



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

January-February 2012

The Need for the Church

by Archpriest Lev Lebedev and
Bishop Alexander (Mileant)+

The mystery of the Church, the kingdom of God - a mystery which is great and wise, surpassing our understanding - was brought into being by Christ in the following way. First, when He was baptized by John in the Jordan, at the moment when the Holy Spirit came down and the voice of the Father was heard, He sanctified the nature of water. By this act, the water of Baptism became a conduit of God's grace, which gives a man new birth. Christ taught that a man is spiritually born and becomes a member of the Church only by being "born of water and of the Spirit" in the sacrament of Baptism (John 3:5).

Just as a newborn infant requires nourishment in order to grow, so also one who is born anew in the mystery of Baptism requires spiritual nourishment, which the Lord gives us in the sacrament of Holy Communion, of which He says: "I am that bread of life. ... The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. ... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. ... He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John 6:48-57).

At His Mystical Supper, the evening before He suffered on the Cross, Christ Himself first changed bread into His true Flesh and wine into His true Blood and gave Them in communion to His disciples, thereby showing them how the Sacrament of Holy Communion should be observed.

From that time on, the sacrament of Holy Communion has been celebrated at a divine service, called the Liturgy. Believers receive the Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ and are thereby united with Him, and not in a purely abstract or mystical sense, but really and truly! The whole being of a man, spiritual and physical, partakes of the spiritual and physical life of Jesus Christ, the God-Man. Love opens a path to spiritual closeness; moreover, in Holy Communion, while people are united with Christ, they are united with one another at the same time, and in Christ they become a single whole, a living organism, called the Church. This is why the Apostle Paul called the Church the Body of Christ (Col. 1:24).

Just as the Incarnation of the Son of God was accomplished by the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Virgin Mary, so also the Church was founded on the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Whom Jesus Christ sent from the Father to the Apostles on the fiftieth day after His Resurrection. Since that day, the Holy Spirit has remained with the Church constantly, giving it life, illuminating it and cultivating it as a single living organism of the Body of Christ, consisting of many "members," faithful Christians.

There is something which must not be forgotten, especially in our times when Christianity is being split up into more and more churches and "jurisdictions." Man is called to be saved not by a mere mental acknowledgement of the truth of Christianity, and not merely by his own best efforts, but by belonging organically to the living body of the Church. Only in the Church, in this mystical Body of Christ, does the believer find correct spiritual guidance and the strength necessary for an authentically Christian life. (continued from last newsletter)

...In our times the Church is not very great in numbers. Still, the word of God applies to her: "Fear not, little flock. I have overcome the world" (Luke 12:32; John 16:33). He says, moreover: "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:8-10).

What is most important in our journey through this temporal life is to hold fast to the Truth, the Way and the Life - our Lord Jesus Christ, Who ever abides in His Church.

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:

V. Rev. Michael Crowley
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 (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
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Sisterhood: Mireille Lang	(603) 465-9754
Peter Danas	(978) 459-9541
John Danas	(978) 454-0315
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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) 560-4425
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.

January

- 1 Natalya Kirichok, Katia Fredette
- 8 Pam Reed, Carolyn Savage, Diane Mendez
- 15 Yolka POTLUCK
- 22 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris, Tanya Vlasenko
- 29 Kot Engalichev, Lydya Lynch, Maria Crawford

February

- 5 Maria Kasarda, Tania Sciaudone, Nina Yakuboff
- 12 Nick Kronauer, Vera Srantakis, Priscilla Choi
- 19 Josephine Kniaziuk, Mariana Haven (Meatfare)
- 26 Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne Dimatteo
 (Cheesefare)

Thank You...

...to all who put together the annual St. John of Kronstadt party for our children, especially Pam Reed and Alexandra Gonzalez. We are so blessed to be able to offer them an alternative to the secular "holiday," and this would not be possible without the help and effort of the St. John of Damascus Church School parents and staff.

...to Tanya Vlasenko and David Burnham for the time they put into refurbishing our Church Hall (see Building Committee Update).

Please remember in your prayers... Nicholas, Lilly, Nina, Josephine, David, Lilly Anne, 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 December 31, 2011, the balance on the church mortgage stands at approximately \$6,800. If you have any questions, or would like to know the exact amount, please see Fr. Constantine Desrosiers.

Building Committee Update: The construction for the structural parts of the roof repair of the Church Hall has been completed after the final inspection by the town building inspector on December 12, 2011.

We are very fortunate and very grateful especially for Tanya Vlasenko and David Burnham for their spending so many hours doing all the finishing touches on the plastering and painting the whole walls and ceilings. Many thanks to them, the Church Hall looks great!

The next meeting will be held on Sunday after Trapeza, January 22, mainly review and discuss the overall Church Expansion Plan."

Annual Meeting: Our Annual Meeting to review the state of the parish was held on Sunday, November 20, 2011. Some of the highlights:

Choir Report: We now have a choir book for the funeral service! This is the only complete book in English that we know of. Special thanks to Choir Director Michael Lang for his musical skills; Reader Robert Stauffer, who reviewed the whole project for liturgical accuracy; and Father Michael, for his ongoing support and encouragement. Our Children's Choir, under the direction of Laryssa Doohovskoy, sings during Communion at every Liturgy, and also is featured during the Feast of the Nativity. Thank you, Laryssa!

Sisterhood Report: During the past year, we sponsored a women's retreat at the Montreal Greek monastery, Saint-Monastere-Vierge Marie La Consolatrice; initiated a series of workshops that included prosphora-baking and the arts of pysanky and water-color; began a book club, which we hope to continue in this coming year; and held our sixth Lilac Nights Festival, which was a successful fundraiser for St. Seraphim Camp. Other activities sponsored included a col-

lection of earrings for women battling cancer and undergoing chemotherapy; the planning and execution of our parish feast; our annual St. John of Kronstadt party; and the Giving Tree that we hold during every Nativity Fast. This coming year, in addition to continuing these activities, we would like to host another retreat in Montreal, and/or a parish women's retreat.

St. John of Damascus Church School News:

Important upcoming events: Holy Friday Retreat on April 13, and our annual Vacation Church School July 8-12. Mark your calendars now for these important events!

As always, questions, comments, or suggestions may be directed to Laryssa Doohovskoy or Fr. Michael. 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.

Join us in prayer for our children: We have a monthly meet-up for anyone who is interested in gathering to pray the Akathist to the Mother of God, Nurturer of Children in church. We start the Akathist at 10:30 a.m. and afterwards socialize a bit, brown-bag lunch together. Please join us if you can. Many thanks to Father Constantine (Desrosiers) for making this possible for us.

A Reminder Concerning Income Tax Deductions:

Beginning in 2007, the tax code changed, especially for people who give cash contributions. These contributions include those made by cash, checks, electronic funds transfer, credit card, or payroll deductions. Donors who want to itemize deductions cannot claim a tax deduction for any contribution regardless of the amount, unless you keep one of the following:

1. A bank record that shows the name of the qualified organization, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution. Bank records may include:
 - a. A canceled check.
 - b. A bank or credit union statement, or
 - c. A credit card statement.
2. A receipt (or letter or other written communication) from the qualified organization showing the name of the organization, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution.
3. The payroll deduction reductions (see Publication 526 (2007)).

To ensure tax compliance for 2011 contributions to our parish, if you are planning to itemize your deductions using Schedule A, the following donation methods are recommended:

1. If you plan to include deduction of your cash donations, please use the parish envelopes provided to you on the candle counter and write your name on the envelope.

2. For checks, if your name is not on the check (for instance, if it is the name of your business), please put the check in the donation envelope and write your name on the envelope.
3. Direct deposit from your bank account
4. Payroll deduction.

Our parish does track contributions made and will, upon request, produce a written statement of contributions made during 2011. This information will include the name of our parish, name of the parishioner, date of each individual contribution, and the dollar amount. Our parish cannot track cash contributions, regardless of amount, that are not properly identified by using the contribution envelope and writing in your name. Everyone who has given single contributions of \$250 or more will still receive a statement without needing to request it, as required by the tax code. This is our best understanding of the current law; if you have additional questions, please consult with your tax advisor.

As we know, the Feast of our beloved parish patroness, St. Xenia of St. Petersburg, falls during January. But the Feast of her patron saint falls on the same day! This issue highlights St. Xenia the Righteous. God is wondrous in His Saints!

January 24/February 6: St. Xenia the Righteous

The Nun Xenia, in the world Eusebia, was the only daughter of an eminent Roman senator. From her youth she yearned for God. In order to evade the marriage set up for her, she secretly left from her parental home together with two servants devoted to her and they set sail upon a ship. Through the Providence of God meeting up with the head of the monastery of the holy Apostle Andrew, which was situated in the city of Milassa, in Caesarea, she besought him to take her with her companions to Milassa.

Having changed her name, she called herself Xenia [which in Greek means "stranger" or foreigner"]. At Milassa she bought land, built a church in the name of Saint Stephen and founded a woman's monastery. Soon after this the Bishop of Milassa, Paul, consecrated Xenia a deaconess, as fully worthy of that calling through virtuous life. The saint rendered aid to all: for the destitute she was a benefactress, for the grief-stricken a comforter, for sinners a guide. She possessed deep humility, accounting herself worst and most sinful of all. In her ascetic deeds she was guided by the counsels of the Palestinian ascetic, the Monk Euthymios.

By her lofty life, Saint Xenia attracted many a soul to salvation. The death of the holy virgin, during a time of prayer, was marked by the Lord with the appearance over the monastery in the heavens of an apparition in the form of a luminous crown with a radiant cross amidst it, which accompanied the body of the saint when it was carried into the city to the people, and it stayed until the moment of burial. Many of the sick, having touched to the remains of the saint, received healing. (*Source: Menologion 3.0*)

Editor's Note: Great Lent this year begins on February 14/27. As we struggle to focus on the greater meaning of this holy Season while continuing to lead our everyday lives, it helps to remember that great feats of asceticism are not required from us; if we can refrain from "feasting on our neighbor" (St. John Chrysostom), we keep the more important Fast. Here, an article written by Archbishop John (Shabovskoy) of San Francisco reminds us of those things we all can do, every day, to help us draw closer to a righteous life.

A Hymn to the Lesser Good

by Archbishop John (Shabovskoy) of San Francisco

Many people believe that to live according to the faith and to fulfill the will of God is very difficult. Actually — it's very easy. One needs only attend to details, to trifles, and try to avoid evil in the slightest and most trivial things. This is the simplest and surest way to enter the world of the spirit and draw near to God. A man often thinks that the Creator demands great things of him, that the Gospel insists on complete self-sacrifice, the abolition of one's personhood, etc., as a condition of faith. A man is so frightened by this that he begins to be afraid of becoming acquainted with God, of drawing near to God, and hides himself from God, not even wishing to look into God's Word. "If I can't do anything important for God, then I'd just better stay away from things spiritual, stop thinking about eternity, and live 'in a normal way!'"

There exists at the entrance to the spiritual realm a "hypnosis of great deeds": one must either do some big thing or do nothing. And so people do nothing at all for God or for their souls! It is very strange — the more a man is devoted to the little things of life, the less he wishes to be honest or pure or faithful to God in those same little things. And, moreover, each one must adopt a correct attitude toward little things if one wishes to come near to the kingdom of heaven.

"Wishes to come near"... In this is summed up all the difficulties of the religious life. Often one wishes to enter into the kingdom of heaven quite unexpectedly, in some miraculous and magical way, or, by right — through some kind of great feat. But neither the one nor the other is the right way to find the higher world. One does not enter God's presence in some wondrous manner while remaining indifferent on earth to the needs of the kingdom of God and its bright eternity, nor can one purchase the treasures of the kingdom of God by some kind of eternal act, however great that act might be. Yet good deeds, holy deeds are necessary for one to grow into a higher life, a bright will, a good desire, a heavenly psychology, a heart that is both pure and fair.

"...Verily, verily I say unto you that whosoever offers one of the least of these but a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward" (*Matthew 10:42*). In this saying of the Lord is the highest expression of the smallness of the good. "A glass of water" — this is not much.

...In every communication between people there must without fail be a good spirit. This spirit is Christ, openly manifest or hidden.

"In the name of a disciple" — this is the first step in communicating with another person in the name of Jesus Christ Himself. Many people, not as yet knowing the Lord and the wondrous fellowship in His Name, still have among themselves an unselfish, pure and human fellowship which brings them ever closer to the Spirit of Christ.

...As a matter of fact, the lesser good is more necessary for mankind than the greater. People can get along with their lives without the greater good; without the lesser they cannot exist. Mankind perishes not from a lack of the greater good, but from an insufficiency of just this lesser good. The greater good is no more than a roof, erected on the brick walls of the lesser good.

The lesser, easier good was left on this earth for man by the Creator Himself, Who took all the greater good upon Himself. Whosoever does the lesser, the same creates — and through him the Creator Himself creates — the greater good. Of our little good the Creator makes His Own great good. For as our Lord is the Creator who formed all things from nothingness, so is He more able to create the greater good from the lesser.

Through such lesser, easy work, done with the greatest simplicity, a man is accustomed to the good and begins to serve it with his whole heart, sincerely, and in this way enters into an atmosphere of good, lets down the roots of his life into new soil, the soil of the good. The roots of human life quickly accommodate themselves to this good earth, and soon cannot live without it. Thus is a man saved: from the small comes the great. "Faithful in little things" turns out to be "faithful in the greater."

Lay aside all theoretical considerations that it is forbidden to slaughter millions, women, children, and elderly; be content to manifest your moral sense by in no way killing the human

dignity of your neighbor, neither by word, nor by innuendo, nor by gesture.

Do not be angry over trifles "against your brother vainly" (Matthew 5:22) or in the daily contacts of life speak untruth to your neighbor. These are trifles, small change, of no account; but just try to do this and you will see what comes of it.

It is hard to pray at night. But try in the morning. If you can't manage to pray at home, then at least as you ride to your place of employment attempt with a clear head the "Our Father" and let the words of this short prayer resound in your heart. And at night commend yourself with complete sincerity into the hands of the Heavenly Father. This indeed is very easy.

And give, give a glass of cold water to everyone who has need of it; give a glass filled to the brim with simple human companionship to everyone that lack it, the very simplest companionship.

O wondrous path of little things, I sing thee a hymn! Surround yourselves, O people, gird up yourselves with little works of good — with a chain of little, simple, easy and good feelings which cost us naught, a chain of bright thoughts, words and deeds. Let us abandon the big and the difficult. That is for them that love it and not for us for whom the Lord in His Mercy, for us who have not yet learned to love the greater, has poured forth the lesser love everywhere, free as water and air...

*From the Website of Bishop Alexander Mileant:
<http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/>*



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JANUARY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 (Dec 19) 29th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 4 Sunday before Nativity 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	2 (Dec 20) HM Ignatius the God-bearer of Antioch Fast: wine and oil	3 (Dec 21) VM Juliana of Nicomedia Fast: wine and oil	4 (Dec 22) GM Anastasia of Rome Fast	5 (Dec 23) Holy Ten Martyrs of Crete Fast: wine and oil	6 (Dec 24) Nun-martyr Eugenia of Rome 10:00 Royal Hours & Vespers 6:30 Vigil of the Nativity Fast	7 (Dec 25) NATIVITY OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 1:30 Vespers
8 (Dec 26) Sunday after the Nativity, Tone 5 Synaxis of the Theotokos 9:00 Matins and Divine Liturgy Fast free	9 (Dec 27) Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen Fast free	10 (Dec 28) The 20,000 MM of Nicomedia Fast free	11 (Dec 29) 14,000 Infants (Holy Innocents) Fast free	12 (Dec 30) St. Macarius, met. of Moscow Fast free	13 (Dec 31) Apodosis of the Nativity Fast free	14 (Jan 1) Circumcision of the Lord 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
15 (Jan 2) Sunday before the Theophany 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 1:00 Parish Yolka Fast free	16 (Jan 3) Forefeast of the Theophany Fast free	17 (Jan 4) Forefeast of the Theophany Fast free	18 (Jan 5) Eve of the Theophany 6:30 Vigil of Theophany Fast: wine and oil	19 (Jan 6) THEOPHANY OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	20 (Jan 7) Synaxis of the Baptist Fast: wine & oil	21 (Jan 8) Ven Pachomius of Kensk 5:30 All-Night Vigil
22 (Jan 9) Sunday after the Theophany, Tone 7 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	23 (Jan 10) St. Gregory of Nyssa	24 (Jan 11) Ven Theodosius the Great	25 (Jan 12) M Tatiana of Rome Fast: wine and oil	26 (Jan 13) MM Hermylus and Stratonicus at Belgrade	27 (Jan 14) Holy Fathers slain at Sinai and Raithu Fast: fish, wine & oil	28 (Jan 15) St. Paul of Thebes 5:30 All-Night Vigil
29 (Jan 16) 33rd Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	30 (Jan 17) St. Anthony the Great	31 (Jan 18) St. Athanasius the Great	Feb 1 (Jan 19) Ven Macarius the Great Fast: wine and oil	Feb 2 (Jan 20) Ven Euthymius the Great	Feb 3 (Jan 21) Ven Maximus the Confessor	Feb 4 (Jan 22) Ap Timothy of the 70 5:30 All-Night Vigil



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FEBRUARY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan 29 (Jan 16) 33rd Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Jan 30 (Jan 17) St. Anthony the Great	Jan 31 (Jan 18) St. Athanasius the Great	1 (Jan 19) Ven Macarius the Great Fast: wine and oil	2 (Jan 20) Ven Euthymius the Great	3 (Jan 21) Ven Maximus the Confessor Fast: wine and oil	4 (Jan 22) Ap Timothy of the 70 5:30 All-Night Vigil
5 (Jan 23) Publican and the Pharisee. Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	6 (Jan 24) St. Xenia of Petersburg 9:00 Matins and Divine Liturgy Fast free	7 (Jan 25) St. Gregory the Theologian Fast free	8 (Jan 26) St. Xenophon and his wife, St. Mary Fast free	9 (Jan 27) St. John Chrysostom Fast free	10 (Jan 28) Ven Ephraim the Syrian Fast free	11 (Jan 29) HM Ignatius the God-bearer 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
12 (Jan 30) Prodigal Son. Tone 2 Three Holy Hierarchs 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	13 (Jan 31) Unmercenaries Cyrus and John	14 (Feb 1) M Tryphon of Campsada 6:30 Vigil of the Meeting of the Lord	15 (Feb 2) MEETING OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine, & oil	16 (Feb 3) Symeon the God-receiver and Anna the Prophetess	17 (Feb 4) Ven Isidore of Pelusium Fast: wine and oil	18 (Feb 5) M Agatha of Palermo 4:30 General Pannyhida 5:30 All-Night Vigil
19 (Feb 6) Last Judgment. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	20 (Feb 7) Ven Parthenius Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	21 (Feb 8) GM Theodore Stratelates Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	22 (Feb 9) M Nicephorus of Antioch Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	23 (Feb 10) Ven Shio Mgvime Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	24 (Feb 11) HM Blaise, bp of Sebaste Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	25 (Feb 12) St. Meletius, abp of Antioch 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil
26 (Feb 13) Sunday of Forgiveness. Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: dairy, fish, wine, & oil	27 (Feb 14) Start of Great Lent 7:00 Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete Fast	28 (Feb 15) Ap Onesimus of the 70 7:00 Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete Fast	29 (Feb 16) MM at Caesarea 7:00 Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete Fast	Mar 1 (Feb 17) 7:00 Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete Fast	Mar 2 (Feb 18) Fast	Mar 3 (Feb 19) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oi

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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.