



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

January-February 2006

Nativity Epistle (1962)

by St. John of Shanghai & San Francisco

"Thou, Who art the God of peace and the Father of compassions, didst send unto us the Angel of Thy great Counsel, granting us peace."

The Angel-Messenger of the pre-eternal Counsel of the Holy Trinity comes to the earth. This is not an ordinary messenger; it is the Only-begotten Son of God Himself. He brings peace to men. "Peace be unto you," he said more than once to His disciples. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," He says to the apostles at the Mystical Supper, "not as the world giveth, give I unto you." And appearing after His Resurrection, again He says: "Peace be unto you." "For he is our peace," the holy Apostle Paul says concerning Him: "He came to the earth to reconcile man unto God by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. And having come, He preached peace to those afar off and to those near, because through Him we both have access unto the Father."

The wall that separated heaven and earth is destroyed; the sword that barred the way to the tree of life disappears. Unto man that had sinned comes his Creator, calling him into His embrace! By the mouths of the apostles, the Holy Spirit cries out: "In Christ, be ye reconciled to God." You that had sinned came not to God, but the Son of God, before Whom you sinned, came to you! He calls everyone to Himself; He gives forgiveness to everyone who merely thirsts for this. For without the desire of man himself, without at least his little effort, God's peace cannot settle in him. The Lord forces no one to come to Him, but calls everyone: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Come all ye who are heavy laden with sins, who are exhausted from your labors and who do not find rest! You shall find that inner peace, which you will find nothing on earth more desirable than. The soul will feel unearthly peace and joy.

The Magi who worshipped the Babe experienced that joy; the shepherds, finding Him lying in a manger, also felt it. But neither peace nor joy touched the heart of Herod and those who wanted to destroy the Babe. For evil desire and malice are incompatible with inner peace. And whoever does not have inner peace, also sows strife and malice about.

The Church now calls us to meet Christ Who comes from heaven. What can we do in order to meet Him like the Magi, and not like Herod? "Ye that desire life, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking guile. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." It tends to be hard to do this; we are weak when it comes to everything good. But the Son of God even came for this: in order to strengthen us. Not for naught was He born in Bethlehem, which signifies "house of bread." He feeds us with heavenly food, His flesh. "God, the Lord and Creator of all, as a babe in the flesh, is worshipped in a poor manger, crying out: eat My body and through faith be made steadfast." These words of the divine Babe are directed to us. Let us hearken to His call! Let us follow the Magi; let us hasten with the shepherds! Our churches are now that cave of Bethlehem. Not illusorily, but in reality does He, Who is now being born in His most pure flesh, rest in them. Let us worship Him; let us offer as a gift our thoughts and desires; let us confess our sins, and let us taste of His immaculate Body and Blood. Whoever did not do this earlier, let him at least accomplish it now, when the star of Bethlehem is already shining! Our minds will be enlightened and the heart will hear:

"Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will among men!"

Christ is born!

San Francisco, 1962

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.

January

- 8 Pot Luck: **YOLKA**
- 15 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris
- 22 Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo
- 29 Carolyn Sarantakis, Pamela Reed

February

- 5 Tanya Sciaudone, Mireille Lang
- 12 Nicholas Kronauer, Vera Sarantakis
- 19 Matushka Nancy Crowley, Yekaterina Fredette
- 26 Masha Harris, Anna Johnson **MEAT FARE**

Sisterhood News:

Our parish's "Giving Tree," which collects gifts for the Lazarus House, was again successful – we collected many gifts and passed them on to Lazarus House on December 18th.

The parish Yolka will take place on January 8. The theme is based on Gogol's short story, *The Night Before Christmas*.

The Sisterhood is offering a scholarship for any member's child who is graduating from high school and going on to college. This scholarship can be requested by a letter from the graduate to the Sisterhood, prior to their graduation.

We are also scheduling meals to be delivered to families with new babies. Anyone who is interested in this effort should contact Pamela Reed for more information

Update on the Bednets Project: We just sent them a check for \$1300.00 that should provide for over 150 bednets. On December 7, Mireille Lang attended a candle-making and decoration event put on by her children's school to benefit the campaign. Furthermore, a high school in Merrimack NH, adopted the campaign for a fundraiser through their National Arts Society, and will make art to be auctioned for the campaign. Incidentally they invited her to speak this Friday at the official funding ceremony of their National Arts Society.

Sisterhood dues are \$5 per year, and membership is open to all women of the parish. Our next meetings will take place on November 4th and December 2nd.

Thank You...

...to all who contributed to our parish Yolka. **Special thanks** to Anna Johnson, for directing Nativity Yolka pageant.

...to Mireille Lang, for expanding the scope of the Bednets project to include members of the greater community (see Sisterhood news).

...to Tatiana Pishenina, whose column, The Russian Corner, was always so interesting and informative. Tatiana is retiring this month as a newsletter contributor. Your column will be missed!

Please remember in your prayers...Fr. Roman, Nicholas, Nina, Josephine, David, Vassilisa, Anne, and Ludmilla.

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

Congratulations... to Anna and John Kekis, on the December 4 birth of their son Demetrius. Many years to mother, father, and baby!

Financial Update: As of October 31, 2005 the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$62,092.64. If you have any questions, please see Reader Constantine Desrosiers.

Bible Study: will re-convene on the second Saturday of each month at 4:00 P.M. Our topic during the upcoming session will be the Gospel of St. Matthew. Our thanks to all who participate.

Principles of Orthodoxy, class has resumed and will be held the first and third Saturdays of each month at 4:00 P.M. in the parish hall. Our text this term is "These Truths We Hold" written by a monk of St. Tikhon's Monastery. There are copies available at no charge in the bookstore. All are welcome to attend this spirited class that is as valuable to the long-time Orthodox as it is to newcomers.

Choir News: We are very pleased to be able to offer professional voice lessons at reduced rates, to be taught at St. Xenia's Church (for the benefit of our future choir). Our member Laryssa Doohovskoy, a voice teacher, is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music with a Bachelor's in vocal performance, and the University of Miami with a Master's in vocal performance. She has agreed to teach any interested children or adults. St. Xenia's Church will underwrite 25% of the cost for our members. A half-hour lesson for members will be \$18.75, or \$37.50 for one hour. Small group lessons could also be arranged, although the most benefit comes from individual lessons. Laryssa has a baby, so her time is necessarily limited to Saturday afternoon before Vigil and Sunday after Trapeza. If you are interested, please speak with Laryssa for more information or to set up a time.

St. Herman's Youth Conference took place this year in Philadelphia, PA, from December 20-26. Our parish was well represented by the attendance of 5 youths.

Upcoming Events: As always at this time of year, the Sunday School is preparing for the Yolka, which will take place on the Sunday after the Nativity.

Column Change: Beginning with this issue, Alexandra Gonzalez has begun a series of interviews with various members of our parish. This month's interview: Lilly Dombrowski, recent recipient of a *grammata*.

Alexandra's column replaces "The Russian Corner," which consisted of articles compiled by Tatiana Pishenina. Many thanks to Tatiana for the effort and care she put into her choice of selections for this column – they were always very interesting, and a delight to read.

Fresco Update

Thank God, and all who have contributed, we have reached our goal of \$10,000 for the new fresco. All monies have been paid to Fr. Yakov for his beautiful work.

Parish Member Interview

Introducing our first of a series of interviews with St. Xenia parish members; our purpose is to help members get to know each other better, helping to foster the sense of community at our parish. We are conducting interviews on various topics regarding our parish, personal lives and faith. Our first interview is with one of the pillars of our Church, whom we appreciate for all her hard work and dedication! Here's a little bit on Lilly's life...

Eulalia Alexeyevna Gavrilyuk Dombrowski, or as we affectionately call her "Lilly", is 87 years young. Her life has not always been easy, but Lilly is determined to stay active and involved with her family and her Church. Her positive attitude and faith in God is a good example for us all. When speaking with her about her background, one notices her nostalgia for past times, yet she lives completely in the present, very much involved with helping her family and the Church. Lilly's story begins with her parents. Her mother was born in Austria and her father in Belarus; they came to this country via ship in 1907. They met aboard the ship when her father gave her mother a gift - a box of sardines! They fell in love and decided to marry upon landing in America. Together they worked hard to make a good life for their eight children. Her father worked for a company on Market Street in Lawrence; he worked on the shuttle-eyes for bobbins. Lilly, the middle child, was born at home in Lawrence, MA. All the children were born at home and there was no mid-wife - her father delivered all eight children.

The Orthodox faith was very important to Lilly's parents and they instilled this into their children. Regarding fasting, her parents were very strict with themselves but not so much with the children. Her mother always said "it isn't what goes into your mouth that sins, it's what comes out." Growing up Lilly felt proud of her faith even though it separated her from other young people because of the fasting and different calendars.

There was no Russian Orthodox Church in their community so her parents helped build St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church in Lawrence. There, Lilly was active in the choir since she was five years old; she directed the choir after her father died. It was during the time when her parents were very involved at St. John the Baptist Church, when her father met the owner of some land in Methuen; the land was for a Russian Orthodox Cemetery and Lilly's father served on the board and was very involved with running the Saints Peter and Paul Cemetery. In fact, in 1928 Lilly's father built the iron fence/gate that today still stands strong at the entrance of St. Xenia's. When the church closed in 1968, the iron cross that was on the top of St. John the Baptist Church was taken down and remained in Lilly's care until it was given to St. Xenia's where it stands today on top of our church. (See photo)

Next, Lilly attended a Russian Orthodox Church in Maynard until one day she met Father Nicholas Bargoot. Father Nicholas was inquiring about the land on which the cemetery was built; he was the pastor in Haverhill at the time. Lilly had the charter for a church in her possession and she jumped at the chance to help Father Nicholas build a church. She enlisted the help and influence of a friend, Anne Pavlenko Garabedian. Lilly would often bring Anne blintzes and stuffed cabbage and it was in one of those visits that she 'put the bug in Anne's ear' about the building of a church. Her son was a NH contractor, Charlie Garabedian. When Mrs. Pavlenko died her wishes for her son were for him to build a church. The Garabedian family took this responsibility very seriously and committed to constructing the church

on donated time and materials at cost. (And of course we know the rest of the story!)

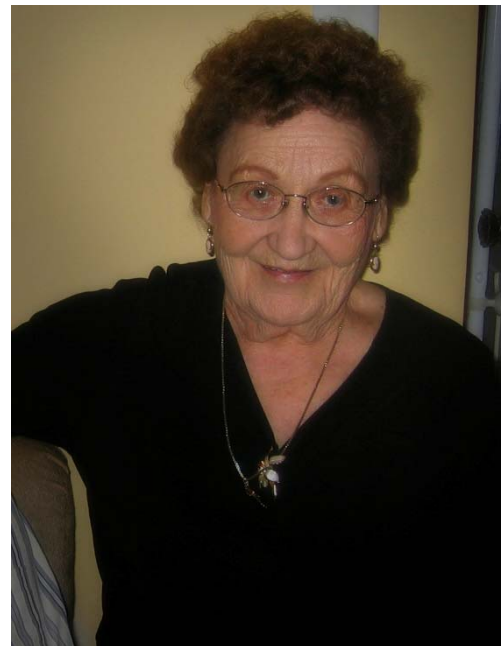
The Orthodox faith is central to Lilly, however, she feels that one should respect other people's choice of faith. If someone's husband is Roman Catholic, for example, Lilly respects his religion and doesn't like the idea of making people feel badly or unwanted. Lilly feels that we should make people feel welcome. "I always taught my children to be nice to people." She tries to instill manners and morals in her grandchildren. "I want them to have morals...which are gone today [in this society]. It's terrible." She wisely remarks "make your life worthwhile because you're only here for a short time. And you're gonna be gone for a long time."

For Lilly, her legacy is her home - all paid for - and everything in it, also all paid for. Her legacy is also the church and the cemetery. She has been involved with working in the Saints Peter and Paul Cemetery since she was 10 years old; she used to make the cement markers from coffee cans! For fifty years Lilly has diligently managed the cemetery; she officially took over when her father died in 1955. The cemetery is a big responsibility and a lot of work, as she attests to: "Find a Lot. Sell the lot. Show the lot to the grave digger. Make sure the digging is done right and according to the family's wishes." It requires attention to many details pertaining to the maintenance, finance and sales. Work related to the cemetery never gives Lilly the 'heebie jeebies'. "My family always believed that you don't mourn death because from life...to life." She explains that when someone dies "you're not happy, but you pray to God for them for eternal rest. We miss them and we don't forget them...memory eternal."

Whether it be to prepare blintzes for a sick person or to put you in contact with a good landscaper or to give you solid advice on an issue, Lilly is a true friend that you can depend on. Her wit and insight, along with a straightforward approach makes her one in a million.

Famous Lilly Lines:

- "I'm not old! I've just lived longer!!"
- "You know I went on a diet for 30 days, and I've already lost 16 days!"



On October 31st we had our annual St. John of Kronstadt party. Fun was had by all. We had soccer games, a scavenger hunt for bowls of candy, pizza and ice cream.

At the end Fr. Michael told us about the life of St. John and then we had a short molieben.

Thanks to everyone that attended and hope to see everyone next year!



January 2006

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 AM Sunday before Nativity Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 3	2 (20 Dec) HM Ignatius the God-Bearer	3 (21 Dec) VM Juliana	4 (22 Dec) GM Anastasia	5 (23 Dec) Holy 10 MM of Crete	6 6:30 PM Nativity Vigil (24 Dec) Nun-Martyr Eugenia of Rome	7 9:30 AM Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ Hours & Divine Liturgy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil
Nativity Fast						
8 9:30 AM Sunday after Nativity Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 4	9 PM & Archdeacon Stephen	10 (28 Dec) 20,000 MM in Nicomedia	11 (29 Dec) 14,000 Holy Innocents	12 (30 Dec) VM Anysia	13 (31 Dec) St Melania the Younger	14 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (1 Jan) Circumcision of our Lord; St Basil the Great
Fast Free						
15 9:30 AM Sunday before Theophany Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 5 1:00 PM Parish Yolka	16 (3 Jan) Pr. Malachi	17 (4 Jan) Synaxis of the 70 Apostles	18 6:30 PM Holy Theophany Vigil	19 9:30 AM Holy Theophany Hours & Divine Liturgy	20 (7 Jan) Synaxis of St John the Baptist Wine & oil allowed	21 4:00 PM Class -- Bible Study 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (8 Jan) St George the Chozebite
Fast Free						
22 9:30 AM Sunday after Theophany Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 6	23 (10 Jan) St Gregory of Nyssa	24 (11 Jan) St Theodosius the Great	25 (12 Jan) M Tatiana of Rome Wine & oil allowed	26 (13 Jan) MM Hermylus & Stratonicus	27 (14 Jan) Leavetaking of Theophany Wine & oil allowed	28 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (15 Jan) St Paul of Thebes
29 9:30 AM Pentecost 32 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 7	30 (17 Jan) St Anthony the Great	31 (18 Jan) SS Athanasius the Great & Cyril of Alexandria				

February 2006

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 (19 Jan) St Macarius the Great	2 (20 Jan) St Euthymius the Great	3 (21 Jan) St Maximus the Confessor	4 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (22 Jan) Ap Timothy of the 70
5 9:30 AM (23 Jan) New Martyrs of Russia; St Xenia of Petersburg Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 8	6 (24 Jan) St Xenia of Rome	7 (25 Jan) St Gregory the Theologian	8 (26 Jan) St Xenophan & wife Mary	9 (27 Jan) St John Chrysostom	10 (28 Jan) St Ephraim the Syrian	11 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (29 Jan) HM Ignatius the God-bearer
12 9:30 AM Publican & Pharisee & Three Hierarchs Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 1	13 (31 Jan) Wonderworkers & Unmerceneries Cyrus & John	14 6:30 PM Vigil of the Meeting of the Lord (1 Feb) Forefeast of the Meeting of the Lord	15 8:30 AM Meeting of our Lord Hours & Divine Liturgy	16 (3 Feb) Righteous Symeon the God-receiver & Anna the Prophetess	17 (4 Feb) St Isidore of Pelusium	18 4:00 PM Class -- Bible Study 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (5 Feb) M Agatha of Palermo
Fast Free Week						
19 9:30 AM Prodigal Son Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 2	20 (7 Feb) St Luke of Hellas	21 (8 Feb) GM Theodore Stratelates	22 (9 Feb) Leavetaking of the Meeting of the Lord	23 (10 Feb) HM Charalampus	24 (11 Feb) HM Blaise	25 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (12 Feb) St Meletius the Great
26 9:30 AM Meatfare Sunday Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 3	27 (14 Feb) St Auxentius	28 (15 Feb) Ap Onesimus of the 70				

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St. Xenia Orthodox Church
170 North Lowell Street
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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.