



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

September-October 2011

The Tragic Two-Sidedness of Our World

by Bp. Alexander (Mileant)+

FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD we are constantly confronted by the unpleasant fact that the world in which we live is two-sided and contradictory.

On one hand, it is majestic and beautiful. Nature enchants us with her beauty, her immenseness and her gentleness. Life beckons to us with all its riddles and (so it seems) its boundless possibilities. We sometimes feel within ourselves great energy and ability. We think that everything has been set up for our happiness, our enjoyment and our progress.

At the same time, we constantly run up against the fact that so much of what is enchanting and beautiful about this world ends in destruction and death. In nature there are storms, earthquakes, drought and epidemics, from which plants and animals suffer and die. In human society we see deception, dissension, robbery, violence and war. In families we see enmity and quarrelling. Even in ourselves we frequently feel discord and disturbances. We are afflicted with doubts; we are affected by unexpected troubles and disappointments; we are deprived of our planned activities by illness. It appears that there is nothing sure and constant in the world. Fame does not endure. Riches slip away between our fingers. Brief moments of happiness are followed by long periods of emptiness and aimlessness. Material things become tiresome. Friends deceive us. Loved ones betray our trust. Dreams do not come true. A few minutes of joy are succeeded by a feeling of barrenness and discontent. Youth is replaced by old age. Death is always waiting for people of every age, waiting to cast down into the dust all human hopes and plans.

What is the reason for these opposite and contradictory perceptions of the world? Why does the world seem to give with one hand, only to take away with the other hand? Why does it build up only to tear down? Is it possible that it gives us times of joy only in order to make our disappointment more bitter later? Does the world allure us only to strike at us? Does it give us the joy of life only that it may later grieve us mercilessly with death?

Furthermore, if the world is by its very nature a duality, like the positive and negative charges of atomic particles, then why is it that we, who are an organic part of it, cannot reconcile ourselves to this duality, but rather long for complete harmony and order? Why do we have within us such a burning thirst for life and endless happiness, when death and dissolution are just as natural as life and devel-

opment? What is more, no matter how much we tell ourselves that someday we will all have to die, and that death is the natural end of every creature, we have a stubborn subconscious resistance to this thought; we demand the continuation of life, even when it is linked with incredible effort and suffering.

It turns out that the greatest contradiction in this world lies within our very selves. There is some aspect of our nature which does not think and feel according to the laws of the physical world, but according to some other, spiritual, kind of laws. This is why man can never be reconciled with the facts of destruction and death. They will always remain for him things that are unnatural and unacceptable. Everyone, perhaps without thinking about it, would like to live in a world free from contradictions, a world where harmony and justice rule, where joy is not dimmed by sorrow, where life knows no end.

Is it possible that, as asserted by certain philosophers (such as Plato, with his world of ideas), our soul once dwelt in some other and better world, filled with harmony, and that it then fell into this imperfect world against its own will, and therefore it subconsciously longs for the ideal world? Such a possibility is fascinating, and it could partially explain the general dissatisfaction felt by mankind, but isn't it just a dream?

Belief in the existence of God, in His infinite goodness and power, suggests to us that He made us for happiness. It is He Who gave us an unquenchable thirst for perfection and the attainment of happiness; therefore, there must be another world, one which is better and more perfect than ours. But where is it and how do we reach it?

A clear and precise answer to this most important and besetting question is provided by Christianity. It unequivocally affirms that there really does exist another and better world, called paradise or the kingdom of heaven, in which the angels and the souls of the just dwell. It is a world without the contradictions and injustices of our own; it is free from crime, violence, sickness and death. It is a world where never-ending life and harmony are the rule, where all rational beings, illumined by the life-giving light of their Creator, ceaselessly contemplate His beauty and rejoice in His incalculable mercies.

Our physical world was also created by God for goodness, life and happiness, but sin has disfigured and corrupted it.

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.

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Confessions on Saturday during Vigil, on Sunday during the Hours, and by appointment

Parish Council

President: V. Rev. Michael Crowley	(978) 204-0428
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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.

September

4 Pot Luck
 11 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris, Tanya Vlasenko
 18 Lydia Lynch and Kot Engalichev
 25 Pot Luck

October

2 Natalya Kirichok, Katia Fredette
 9 Nick Kronauer, Vera Srantakis, Priscilla Choi
 16 Josephine Kniaziuk, Mariana Haven
 23 Pam Reed, Carolyn Savage, Diane Mendez
 30 Pot Luck

Sisterhood News: After our summer hiatus, we are back in action! A general meeting of the Sisterhood was called for August 28, following Divine Liturgy, to begin preliminary planning for the visit of Metropolitan Hilarion. As always, helping hands are needed to ensure the success of this visit, so please contact Father Michael or Mireille Lang concerning any help you will be able to offer.

Thank You...

...to Laryssa Doohovskoy, for filling in so ably for choir director Michael Lang during his extended vacation.

...to all who made our Second Annual Vacation Church School such a resounding success (see report in this issue).

Please remember in your prayers... Nicholas, Lilly, Nina, Josephine, David, Lilly Anne, John (Gil), 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 August 31, 2011, the balance on the church mortgage stands at approximately \$10,000. If you have any questions, or would like to know the exact amount, please see Fr. Constantine Desrosiers.

Metropolitan Hilarion's Visit: Every year we look forward to our Metropolitan's annual visit on the occasion of our altar feast, and this year is no exception. Because he has committed to serving at the New Kursk Root Hermitage on September 25, he has set his annual visit to us for Friday, September 23, and Saturday, September 24. The visit of a Hierarch is always a special occasion in the life of a parish, so please make every effort to attend Vigil and/or Divine Liturgy on these dates.

St. John of Damascus Church School News:

Vacation Church School was a wonderful success. We had 25 participants (Pre-K through High School). Utilizing the program Stepping Stones in the Divine Liturgy, our parish children were able to gain a better understanding of our work in the church. Fr. Michael and Matushka led wonderful workshops on the "Liturgy of Preparation" and Prosphora making. Along with the various craft projects, the children took home a book to share with their families, complete with handouts and explanations. Photos from the week are available for viewing on the church school section of the website.

Our Church School Year begins on September 11, 2011! Class lists and locations are posted on the bulletin board at church.

Please mark your calendars for the following Church School Events:

October 31, 2011 - St. John of Kronstadt Party (2pm)

January 15, 2012 - Yolka

April 13, 2012 - Holy Friday Retreat (12:30pm)

July 8-12, 2012 - Vacation Church School

As always, questions and comments are welcome and 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.

Notice concerning the newsletter: The newsletter is now distributed via e-mail to parish members, and is available on the parish website to non-members. Please let your friends and acquaintances know that they can access the newsletter here:

<http://www.stxenia.org/newsletters.html>.

If you need a hard copy of the newsletter, or if you know someone who does, please let Father Michael know.

Building Committee Update: The committee met on July 17 and discussed the following:

1. Church Choir Input (Robert Stauffer)

- need more space-increase in choir members
- improvements in the layout and acoustics

2. Current Status of the Church Hall Roof Repairs:

The final design drawings for Permit Application and Construction were completed on August 3. After getting construction cost estimates from a general contractor, we and general contractor will apply for a Building Permit in early August. We expect that the construction will be done in early December, possibly earlier.

3. The committee is currently reviewing the overall Church Safety Plan regarding the fire, health, and building safety. Anyone with building-code or life-safety experience is invited to submit input to the committee.

Rules for a Pious Life

By Platon, Archbishop of Kostroma

FORCE YOURSELF to get up early and on a set schedule. As soon as you wake up, turn your mind to God: make the Sign of the Cross, and thank Him for the night that has passed and for all His mercies towards you. Ask Him to guide all your thoughts, feelings and desires, so that everything you say or do will be pleasing to Him.

As you dress, recollect the presence of the Lord and of your Guardian Angel. Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to put on you the robe of salvation.

After washing yourself, get down to morning prayers. Pray kneeling, with concentration, and with reverence and meekness, as is proper before the eyes of the Almighty. Ask Him to give you faith, hope, and charity, as well as calm strength to accept all that the coming day may bring to you - its hardships and troubles. Ask Him to bless your labors. Ask for help: to accomplish some particular task that you face; to steer clear of some particular sin.

If you can, read something from the Bible, especially from the New Testament and the Psalms. Read with intent to receive some spiritual enlightenment, inclining your heart to compunction. Having read a little, pause and reflect on what you read, and then proceed further, listening to what the Lord suggests to your heart.

Try to devote at least fifteen minutes to spiritually contemplate the teachings of the Faith and the profit to your soul in what you have read.

Always thank the Lord that He did not leave you to perish in your sins, but cares for you and in every possible way leads you to the Heavenly Kingdom.

Start every morning as if you had just decided to become a Christian and to live according to God's commandments.

As you enter upon your duties, strive to do everything towards the glory of God. Start nothing without prayer, because whatever we do without prayer later turns out to be futile or harmful. The words of the Lord are true: *"Without me, you can do nothing."*

Imitate our Saviour, Who labored helping Joseph and His most pure Mother. While working, keep a good spirit, relying always on the Lord's help. It is a good thing to repeat unceasingly the prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."

If your labors are successful, give thanks to the Lord; and if they are not, place yourself in His will, for He takes care of us and directs everything towards the better. Accept all hardships as a penance for your sins - in the spirit of obedience and humility.

Before every meal, pray that God will bless the food and drink; and after the meal give thanks to Him and ask Him not to deprive you of spiritual blessings. It is good to leave the

table feeling a bit hungry. In everything, avoid excess. Following the example of Christians of old, fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Do not be greedy. Be content having food and clothing, imitating Christ Who became impoverished for our sake.

Strive to please the Lord in everything, so that you will not be reproached by your own conscience. Remember God always sees you, and so be carefully vigilant concerning the feelings, thoughts and desires of your heart.

Avoid even the smallest sins, lest you fall into greater ones. Drive away from your heart each and every thought or design that moves you away from the Lord. Strive especially against unclean desire; drive it out of your heart like a burning spark fallen on your coat. If you do not want to be troubled by evil desires, meekly accept humiliation from others.

Do not say too much, remember that for every spoken word we will give account before God. It is better to listen than to talk: in verbosity it is impossible to avoid sin. Do not be curious to hear the news, which only entertains and distracts the spirit. Condemn no one, but consider yourself to be worse than everyone else. The one who condemns another is taking another's sins onto himself; it is better to grieve about the sinner, and pray that God will correct him in His own way. If someone does not listen to your advice, do not dispute with him. But if his deeds are a temptation to others, take appropriate measures, because their good, being many, must carry more weight than his, being only one.

Never argue or make excuses. Be gentle, quiet and humble; endure everything, according to the example of Jesus. He will not burden you with a cross that exceeds your strength. He will also help you carry the cross that you have.

Ask the Lord to give you the grace to fulfill His holy Commandments as well as you can, even if they seem too difficult to keep. Having done a good deed, do not expect gratitude, but temptation: for love towards God is tested by obstacles. Do not hope to acquire any virtues without suffering sorrows. In the midst of temptations do not despair, but address God with short prayers: "Lord, help... Teach me to... Do not leave... Protect me..." The Lord allows temptations and trials; He also gives the strength to overcome them.

Ask God to take away from you every thing that feeds your pride, even if it will be bitter. Avoid being harsh, gloomy, nagging, mistrustful, suspicious or hypocritical, and avoid rivalry. Be sincere and simple in your attitude. Humbly accept the admonitions of others, even if you are more wise and experienced.

What you do not want done to you, do not do to others. Rather, do for them what you wish to be done for you. If anyone visits you, be tender towards him, be modest, wise, and, sometimes, depending on the circumstances, be also blind and deaf.

When you feel slack, or a certain coolness, do not leave off the usual order of prayer and pious practices which you have

established. Everything that you do in the name of the Lord Jesus, even the small and imperfect things, becomes an act of piety.

If you desire to find peace, commit yourself completely unto God. You will find no peace until you calm down in God, loving Him alone.

From time to time seclude yourself, following the example of Jesus, for prayer and contemplation of God. Contemplate the infinite love of our Lord Jesus Christ, His sufferings and death, His Resurrection, His Second Coming and the Last Judgment.

Visit the church as often as possible. Confess more often and receive the Holy Mysteries. Doing so you will abide in God, and this is the highest blessing. During Confession, repent and confess frankly and with contrition all your sins; for the unrepented sin leads to death.

Devote Sundays to works of charity and mercy; for example, visit someone who is sick, console someone who is in sorrow, save one who is lost. If anyone will help the lost one turn towards God he will receive a great reward in this life and in the age to come. Encourage your friends to read Christian spiritual literature and to participate in discussing spiritual matters.

Let the Lord Jesus Christ be your teacher in everything. Constantly address Him by turning your mind to Him; ask yourself: what would He do in similar circumstances?

Before you go to sleep, pray frankly and with all your heart, look searchingly at your sins during the past day. You should always compel yourself to repent with a contrite heart, with suffering and tears, lest you repeat past sins. As you go to bed, make the Sign of the Cross, kiss the cross, and entrust yourself to the Lord God, who is your Good Shepherd. Consider that perhaps this night you will have to appear before Him.

Remember the Lord's love towards you and love Him with all your heart, your soul and your mind. Acting in this way, you will reach the blessed life in the Kingdom of Eternal Light.

From the Website of Bishop Alexander Mileant:

<http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/child.htm#n10>

Where the Bishop is, so is the Church

Q. *How do I address an Orthodox Bishop in person?*

A. The first thing in discussing how to address an Orthodox Bishop is to recognize what the Bishop represents.

An Orthodox Bishop is the living icon of Christ, the most perfect celebrant of the Holy Mysteries and is empowered with the authority of Apostolic Succession.

While Orthodox Bishops are all equal, within the Orthodox Church, they have different administrative duties, honors and rank. (i.e.: Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Archbishops and Bishops)

So based upon their rank:

We should address Bishops as "Your Grace,"

Archbishops and Metropolitans as "Your Eminence."

The proper title for Patriarchs is "Your Beatitude" or "Your Holiness." There are exceptions to this rule:

The Russian Patriarch is address as "Your Holiness."

Q. *How do I greet an Orthodox Bishop in person?*

A. When we approach an Orthodox Bishop, we seek his blessing: By bowing from the waist such that our right hand touches the floor, than as we raise up we place our right hand over the left hand with palms upward, we say, "Bless your Grace" or "Bless your Eminence." The Bishop then answers, "May the Lord bless you," and blesses us with the Sign of the Cross by forming his fingers into a Christogram, and places his right hand in our hands. We kiss then his hand. It should be noted that unlike a priest, the Bishop can bless with both the right and left hands; however he will as in the case stated above use his right hand.

The reason that a lay person kisses the hand of a Bishop is to show respect to his Apostolic office. More importantly, because the Holy Mysteries are held in the hands of the Bishop during the Divine Liturgy, when we kiss his hand, we show respect to the Holy Eucharist.



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SEPTEMBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug 28 (Aug 15) DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Aug 29 (Aug 16) Trans. of the Image Not-Made-By-Hands of our Lord Jesus Christ	Aug 30 (Aug 17) M Myron of Cyzicus	Aug 31 (Aug 18) MM Florus and Laurus of Illyria Fast	1 (Aug 19) M Andrew Stratelates	2 (Aug 20) Pr Samuel Fast	3 (Aug 21) Ap Thaddeus of the 70 5:30 All-Night Vigil
4 (Aug 22) 12th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	5 (Aug 23) M Lupus	6 (Aug 24) HM Eutychius	7 (Aug 25) Ap Titus of the 70 Fast	8 (Aug 26) MM Adrian and Natalia and comp	9 (Aug 27) Ven Poemen the Great Fast	10 (Aug 28) Ven Moses the Black of Scete 5:30 All-Night Vigil
11 (Aug 29) 13th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 4 Beheading of the Baptist 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	12 (Aug 30) Sts. Alexander, John, and Paul the New, patriarchs of Constantinople	13 (Aug 31) Placing of the Sash of the Most Holy Theotokos	14 (Sep 1) The Church New Year Fast: wine & oil	15 (Sep 2) M Mamas of Caesarea	16 (Sep 3) HM Anthimus, bp of Nicomedia Fast	17 (Sep 4) HM Babylas, bp of Antioch 5:30 All-Night Vigil
18 (Sep 5) 14th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	19 (Sep 6) Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae	20 (Sep 7) M Sozon of Cilicia 6:30 Vigil	21 (Sep 8) NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine, & oil	22 (Sep 9) R Ancestors of God Joachim and Anna	23 (Sep 10) MM Menodora, Metrodora, and Nymphodora at Nicomedia 6:30 Vigil Fast	24 (Sep 11) Glorification of St. Xenia 9:00 Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy 5:30 All-Night Vigil
25 (Sep 12) 15th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	26 (Sep 13) Founding of the Church of the Resurrection (The Holy Sepulchre) 6:30 Vigil	27 (Sep 14) ELEVATION OF THE CROSS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	28 (Sep 15) GM Nicetas the Goth Fast	29 (Sep 16) GM Euphemia the All-praised, of Chalcedon	30 (Sep 17) MM Sophia and daughters: Faith, Hope, and Love, at Rome Fast	Oct 1 (Sep 18) Ven Eumenes, bp of Gortyna 5:30 All-Night Vigi



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OCTOBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sep 25 (Sep 12) 15th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Sep 26 (Sep 13) Founding of the Church of the Resurrection (The Holy Sepulchre) 6:30 Vigil	Sep 27 (Sep 14) ELEVATION OF THE CROSS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	Sep 28 (Sep 15) GM Nicetas the Goth Fast	Sep 29 (Sep 16) GM Euphemia the All-praised, of Chalcedon	Sep 30 (Sep 17) MM Sophia and daughters: Faith, Hope, and Love, at Rome Fast	1 (Sep 18) Ven Eumenes, bp of Gortyna 5:30 All-Night Vigil
2 (Sep 19) 16th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 7 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	3 (Sep 20) GM Eustace & family	4 (Sep 21) Ap Quadratus of the 70	5 (Sep 22) Pr Jonah Fast	6 (Sep 23) Conception of John the Baptist	7 (Sep 24) PM and Equal-to-the-Apostles Thecla of Iconium Fast	8 (Sep 25) Ven Euphrosyne, nun, of Alexandria 5:30 All-Night Vigil
9 (Sep 26) 17th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	10 (Sep 27) M Callistratus and comp	11 (Sep 28) V Chariton the Confessor	12 (Sep 29) Ven Cyriacus the Hermit of Palestine Fast	13 (Sep 30) HM Gregory, bp of Greater Armenia	14 (Oct 1) Protection of the Theotokos Fast: fish, wine, & oil	15 (Oct 2) HM Cyprian, VM Justina and M Theoctist of Nicomedia 5:30 All-Night Vigil
16 (Oct 3) 18th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	17 (Oct 4) HM Hierotheus, bp of Athens	18 (Oct 5) M Charitina of Amisus	19 (Oct 6) Holy Ap Thomas Fast: oil & wine	20 (Oct 7) MM Sergius and Bacchus in Syria	21 (Oct 8) Ven Pelagia the Penitent Fast	22 (Oct 9) Holy Ap James, son of Alphaeus 5:30 All-Night Vigil
23 (Oct 10) 19th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	24 (Oct 11) Holy Ap Philip of the 70	25 (Oct 12) MM Probus, Tarachus, and Andronicus at Tarsus	26 (Oct 13) MM Carpus, bp at Thyateira & comp Fast: oil & wine	27 (Oct 14) MM Nazarius, Gervase, Protase, and Celsus of Milan	28 (Oct 15) Ven Euthymius the New of Thessalonica Fast	29 (Oct 16) St Demetrius Saturday Ven Longinus the Centurion 5:30 All-Night Vigil
30 (Oct 17) 20th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	31 (Oct 18) Holy Ap and Evangelist Luke	Nov 1 (Oct 19)	Nov 2 (Oct 20) Fast	Nov 3 (Oct 21)	Nov 4 (Oct 22) Fast	Nov 5 (Oct 23) 5:30 All-Night Vigil

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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.