

PASTORS TO PASTORS

Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry
Orthodox Church in America



Volume 2
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A matter of trust

Dear brothers,

Surely there are many good, healthy, constructive things happening on every level in the life of the Church. And of this fact we must not lose sight as we speak of other things. As one who gives at least one voice to the state of modern life, Woodie Allen quipped that just because he was paranoid it didn't mean that people weren't out to get him. In this same spirit, just because the word "problem" is misused and over-used *ad nauseam*, it does not mean that there are not problems on each level of Church life.

A problem in addressing *the* problems which confront us brings me directly to the point to be raised -- that of trust, or rather, of *dis-trust*. With no solutions in mind, I raise the issue in order to invite, encourage, and/or provoke fellow clergy to put pen to paper. And because of a widespread atmosphere of distrust, I hasten to add that it is the policy of the Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry to accept both signed and unsigned letters for publication in this newsletter in the hope of promoting free and constructive dialogue without fear of reprimand.

Time and time again we hear of clergy, lonely, stressed out, psychologically and emotionally drained, abusing alcohol and/or drugs, their days spent in front of the television, rationalizing adulterous or homosexual activity, their marriages in various states of collapse, their children out of the Church, their family life totally secularized and functioning (perhaps barely) within liturgical trappings, their faith vanishing or gone, their prayer life non-existent, [choose one or all of the above], and yet hesitant to speak to or confide in other clergy for fear that their confidences will become grist for the gossip mill. Tragically, some clergy allow many months or even years to slip by without approaching for Confession for lack of confidence that the contents of the Confession will not become late night small talk. Priests and hierarchs fearful of free dialogue and each suspicious of the other's motives frequently adopt an "I'm ok -- you're ok" attitude, pretending

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From the Editor

In this particular issue, our guest editor, Father Michael Westerberg, Chairman of our Department, provides us with an article on *trust*. The article is both stark and provocative and invites responses.

Father Basil Rhodes, pastor of Saint Nicholas Church, Saratoga, California, offers a concise review of three Orthodox books on pastoral ministry. Father Basil reminds us of the constant need for self renewal. How important that is!

I was also delighted to receive a letter from Lyn Breck, a psychotherapist and the wife of a priest, asking for clarification as to the intent of our newsletter and her willingness to send in articles.

In our "humor" department, we have a visual contribution by Bishop Job, our Episcopal moderator.

Finally, the second part of my article on *Liturgy as Journey* rounds out this issue.

May God continue to bless and strengthen you during this busy time of the year.

Your brother in Christ,

John Scollard, D. Min, ACSW

TRUST from 1 that it is true and hoping that problems and pains will simply fade away for lack of attention.

And all this, while questions of trust between clergy and laity are not even touched.

Though no exegete, I confidently assert that this is neither what the psalmist meant, nor what the Church understands, in singing: "...Put not your trust in princes, in sons of men..."

Your brother in Christ,

Father Michael Westerberg
DPLM Chairman

THE LIGHTER SIDE



"No, I would not welcome a contrasting point of view."

Let us hear from you!

Pastors to Pastors welcomes your input, your suggestions, and your writing. Send to DPLM, PO Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791.

MAIL CALL

Dear Father Scollard,

The *Pastors to Pastors* newsletter is a much needed contribution and support to clergy and their families in parish life. I was positively impressed by the Lent 1991 issue.

Because Bishop Job's statement of vision so clearly indicates both clergy and their families and your opening notes the focus of the newsletter to be the pastoral ministry of both clergy and family, I am wondering if you will be soliciting contributions from family members as well.

My lack of clarity comes from the title of the newsletter itself (*Pastors to Pastors*) which implies priests will write for priests, however your interpretation of "pastor" may be in the larger sense.

As a priest's wife and psychotherapist, I am particularly concerned about the complexities of clergy family life and ministry. Currently, I am in the process of developing a pastoral enrichment program with separate workshops for clergy, clergy wives, children, clergy couples, and families.

The "renewal retreats and workshops" I've been leading over the past three years have provided an awareness of the great need for information, support, sharing, healing, and renewal firmly grounded in Orthodox theology, spirituality, and worship.

Please let me know from whom you are soliciting contributions for this newsletter. If, in fact, you are open to receiving articles from clergy family members, I would be pleased to submit an article.

I send best wishes and encouragement in this new endeavor.

In Christ,
Lyn Breck

P.S. Are you interested in pertinent book reviews?

Editorial response:

Dear Lyn,

Thanks for your letter and interest. Any and all letters from clergy family members are indeed welcomed and listened to. We look forward to your contribution. Thank you for your priestly help.

-- JS

The Pilgrim's Way

Liturgy as Journey

Part II

Father John Scollard, D. Min., ACSW

I have always loved to travel. At age six, my grandmother would place me in the front seat of her "huge" Ford and take me for drives into the hills of Oakland, California. Everything seemed to be expansive and awe inspiring. I can remember the smell of the leather seats, the bright blue skies, the feeling of the warm sun on my face, and the soft breeze. While these experiences were sensual in nature, they seemed to cause me to think about something greater than myself. I loved those country drives, but there were too few of them and then my grandmother was dead.

The second important journey of my life happened in 1972, about nine months after my ordination. My wife and I had the opportunity to spend three months traveling in Europe. I remember experiencing a sense of timelessness as I walked through great cathedrals and monastic ruins. Through these visits, I slowly became aware of my need to externalize an inner sense of spiritual beauty and harmony in concrete physical fashion, to create a monastic setting. No monastic setting, of course, can sustain itself unless there is an active prayer life at work. A particular surrounding can reinforce a spiritual sense, but I can not create it unless there is real spiritual journey and struggle.

The Liturgy for me is my most important journey. I realize that the Liturgy is a community prayer service and not a private priestly

exercise. Nevertheless, I am hopeful that it be helpful to share my experience in order to open up dialogue among my brother priests.

When I intone the words, "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen," I believe that I am beginning a mystical journey from earth to heaven. I both yearn to begin this journey, to feel the absolute need to be there, and yet I recognize that I am unworthy to be there. As I stand at the altar, I am reminded that eternity is both present now and yet to come, and

needs and concerns. At every moment, I am told that God's peace is at hand and that this earthly journey will culminate in the Heavenly Kingdom. At the Little Entrance we are taught that Christ entered this world and through His Incarnation transformed it -- that we too can transform our lives. My belief that I can transform my life becomes possible only if I believe that Christ is there to do it. Salvation is possible only if I believe that Christ is bigger than my life. There experience of Liturgy makes this reality conscious.

I fully understand that the beautiful spiritual dynamics of Liturgy do not happen automatically. They require spiritual discipline. I also have come to realize that, at times, the celebration of Liturgy can involve intense pain and alienation, especially if

"The beautiful spiritual dynamics of Liturgy do not happen automatically. They require spiritual discipline."

that God as Heavenly Father is always there to help, even when I can make no sense of the events in my life. The Great Litany that follows urges me to both acquire a sense of peace in my life (the Holy Spirit) and to let go of my material

there are significant problems between the priest and his community. It is perhaps well to remind ourselves that the very context of the first Mystical Supper was the death of Jesus and His betrayal. □

D P L M

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His Beatitude, Metropolitan THEODOSIUS, *Primate of the Orthodox Church in America*

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His Grace, Bishop JOB, *Episcopal Moderator*

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The Rev. John Jillions, Dr. Frank Touchet, Mrs. Evelyn Hubiak,

The Very Rev. John Matusiak, *Design and Technical Production.*

Books in review

Father Basil Rhodes

"Ye have not many fathers."

-- I Corinthians 4:15

These words of Saint Paul ring with a special clarity in our time. There are not many fathers. And often we who are called "father" feel the urgent need to find such a father as we discover when reading the lives of the saints or the pages of Church history.

Real guides, spiritual giants whose expertise in the Christian and pastoral life could be of great benefit to us, are sadly lacking. And what are we to do? Give up? Of course not. As one elder on the Holy Mountain once told me, "Don't forget that He Who was in the elders is also in you!" Christ has not left us comfortless. In addition to His many mercies and gifts, Our Lord has also given us the comfort and help of books, foremost of which are the Scriptures, the lives of the saints, and the Holy Fathers. I would also like to recommend a trinity of helpful books which I have personally found inspiring as well as educational.

Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky's *Confession* (Holy Trinity Mon-

astery, Jordanville, New York, 1983), is based on a course taught at the Kiev Theological Academy at the turn of the century and later updated to prepare candidates for ordination in the diaspora. While I originally bought the book to help me to become a better confessor, I soon discovered that the book's main impact on my life has been in teaching me how to examine my own heart and to make my own Confession. This is a vital part of our ministry: learning to become a better father by learning how to be a better son. I highly recommend this book.

The second book, Archbishop John Shahovskoy's *The Orthodox Pastor* (SVS Press, 1966), may be out of print. It has often been criticized or overlooked because of its perceived "simplistic" approach to the pastoral life. The book is concise and simple, yet it elegantly identifies many of the challenges and pitfalls which may confront the Orthodox priest. Using Scripture and Holy Tradition, Archbishop John transfigures these difficulties into opportunities, solving them with the ointment of love.

The third book, *Serve the Lord with Gladness* (SVS Press, 1990), is new. Written by a monk of the Orthodox Church, the book is divided into two sections: *Our Life in the Liturgy* and *Be My Priest*. As if to suggest that Archbishop John has been vindicated, Saint Vladimir's Press has recently published this simple yet beautiful book.

Do you sometimes feel that serving the Liturgy has become "work" rather than the divine work? The first section of the book offers no scholarly archaeology, but you may find that it rejuvenates your love for the Liturgy.

The second section examines and defines the priesthood in a simple and practical way. Real questions are asked, and real answers are given. But again, as in Archbishop John's book, there are often no hard and fast answers to some very trying situations.

The point that all of these books makes is that the priesthood can never be mechanical, wooden, or worldly. It is a life lived in the Spirit. If you get the chance, pick up one or all of these books. I think that you will find them more than useful. Who knows? You may even find that they can help to save your soul! □

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