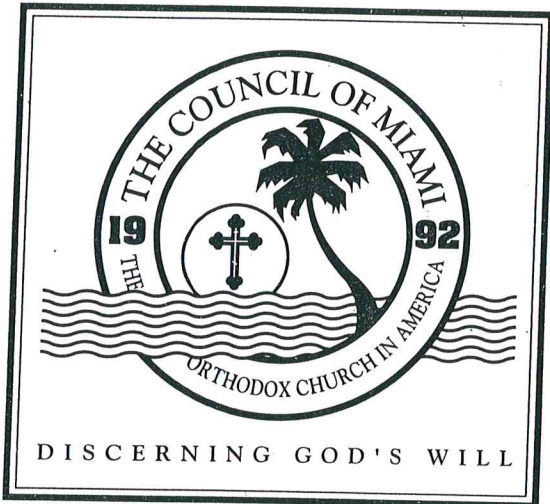


PASTORS TO PASTORS

Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry
Orthodox Church in America



Volume 3
Number 2
Summer 1992



TO THE HIERARCHS AND FAITHFUL CLERGY OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Dear Brothers:

Christ is in our midst!

As many of you may already know, the first evening of the All-American Council will be devoted to a meeting involving the bishops, priests and deacons.

The Holy Synod has for some time recognized that in addition to regular meetings with their own diocesan bishop, the clergy need to meet together regularly to

discuss common concerns that transcend our dioceses. Regional clergy conferences had been planned for last fall, but logistical and financial considerations, as well as the visit of Patriarch Alexis, prevented these from taking place.

The format for the Monday-evening gathering was proposed by the Pre-Conciliar Commission and the Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry, and has the support of the Holy Synod. After opening remarks, I will ask Bishop Job and Fr. Michael Westerberg to be moderators. Each of the following topics will be very briefly introduced and then opened for comments or questions.

Bishop-priest relations (Introduced by Bishop Job)

Bishop-priest relations (Fr. John Jillions)

Priest-parishioner relations (Fr. Serge Kuharsky)

Moral concerns (Fr. Michael Mihalick)

Material concerns (Fr. Paul Suda)

Spiritual renewal for priests (Fr. Basil Rhodes)

I realize that the time before the Council is now very short, but it would be very beneficial if in your deaneries or in other small gatherings of clergy there could be some preliminary discussion of these important issues. Given the limited time available, the large number of participants, and the complex issues to be addressed, my own humble hope is that by the end of the evening, all of us — bishops, priests, deacons — would have a little more understanding, respect and love for each other, and more awareness that we indeed share one common ministry: "to care for the church of God which he obtained by the blood of his own Son" (Acts 20:28).

With love in Christ,

+ THEODOSIUS

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

The Counsel of Experience

by Matushka Evelyn Hubiak

What wise counsel would you give today's new matushka?*

This question was part of a survey sent to widowed clergy wives whose ages range from 42 to 94 years, and years of service from 2 to 75 years.

Who better to respond to this question than the women who served side by side with their husbands through some of the most politically and economically difficult times in the history of our Orthodox Church in America? Most clergy wives had no first hand knowledge of what life would be like married to a priest; yet a common experience is shared by all. The husband's pastorate to a flock spilled over into her own personal life, and the course of his ministry also became hers.

Although each matushka may have said it differently, the answer to this question was the same: help your husband in his life's work; be his helpmate. The actual means of helping were as varied as the respondents: sing in the choir, teach Sunday School, acts as priest's secretary, be a translator, sew vestments, bake prosphora, direct the choir, and so forth. It seems to be that the act of helping one's husband first requires sifting through all the expectations and needs of the people involved (husband, self, and parish fam-

ily). When these have been evaluated, the priest's wife can focus on her areas of interest. This is not to say she will never get involved in areas of her weakness or disinterest!

As important as these considerations are, the priests' widows who responded placed the highest emphasis on personal prayer life and participation in church life through the services. For them, personal prayer life and participation in the church services were the two touchstones of spiritual life that gave reason and purpose to all else.

The following additional counsel was voiced by some of the matushki:

"In expressing your own opinion, be careful in what you say about anything or anybody. For many people, the priest's wife is not a separate person, but a part of her husband, who expresses her husband's view."

"Be loving."

"Be patient with the faults of parishioners."

"Don't set yourself above the people."

"Respect others."

"Be your husband's right hand."

In viewing the clergy wives' positive acceptance of their husbands' vocation, one can see a likeness to the response Mary

gave the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation. With similar faith and humility, these women shouldered the burdens of their husbands and parishes. To quote Mother Xenia of Transfiguration Monastery (herself a widowed matushka), "The excellent example set by many of our older matushki leads me to believe that they are our 'unsung saints' and that they have had a very special ministry in the Church."

From their responses, one may also conclude that the matushki saw the priesthood not as their husband's job or career, but as a way of life for themselves and their families. Interestingly enough, these women saw parish life as a communal one, and shared in the joys and sorrows of all their parishioners. As one ninety-one year old matushka succinctly put it, "I would live it all over again. I loved every minute of it because God was indeed with us."*

*The term *matushka* has no English equivalent. In using this word, we include all other popular terms such as *presbytera*, *preoteza*, etc.

(Matushka Evelyn Hubiak resides in Moscow, Russia, where her husband, Fr. Daniel Hubiak, is the OCA Representative Priest to the Moscow Patriarchate.)

You cannot cure the soul of others or 'help people' without having changed yourself. You cannot put in order the spiritual economy of others so long as there is chaos in your own soul. You cannot bring peace to others if you do not have it yourself.

-Fr. Alexander Elchaninov

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.

THEN AND NOW from 4

experienced their love.

I have been a widow for five years and still continue giving my talents to God. I have a wonderful parish family and their love sustains me during the lonely times.

A thought I would like to share with our young wives in the parish is that ordination has changed your lives. But if you

can learn to reach out to your parish family with love, sharing your talents with them, you will always have friends. I heard a sermon one Sunday, "we don't serve God because of the blessings we expect from Him, we serve God because He is God and we love Him." He wants this love from us unconditionally, without an expected re-

ward. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all could love everyone as God loves us? Society teaches us to live for ourselves, but the Church teaches us to love one another. The priest's wife can lead others to share that love with the parish families by being the example. ✽

(Matushka Ann Sovyrda is a parishioner at Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church in Terryville, CT)

Chrysostom on Preaching

Pray, are you ignorant that that Body (the Church) is subject to more diseases and attacks than this flesh of ours, and is marred more quickly and cured more slowly? Those who treat the human body have devised manifold medicines, and diverse kinds of instruments, and forms of diet suited to the needs of the sufferer; and the character of the climate has often been sufficient by itself to restore the patient's health. There are occasions also when seasonable sleep has relieved the physician of all trouble. But in the present case (the life of the Church) none of these devices is of avail; but only one means and one way of cure has been given us after any trouble, and that is teaching of the Word. This is the best instrument, this the best diet and climate; this serves instead of medicine, this serves instead of cautery and cutting; whether it be needful to burn or to amputate, this one method must be used; and without it nothing else will avail. By it we rouse the lethargy, we allay the swelling, we remove the growths and make good the defects of the soul, and in short we do everything which tends to promote its health. To help a man to order his life aright it is true that the life of another may excite him to emulation; but when the soul is suffering under spurious doctrines then there is great need of the Word not only for the safety of those within the fold, but also to meet the attacks of foes without. ✽

THE LIGHTER SIDE



"My feeling is that while we should have the deepest respect for reality, we should not let it control our lives."

D P L M

Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry • Orthodox Church in America
P.O. Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791

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

The Very Reverend Robert Kondratick, Chancellor

His Grace, Bishop JOB, Episcopal Moderator

The Very Reverend Michael Westerberg, Chairman

The Reverend Dr. John Scollard, Editor, *Pastors to Pastors*

Department Members: The Very Rev. Sergius Kuharsky, The Very Rev. Basil Rhodes,

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

The Reverend John Dresko, Design and Technical Production

The Priest's Wife — Then and Now

by Matushka Ann Sovyrda

I accepted the invitation to write this article sharing my experiences over the last 30 years of my life. I wondered, "what could I say to this generation of priest's wives that would be meaningful in their lives today?"

As I started to recall the beginning of my co-ministry, I came to the realization that my husband's ordination was not the beginning of this ministry. It began at baptism when the Holy Chrism was anointed on my body, receiving the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

During my childhood and adult life, the Church was an important part of my life. I loved singing in the choir even as a young child, I helped with the organization of the church school — we were in transition learning about the Church in our language rather than my parents'. I was very excited

about being a part of this growth.

Both my husband and I continued in this service after our marriage. Our children enjoyed the fruits of that growth. Our home became our extended church. After eight years, my husband decided to enter the seminary to study for the priesthood. So this became an extension of our service to God. This was a natural part of our lives and it brought us to another level of our faith. This was the test. Did we really love God with all our mind, with all our heart, with all our soul? It wasn't easy with four children, but all the sacrifice and hard work was a preparation for parish life.

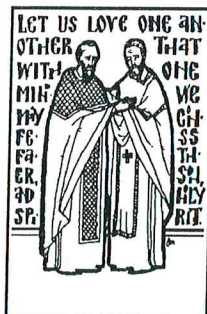
Life in the parish was another service to God. I learned that we were no longer the extended church in our home, we now had our parish families combined with ours. There were

happy and sad times, periods of frustration trying to bring more understanding in the services, we were in transition again but not always with people who understood that this was the way to go, the children needed more than beautiful music and customs, they needed to learn about God. Each parish was the same, the need was there to teach and educate, we shared our knowledge and helped them to understand that each family could contribute to the growth of the parish.

I am grateful for those years as I now visit different places and meet my parish families and we share the good times. I meet the grown children who are parents and are still in the Church, some who have gone into the priesthood. All of these people are our family and I consider myself fortunate to have

THEN AND NOW to 3

PASTORS TO PASTORS is published quarterly by the OCA Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry, PO Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791, and is distributed to all hierarchs, parish and institutional clergy, military chaplains, and monastic clergy, active and retired, on the rolls of the Orthodox Church in America, and to OCA seminarians.



DPLM

Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry
 Orthodox Church in America
 PO Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791

