



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

November-December 2004

On the Covering of Heads

By Archpriest Victor Potapov

But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head. (I Corinthians 11:5).

Orthodox women, according to the words of the holy Apostle Paul, go to God's church with covered heads. For nearly two thousand years now, this custom has been kept by faithful women and has been handed down from generation to generation. It is a custom not only of the local churches, but also of the Universal Church, and, therefore whether we be in a Greek, in a Serbian or Russian church the women in the church have their heads covered. Not long ago, we happened to talk with a woman who had only just been in Russia. On a feast day, she went to church with her head uncovered, and when she came forward to venerate the Cross, the priest refused to give her the Cross. To her protests and excuses, that she had come from abroad, did not know the local customs and thought that it is necessary to cover one's head only for Communion, the priest replied to her that this is no excuse, that it is always necessary to have the head covered in church, and that he could not allow her to kiss the Holy Cross.

When taking into consideration the rule that women in church must cover their heads, it is completely incomprehensible why in many churches of the Russian diaspora one may see women with uncovered heads. The reasons and justifications for this are usually the following: kerchiefs are not in style; a kerchief spoils the hairdo; they say that there is no basis for covering the head; they ask why the Apostle Paul says that it is necessary to cover the head: why is it necessary for us women to cover the head, but not necessary for men? And sometimes it simply makes no difference to people what the Church directs, and even when given a well-grounded response to the foregoing arguments, they remain of the same opinion. Below, we shall try to respond briefly to all of these points.

Worldly fashions should not have any kind of influence on our Church life. If we were to give in to fashion, then our services would last fifteen minutes, we would sit in our churches and there would be the playing of musical instruments. Perhaps the head covering does spoil one's hairdo; but at the same time, for example, women wear high-heel shoes for the sake of beauty. It seems that one can endure discomfort for the sake of beauty, but to do so for the sake of God is impossible.

We find the basis for covering the head in Sacred Scripture itself, in the New Testament. The Most Holy Virgin Mary covered her head in the holy temple from her young years. According to tradition, her head-covering in the Jerusalem temple was light blue; therefore, on the feast days of the Theotokos our clergy wear light blue vestments. The Most Holy Theotokos wore a kerchief as a sign of her humility and submissiveness to God's will, which was manifested on the day of the Annunciation. In wearing a kerchief, the faithful woman recalls the image of her who was vouchsafed to carry the Saviour Himself. If the Most Pure and Most Blessed One herself had a covered head, shall we really consider the imitation of her as an abasement. Every outward action, accompanied by the correct Christian inward disposition, brings benefit to the soul. The Holy Church knows human nature and the effect of symbolism on man perfectly well. The Saviour frequently taught by means of parables and images, so that His teaching would be more understandable and intelligible to the people. And His Church teaches us by means of images and symbolic actions (the sign of the Cross, bows), in order to bring us closer to His Kingdom.

But why should only women cover their heads? This is not entirely true look at the hierarch; is not his head covered with a klobuk, and during the Divine services with a miter? The right to wear a headcovering is considered an award and an honor by the clergy. However, women, in coming to church with a headcovering, should not take it off; whereas clergy and monastics should take of and put on theirs at various times during the course of the Divine services.

And so, we have no basis for breaking the Church's statute. When Greeks, converts or just Church people come to our church and see women in church with uncovered heads, this disturbs them and leads them into perplexity! And there is nothing we can say in reply. For a thousand years Russian Orthodox women have prayed in Russian churches with covered heads. Let it not be us who neglect this profound custom. Let us remember the words of the Lord that *he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much* (Luke 16:10).

Parish Life, August 1994
Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Washington, D.C.

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 bimonthly 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
Michael Lang (603) 465-9754
Peter Danas (978) 459-9541
Roberto Gonzales (978) 264-9594
Michael Johnson (978) 691-0045
Anna Johnson (978) 691-0045
John Kekis (978) 264-6604
John Rush (603) 898-4315
Choir Director: Michael Lang (603) 465-9754

Trapeza Schedule

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. Doughnuts, fruit and pastries are as acceptable as soup and sandwiches. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Please note that Sundays preceded by an asterisk (*) denote a fast period, during which we consume no meat or dairy products. Please plan accordingly.

November

7 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris

14 Tatiana Pishenina

21 Carolyn Sarantakis, Pamela Reed

28* Tanya Sciaudone, Mireille Lang / **Beginning Christmas Fast**

December

5 * Nicholas Kronauer, Vera Sarantakis

12 * Matushka Nancy, Anna Kekis

19 * Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo

26 * Amy McLellan, Yekaterina Fredette, Kasarda Family

Sisterhood News:

The Giving Tree: Amy Elizabeth McLellan will contact Lazarus House and ask for a list of needs for our "Giving Tree." The lower elementary class of the Sunday School will make paper ornaments, which will have these needs on them. We will then put up our tree in the parish hall with these "ornaments" on it. Anyone can take an "ornament" off the tree to fill the need, then put the unwrapped gift in a box under the tree with the "ornament" taped on top. On the Sunday before December 25, we will re-decorate the tree for our own celebration of the birth of our Lord.

Sisterhood dues are \$5 per year, and membership is open to all women of the parish. Our next meetings will take place on November 28 and December 19.

Thank You...

... to all who came out and helped at both our parish yard sale and the day of work, both held on October 2. Thanks to the efforts of the parish, we netted over \$800. And our grounds now look clean and tidy.

...to Roberto Gonzalez' mother, who, although not a member of our parish, came out and worked very hard clearing and cleaning. ¡Muchas gracias, Señora Gonzalez!

...to the Marina Kasarda for the beautiful icons of St. John the Evangelist, St. Mary of Egypt (both on the choir loft), and others that now grace our temple.

Congratulations... from our whole parish

...to Patricia and Alexei Klar on the birth of their son, Antony on October 5th, and to the proud grandparents, Father Michael and Matushka Nancy.

...to Diane & Rafael Mendez on the birth of their daughter Rose Evelyn on October 11th, and to the proud grandparents Tony and Vera Sarantakis.

...to Lily Dombrowski on the *Gramata* awarded her by Bishop Gabriel on the occasion of our parish feast. This is an extremely great honor bestowed by the Bishop onto someone for deeds and efforts toward the church and/or parish life. In Lilly's case, she was recognized for her long-standing work, devotion, and assistance. She has labored in the church, maintained the cemetery, helped found our parish, sung in the choir, safeguarded the cross on top of our church, and was instrumental in the beautification of our church by initiating the frescoes. Many thanks to you, Lily, and many years!

Please remember in your prayers... Nicholas, Paul, Nina, David, Basil, Vassilisa, Seraphim, Lily, Genevieve, Anne, and Abbot George Schaeffer of Holy Trinity Monastery. Please remember to inform the Myrrh-bearers Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Financial Update: As of October 31, 2004, the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$76,092.64. If you have any questions, please see Reader Constantine Desrosiers.

Choir: Choir practice is regularly held on Sunday afternoon from 12:15-1:00, except on the one Sunday a month when there is a Parish Council Meeting.

Bible Study: Meets the second Wednesday of every month. This year we are focusing on the book of Genesis. Particular emphasis is being given to contemporary issues involving theories of evolution. Come and join us!

St. Herman's Youth Conference

The annual St. Herman's Youth Conference will be held this year from December 23-29 at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Lakewood, N.J. The cost is \$300, which includes all meals and lodging. For further information, please see Matushka Nancy or visit <http://www/sthermans2004.com>.

Upcoming Events

Yolka is set for Sunday, January 9, 2005. Anna Johnson has agreed to organize a play with the children of the parish, probably a folk tale having to do with the Nativity. The last four weeks of Sunday School prior to Nativity will be set aside for rehearsals. There will also be other forms of entertainment. A food sign-up sheet will be put up on the bulletin board, and Amy McLellan will put together a list of children's names for gifts.

The mosaic icon of St. Xenia standing on the grounds of her parish in Methuen was installed during the week of October 24. All who have seen this icon are particularly moved, and we thank all who contributed to the costs of both the icon and its installation, and particularly Tony Sarantakis, Roberto Gonzalez and John Kekis for their huge effort in helping with the actual installation.



Report on Our Annual Meeting

The annual meeting for St. Xenia's parish was held on Sunday, October 17, 2004, after Divine Liturgy. At this meeting the following decisions concerning parish life were adopted by vote:

Editing Committee:

Vera Sarantakis
Helena Doohovskoy

Auditing Committee for 2005 (3):

Anna Kekis
Daniel McLellan
Nicholas Kronauer
(Robert DiMatteo – alternate)

Members of the Parish Council for 2005 are noted on the second page of the Newsletter.

Amendment to the adopted ROCOR by-laws: At-large parish council members shall number 2 – 8 in lieu of 2 – 5

Fixing of Annual Dues: Continue as a voluntary percentage of income, from 1% – 10%

Ratified: Reports presented by the Starosta, Treasurer, Auditing Committee, and Sisterhood

The proposed 2004 – 2005 budget, totaling \$91,000, was adopted.

Further Fresco Iconography in our Church

Fr Yakov Ferins, the iconographer who did our altar fresco last year, recently visited the church and spoke to a few of us about his idea of what might be done next.

If we can raise the funds to continue, he suggests that we have the icon of the Hospitality of Abraham, sometimes spoken of as the Old Testament Trinity because of the depiction of the three angels who visited Abraham and Sarah revealing that they would bear a child, done directly above the iconostasis on the blank white wall which faces into the nave. His idea for the fresco, with added ornamentation, would essentially fill this space and frame in, so to speak, our beautiful iconostasis.

A fresco of this magnitude would cost approximately \$10,000. One donor has already come forward and pledged \$1,000 so we are at least on the way to raising the money for this project if we choose to proceed.

If you are interested in being a sponsor for this fresco, or have any ideas or comments about doing it, please speak directly with Fr. Michael.

Upcoming Lecture Series

We are offering a lecture series at St. Xenia's beginning on Sunday, November 21st. This series will be geared for high school aged people and above both in our parish and the general public.

The first lecture entitled "The Methodology of Salvation: The Story of God in History" will be given by Dr. Richard V. Desrosiers (Reader Constantine), retired professor of Classics at the University of New Hampshire.

The lecture will begin at 2:00 P.M., and will continue on the following Sunday, November 28th for further discussion, questions and answers.

The second lecture in our series will be on Sunday, December 19th entitled "The Babble after Babel" given by both Dr. Desrosiers and Robert Stauffer. Dr. Desrosiers will speak about the origin and development of the Indo-European language and its effect upon the ancient world, and Robert Stauffer will speak about the origin and development of Ancient Hebrew and its relationship to Old Testament Scriptures.

Robert Stauffer will offer a further lecture sometime in January on the "Historical Background of Asia in relation to Old Testament Scriptures". The date and time will be announced in the next newsletter.

These lectures are free and open to the general public.

All parishioners of St. Xenia's are encouraged to take advantage of these lectures. They will be highly edifying to both our young people and adults by providing a scholarly and historical foundation upon which to understand the profundity of our Orthodox Faith.

Thoughts from the Fathers

As the sun shines from the sky, so does Christianity shine. Let him who willfully closes his eyes attribute his lack of sight and ignorance to his own willfulness, and not to the absence of light.

St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

God created us in His image and likeness; and every Christian is obliged to keep himself, and to preserve and honor in himself God's image, and to be sanctified by good works.

Saint John Chrysostom

The Russian Corner

Here's Winter

by Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin (1799-1837)

Pushkin is considered Russia's greatest poet. The poetry of his later years, addressing as it does ethical and spiritual concerns, helped set the tone for much of 19th-century Russian literature.

What does not enter then my drowsy mind...?"

-- Derzhavin

I

October comes at last. The grove is shaking
The last reluctant leaves from naked boughs.
The autumn cold has breathed, the road is freezing—
The brook still sounds behind the miller's house,
But the pond's hushed; now with his pack my neighbor
Makes for the distant field—his hounds will rouse
The woods with barking, and his horse's feet
Will trample cruelly the winter wheat.

II

This is my time! What is the Spring to me?
Thaw is a bore: mud running thick and stinking—
Spring makes me ill: my mind is never free
From dizzy dreams, my bloods' in constant ferment.
Give me instead Winter's austerity,
The snows under the moon.

Our northern summer, swiftly flying,
Is southern winter's travesty;
And even as we are denying
Its passage, it has ceased to be.
More often now the sun was clouded;
The sky breathed autumn, somber, shrouded;
Shorter and shorter grew the days;
Sad murmurs filled the woodland ways
As the dark coverts were denuded;
Now southward swept the caravan
Of the wild geese, a noisy clan;
And mists above the meadows brooded;
A tedious season they await
Who hear November at the gate.

—From *"The Everyman's Library,"* printed 1936

A Regular Session of the Synod of Bishops is Held

A regular session of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia was held in New York on October 26-28, under the presidency of His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus. Besides the regular members of the Synod of Bishops: His Eminence Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany and the United Kingdom, His Eminence Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco and Western America, His Grace Bishop Ambroise of Vevey, His Grace Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan and His Grace Bishop Michael of Boston, the session was also attended by Bishop Agathangel of Tavrichesk and Odessa.

Ongoing matters of church life were discussed. Special attention was devoted to the discussion of the results of the second joint meeting of the Committees of the Russian Church Abroad and the Russian Orthodox Church/Moscow Patriarchate held recently in Munich.

The Synod of Bishops studied the materials developed during the meeting in Munich, considered their contents, which correspond to the age-old positions of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. The documents drawn up by the Committees will be presented to the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, which is to be held sometime within the next two years. His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus and the members of the Synod of Bishops expressed their gratitude to the members of the Committee for their work and blessed them to continue to work for the good of the Russian Church.

Among other matters, the Synod of Bishops discussed the situation in the Kursk-Root Hermitage in Mahopac, which is a Synodal podvorie [branch]. Unfortunately, a great portion of the buildings of the podvorie have aged badly and are in need of major renovation. One of the morning sessions of this Synod was held at the Kursk-Root Hermitage, giving the members of the Synod of Bishops the opportunity to examine the property themselves.

The next session of the Synod of Bishops will be held in January 2005

November 2004

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 (19 Oct) St. John of Kronstadt	2 (20 Oct) GM Artemius	3 (21 Oct) St. Hilarion the Great	4 (22 Oct) St Abercius & 7 Youthe	5 (23 Oct) St James the Brother of the Lord Wine & oil allowed	6 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (24 Oct) M Arethas & comp
Fr. Michael in NJ - Fr. Joakim ser..						
7 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 23 Divine Liturgy Tone 6	8 (26 Oct) GM Demetrius	9 (27 Oct) M Nestor	10 7:30 PM Bible Study - Genesis (28 Oct) MM Terence & Neonilla & children	11 (29 Oct) M Anastasia the Roman	12 (30 Oct) HM Zenobius & sister Zenobia	13 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (31 Oct) Ap Stachys & M Epimachus
Fr. Michael in ...						
14 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 24 Divine Liturgy Tone 7 1:00 PM Parish Council Meeting	15 (2 Nov) M Acindynus & comp	16 (3 Nov) M Aicepsimus	17 (4 Nov) St Joannicius the Great	18 (5 Nov) MM Galacteon & Episteme	19 (6 Nov) St Paul the Confessor	20 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (7 Nov) Holy 33 Martyrs of Melitene
21 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 26 Divine Liturgy Tone 8 2:00 PM Lecture: The Story of God in History by Rdr Constantine Desrosiers	22 (9 Nov) MM Onesiphorus & Porphyrius	23 (10 Nov) Ap Erastus & comp	24 (11 Nov) MM Minas, Victor, Vincent	25 (12 Nov) St John the Merciful American Thanksgiving Day	26 (13 Nov) St John Chrysostom Fish, wine & oil allowed	27 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (14 Nov) Ap Philip
28 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 26 Divine Liturgy Tone 1 12:15 PM Sisterhood Meeting 2:00 PM Lecture Part II	29 (16 Nov) Ap & Evangelist Matthew Fish, wine & oil allowed	30 (17 Nov) St Gregory the Wonderworker Wine & oil allowed				
Nativity Fast begins						

December 2004

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 (18 Nov) M Platon; M Romanus	2 (19 Nov) Pr Obadiah Wine & oil allowed	3 6:30 PM Vigil of the Entry of the Theotokos (20 Nov) St Gregory Decapolite	4 10:00 AM Entry of the Theotokos Divine Liturgy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil Fish, wine & oil allowed
Nativity Fast						
5 10:00 AM Pentecost 27 Divine Liturgy Tone 2 Fish, wine & oil allowed	6 (23 Nov) St Amphilocius	7 (24 Nov) GM Catherine Wine & oil allowed	8 7:30 PM Bible Study - Genesis (25 Nov) HM Clement Wine & oil allowed	9 (26 Nov) St Alypius Wine & oil allowed	10 (27 Nov) GM James the Persian Wine & oil allowed	11 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (28 Nov) M Stephen the New Fish, wine & oil allowed
Nativity Fast						
12 10:00 AM Pentecost 28 Divine Liturgy Tone 3 1:00 PM Parish Council Meeting Fish, wine & oil allowed	13 (30 Nov) Ap Andrew Fish, wine & oil allowed	14 (1 Dec) Pr Nahum Wine & oil allowed	15 (2 Dec) Pr Habbakuk	16 (3 Dec) Pr Zephaniah Wine & oil allowed	17 (4 Dec) GM Barbara; St John Damascene Wine & oil allowed	18 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (5 Dec) St Sabbas the Sanctified Fish, wine & oil allowed
Nativity Fast						
19 10:00 AM Pentecost 29 Divine Liturgy Tone 4 12:15 PM Sisterhood Meeting 2:00 PM Lecture: The Babble after Babel by Rdr Constantine & Robert Stauff ▼	20 (7 Dec) St Ambrose	21 (8 Dec) St Patapius Wine & oil allowed	22 (9 Dec) Conception of the Theotokos Wine & oil allowed	23 (10 Dec) MM Mennas & comp Wine & oil allowed	24 5:30 PM English Vigil St Herman of Alaska at Holy Epiphany (11 Dec) St Daniel the Stylite	25 9:30 AM English St Herman Divine Liturgy at Holy Epiphany 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (12 Dec) St Spyridon; St Herman of Alaska ▼
Nativity Fast						
26 10:00 AM Pentecost 30 Divine Liturgy Tone 5 Fish, wine & oil allowed	27 (14 Dec) MM Thyrsus & comp	28 (15 Dec) HM Eleutherius; St Paul Wine & oil allowed	29 (16 Dec) Pr Haggai	30 (17 Dec) Prophet Daniel; 3 Youths Wine & oil allowed	31 (18 Dec) MM Sebastian	
Nativity Fast						

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I no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

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Name _____

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St. Xenia Orthodox Church
170 North Lowell Street
P.O. Box 147
Methuen, MA 01844

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Postmaster: Dated Material

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.