



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

July-August 2006

Children in Church

And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. (Lk. 18:15-16)

By the Grace of God, our parish of St. Xenia is growing and waxing strong with new families and new “arrivals” coming to us quite regularly. It brings joy to our hearts, and I am sure to our Lord, to see these new faces in our holy temple each time we gather. When there is such an influx there are inevitably adjustments that all have to make in order to maintain a prayerful atmosphere and proper order in church.

Parents, particularly new parents, are presented with a great challenge when bringing their children to worship services. We not only need to monitor our own minds and hearts during the services to struggle to pay attention and pray effectively, but also must simultaneously do the same with the little ones we bring. In my opinion this has to begin before we find ourselves in the midst of the congregation on Sunday morning. It is most advantageous if we attend Vigil on Saturday evening. Yes, it is a long service and an evening service and children can get tired. But I contend that if parents bring even small children to at least some part of the Vigil, they are much more likely to be prepared for Sunday morning. It is (unfortunately!) true that there are many fewer people at Vigil than at Liturgy and so the child has the opportunity to again become accustomed to the temple and the things around them. Prolonged absence arouses greater curiosity. The parent also has more opportunity, with fewer distractions, to re-introduce the child to the way of being in church, the lighting of candles and veneration of icons, the signs of the cross and bows, and other normal occurrences during worship services. The child will begin to imitate the reverence of the parent towards holy things. This, of course, must continue at home with prayers before and veneration of holy icons morning and evening as the family prays together. When the child begins to lose attention the parent can gently guide them back to focus towards the Holy Altar. It is not a time for toys or visiting with other children or adults. This preparation at Vigil makes Sunday morning go smoother. It is equally

necessary to limit other kinds of activity before Liturgy on Sunday. Avoid the television and other forms of entertainment, using the time instead to help the child dress properly and prepare mentally for what is to come. Reading a spiritual story, or bible story might help in this regard. In any case, all should be about getting ready for the Liturgy with the fewest distractions. On arrival, care should be taken to focus the child on the Liturgy. It is not the time to look for or otherwise interact with other children or adults. If the adults will only greet each other with a holy kiss and not carry on conversation the children will learn to follow suit. There is plenty of fellowship time after the Liturgy for everyone to “catch up.”

Though the principle responsibility rests with the parents, all other members of the congregation have their part to play as well. We first and foremost have to have patience and understanding. One parishioner told me that her remembrance of her child’s baptism had her baby perfect and serene. She then came upon a video that was taken at the time and was somewhat shocked and surprised to see that the child had screamed for the duration of the service! Most of us who have older children can, with a little effort, remember that we had our challenges as well. So it is important for us to be helpful and supportive of parents of younger children without being intrusive. It is not helpful if we stare at a child having an unruly moment, neither is it helpful for to stare judgmentally at the parent. We should only make more fervent our own prayer on their behalf. It equally unhelpful for us to play with young children during worship no matter how endearing they are to us. There is plenty of time outside of worship services to show our love and affection. We would all prefer perfect silence and attention by everyone during services, but we have to face the fact that this will not always be. Consider how hard it is to discipline your own mind had heart at any given time and you realize that it is not only others who are disruptive.

There is no doubt that if we all work together God will bless our efforts and bring the wonderful Grace that is necessary for our minds and hearts to be lifted up to him in worship and thanksgiving for all that He has given us.

—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 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.

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.

*Please note that the first two Sundays of July fall during the Peter & Paul Fast, and plan accordingly.

Sisterhood News:

Metropolitan's Visit: Planning and preparations have already begun for Metropolitan Laurus' visit on September 23-24 for our altar feast. This year is the 10th anniversary of the parish and so is a true milestone! Sign-up lists are posted on the bulletin board for people who would like to help by heading up a committee or participating in the cooking or setup. Please make an effort to pitch in. There is plenty of work to go around!

Update on the Bednets Project: Elsewhere in the newsletter, we have reproduced a letter received from Health Alliance International thanking us for our participation in raising funds for this project. Our most heartfelt thanks to all those parishioners who donated towards Bednets.

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

Thank You...

...to John Kekis, Theo Kekis, Peter Reed, John Sarantakis, John Danas, and Roberto Gonzalez, who showed up on June 17 and 24 for the church maintenance days. Your efforts are most appreciated, and the results are noticeable, especially the freshly painted deck and church doors.

...to all who responded to the effort to collect small paper icons for the Church in Haiti. We were able to collect and ship over 600 small icons.

...to Gene Survillo for his help in beautifying our church with potted palms for Palm Sunday and Easter lilies for the Tomb of our Lord.

...to all who came out to help clean and beautify our church for Pascha, the most glorious Feast of feasts!

Please remember in your prayers...Nicholas, Lilly, Nina, Josephine, David, Vassilisa, Anne, Fr. Roman Lukianov, Stephen Hayes (reposed).

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

Financial Update: As of April 30, 2006 the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$65,335. If you have any questions, please see Reader Constantine Desrosiers.

Bible Study and other classes will resume in the Fall. Our thanks to all who participated in these – they have always been interesting and informative.

Sunday School: A HUGE thank you goes out to Danny McLellan and Laryssa Doohovskoy for the great job they did this year, and of course to Subdeacon Alexander Doohovskoy for the terrific job he continues to do with the younger kids, and to John Danas for his able assistance to Alexander.

Choir News: At the Paschal Liturgy, we introduced the new Cherubic Hymn (a Lvov arrangement of a Greek melody), and a new Anaphora (a Soloviev arrangement of Znamenny chant), and have been singing them since.

We will also soon introduce a new Cherubic Hymn.

Choir members please note: It will soon be time to get started planning out the Metropolitan's visit in the fall. 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 on Sunday after Trapeza. Michael Lang and Rdr. Robert Stauffer are being helped by Subdeacon Alexei and Patricia Klar to assemble the necessary music to put complete books together for the services. Most of the music will be familiar, but it is yet necessary to practice anything new and particularly the hierarchical additions that are not done each week.

St. Seraphim Camp: Camp dates this year are July 30-August 6. The cost is \$175 per child, and is open to children grades 3 through high school. Please see Fr. Michael if you have children who are interested in attending. Also, please note: The Camp is endeavoring to find land to purchase, probably in Upstate New York, and is requesting donations towards this worthy project. If you wish to contribute towards the purchase of land, please ask Fr. Michael for details.

Fundraising Project: *GREAT OPPORTUNITY!*

As mentioned in the May-June parish newsletter, a fundraising effort is underway to finish our basement space for use by the Sunday School and other functions. A parishioner has pledged to match all donations to our Basement Improvement Fund, up to \$6,000. Your gift can now be doubled, and with your generous support, we would be able to start this year.

So far we have received \$2,435, and with the matching amount, we have now collected \$4,870 (the estimate for the work was \$12,000). So if you are able, please consider making a donation to finish off the basement, for our children's and grandchildren's future.

**Health Alliance
International**

May 12, 2006

Mirielle Lang
The Children of St. Nicholas
Saint Xenia Russian Orthodox Church

Dear Mireille and the Children of St. Nicholas:

I was just gathering the latest information regarding your wonderful gift when I received your email today. With the \$1,300 raised by the Children of St. Nicholas, and \$8,700 raised through other sources, HAI was able to purchase nearly 1200 insecticide-treated bednets for free distribution to HIV patients in the Sofala and Manica day hospitals in Mozambique. We had waited until March to make the purchase, so that we could secure additional funds to enable a bulk purchase and distribution.

We purchased Olysets, which are the only long-lasting bednets endorsed by the WHO for their effectiveness in preventing malaria. Olysets still contain 50 % of their original insecticide content after five years of use, making them very effective as long-term anti-malarial tools.

The nets are currently being distributed to the most vulnerable patients of the HIV day hospitals of Manica and Sofala. The recipients are low-income people with AIDS, who are especially susceptible to malaria. Preference is being given to children and pregnant women.

On behalf of HAI, I thank you very much for your efforts to help in this crucial work. We truly appreciate your pro-active campaign to help those in our world who are most in need.

Sincerely,



Tom Martin
Grants Manager

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Phone (206) 543-8382
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Interview with Tony Sarantakis

We all know and appreciate Tony Sarantakis as our numbers cruncher – our esteemed Church Treasurer – as well as a member of the choir. Tony has diligently served as our treasurer since August 1989. He quietly yet steadily works behind the scenes to ensure that we are going in the right fiscal direction. But who is Tony and what brought this Greek to St. Xenia's? In fact, Tony is one of the original members of this parish; he was instrumental in bringing us here! (Read more about this in the next article "History of Our Parish").

Anthony John Sarantakis' heritage begins in the Peloponnese area of Southern Greece in two villages: Longanikos and the neighboring village of Kotitza. These are the villages where his father and mother were born and raised. His father first met his mother at her own baptism! And yes, she was baptized as an infant. Tony's father was 25 years her senior; he left for the United States shortly after "meeting her" at her baptism. In 1935, Tony's mother came to the United States as a young 21-year-old woman. Their marriage was later arranged by her older sister, which was not uncommon in those days.

The Sarantakis family started out in Lowell, as many Greeks did, and then later moved to the city of Cambridge where Tony was raised. So why does Tony have an Italian name? He does not! His name comes from the Greek, Andonis (Anthony), after his grandfather. Tony's father, John, earned his living working in the Boston Naval Shipyard; he did not have a formal education. Although education was important to John, it was even more important to have a job. Initially, he was upset about Tony's plans to attend college and study engineering, rather than going to work, but in the end he was very proud of his son's accomplishment. Tony's parents made attending Church a regular custom every Sunday. But perhaps even a greater impact on Tony's spiritual upbringing was witnessing his father pray daily.

While still in college, Tony met his true love on a blind date arranged by friends. Even though she was not Greek, Vera (who is half Russian and half Hungarian) was accepted easily into the family. (Tony's older sisters broke the ice with their parents first by marrying non-Greeks!) Vera was raised a Roman Catholic, so before marrying, Tony and Vera discussed and agreed upon matters of religion, and Vera was accepted into the Orthodox Church in

1971. "I felt that it was important if we were going to raise a family that we raise it in the unity of the Orthodox Church," Tony adds that the Catholics did a wonderful job instructing Vera in the faith. In those days the Catholic Church was more traditional. However, when the Catholic Church went through the upheaval of Vatican II, Tony reflected, "I think Vera realized that in the Orthodox faith things weren't changing."

Another point of harmony for Vera and Tony was their similar immigrant background and traditional upbringing. "Both of our parents came from the old world philosophy, my father was born in 1889 and Vera's father in 1898. She spoke Russian at home, I spoke Greek at home. I think it was a marriage made in heaven."

Although Tony really appreciates his Greek heritage, even as a teenager he realized that most young people were drifting away from his parents' church, mainly because they couldn't understand the Greek services. Tony himself had trouble understanding the unfamiliar Hellenistic Greek used in the Church, which made it difficult to appreciate the spiritual fullness of his faith. He concluded that when he had a family, if he wanted to keep his children involved in the Orthodox faith, it would be extremely important that they attend a church where they could fully understand the language. Therefore, Tony feels very blessed that he and his family were able to help establish our St. Xenia's parish. And he is very grateful that all four of his now-grown-up children live in this area and continue to be active members of St. Xenia's, along with their spouses and three (so far) grandchildren.

I asked Tony if he has any hobbies, like gardening, etc. "Well, once in while I have to mow the lawn." Tony likes sports and he enjoys watching the New England sports teams. But what really makes Tony tick? Church and family. If he's not spending time with his children and grandchildren, he is researching his family roots on the internet. You could say family genealogy is one of his hobbies. Tony's advice to us young parents is "bring the children to church and make sure they learn about the faith. Know what they're doing and work with them very closely." Tony further reflects that this helps the child during difficult times as well; they gain strength and faith through their prayers.

—*Alexandra Gonzalez*

July 2006

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (18 Jun) MM Leontius & comp; St John of San Francisco Fish, wine & oil allowed
2 9:30 AM Pentecost 3 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 2 Fish, wine & oil allowed	3 (20 Jun) HM Methodius	4 (21 Jun) M Julian of Tarsus Wine & oil allowed	5 (22 Jun) HM Eusebius	6 (23 Jun) M Agrippina Wine & oil allowed	7 (24 Jun) Nativity of St John the Baptist Fish, wine & oil allowed	8 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (25 Jun) VM Febronia Fish, wine & oil allowed
Apostles Fast						
9 9:30 AM Pentecost 4 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 3 Fish, wine & oil allowed	10 (27 Jun) St Sampson the Hospitable	11 6:30 PM Apostles Vigil (28 Jun) SS Cyrus & John; SS Sergius & Herman	12 9:00 AM (29 Jun) Apostles Peter & Paul Hours & Divine Liturgy Fish, wine & oil allowed	13 (30 Jun) Synaxis of the 12 Apostles	14 (1 Jul) MM Cosmas & Damian	15 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (2 Jul) Deposition of the Robe of the Theotokos
Apostles Fast						
16 9:30 AM Pentecost 5 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 4	17 (4 July) St Andrew of Crete	18 (5 Jul) St Athanasius of Athos; St Sergius of Radonezh; NMM Elizabeth & Barbara	19 (6 July) St Sisoës the Great	20 (7 Jul) St Thomas	21 (8 Jul) GM Procopius Wine & oil allowed	22 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (9 Jul) HM Pancratius
23 9:30 AM Pentecost 6 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 5	24 (11 Jul) GM Euphemia; St Olga	25 (12 Jul) MM Proclus & Hilary	26 (13 Jul) Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel	27 (14 Jul) Ap Aquila; St Priscilla	28 (15 Jul) St Vladimir the Enlightener of Russia Fish, wine & oil allowed	29 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (16 Jul) HM Athenogenes
30 9:30 AM Pentecost 7 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 6	31 (18 Jul) M Emilian					

August 2006

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 (19 Jul) St Macrina; St Seraphim of Sarov	2 (20 Jul) Pr Elijah Fish, wine & oil allowed	3 (21 Jul) St Symeon of Emessa	4 (22 Jul) St Mary Magdalen Wine & oil allowed	5 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (23 Jul) MM Trophimus & comp
6 9:30 AM Pentecost 8 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 7	7 (25 Jul) Dormition of St Anna	8 (26 Jul) HM Hermolaus	9 (27 Jul) GM Panteleimon Wine & oil allowed	10 (28 Jul) Ap Prochorus & comp	11 (29 Jul) M Callinicus of Gangra	12 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (30 Jul) App Silas & Silvanus
13 9:30 AM Pentecost 9 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 8	14 (1 Aug) Procession of the Cross	15 (2 Aug) Protomartyr Stephen	16 (3 Aug) St Isaaius & comp	17 (4 Aug) 7 Youths of Ephesus	18 6:30 PM Vigil of the Transfiguration (5 Aug) M Eusygnius	19 9:30 AM Transfiguration of the Lord Hours & Divine Liturgy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil Fish, wine & oil allowed
Dormition Fast						
20 9:30 AM Pentecost 10 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 1 Wine & oil allowed	21 (8 Aug) St Emilian of Cyzicus	22 (9 Aug) Ap Matthias Wine & oil allowed	23 (10 Aug) M Laurence	24 (11 Aug) M Euplus	25 (12 Aug) MM Protius & Anicetas	26 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (13 Aug) St Tikhon; St Maximus Wine & oil allowed
Dormition Fast						
27 9:30 AM Pentecost 11 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 2 6:30 PM Vigil of the Dormition Wine & oil allowed	28 8:30 AM Dormition of the Theotokos Hours & Divine Liturgy	29 (16 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.