



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

September-October 2007

The Importance of Religious Instruction

Every Orthodox Christian needs a continual program of religious instruction. I am sure that this sounds like a gross generalization to many, but I know it to be true. It is true for the young and the old, it is true for men and for women, and it is true for clergy and laity.

There are at least three kinds of religious instruction that we all need. First and foremost in the Orthodox Church, we have the religious instruction that we are given in the Divine Services: the Vigil, the Divine Liturgy, the cycle of the hours and that of the feasts. We do not often think of the Divine Services as means of instruction but they are in fact the most complete means in that we are taught on every level of our being.

For example, in the All-Night Vigil on Saturday evenings and before great feasts, we are offered a complete learning experience. We are instructed in heavenly things by the sights and smells and sounds of the Service in the Temple of God. We taste the blessed bread and wine of the Litya, the hand of blessing touches us with oil and we kiss the hand of Christ in the person of the priest.

On the emotional level the beauty of the hymnography and iconography and the touching sentiments associated with the life of Christ and of the saints' strikes us. We are united in a family bond of brotherhood with all who participate, and all who we remember in prayer.

Our intellect is stimulated and challenged by the poetic and spiritual depth of the words we hear. We are taught Theology by the Apostles and Fathers of the Church who labored over the centuries for our sake.

And perhaps most importantly, we are stirred in the depths of our souls by the presence of God in Holy Trinity. The barriers to spiritual life and growth are penetrated and we, unable by our own strength, are brought to the remembrance of God and so true self-knowledge. This is even more fully the case with attendance at Divine Liturgy.

The second form of religious instruction centers around being taught either in classroom settings or by reading the Law of God explained to us by those who themselves have been instructed from Christ Himself, through the Apostles and those who came after. Again, this is both stimulating and challenging for us to grasp not only the words but also the Spirit in the words. The articles of our Faith, the defense against heresy, need to be grasped to the best of one's ability by each and every Orthodox Christian.

The third form of instruction is received at home. It is setting aside the times of prayer, the giving of thanks for all the gifts of God. The example of parents and children living an *Orthodox way of life* strengthens our resolve. Conversations over dinner regarding spiritual and moral issues are essential and should be the norm rather than the exception.

So I ask, who does not need this? Only a person lacking in instruction and/or blinded by the cares of the world would consider himself or herself exempt. Without a doubt, those who need it the most are most want to flee from it.

It does not take a great intellect to understand that the milieu in which we live will lead only to our demise if left unchecked. It has been called by some the "world, the flesh and the devil." The world in the sense, not of the earth that God created, but the corruption of nature brought about by the Fall. The flesh is not the perfect body that God has given us, but the passions that continually work against us. And the devil is pride, evil and corruption in all of its many forms as well as Satan himself.

Our parish is providing two of these three forms of instruction, and the groundwork for you to provide the third on a continual basis.

Our Divine Services are full and beautiful by any standard of measure. As we traverse the year according to the Typicon we are given both a depth of understanding and of experience of the fullness of the Life of Christ—the perfect Life given to us by the Savior Himself. How often we leave the Temple sensing that we have been in the very presence of the Divine, in heaven to the degree that we can bear it.

We strive and struggle to offer classes to all. We are now at the beginning of another yearly cycle of instruction. What are your plans? Have you "registered" your child for the Sunday School and made the commitment in yourself to bring them to Church each week to receive instruction? Have you considered our adult classes, or asked for recommended reading on spiritual subjects?

Please be aware: Christianity, the *Way of Salvation and Peace* in this life and that to come, does not come intuitively or without effort and struggle. It does not take a strong character to mindlessly follow the customs and mores of the day. It does take heroic effort on our part to break free of the chains of mediocrity and carelessness that are fostered by modern society.

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: woolfolk3@gmail.com, 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: Sdn. Constantine Desrosiers (603) 775-0320
Secretary: Natalie Pishenin (978) 658-5564
Treasurer: Anthony Sarantakis (978) 263-2016
Sisterhood: Matushka Nancy Crowley (207) 767-1889
Cemetery: to be determined by search committee.
Interim, Rev. Michael Crowley

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 50 people, anything is appreciated. Donuts, fruit and pastries are as acceptable as soup and sandwiches. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

September

2 POT LUCK
9 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris
16 Masha Harris, Kot Engalichev
23 Natalie Botchkov, Tania Sciaudone
30 Feast Day

October

7 Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo, Laryssa Doohovskoy
14 Nick Kronauer, Vera Sarantakis
21 Vera Dubois, Amy McLellan
28 Anna Kekis, Mireille Lang, Natalie Villahermosa

Sisterhood News:

Thank You... to all who provided meals to the Mendez family during the month of August.

...to Alexandra Gonzalez, who organized the aforementioned meals, and who has offered to do this for other families of newborns.

Please remember in your prayers...Nicholas, Lilly, Nina, Josephine, David, Vassilisa, Lilly Anne, Margaret, Matushka Irina Lukianov.

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

Financial Update: As of August 31, 2007, the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$51,335. If you have any questions, please see Subdeacon Constantine Desrosiers.

Congratulations:

... to Diane and Rafael Mendez (and their daughter Rose), on the newest member of the family, Alexander Gabriel, born on August 1.

...to Anthony and Vera Sarantakis, grandparents of Alexander Gabriel and his big sister Rose. Many years to all!

St. Xenia Support Group: Our parish regularly provides support to new parents by providing several meals to families with a newborn. At this time, they especially need our support. Alexandra Gonzales heads up this effort, which is completely voluntary. If you would like to offer your support by cooking for any family with a newborn, please contact Alexandra at alex8665@yahoo.com, specifying days of the week when you can help in your e-mail. You will be expected to cook a dinner for a family of two adults and any other children in their family, and to and bring the meal to their home on your assigned day. For anyone who would really like to participate but lives too far away, Alexandra has offered to assign you a Sunday and arrange for the food to be delivered to the Mendez family. Alexandra's telephone number is (978) 692-1229.

A cemetery reminder: Burning candles and vigil lights are a fire hazard! Please extinguish all flames after visiting the cemetery. Thank you for your cooperation.

Also, please remember to keep the cemetery road clear, not only on Sundays, but also when visiting.

Children's Play Loft: If your child has played (or eaten) in the loft area, please remember to pick up toys from the floor and discard food and plates. This will keep the area clean and safe for everyone's use and will help our hall cleaner to clean that area more thoroughly. Thanks!

October is Member Month: The month of October is 'Member Month' at St. Xenia's!

All voting members are asked to review and renew their commitment to our parish this month. If you have previ-

ously filled out a new member or renewal member form, we ask that you update that information as needed (addresses, emails, phone numbers, etc.). We will be collecting that information in our hall during the month of October. If you prefer to be removed from the member roster, kindly let Fr. Michael or someone on the parish council know. We are asking that you help us to keep our member records up-to-date.

If you're not yet a member, please consider completing a new member form and dropping it into the collection basket. We encourage all Orthodox Christians in good standing to come to pray in the House of Our Lord and also to offer their commitment to our ongoing efforts and needs.

Annual Parish Meeting: Our annual parish meeting will be held on Sunday, October 14th in the parish hall after trapeza. Main points of this meeting will include: State of the parish address by Father Michael, presentation of the 2006 - 2007 Auditing Committee report, presentation of the 2007-2008 annual budget to parishioners for review and approval, election of parish council members having 1 yr. terms, election of three Auditing Committee members for the 2007 - 2008 year, question and answer session. All parishioners and attendees are welcome to come to the meeting to become informed and to offer input, however, only voting members may participate in elections and voting. Voting parish members are those who have (updated) membership commitments on file.

Holy Communion: All Orthodox who have gone to confession, and baptized Orthodox children under seven years of age (without confession), are welcomed and encouraged to partake of Holy Communion. When preparing to partake of Holy Communion, please plan for you and/or your child to be in church for the entirety of Divine Liturgy, arriving on time and remaining in church after Divine Liturgy for the reading of the Thanksgiving after Communion prayers.

St. Nicholas Church , Springfield: Fr. Brendan and his family will be hosting their annual Autumn Picnic on Sunday, October 7th. This has become an annual event for many families from Albany, Springfield and Methuen parishes, particularly those with ties to St. Seraphim Camp. The invitation is extended to our parishioners again this year. If you wish to go after Liturgy on that day there will surely be rides available.

Winter Clothing: Quite a bit of abandoned winter clothing remains at the church. Please scan these items by the back door and claim and remove what is yours. Thank you!

Sunday School News:

Our Church School is looking forward to an exciting new year! Classes will begin on October 7th.

This year's classes will be divided into four sections: Pre-school through Kindergarten led by Laryssa Doohovskoy,

First Grade through Fifth Grade led by Alexander Doo-hovskoy and John Danas, Sixth Grade through Ninth Grade led by Alexei Doohovskoy, and Tenth Grade through Twelfth Grade meeting weekly for lectures organized by Matushka Nancy (schedule for October given below).

We are pleased to announce that many Church School resources are now available on the updated St. Xenia Parish Website (www.stxenia.org). We are now able to update the progress of each class with weekly summaries. Curriculum guidelines are also available for perusal and download.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact Laryssa Doohovskoy, Church

School Coordinator, at 978-897-1734 or by email at LaryssaL@aol.com.

ADVANCED SUNDAY CLASS, FALL 2007

October 7: Short History of Old Testament Israel - Reader Robert

October 14: The Early Church – Daniel McLellan

October 21: Short History of the Life of Christ - Reader John Kekis

October 28: Ecumenical Councils - Sub-deacon Constantine

Three of our youngest Sunday School attendees got together recently for a little conference:



Orthodox Teaching on the Holy Angels

Nine orders of angels divided into three hierarchies

Hierarchies are divided into three orders

"Мы принимаем девять чинов ангельских, потому что из свидетельства слова Божия знаем об Ангелах, Архангелах, Силах, Властях, Началах, Господствах, Престолах, Херувимах и Серафимах"

The Apostle Paul was taken up to the third (highest) heaven (II Cor. 12:2) and saw the difference of the orders of the holy angels and explained them to Dionysius, as his disciple (St. Dionysius the Areopagite). All the heavenly orders are called by the common name "angels." The word "angel" is not a denomination of essence, but of service. Angels do, however, have different names according to their situation and grace given by God.

The first hierarchy, the highest and closest to the Holy Trinity, consists of the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones. The six-winged Seraphim stand closer than all before their Creator and Maker and are fire-like. They are aflame with love for God. Next are the many-eyed Cherubim being themselves enlightened, they enlighten others sending wisdom and enlightenment of the spiritual eyes, given for the seeing of God and the knowledge of God. The Thrones are called "God-bearing" according to grace and given for their service which is to mystically and incomprehensibly bear God in themselves. Through them the justice of God is pre-eminently manifested.

The middle hierarchy consists of three angelic orders: the Dominions, the Virtues, and the Powers. The Dominions are themselves free and dominate over the rest of the angels which follow behind them, voluntarily and joyfully serving God and sending down power for the prudent governing and wise management to authorities on the earth. The Virtues are filled with Divine strength, work very great miracles and send the grace of miracle working to God's saints who are worthy of such grace. The Powers are so called because they have power over the devil, to restrain the power of the demons and to repulse the temptations brought upon by them.

The lowest hierarchy also has three orders: the Principalities, the Archangels and the Angels. The Principalities are named thus because they have command over the lower angels, directing them to the fulfillment of divine orders. The Archangels are the great heralds of good news. The Angels are closest to man. They announce lesser mysteries and intentions of God and are appointed to guard each of us who believe.

Being in need of the help of the angels, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Assembly of the nine angelic orders with a special supplication on the eighth day of the month of November, i.e. the ninth month, since all these nine orders of angels will gather on the day of the Terrible Judgment of the Lord, which the divine teachers of the Church call the eighth day. The Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Michael and all the Heavenly Bodiless Powers is commemorated November 8/21.

From the Minea of St. Dimitry of Rostov



ST. XENIA ORTHODOX CHURCH
 170 N. Lowell St. (Rt. 113)/PO Box 147 - Methuen, MA 01844
 (phone) Fr. Michael Crowley (978) 204-0428 -- Church (978) 688-1211



SEPTEMBER 2007						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug 26 (Aug 13) Pentecost 13 Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	Aug 27 (Aug 14) 6:30 Vigil of the Feast Fast	Aug 28 (Aug 15) DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy	Aug 29 (Aug 16) Fast	Aug 30 (Aug 17) Fast	Aug 31 (Aug 18) Fast	1 (Aug 19) 6:30 All-Night Vigil
2 (Aug 20) Pentecost 14 Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	3 (Aug 21) Fast	4 (Aug 22) Fast	5 (Aug 23) Fast	6 (Aug 24) Fast	7 (Aug 25) Fast	8 (Aug 26) 6:30 All-Night Vigil
9 (Aug 27) Pentecost 15 Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	10 (Aug 28) Fast	11 (Aug 29) Beheading of the Baptist Fast: Strict fast	12 (Aug 30) Fast	13 (Aug 31) Fast	14 (Sep 1) The Church New Year Fast	15 (Sep 2) 10:00 Lectures in Honor of St. John Chrysostom for Youth 3:30 Cookout on Church Grounds for conference attendees 6:30 All-Night Vigil with Youth Choir
16 (Sep 3) Celebration of Parish Altar Feast 9:00 Meeting of the Bishop & Hours 10:00 Hierarchical Divine Liturgy w/ Met. Laurus 1:00 Outdoor Banquet	17 (Sep 4) Fast	18 (Sep 5) Fast	19 (Sep 6) Fast	20 (Sep 7) 6:30 Vigil of the Feast Fast	21 (Sep 8) NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy of the Feast Fast: fish, wine, & oil	22 (Sep 9) 6:30 All-Night Vigil
23 (Sep 10) 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	24 (Sep 11) Glorification of St. Xenia of St. Petersburg 10:00 Molieben & Akathist to St. Xenia 11:00 Activities for Pre-School Children	25 (Sep 12) Fast	26 (Sep 13) 6:30 Vigil of the Feast Fast	27 (Sep 14) ELEVATION OF THE CROSS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy of the Feast Fast: wine & oil	28 (Sep 15) Fast	29 (Sep 16) 6:30 All-Night Vigil
30 (Sep 17) Pentecost 19 Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Oct 1 (Sep 18) Fast	Oct 2 (Sep 19) Fast	Oct 3 (Sep 20) Fast	Oct 4 (Sep 21) Fast	Oct 5 (Sep 22) Fast	Oct 6 (Sep 23) 6:30 All-Night Vigil



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OCTOBER 2007						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sep 30 (Sep 17) Pentecost 19 Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	1 (Sep 18)	2 (Sep 19)	3 (Sep 20)	4 (Sep 21)	5 (Sep 22)	6 (Sep 23)
			Fast		Fast	6:30 All-Night Vigil
7 (Sep 24) Pentecost 20 Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Church School begins New Year	8 (Sep 25)	9 (Sep 26)	10 (Sep 27)	11 (Sep 28)	12 (Sep 29)	13 (Sep 30)
			Fast		Fast	6:30 All-Night Vigil
14 (Oct 1) Protection of the Theotokos Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 1:00 Annual Meeting of Parish Members	15 (Oct 2)	16 (Oct 3)	17 (Oct 4)	18 (Oct 5)	19 (Oct 6)	20 (Oct 7)
			Fast		Fast	6:30 All-Night Vigil
21 (Oct 8) Pentecost 21 Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	22 (Oct 9)	23 (Oct 10)	24 (Oct 11)	25 (Oct 12)	26 (Oct 13)	27 (Oct 14)
			Fast		Fast	6:30 All-Night Vigil
28 (Oct 15) Pentecost 22 Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	29 (Oct 16)	30 (Oct 17)	31 (Oct 18)	Nov 1 (Oct 19)	Nov 2 (Oct 20)	Nov 3 (Oct 21)
			Fast		Fast	6:30 All-Night Vigil

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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.