

opinion,' but as 'right doxology,' [that is,] 'right worship.'" —Archimandrite Zacharias, *Ecclesial Being*, pg. 88.

• PEARL OF GREAT PRICE:

Please join us for a "Book Event" at 7 PM, on Wednesday, January 25. Author Veronica Hughes will be here to speak on her book *Pearl of Great Price* which chronicles her journey from disillusioned baby-boomer Roman Catholic—to practitioner and teacher of hatha yoga, EST, Hinduism, occult, metaphysics, psychic healing, Tibetan Buddhism and Theosophy—to faith in Jesus Christ in the Orthodox Church.

• WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY GROUP:

The January meeting will take place on January 18, at 7 PM at the home of Barbara Owens.

• THANKYOU:

The parish offers its thanks to God for the wonderful festal meal that was prepared for St. Seraphim day, January 2. How marvelous it was that we were able to celebrate in the new hall. Our beloved Bishop Benjamin sent a note saying he was delighted with everything. Thank you all.

• MORE THANKS:

We are extremely grateful to our Starosta Serge Anderson and family, and to Anderson Fine Woodworking, for managing the construction of the hall, the storage building and the landscaping. Countless hours were given, in a spirit of offering to God, to working with the General Contractor, the subs, with parishioners and the Council, and with securing the needed permits. May God grant Serge and his family many blessings.

• YOUTH ACTIVITY PLANNING:

Parents of our high school-age children are invited to attend a meeting on Sunday, January 22, at 1 PM. **Topic:** Creating Orthodox soul-strengthening, faith-building and friendship-bonding activities, camp-outs, and retreats for our parish teens. We won't be discussing theology, theory, challenges or problems that confront our youth (that's for the retreats, etc.). We will simply attempt to make plans for the above-named activities for the year ahead, using our resources, those that the Diocese makes available to us, and those of our sister parishes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, January 8, 2012

• TROPARION OF THEOPHANY, Tone One:

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His Word. O Christ, our God, Who hast revealed Thyself, and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

• KONTAKION OF THEOPHANY, Tone Four:

On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world, and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, is signed on us who sing Thy praise: and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light Unapproachable.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Jan. 7: 9:30 AM, Nativity Liturgy at Kazan Skete
5 PM, Great Vespers, Confessions
- Sunday, Jan. 8: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Church School, Agape Meal in Hall
SISTERHOOD MEETING at 1 PM
3 PM, Wedding of Brendan and Irini
- Wed., Jan. 11: 7 PM, Vespers
- Thurs., Jan. 12: 6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim
- Sat., Jan. 14: 11:30 AM, Baptism of Lucca Mattei (son of Christian and Alina)
3:30 PM, Catechism—*On Baptism*
5 PM Great Vespers, Confessions

• HOUSE BLESSINGS:

Please email or call Fr Lawrence or any of the other clergy to schedule a house blessing. Here's how to prepare for a house blessing:

1) Have a copy of the *Troparion of Theophany* so that you can sing with the priest. The words are included in this Announcement Sheet, above. 2) The entire family should be present. 3) Have the following items at your Icon Corner or on a table: icon, oil lamp or a candle, small bowl (cereal size) for the Holy Water. I will bring Holy Water with me if you do not have any; list of names of your family, living and departed, clearly marked. 4) Turn off TVs and Radios, video games. 6. Teach your children the way to receive the blessing of the priest.

• ANNUAL MEETING, MEMBERSHIP:

On February 5, 2012, our parish membership will gather at 12:30 PM, following the Holy Liturgy, for its **Annual Meeting**. What constitutes parish membership; who is a member? According to the by-laws of our parish and the OCA, a member is one who:

- 1) is an Orthodox Christian living according to the moral, ethical, spiritual and dogmatic teachings of the Church;
- 2) is at least 18 years of age;
- 3) financially supports the parish
- 4) makes Confession and receives Holy Communion regularly here at this parish.

It's my task as your rector to determine the parish membership count. The criteria are quite simple, as you can see: if you're Orthodox, live a moral life according to the Church (not your own rules) and keep the Gospel commandments. Make your confession and communion **regularly, not sporadically**. We receive for the healing of body and soul, for union with God and each other, a provision on the way to eternal life, and for the "forgiveness of sins" as the Lord Himself says. We do not absent ourselves from communion, since we very well may "by long abstaining from Thy Communion, become a prey to the noetic wolf" (*Prayer Before Communion*). To not confess and commune regularly, is to betray the advice of all the saints from the New Testament on.

Regarding point #3 above, I hesitate to use the phrase "financial support" for the Church, since the issue is not about what the *Church needs*, but what *we need* to do as Christians, rich and poor alike: "let each person

give, on the first day of the week, as God has proposed him" to paraphrase St. Paul (1 Cor. 16:2). This means, if we discern the meaning of St. Paul's command in the light of Scripture and the Tradition, is that we give according to what we have, whether or not we have little or much. God can increase what we give (call it proportional giving or tithing if you want). Demonstrate your trust in God, for He will care for you as His child.

It is important that all of us understand that all parishes make an offering—a tithe, in fact—for the work of the Diocese, Bishop Benjamin and our Metropolitan Jonah. The offering is based on our membership count. No doubt, all will agree that a parish cannot afford to subsidize the membership of those who do not give, yet who are capable of giving (perhaps there are those who are not capable, but that's a pastoral issue). Using parish funds to subsidize someone's membership listing literally takes away money that is to be used for the care of widows, single mothers, and the poor. Please, establish and maintain your membership in the parish, the Body of Christ. — *Fr L*

• FROM THE DESERT FATHERS:

While Abba Macarius was praying in his cave in the desert, a hyena suddenly appeared and began to lick his feet and taking him gently by the hem of his tunic, she drew him towards her own cave. He followed her, saying, "I wonder what this animal wants me to do?" When she had led him to her cave, she went in and brought her cubs which had been born blind. He prayed over them and returned them to the hyena with their sight healed. She in turn, by way of a thank offering, brought the man the huge skin of a ram and laid it at his feet. He smiled at her as if at a kind person and taking the skin spread it under him. — *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

• WORSHIP AND DOCTRINE:

"In the Tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church, doctrine and worship are inseparable. Worship is, in a certain sense, doctrinal testimony, reference to the events of Revelation. Thus, 'dogmas are not abstract ideas in and for themselves but revealed and saving truths and realities intended to bring mankind into communion with God.' One could say without hesitation that, according to Orthodox understanding, the fullness of theological thought is found in the worship of the Church. This is why the term Orthodoxy is understood by many not as 'right