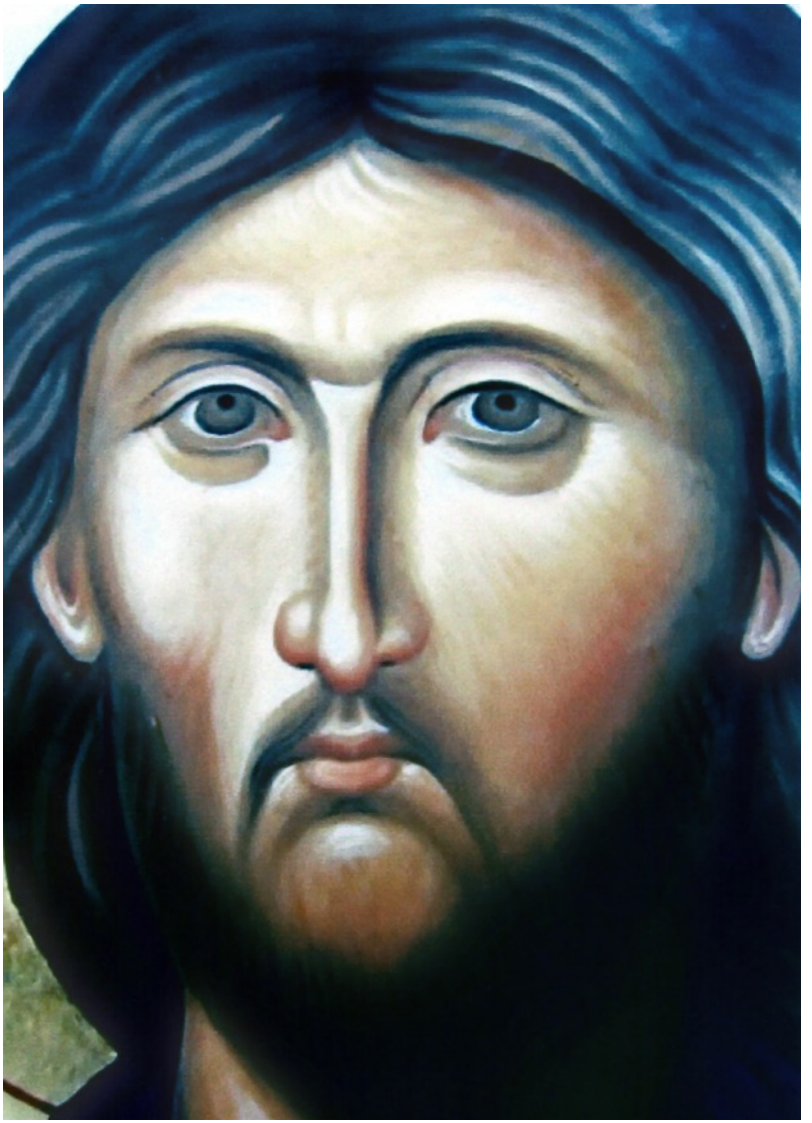
Winter/December-February 2013

In Communion

journal of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship
of the Protection of the Mother of God



Peace: A word with meaning.

Finding Peace

by Father Lev Gillet

PEACE I LEAVE with you; My peace I give to you." Jesus gives His peace. He does not loan it; He does not take it back. The peace that is in Jesus "My peace" becomes the disciples' final possession.

The Savior gives His disciples His peace at the moment when His Passion is about to begin. When He is confronted with the vision of immediate suffering and death, He proclaims and communicates His peace. If at such moments, Jesus is the Master of Peace, then the strength of this peace will not abandon the disciple in moments of lesser strife.

"But I say to you, do not resist evil." How scandalous and foolish is this statement in the eyes of men, and especially of unbelievers? How do we interpret this commandment about turning the left cheek to the one who struck the right, giving our cloak to the one who took our tunic, walking two miles with the one who forced us to go one mile already, giving a blessing to him who curses us? Have we explored the ways and means of loving our enemy whether he be a personal or public enemy? "You do not know of what spirit you are."

No, it is a question of resisting the Gospel. The choice is not between fighting and not fighting, but between fighting and suffering. Fighting brings about only vain and illusory victories, because Jesus is the absolute reality. Suffering without resistance proclaims the absolute reality of Jesus. If we understand this point, we see that suffering is a real victory. Jesus said "It is enough" when His disciples presented Him with two swords. The disciples had not understood the meaning of Christ's statement, "He who does not have a purse, let him sell his coat and buy a sword." What Christ meant was that there are times when we must sacrifice what seems the most ordinary thing, in order to concentrate our attention on the assaults of the evil one. But defense and attack are both spiritual. (Continued on inside back cover)

Again, to the rich young man He said: "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you have and come and follow me" (Matt. 19: 21).

It is with reference to this incident that St. Basil the Great observes that the young man lied when he said that he had kept the commandments; for if he had kept them, he would not have acquired many possessions, since the first commandment in the Law is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul" (Deut. 6:5). The word "all" forbids him who loves God to love anything else to such an extent that it would make him sad were it to be taken away. After this the Law says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:19), that is "you shall love every man." But how can he have kept this commandment if, when many other men lacked daily nourishment, he had many possessions and was passionately attached to them? If…he had regarded those possessions as the property of God, he would not have gone away sorrowing.

—St. Peter of Damaskos, *The Philokalia*

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Letter

from the editor

Dear friends,

This morning as I searched for some gem by St. Maximos the Confessor to offer as the first word on our theme "Peace: a word with meaning" before I send the issue off to the printer, I found this seemingly random, but relevant, verse instead: "A man writes either to assist his memory, or to help others, or for both reasons." Amusingly, almost all writers (and editors) I know seem motivated to some degree by bad memory—paper and ink, and hard drives, are miracles! But that aside, it is the bit about helping others that stood out for me this morning.

In Communion is an offering of help as an act of love, each and every issue, nothing more and nothing less. I was reminded recently by my favorite priest that a good sermon should "simply share what we have been given." I find that good advice generally. Every essay by our authors, every word squeezed into our tiny journal by your editor, is intended as an offering of what we have been given.

And that brings me to what that offering is, to that word, "Peace." Is there a word more central to Christianity? Is there a word more ironically fought over and strangely employed in conflicted ways than the word peace? We attempt in this issue some effort to reclaim and restore to proper use this most amazing of words that has been so curiously euphemized, politicized, parsed, pimped, and distorted.

You'll notice we've departed from the pattern of offering an icon with a cover story. In this issue, we intend to make clear from cover to cover that Christ and Peace are one and the same: the entire issue is the cover story! But our strategy extends beyond this single issue of *In Communion.* We aim for two things: creating tools that can help us grow OPF and spread the word, and our 2013 conference. This issue is a planned "give away" to promote who we are and what we are about. The content also addresses the theme of our upcoming conference in Washington, D.C. this Fall: a look at the relationship of the Church to the State through the lens of how Christians, corporately and singly, live out their peacemaking vocation in society and the world, at every level of community and relationship.

You can help. First, always, simply respond to the call of Jesus our Peace and be a peacemaker in whatever circumstance you find yourself. Second, do not keep this issue of *In Communion*—share what you have been given with someone who might be helped by it. And third, please respond to the letter enclosed by renewing your membership if you are due, helping us to grow by giving extra if you can, or considering other ways to spread the word such as ordering extra copies to give away. We are quite simply at a place where we can happily continue to roll along with just under 500 members, though barely surviving financially, or we can make every effort to grow, increasing our capacity to give away what we have been given with a larger donor base. Truly, humbly, thank you for whatever you can do.

Pieter Dykhorst

Peacemaking As Vocation:
Toward an Orthodox Understanding

by Fr. Emmanuel Clapsis

> *For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.* *(James 3:16-18)*
>
> *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.* *(Matthew 5:9)*

In an increasingly complex and violent world, Christian Churches have come to recognize that working for peace constitutes a primary expression of their responsibility for the life of the world. This responsibility is grounded on the essential goodness of all human beings and of all that God has created, continues to sustain, and desires to redeem and make whole. For Orthodoxy, peace—as gift and vocation—is inextricably related to the notions of justice and the freedom that God has granted to all human beings through Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. Peace and peacemaking as a gift and vocation provide opportunities to connect theology with ethical witness, faith with social transformation. The dynamic nature of peace as gift and vocation does not allow its identification with stagnation or passivity or with the acceptance of injustice.

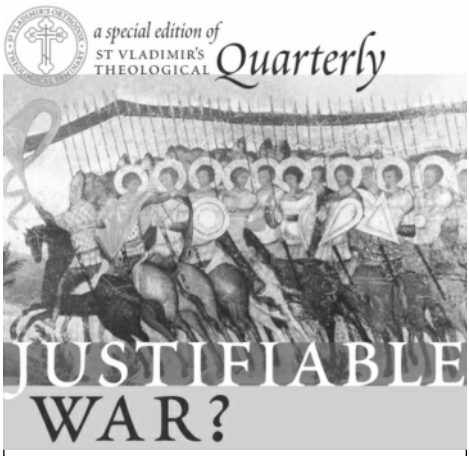
While the Orthodox Church affirms that peace is an integral and indispensable element of the Christian gospel, it has not sufficiently reflected—in a morally consistent manner—on the nature of peace and peacemaking and what peacemaking requires, in practical terms, of their life and witness to the world. Orthodox theologians have noted that offering simply a theoretical presentation of the Orthodox understanding of peace is not a sufficient expression and witness:

> It is not enough for us simply to theologize, to describe and to prescribe regarding the Orthodox vision of justice and peace. We must also mobilize and work together for God's purpose to defeat injustices and to establish justice wherever possible, as well as to overcome the forces which threaten peace on earth.*

The contextualization of peace and peacemaking and the critical appreciation of the ecclesial actions or inactions for the advancement of peace compel the Orthodox Church to explore different but complementary ways to relate liturgical and spiritual experience and faith with the complex and conflictual issues of the world. Such a

* To save space, all footnotes and references have been removed throughout this issue. Any article is available, with full notes, to anyone upon request.

move evokes accusations that the Church moves from the spiritual realm to politics, an "activism" that would be alien to Orthodoxy. Commenting on the reluctance of the various Orthodox Churches to address issues of public life, Metropolitan John Zizioulas believes that they are right to give preeminence to those elements of their tradition that refer to the centrality of eschatology but they are wrong to disconnect eschatology from history, theology from ethics, and generally to be indifferent in finding and witnessing God in the historical realm.



St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly published a special edition in 2003 exploring the question of Justifiable War and war as either a lesser good or a lesser evil. Among the contributing authors were Fr. Alexander Webster, Jim Forest, Fr. Philip LeMasters, and Fr. John Breck.

Orthodox theologians, because of close association of many Orthodox Churches with the State and their long oppression by totalitarian regimes, have not adequately and critically reflected on either the reflexive relationship of self and society or the Christian imperative of the simultaneous transformation by God's grace as well as of Christian discipleship of both. Oppressive, unjust, and violent social structures in the past jeopardized the humanity of the oppressed, but now the possibility of just societies is put at risk by unjust, greedy, and self-centered individuals. Fr. Stanley Harakas notes the undeveloped status of social ethics in Eastern Orthodoxy most especially on peace studies:

> There are few Orthodox writers and thinkers who have dealt deeply and thoughtfully with these issues. Still fewer, if any, have provided theoretical underpinning for a consistent and authentic Orthodox Christian Social Ethic. Because of this there is the danger that our social concern will become subject to mere sloganeering and, worse yet, the tool of alien forces. For example, Peace as an ideal for the Christian Church is almost self-evident. Yet there is no such thing as a coherent body of Orthodox peace studies. Few, if any, Orthodox theologians have concerned themselves with the problems of pacifism, disarmament, nuclear war, just war theory, peace movements, etc. There is a danger on this issue that we will allow ourselves simply to be used as a propaganda outlet.

Despite this lamentable situation, opportunities for Orthodox theologians to reflect on issues of justice and peace have arisen. Among them, the military invasion of Iraq generated among Orthodox in the USA an interesting debate on whether the war was just, and whether judged by the standards of the Orthodox Church, war can ever be "Just," or may sometimes be considered a "lesser good" or a "lesser evil." All

three views are problematic. Orthodoxy has never conceived a theory of Just War or the notion that any war may be just; further, violence is neither fully legitimized when it is viewed as a lesser good nor unconditionally renounced when it is considered as a lesser evil. Rather, most Orthodox theologians have defended the peaceable nature of the Orthodox Church and at the same time have conceded that the use of force is sometimes an inevitable tool of statecraft, while some evidence exists that the Byzantines at times attempted to place elements of strict and yet meaningful moral restraint on the execution of war. The theological assessment of violence, however, remains an issue of contestation.

Does the eschatological nature of the Christian faith allow us to give a conditional theological legitimacy to violence? While the eschatological orientation of the gospel teaches us that a fully reachable earthly *shalom* is unattainable in history, it places the world in a dynamic process of transformation by the Holy Spirit that moves the world closer to the peaceable reign of God. Eschatology is thus a subversive principle questioning every necessity that legitimates violence. As Gregory Baum states:

> Replying to the question "Can society exist without violence?" in the negative gives permission for societies to reconcile themselves with the violence they practice. Replying yes to the question, in the name of divine promises, challenges every society to review its practices and reduce its reliance on violence.

Peace, of course, is more than the absence of violence. It does not deny conflict, an intrinsic element of human relationships, but neither does conflict necessitate violence. Violence is not the only way to resolve conflicts. Peacemakers are constantly seeking creative applications of peacemaking principles to conflict situations whereby people and communities can resolve their differences without resort to physical violence. Peacemaking is a dynamic process, often without an absolute end point, that either strengthens conditions that prevent violence or introduces new elements that lead toward greater freedom and justice and away from violence.

Metropolitan George of Mount Lebanon, living in a Muslim country and having experience with the cruelties of religion-sanctioned wars and strife, argues that the Church cannot exercise its vocation of peace and peacemaking and hold onto war:

> In the church, a vision of inwardness where peace becomes our vocation is plausible only if war can be exorcised….Nothing can be accomplished until the biblical foundations of violence are shattered. For us the error lies not in history but in theology.

Alongside the image of a bloodthirsty God, there arises the image of a merciful God whose voice speaks through prophets like Jeremiah and Hosea and in the Song of the Servant in Isaiah. We are confronted here with two irreconcilably opposed faces of the Lord in the same Scripture.

Metropolitan George argues that these incompatible images of God must be understood through a "kenotic" reading of Scripture and suggests that the "the

Cross alone is the locus of divine victory, and the source of the meaning of faith. Anything in the Scripture that does not conform to the mystery of Love is a veil over the Word." Other Orthodox scholars, risking the accusation of being Marcionites, tend to bypass the violent texts of the Old Testament as earlier stages in understanding God's revelation that the New Testament has surpassed. In the Patristic tradition the violent texts of the Scripture have been interpreted through the allegorical method to describe "Spiritual personal struggles against evil and sin."

However, the renunciation of violence and war as destructive of human lives, unjust, and oppressive becomes a credible expression of the Church's faith only when it is complemented with ethical practices that point to their prevention. The peaceable witness of the Church in situations of conflict and war cannot be limited only to its ethical judgment about the legitimacy and rules of conduct of war or even its unconditional renunciation. Peace requires much more than either military action or passive pacifism. If our ethics focus only on when a military action is right or wrong, their scope is limited to the exclusion of preventive actions. A remedy to this limitation is for the Church to develop "just peacemaking" practices that move its ethical discourse from theories that justify or regulate the use of violence to preventive actions that contribute to the building up of a culture of peace.

The Church's witness may not always prevent war, and Christians may continue to disagree on the justification of a particular war, but it must be possible to work together and reach consensus on what practices of violence prevention and peacemaking the Church should support. Orthodox pacifists have a particular moral obligation to address situations of aggression, injustice, and violent conflicts to contribute to the invention of peaceful means and actions by which justice, peace, and reconciliation are served and not simply to renounce violence and war.

The concern of the Church for peace and its active participation in movements of peace is a testing ground of its faith about the origins, essential goodness, and future of the world. The Church, as the sacrament of God's peace to the world, must find ways to actively support all human efforts that aim to identify more effective ways of resolving disputes without resorting to violence. The Church's peacemaking vocation, through prayer and action, is to transform the conditions that breed violence and to help those whom violence and war have put asunder to find wholeness in God's peace and justice through reconciliation, healing, and forgiveness.

Theological Foundations for a Culture of Peace: The Orthodox Church understands peace and peacemaking as an indispensable aspect of its faith and of its mission to the world. It grounds this faith conviction upon the wholeness of the Biblical tradition as it is properly interpreted through the Church's liturgical experience and practice. The Eucharist provides the space and the perspective by which one discerns and experiences the fullness of the Christian faith and is the witness of the Church as it bears its mission for the life of the world. Robert F. Taft concludes that since the formation of the Byzantine liturgy,

If we do not see the Church as a vessel bringing peace to a violent world, it becomes in effect merely a lifeboat adrift in the wind.

peace had assumed a central importance as a greeting and prayer that expresses the Church's understanding of God's Kingdom. The peace of God in the Liturgy is referred to as "peace from on high," as in the angelic greeting "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men" (Lk. 2:14). In the Liturgy, people receive the peace of God through unity with Christ once they enter, by the Eucharist through the work of the Holy Spirit, into unity with God. Finally, at the end of the liturgy, the people are sent away in peace and as bearers of peace to the world.

Peace in Scripture as well as in the liturgy is a greeting and a dynamic, grace-giving word: God Himself is Peace and peace is His gift; peace is a sign of communion with God, who gives peace to those who serve him; peace grants freedom from fear and is inseparable from righteousness without which there is no real peace—in short, "peace" is practically synonymous with salvation; peace is communion with God and Jesus Christ is our peace since, as the bond of communion, "We live in peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; peace is granted to the world and to the Church by the operation of the Holy Spirit, the active presence of God within the world that guides the Church into unity "in one place with one accord" and grants to all peace, justice, love, and joy (Jn. 20:19-21, Jgs. 6:24, Ps. 85:8-13, Rom. 16:20, 1 Thess. 5:23, Eph. 2:14-17, Rom 5:1, Acts 2:1, Rom. 14:14).

Christians, as it is reflected in the liturgy, place primary emphasis on the eschatological peace that God grants to them as a gift of communion with Christ. Yet, they do not ignore the conflicts, power struggles, and violence they presently experience in the world. Although the early Christian Church of the first three centuries was primarily pacifist, grounding its attitudes on the Sermon of the Mount, the Fathers of the Church later—without abandoning the pacifist attitude of the early Church—justified defensive wars without developing theories of Just War or

giving theological legitimacy to violence. Still, the Orthodox Church gave far more attention to the question of how to establish and maintain peaceful and just societies than it did to justify, or even tolerate, any instance of war. It remains that the Church has a dynamic commitment to the praxis of peace.

In every dimension of life, the Church invites us to embody the way of Christ as fully as we can in the circumstances that we face: to forgive enemies; to work for the reconciliation of those who have become estranged; to overcome the divisions of race, nationality, and class; to care for the poor; to live in harmony with others; to protect creation and to use the created goods of the world for the benefit of all. Advocacy for peace must not stop with praying the litanies of the Liturgy. We can pray these petitions with integrity only if we also move beyond prayer and offer ourselves as instruments for God's peace in the world, ready to live the petitions out in relation to the challenges to peace that exist among peoples and nations, believing that God has destined the world to live in peace. As St. Nicholas Cabasilas states: "Christians, as disciples of Christ who made all things for peace, are to be 'craftsmen of peace.' They are called a peaceable race, since 'nothing is more characteristic of a Christian than to be a worker for peace.'" The Third Pre-Conciliar Pan Orthodox Conference (1986) exhorts Orthodox Christians to be active peacemakers grounded in their faith:

> We, Orthodox Christians, have—by reason of the fact that we have had access to the meaning of salvation—a duty to fight against disease, misfortune, fear; because we have had access to the experience of peace we cannot remain indifferent to its absence from society today; because we have benefited from God's justice, we are fighting for further justice in the world and for the elimination of all oppression; because we daily experience God's mercy, we are fighting all fanaticism and intolerance between persons and nations; because we continually proclaim the incarnation of God and the divinization of man we defend human rights for all individuals and all peoples; because we live God's gift of liberty, thanks to the redemptive work of Christ, we can announce more completely its universal value for all individuals and peoples; because, nourished by the body and blood of our Lord in the holy Eucharist, we experience the need to share God's gifts with our brothers and sisters, we have a better understanding of hunger and privation and fight for their abolition; because we expect a new earth and new heaven where absolute justice will reign, we fight here and now for the rebirth and renewal of the human being and society.

There remains, then, a need to learn practical ways, develop pastoral projects, and create opportunities that allow Orthodox people and the Church to participate in movements of social transformation and contribute to a culture of peace. For, as the Christian understanding of peace and how it is advanced in the life of the world is guided by the eschatological peace that God grants to the world—the reality of being with God and participating in the glory of His reign—it remains primarily a gift and a vocation, a pattern of life. It discloses the life of those who have been reconciled and united with God. It is primarily this unity that enables Christians to

embrace in love all human beings because of the active presence of God's spirit in them. Since peace is constitutive of the Christian Gospel, Christian believers are involved in a permanent process of becoming more conscious of their responsibility to incarnate the message of peace and justice in the world as a witness of the authenticity of their faith. This is clearly stated by St. Basil: "Christ is our peace," and hence "he who seeks peace seeks Christ…without love for others, without an attitude of peace towards all men, no one can be called a true servant of Christ."

The Orthodox Church insists that the root cause for violence, injustice and oppression in the world reflects the pervasive presence and impact of the still active operation of the "principalities and powers" of the fallen world. Evil, violence, injustice, and oppression reflect the disrupted communion of human beings with God, the fallible nature of our human actions, and the failure to discern and do the will of God in the midst of the ambiguities of history. Violence has multiple manifestations: oppression of the poor, deprivation of basic human rights, economic exploitation, sexual exploitation and pornography, neglect or abuse of the aged and the helpless, and innumerable other acts of inhumanity between individuals and groups of every organizational type. In the midst of violence and injustice, Christian faith recognizes the active presence of God's Spirit, the subversive reality that enables the world, and in particular the suffering victims of injustice, aggression and oppression, to begin a process of liberation and movement towards a culture of peace and justice. A tension between the already given reality of peace and its not-yet-fulfilled reality characterizes the key theological stance of Christians involved in the struggle for peace. The awareness that peace is an eschatological gift of God and of the active presence of God's Spirit in history makes it impossible for the Church to accept either the historical fatalism that makes wars, lesser clashes, and other violence an unshakable reality or to embrace the possibility of a permanent peace in this world by relying on simple human-centered ideologies.

THE CHRISTIAN NOTION OF PEACE IN THE PUBLIC SPACE: The Christian gospel invites the faithful to a continuous spiritual struggle that leads, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, towards greater justice and peace. Every Christian is called to be a peacemaker and a worker for justice. This calling is nourished through prayer and repentance, by allowing Scripture to form our human consciousness, in participating in the Eucharist, and through recognizing the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed as living icons of Christ.

This calling is noble, and Christians, through the above mentioned devotional practices, receive the gift of God's peace as the basis of their involvement in the life of the world. They are peacemakers because of their participation in God's mission. Here it is important to differentiate between the gift of God's peace and how this gift is received, acknowledged, and communicated by the Church and the faithful. While the gift of God's peace is given through the Church to all by virtue of their identification with Christ, it is not equally true that the faithful are always the

vehicles of God's grace and peace to the world. Christian responses to situations of violence are always subject to God's judgment that compels the Church and the faithful to repentance and asking for God's forgiveness for all their failures to act as agents of His peace to the world.

Orthodox theologians have recognized that there is a need to "lift up in the consciousness of the Church the peacemaking character of Christianity and the Christian duty to serve the cause of peace and Justice." Articulating only abstract theological truths, which nevertheless are normative for the Church's identity and mission, cannot raise the consciousness of the Church. There is a need to enhance and concretize these theological ideals with insights about social injustice, oppression, and violence that the social sciences provide. As the report of the Orthodox Perspectives on Justice and Peace states:

> It is important that we not only speak about justice and peace, but also develop projects and contribute practically in programs and sustained organized activity on behalf of the concrete realization of the values of justice and peace in our ecclesial life. In this regard the Church must learn to dialogue especially with non-Church bodies to find the most suitable common ways for the implementation of justice and peace.

We carefully note, however, that dialogue between opposing sides is not simply a means to reach agreement. The Orthodox Church should exercise its peacemaking mission through its active participation in peace dialogues seeking to end wars between and within states, resolve violent disputes of all kinds within society, and defeat racism, discrimination, and exploitation of the weak and the poor. The very presence of the Church in dialogue with others is witness to God's love for all humanity and affirms the dignity of all human beings as well as affirms that dialogue itself is part of a reconciliation process. The Orthodox should defend not only dialogue on peace as such but also the inclusion of people who are very often neglected in crucial deliberations. Those who partner in true dialogue with open and sincere minds, ready to listen and not only to speak, are already on the way to peace.

On the basis of the theological understanding of peace, the various Orthodox Churches should participate in movements of peace and justice. However their involvement will not be credible unless they first liberate themselves from ethno-nationalisms that reflect the history of the long identification of church-nation-state relationship in most Orthodox countries where the Churches had been considered as national institutions. Ethno-nationalism has in some instances reduced the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church to a "national" church, restricted geographically and shaped by a particular culture, shared history, worldview, language, and other idiosyncrasies that serves the political purposes of a state while helping to preserve its nationalist, racist, and chauvinist ideologies. The suggested liberation of the Orthodox Churches from ethno-nationalism does not mean that their members cannot be patriotic or love their nation. What is objectionable is the exclusive

A defensive Church will never be a victorious Church; a Church that engages the world on its terms will always be a defeated Church; only when the Church "wages peace" on the Gospel's terms will the violence of Hell be defeated and Hell's gates sundered.

identification of God with a particular nation and the triumphalism that attaches to that. The partiality of ethno-nationalism not only hinders the Orthodox contribution to peace movements, but it debases basic tenets of the Orthodox faith.

The Church must learn to express its deep-rooted commitment to justice in concrete ways relevant in our time. We must continue to affirm, loudly and clearly, the truth that God's image is present in every human being. We need to seek out and actively cooperate with all forces of good working for the eradication from God's creation of all forms of prejudice and discrimination. We ourselves must teach our people to respect the integrity and dignity of all peoples of every nation, economic condition, race, sex, and political affiliation, so that reconciliation and tolerance may replace coercion and violence in our relationships. Our goal is nothing less than the reign of God's love among all peoples.

Is it possible for Orthodoxy to justify wars in defending the dignity, the rights, the freedom and the liberation of oppressed people? As the report on Orthodox Perspective on Justice and Peace states:

> The Orthodox Church unreservedly condemns war as evil. Yet it also recognizes that in the defense of the innocent and the protection of one's people from unjust attack, criminal activity and the overthrowing of oppression, it is sometimes necessary, with reluctance, to resort to arms. In every case, such a decision must be taken with full consciousness of its tragic dimensions. Consequently, the Greek fathers of the Church have never developed, a just war theory, preferring rather to speak of the blessings of and the preference for Peace.

The Church, while it supports all human efforts to repudiate the logic of violence and war, must not forget its greater mission to lead the world to address the deeper issues. Peace is not a moral good in and of itself; it is linked with the most basic

human values and practices as a permanent improvement of the human condition on all levels. Defending the dignity of every human person and the sanctity of life cannot be disengaged from the quest for greater justice and freedom as the foundation, source, and origin of real and permanent peace. "No society can live in peace with itself, or with the world, without the full awareness of the worth and dignity of every human person, and of the sacredness of all human life." The Church must be hesitant to fully support those peace movements that disregard fundamental human values like justice and freedom for the sake of merely avoiding the last explicit negation of peace, i.e. massive armed war and lesser applications of violence. Certainly, a Christian would always share in the efforts to avoid bloodshed because life is the most precious God-given gift, but he would try to remind people that when attempting to avoid war and keep peace they should critically examine what kind of peace they represent.

One has to speak of the Christian peace concept and its contribution to the general peace movement not as an absolute one in a general religious, self-sufficient sense but as a radical particularity which is unique in that it goes dynamically deep into the primary causes of war and violence and calls for thorough understanding in shaping a praxis of peacemaking. Particularity here refers to a uniqueness relating to Christ as our Peace, presenting God's Peace as a paramount gift to the whole of humanity. There are good attempts in the secular realm regarding peace, and a Christian should affirm them as a first point of contact with God's peace: "Whenever we see harmony, justice, forgiveness, respect for human dignity, generosity, and care for the weak in the common life of humanity, we witness a blessing of the Lord and catch a glimpse—no matter how dim and imperfect—of the peace of Christ." Then the uniqueness of Christian peace could definitely become a necessary and positive counterbalance against all kinds of unilateral, human-centered and godless peacemaking.

Finally, the contribution of *the* Orthodox Church in advancing peace with justice and freedom depends upon the unity of *all* Orthodox Churches in their total commitment to the Gospel of love and reconciliation and on their courage to speak and act accordingly beyond any kind of temporary affiliations in the socio-political realm. Its contribution will, however, be truly Christian, if it is offered in all humility and in that spirit of repentance and forbearance which is the key prerequisite of true peacemakers. *IC*

Fr. Emmanuel Clapsis is Archbishop Iakovos Professor of Orthodox Theology at Holy Cross Seminary in Boston, MA where he has taught since 1985. *In Communion* thanks Fr. Emmanuel for his invaluable contribution to our ongoing quest to promote peacemaking not just as an ideal, an eschatological end point, or for those inclined to activism but as necessary for the whole Church. His essay has been edited here for length. The unedited essay with full notes and references may be found at: www.goarch.com.

The Church As Neighbor:
Corporately and Compassionately Engaged

by Fr. John D. Jones

MOVED WITH COMPASSION, the Good Samaritan comes to the place where a Jew, typically despised by Samaritans, has been beaten and left (Lk. 10:33). And he acts: "beholding him," the Samaritan "came to him and bandaged up his wounds."

When the father sees his returning, prodigal son at a distance, he is moved with compassion and rushes out to him (Lk. 15:20). He embraces him and welcomes him back home as his son and not merely his servant.

Moved with compassion for the widowed mother who has just lost her only son, Jesus stops the funeral procession and restores the son to life (Lk. 7:11-16).

The Greek verb for "moved with compassion" is found only in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Sometimes it describes Jesus' response to others; other times, Jesus uses the term in certain parables. In the Gospels, being moved with compassion always serves as a prelude to or motive for action on behalf of others.

Despite its apparently visceral origin in our inner parts, "compassion" is less a raw emotion than what might be regarded as an attunement (an *Einstimmung* to borrow loosely from Heidegger). In Patristic texts, compassion is often linked with *sumpatheia*, which is often translated in Latin as "compassio" in the sense of a capacity, if you will, to identify with the suffering of another.

Compassion makes us aware of others who are afflicted or in distress and it draws us towards them. Moved with compassion, the Good Samaritan "comes near" to the beaten man. Moved with compassion, even while his son is "a great way off," the father runs towards the prodigal son and embraces him. By way of comparison, although the Priest and the Levite see the beaten man, they pass by him on the opposite side of the road. Jesus does not tell us what moves these men to deliberately avoid the man, but the clear intention of the parable is that both lack any acute sense of *sumpatheia* or of mercy. Compassion then is distinguished from pity at least in the sense that pity involves merely feeling sorry for someone while yet remaining aloof, distant, superior to and disengaged from that person.

Compassion, moreover, is an attunement to others "without borders." One principal lesson of the Good Samaritan parable is that the merciful neighbor is a neighbor to all others. As St. John Chrysostom writes to correct those who would limit assistance only to other Christians: "Let us not care only for 'those of the household of faith' (Gal. 6:10), and neglect others…If you see any one in distress do not be curious and enquire further. His being in distress involves a just claim on your aid…He is God's…[and] even if he is an unbeliever, still he needs help."

Compassion, thus, leads to "good works" that render mercy and assistance to others. Of course we call these good works alms or, in a broader sense, works of mercy. Our prototype for such compassionate works is, of course, God Himself. Even after our sinful rebellion against Him, he did not abandon us but "because of his tender compassion" visited us in various ways (Liturgy of St. Basil just before the recitation in the Anaphora of the events of salvation history). In the Divine Liturgy, we are reminded that God is merciful and compassionate (Ps. 102:8, the first Antiphon) and that the scope of these works includes "giving food to the hungry, setting the prisoners free, giving sight to the blind, lifting up those who are bowed down, watching over the sojourners, and upholding the widow and the fatherless" (Ps. 145:7–9, verses of the 2nd Antiphon that we, regrettably, rarely sing).

Works of mercy

Not surprisingly, then, the scope of alms is substantively broader than merely giving material aid or money. Works of mercy comprise all our personal actions to assist those who are in need and distress, whether spiritual, mental, or physical. Personal works of mercy can and should extend to efforts to change social structures and policies on behalf of, as well as to advocate for, those who are poor, vulnerable, or treated unjustly.

But what about corporate works of mercy or actions that are undertaken by a community in which there is a "we" who collectively and collaboratively acts *as* a community, be it a local church, a monastery, or the general assembly of an autocephalous Church. Why should Orthodox Christians be concerned about cultivating such activity rather than simply the merciful activities of individual persons?

The history of the church is, of course, replete with examples of corporate works of mercy. Indeed, monasteries have often had hospices, poorhouses, hospitals, and other philanthropic institutions associated with them which were either staffed in part by monks/nuns or at least supported by the community. The monastic reformer, Nikon of the Black Mountain, offers this observation about the Monastery and Hospice of the Mother of God *Tou Roidiou* which clearly links communal worship with communal works of mercy:

> Behold, the church and the house of hospitality: the one for the worship and correctness of right faith and praise of the love of God and so on, the other for

the love of neighbor (and "neighbor" means all humankind) for "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matt. 25:35) and other similar commandments of the Lord. As the Lord himself says, "On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:40), [that is] on the love of God and neighbor. For these things the church and the hospice were provided.

There are many specialized studies that allow us to gain some understanding of the nature and scope of these corporate activities, but there is almost nothing, as far as I can tell, in our service texts or icons that serve to commemorate them. Consider these examples drawn from the lives of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great—two of our three hierarchs or ecumenical teachers.

Fr. Georges Florovsky famously referred to St. John Chrysostom as the prophet of charity. Anyone familiar with St. John's many homilies knows how passionate he was about the importance of caring for the poor and others in need. However, of the many hymns and other texts for his feast day, there is only one text that I find—an aposticha verse—that acknowledges him as "… true Father to orphans, prompt help of the distressed, support of the poor, nourisher of the hungry, staff for those who are falling." His biographies note that he founded various hospitals. St. John himself mentions that the Church (most likely in Antioch) provided for 3,000 widows daily plus others in prisons, those who were infirm, etc. This must have been a rather highly organized undertaking which St. John obviously did not undertake by himself but for which he most likely at best provided general oversight. Sadly there is almost no surviving record of how this activity was carried out. But there is also no day in the church calendar on which we commemorate or even remember the church in Antioch, or the many other churches and Christian communities in the 4th century, for undertaking the daily feeding of the poor and other works of hospitality.

St. Maria and her co-workers

St. Basil the Great was also one of the great episcopal benefactors in this period. As with St. John, there is one service text for his feast day, January 1, which clearly acknowledges this: "Treasure of the poor, father of orphans, protector of widows, consoler of the afflicted, O holy Basil, you were also the pilot for the wealthy, the instructor for youth, the staff for the elderly; and for monks, a model of virtue" (Troparion, Canon ode 7). His *vita* mentions that he spent his wealth and the income of the church on behalf of the poor and destitute and "in every center of his diocese

he built a poorhouse; and at Caesarea, a home for wanderers and the homeless." (OCA life of St Basil). In Caesarea he established a "new city" outside of Caesarea, as St. Gregory the Theologian referred to it, which consisted of a hospital and other buildings attached to a monastery that provided care for lepers, respite for travelers, and so forth. We know practically nothing about the daily activities of this complex except that it was supported by the corporate activity of the monastery's monks. But, again, so far as I know, there are no service texts or days to commemorate this monastery or any others for their corporate philanthropic activities.

As with our service texts, Orthodox icons focus almost exclusively on individual saints. Nearly all of our icons of saints present them alone or in groups but almost never, so far as I know, as engaged in collective action together. We get at best some intimation of the activity of a community in the icons of St. Maria Skobstova and those with her but only because of what we know of their work together. I obviously do not want to diminish the important witness of the holy men and women whom we venerate as saints. Their lives and icons rightly serve to portray them as prime examples of our god-bearing fathers and mothers who remained steadfast in their faith and in their manifestation of God's love in the world. Yet, as Jim Forest notes, the icon shows "the recovery of wholeness….[It] suggests the transformation that occurs to whomever has acquired the Holy Spirit….[It is] thus a witness to theosis, deification." There are, of course, many icons of Christ performing works of mercy as exemplified by the first icon shown in this essay (pg. 14). But does the nearly complete absence of icons and service texts commemorating the collective or corporate works of mercy of Christian communities suggest that these activities are somehow outside the pale of transformation or deification in the Holy Spirit?

Of course, if there are no clear examples of icons or service texts commemorating corporate works of mercy, there are the icons and service texts that commemorate the fathers of the various ecumenical councils. These icons represent the Fathers of the Church acting together with one another in an organized, corporate manner to resolve the various issues that were presented to them at the councils. These icons, especially those which represent the Fathers of the Church gathered in semi-circles across from one another recall the icon of Pentecost. This icon, of course, represents the new community (ecclesia)

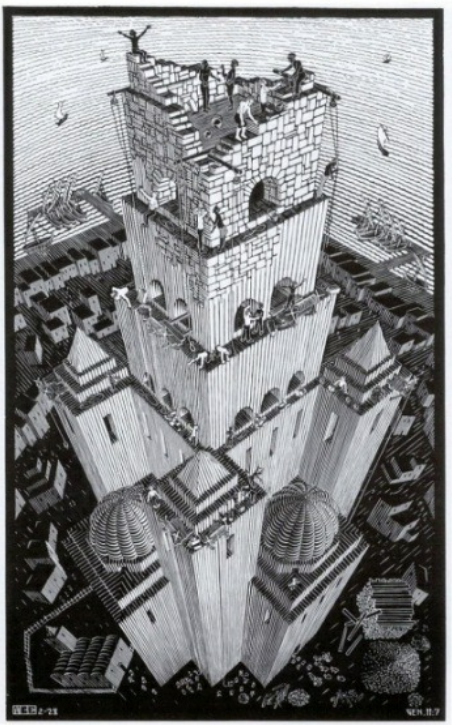
First Ecumenical Council

Pentecost

that overturns the breakdown of communication and collaboration that plagued the construction of the Tower of Babel (Aposticha, Vespers for Pentecost).

M.C. Escher's early 1928 woodcut of the Tower of Babel (below) well illustrates the contrast between the (transfigured) reality of the Church and that tower. As Escher noted about this woodcut: "Some of the builders are white and others black. The work is at a standstill because they are no longer able to understand one another." (I will leave it to the reader to ponder whether the actual historical condition of the Church at times is more aptly represented by Escher's woodcut than the icon of Pentecost.)

The unity and repose of the apostles in the icon for Pentecost provides the basis for their collective and united activity in the church. It was the apostles, at least those in Jerusalem, who collectively managed the gifts that were laid at their feet in the first Christian community (Acts 4:35); it was the apostles who collectively appointed the seven for service in the early community (Acts 6:1-5). It was the apostles and other elders in the church who met at the very first council of the church and who collectively acted on various matters "as it seemed good to us and the Holy Spirit" (Acts 15:28).



At the feast of Pentecost, we also celebrate and commemorate the Holy Trinity. Nor surprisingly the icon of Pentecost recalls the icon, the Hospitality of Abraham, by which we commemorate the Trinity. The manner in which the figures in that icon are turned toward one another illustrates the essential and eternal communion of the persons of the

Trinity as they face each other. But this icon is not limited to manifesting the love of the divine persons solely for one another. For the chalice in the center of the table reminds us of the freely chosen "outgoing" character of the Trinity's love for the world. The Eucharistic chalice in the icon also manifests the essentially compassionate character of God's love. As Blessed Theophylact writes, likening Jesus to the Good Samaritan in that parable: "Our Lord and God…journeyed to us…. He did not just catch a glimpse of us as He happened to pass by. He actually came to us and lived together with us and spoke to us. Therefore, He at once bound up our wounds."

But while only the Son of God becomes incarnate, suffers, dies, and is resurrected, nevertheless his salvific engagement in our life always expresses the will and love of the Father and the Holy Spirit just as the Divine Liturgy always manifests the distinct but undivided action of the Trinitarian persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As Sr. Nona Harrison rightly observes, the icon of the Trinity also serves as a model for human community that is grounded in our existence as persons, which means that "we are free and are able to know and love others, but it also means that our belonging to the community of humankind, our relatedness to other people, is at the very root of who we are." She gives a particularly apt quotation by then Bishop Kallistos of what this means in practice:

> Each social grouping—family, parish, diocese, church council, school, office, factory, nation—has as its vocation to be transformed by grace into a living icon of [the Holy Trinity], to effect a reconciling harmony between diversity and unity, human freedom and mutual solidarity, after the pattern of the Trinity.

The realization of this vocation is obviously impossible unless human beings collaborate with one another in actions that have the corporate, social nature of a "we" who act. Such social action has a structural character to it that cannot be reduced merely to the sum or conglomeration of purely independent individual actions. For example, the outreach ministry or Christian education program of a parish typically require the blessing of the rector, the support of the parish council, and funding provided from the parish budget or other sources. Individuals who work in the programs act as representatives of the parish. The programs themselves require some organization, a division of labor, etc. Such programs, in other words, are carried out by people acting in a collective manner and not merely as isolated individuals acting on their own behalf.

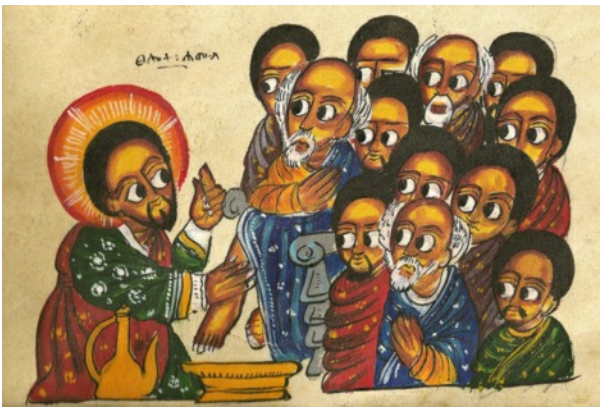
Alas, while I am unaware of any icons that commemorate communal works of mercy undertaken by various Christian communities, there is one notable exception in some of the icons of the Feeding of the 5000. This miracle is recounted in all four gospels (Matt. 14:13-21, Mk. 6:31-44, Lk. 9:10-17, and Jn. 6:5-15). On the one hand, the story receives a Eucharistic interpretation in which Christ's miraculously feeding the people prefigures the Eucharist. Not surprisingly, the icon for this event that evidently stresses a Eucharistic interpretation focuses almost exclusively on Christ.

Yet in each of the Gospel accounts, Christ tells the disciples that they should feed the crowd even though they want to send them away. They are incredulous that they can feed them since they only have two fish and five loaves. Christ miraculously multiplies the loaves and fish, but he gives the food to the disciples and they distribute it. Without losing a Eucharistic interpretation, this event also has the simple, literal meaning that Christ together with the disciples fed a large crowd at the end of the day when they were hungry.

In this second icon, Christ blesses the food and the disciples actively distribute it. This icon manifests the corporate action of the disciples together with Christ in feeding the 5000. That is, if Peter had gone home to his wife at the end of the day, he would have recounted the event by telling his wife about the miracle that Jesus performed and about the fact that "we disciples" distributed the food after Christ blessed it. The feeding of the 5000 then was the action of a community. Again without losing the Eucharistic interpretation of the event, the story and the second icon serve as the prototype for a work of mercy performed by the community of Christ and his disciples.

I've not been able to find an icon for the event of the Christ's first commissioning of the disciples. But that event also initiates collective or corporate action. Jesus does not simply send the disciples forth to act as autonomous individuals in their own names. They are sent to preach the word of God, to heal the sick, cast out demons, etc. as members of the community of the disciples whom Jesus had called. Whether they traveled in groups of two or individually, but not as a single group,


·THECUKHARIST·



they still acted as members of the community of Jesus' disciples.

In any event, I think we can combine a set of icons in which the corporate works of mercy of a community reflect and manifest the "collective" compassionate action of the Trinity towards the world (opposite page).

The traditional Eucharistic icon of Christ giving himself as his Body and Blood to the community of his disciples is intimately connected with the icon of the Hospitality of Abraham. Moreover, the celebration of the Eucharist is intimately and essentially related by Christ himself to the paradigmatic expression of Christian humility and service: Christ washing the feet of his disciples (Jn. 13:4-17). This event is emblematic of the new commandment that Christ gives to his disciples: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 13:34). When we recall that Christ's love and compassionate engagement with us is symbolized by the compassionate engagement of the Good Samaritan with the man beaten and abandoned, then another way of phrasing the new commandment is "be compassionate and merciful neighbors to one another as I have been a compassionate, merciful neighbor to you."

In its own way, then, the icon of the Feeding of the 5000 pulls all of these themes together. Given a Eucharistic interpretation, the icon manifests Christ Eucharistically giving himself to the faithful through the priestly ministry of the apostles. The icon also manifests what we might call the liturgy after the liturgy: the Eucharistic community of the church facing the world in order to feed those who are hungry through the material gifts of food that Christ supplies. Christ's neighborly presence to the community of the faithful in the Eucharist is simultaneously repeated in the neighborly presence of a Christian community engaged in works of mercy.

It should be clear, I think, why Orthodox Christian communities should cultivate corporate works of mercy. For such works are, if you will, a "natural" extension of the life of a Christian community. Metropolitan Anthony Sourozh wrote that

> if we want to become…a Christian community, a community of people who love one another earnestly, if necessary sacrificially, whose love is prepared to go as far as crucifixion, then we must learn a great deal about our attitude to each other. How can we contemplate the vision of the Cross if we are not prepared to carry one another's burdens, to identify in sympathy and compassion with each other?

But compassion, as I noted above, has no borders. The very cultivation of compassion among the members of a Christian community has to extend to members outside that community. How can people claim to belong to compassionate Christian community and yet be oblivious to and unengaged with people outside the community? Conversely, if we always receive Christ's loving gift of himself as members of a Eucharistic community, how can the community not manifest that same love through "facing the world" in a compassionate and neighborly manner?

Each Orthodox Christian community must face the world if it takes seriously the mission of the Church to bring the Word of God to the world through evangelization. But the Word of God did not simply preach to people. When crowds of

people came to Christ with "those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others," he healed them. After they spent three days with Christ, he refused to send the crowd away hungry, but "moved with compassion," he blessed the meager food the disciples had and mobilized them to feed the people (Matt. 15:30-38, Mk. 8:1-6).

We have a striking witness of a corporate, compassionate attunement to the world in our own monastic tradition. In the Byzantine period of the Church, as Giles Constable notes,

> almost all houses [monastic communities] distributed alms to the poor and to travelers at the gate and provided food and lodging in the guesthouse, and many of them assisted orphans, prisoners, and women who lacked the wherewithal for dowries. The hospital associated with the Pantokrator in Constantinople was unique, but many houses supported hospices, old age homes, and hospitals, and also bridges, which were considered a worthy object of charity.

Finally, I want to note that compassion should make us critically attuned to the kinds of injustice that marginalize, dehumanize, and exclude people from a legitimate participation in their social world. Samaritans were outcasts to Jews, and vice versa. Yet the Good Samaritan's compassionate action implicitly challenged the legitimacy of various negative barriers—psychological and social—by which Jews and Samaritans ostracized each other. If compassion is so often most manifest when directed to those who are marginalized in a society, it is because compassion is fundamentally without borders. As such, compassionate action is attuned to the contrived borders which exclude people from a full participation in their social world. Compassion in principle shatters the artificial and unjust ways in which humans individually and collectively marginalize and dehumanize people. For example, St. Herman of Alaska and other monks of the American Mission sought to defend the Alaskan natives against oppression and exploitation by the Russian American Company headed by Alexander Baranov. Their compassion incurred a particular cross: "for their concern and intervention, the members of the Mission were persecuted, among them Father Herman."

In a similar way, a compassionate response to assisting those who are poor is in principle critically sensitive to attitudes and policies that seek to blame the poor entirely for their poverty. One need only read St. John Chrysostom's many homilies dealing with poverty to see how often he caustically rejects claims by parishioners that the poor did not deserve assistance since they were to blame for their condition. Indeed, St. John pointedly rejects any appeal to Jesus's remark that "the poor are always with you" to justify spending money on beautifying the Church at the expense of directing funds to support the poor and others in need.

> For what is the profit, when His table indeed is full of golden cups, but He perishes with hunger? First fill Him, as one who is hungry, and then abundantly deck out His table also. Do you make Him a cup of gold, while you do not even give Him a cup of cold water? And what is the profit? Do you furnish His table with cloths bespangled with gold, while to Him you do not afford even the necessary covering?

To be sure, St. John is addressing parishioners who would rather have donated money to the Church than to those who were poor. But is there any reason why a parish community should not consider this text to be relevant when it considers how to use its own time, talents, and resources? If it did, it certainly could not automatically justify simply turning entirely towards its own internal "needs" rather than cultivating a communal commitment to facing the world in a compassionate manner. Such a community would not use a text like "the poor shall always be with you" to justify some inevitability or divine sanction to poverty, among other things, as a reason for avoiding compassionate engagement with the world. St. John Chrysostom certainly did not think that poverty in his day was inevitable. He thought it could be eliminated, at least in extreme form, if people were sufficiently willing to share economic resources with one another. Indeed, while St. Cyril of Alexandria acknowledges that in this text, Jesus gives a certain precedence to honoring him over serving the poor or doing works of mercy in general, he denies that this precedent is absolute. In fact he writes that Our Lord himself tells us "it is not necessary always without intermission to devote our time to honoring Him, or to spend everything upon the priestly service, but rather [we should] lay out the greatest part upon the poor." St. Cyril notes that while, at the command of Christ, the apostles devoted themselves to prayer and fasting between his Ascension and Pentecost, they afterwards "eagerly spent all the offerings that were brought to them upon the poor." They did this as leaders of and on behalf of the Church.

Indeed, generosity in service to others pervades the history of the Church in its corporate works of mercy. As Fr. Demetrios Constantelos notes in his discussion of history of corporate philanthropic activity of the Orthodox Church:

> The Church, in the Byzantine era, including its monastic communities, often provided the essentials of social security for a large segment of the population of the Empire throughout its existence…it took under its aegis orphans, widows, the old and the disabled, the stranger and the unemployed; it saw to the release of prisoners of war and of those unjustly detained.

Moreover, Orthodox Christian communities that endeavor to face the world around them in a neighborly, compassionate manner should not shun, but in fact should cultivate, the critical dimension of compassion. There is absolutely no reason why a Christian compassionate attunement to the world should be blind to social and structural factors that harm people. In 2009, for example, the Diocese of Alaska (Orthodox Church in America) "passed a unanimous resolution opposing any development that may be harmful to the people or land of Southwest Alaska." The resolution was passed in opposition to the development of the Pebble Mine in Alaska. In 1989 at its Ninth All American Council, the Orthodox Church in America passed a motion supporting "the abolition of the death penalty in this and all countries" and further recommended that "legislative provisions be made for life imprisonment without possibility of parole for those subject to the death penalty."

Examples like these certainly suggest that there is good reason in principle for Orthodox communities to address as appropriate the institutional and social factors that promote or block the compassionate treatment of people in their local communities.

Fr. Constantelos' observation, thus, is well worth remembering by Orthodox Christians individually and as communities:

> Because of peculiar historical experiences—one might speak of vicissitudes—the Orthodox have often failed to respond to social problems such as racism, peace and war, social justice, and political oppression in a systematic manner…[However] if some Orthodox fail to raise voices of protest against racism, injustice, and oppression, they betray the ethos of their Church. But when they concern themselves with contemporary social problems, they act in full agreement with the nature and character of their Church in history. *IC*

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"Would you see the altar?"

—St. John Chrysostom, referring to the primacy of offering our sacrifices of service on the altar of the lives of all those we meet who are in need.

Bellow: The "altar," together with those who serve there, at Hogar Raphael Orphanage in Guatemala .

Healing in the Parish and the World:
Let Us Go Forth in Peace

by Bishop Kallistos Ware

OUR THEME IS the liturgy after the Liturgy. Consider the word "peace" in the Divine Liturgy: In peace let us pray to the Lord, for the peace from above, and for the peace of the whole world; and also the meaning of the celebrant's greeting, "Peace be with you all." We know the priest is not just transmitting his own peace, but he is transmitting to the congregation the peace of Christ. And peace, we know, is a gift from God.

There is one phrase from the Liturgy in which the word peace figures prominently: "Let us go forth in peace." There are many commandments in the Liturgy, things that we are told to do such as "Lift up your hearts," "Give thanks to the Lord." But, "Let us go forth in peace" is the last commandment of the Liturgy. What does it mean? It means, surely, that the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy is not an end but a beginning. Those words, "Let us go forth in peace," are not a comforting epilogue, they are a call to serve and bear witness. In effect, those words, "Let us go forth in peace," mean the Liturgy is over, the liturgy after the Liturgy is about to begin.

This, then, is the aim of the Liturgy: that we should return to the world with the doors of our perceptions cleansed. We should return to the world after the Liturgy, seeing Christ in every human person, especially in those who suffer. In the words of Father Alexander Schmemann, the Christian is the one who, wherever he or she looks, sees Christ everywhere and rejoices in him. We are to go out, then, from the Liturgy and see Christ everywhere.

"I was hungry. I was thirsty. I was a stranger. I was in prison." Of everyone who is in need, Christ says, "I." Christ is looking at us through the eyes of all the people whom we meet, especially those who are in distress and who are suffering. We go out from the Liturgy, seeing Christ everywhere. But we are to return to the world not just with our eyes open but with our hands strengthened. I remember a hymn as an Anglican that we used to sing at the end of the Eucharist, "Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that holy things have taken." So, we are not only to see Christ in all human persons, but we are to serve Christ in all human persons.

Let us reflect on what happened at the Last Supper. First there was the Eucharistic meal, where Christ blessed bread and gave it to the disciples, "This is my body," and he blessed the cup, "This is my blood." Then, after the Eucharistic meal, Christ kneels and washes the feet of his disciples. The Eucharistic meal and the foot washing are a single mystery. So, we have to apply that to ourselves. We go out from the Liturgy to wash the feet of our fellow humans, literally and symbolically. That is how I understand the words at the end of the Liturgy, "Let us go forth in peace." Peace is to be something dynamic within this broken world. It's not just a quality that we experience within the church walls.

Let's remind ourselves of the way in which St. John Chrysostom envisages this liturgy after the Liturgy. There are, he says, two altars. There is, in the first place, the altar in church, and towards this altar we show deep reverence. We bow in front of it. We decorate it with silver and gold. We cover it with precious hangings. But, continues St. John, there is another altar, an altar that we encounter every day, on which we can offer sacrifice at any moment. And yet towards this second altar, an altar which God himself has made, we show no reverence at all. We treat it with contempt. We ignore it. And what is this second altar? It is, says St. John Chrysostom, the poor, the suffering, those in need, the homeless, all who are in distress. At any moment, he says, when you go out from the church, there you will see an altar on which you can offer sacrifice, a living altar made by Christ.

Developing the meaning of the command, "Let us go forth in peace," let us think of the Liturgy as a journey, Fr. Alexander Schmemann's key image for the Liturgy. We may discern in the Liturgy a movement of ascent and of return. That kind of movement actually happens very frequently. We can see it in the lives of the saints, such as Antony of Egypt or Seraphim of Sarov. First, in the movement of ascent, if you like, or flight from the world, they go out into the desert, into the wilderness, into solitude, to be alone with God. But then there is a moment of return. They open their doors to the world, they receive all who come, they minister and they heal.

There is a similar movement of ascent within the Liturgy. We go to church. It's pleasant to go there; though some people must use cars, I like to walk from my home to church before the Divine Liturgy, to walk alone if I can. It's only about ten minutes, but I find it quite important to have that movement, a sense of going to church, a sense, if you like, of a separation from the world and starting on a journey. I walk to church, and I enter the church building, into a sacred space and sacred time. This is the beginning of the movement of ascent: we go to the church. Then, continuing the movement of ascent, we bring to the altar gifts of bread and wine and offer them to Christ. The movement of ascent is completed when Christ accepts this offering, consecrates it, makes the bread and wine to be his body and blood.

After the ascent comes the return. The bread and wine that we offered to Christ, he then gives back to us in Holy Communion as his body and blood.

But the movement of return doesn't stop there. Having received Christ in the

Holy Gifts, we then go out from the church, going back to the world to share Christ with all those around us.

Let's develop this idea a little. Receiving Christ's body, we become what he is. We become the body of Christ. But gifts are for sharing. We become Christ's body not for ourselves but for others. We become Christ's body in the world and for the world. So the Eucharist impels believers to specific action in society, action that will be challenging and prophetic. The Eucharist is the start of cosmic transfiguration, and each communicant shares in this transfiguring work.

Our title suggest a connection between peace and healing in the parish and the world, and I can't possibly deal with all the things suggested by it. But let me, in light of the bit about "Let us go forth in peace," pose a few questions about the different levels of Eucharistic healing and transfiguration in the world.

First a question about our parish life. Perhaps this is not true everywhere, but it's true of some parishes I've known. I've often wondered why our parish council meetings, and more particularly the annual general meetings of parishes, are such a disappointment? To me it's very surprising that often there's a rather dark spirit at work in the annual general meetings of parishes. The picture given of our parish life is actually deeply misleading. All the good things seem to be hidden—perhaps that's as it should be—but we get a very distorted picture. There seems often to be an atmosphere of tension and hostility at annual general meetings in parishes.

I've often wondered why that is. How to bring a truly Eucharistic spirit into such gatherings? How can we bring the peace of the Divine Liturgy into the other aspects of our parish life? I don't have an easy answer, but I think behind this first question there lurks another question. How can we make the Divine Liturgy more manifestly a shared and corporate action? In my own experience, the parish where I am, we began worshiping just in a room, and at that time it was not difficult to have a very strong feeling of the Liturgy as a unified action in which everybody was sharing because we were all so close to one another, and there was only a few of us.

Some of the most moving Liturgies I've ever attended have not been in churches with great marble floors and huge candelabra but in small house chapels in a room or even in a garage. Now, gradually our community has grown. Twenty-five years ago, we built ourselves a church, and now that church is too small and we're working towards enlarging the church in order to be able to have room for all the worshipers. Now that is, in a sense, encouraging, but there is a real struggle here. As a parish grows larger and as it acquires a larger building, it becomes much harder to preserve the corporate spirit, the sense of a single family, the sense of all of us doing something together. It becomes much harder to preserve that.

I haven't any easy answers, but that is one level on which I ask, "How can we bring peace and healing into a community that's growing ever larger, and therefore that is bound to lose its sense of close coherence, unless we struggle to preserve it?"

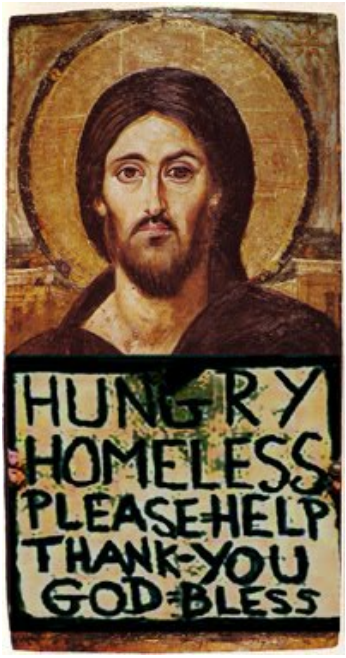
There is another level of healing that occurs to me quite frequently at the Divine

Liturgy. We often have present non-Orthodox Christians and we are not able to give them Holy Communion by the rules of our Church. Now, I'm sure all of you have reflected on the reasons why the Orthodox Church takes this straight line over inter-communion. The act of Communion, we say, involves our total acceptance of the faith. It involves our total life in the Church. Therefore we cannot share in Communion with other Christians who—however much we may love them—we recognize as holding a different understanding of the Christian faith, and are therefore divided from us.

This is, we know, the argument why we cannot have inter-communion. But I think we should constantly ask ourselves if we are right to take this position? In fact I think we are, but I would say go on asking yourself in your heart if it's the right thing to do. We Orthodox are becoming increasingly isolated on this issue. In my young days, most Anglicans would have taken the same view, and would have said they could not have Communion with Protestants. That's certainly not the case now in the Anglican Church. Also, Roman Catholics held this view very strictly, but since Vatican II, whatever the official regulations may be, in the practice of the Roman Catholic Church there is widespread inter-communion. But we Orthodox continue as we were. Are we right? And if we do continue to uphold a strict line on inter-communion, in what spirit are we doing this? Is it in a spirit of peace and healing?

I remember at the beginning of my time as priest, the first occasion, and I still feel the wound inwardly, when persons came up for Communion whom I knew were not Orthodox. I felt that it was my duty as priest not to give them Communion. I was really interested in the reaction of two different parishioners. One said to me, "You did quite right! We cannot give Communion to these heretics. The Orthodox Church is the one true church." He saw that in triumphalist terms. That made me feel even worse. But then another parishioner came up, and he said, in a very different tone of voice, "Yes, you were right, but how tragic, how sad, that we had to do this." Then I thought, yes, we do have to do this, but we should never do it in an aggressive spirit of superiority but always with a sense of deep sorrow in our hearts. We should mind very much that we cannot yet have Communion together. Incidentally, both of those two parishioners are now Orthodox priests themselves. I think the first one, over the years, has grown a little less triumphalist. I hope we all do, but I'm not sure

whether that always happens.



Then I'd like to reflect on a third level of healing. Let me take as my basis here the words said just before the Epiclesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, at the heart of the Liturgy. The deacon lifts the Holy Gifts, and the celebrant says, "Thine own from Thine own, we offer Thee." And in usual translation, it continues, "in all and for all." But that translation could be misleading. It could be understood as meaning "for all human persons, for everyone." In fact in Greek, it is not masculine, it is neuter—"for in all things, and for all things." At that moment, we do not just speak about human persons, we speak about all created things. A more literal translation would be, "In all things and for all things."

This shows us that the liturgy after the Liturgy involves service not just to all persons, but ministry to the whole creation, to all created things. The Eucharist, thus, commits us to an ecological healing. That is underlined in the words of Fr. Lev: "Peace of the whole world." It means, says Fr. Lev, peace not just for humans, but all creatures—for animals and vegetables, stars, for all nature. Cosmic piety and cosmic healing. Ecology has become mildly fashionable and often has quite strong political associations. We Orthodox, along with other Christians, must involve ourselves fully on behalf of the environment, but we must do so in the name of the Divine Liturgy. We must put our ecological witness in the context of Holy Communion.

I'm very much encouraged by the initiatives taken recently by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Twenty some years ago, the then Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios issued a Christmas encyclical saying that when we celebrate the Incarnation of Christ, his taking of a human body, we should also see that as God's blessing upon the whole creation. We should understand the incarnation in cosmic terms. He goes on in his encyclical to call all of us to show, and I quote, "towards the creation an ascetic and Eucharistic spirit." An ascetic spirit helps us distinguish between wants and needs. The real point being not what I want.

The real point, then, is what I need. I want a great many things that I don't in fact need. The first step towards cosmic healing is for me to make a distinction between the two, and as far as possible, to stick just to what I need. People want more and more. That's going to bring disaster on ourselves if we go on selfishly increasing our demands. But we don't in fact need more and more to be truly human. That's what I understand to define an ascetic spirit. Fasting indeed can help us to distinguish between what we want and what we need. Good to do without things, because then

we realize that, yes, we can use them, but we can also forego them, we are not dependent on material things. We have freedom.

If we have a Eucharistic spirit, we realize all is a gift to be offered back in thanksgiving to God the Giver. Developing this theme, the Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios, followed by his successor, the present Patriarch Bartholomew, have dedicated the first of September, the New Year in the Orthodox calendar, as a day of creation, when we give thanks to God for his gifts, when we ask forgiveness for the way we have misused those gifts, and when we pray that we may be guided for the right use of them in the future. There's a phrase that often comes to my mind from the special service "When in danger of earthquake." "The earth, though without words, yet cries aloud, 'Why, all peoples, do you inflict upon me such evil?'" And we are inflicting great evil on the earth. Interesting to see earthquakes as the earth groaning because of what we do to it!

Finally, I ask you to think for a moment about one of our Gospel readings. What happens when the risen Christ on the first Easter Sunday appears to his disciples? Christ says first to the disciples, "Peace be unto you." The first thing that Christ speaks after rising from the dead is peace. Then what does he do? He shows them his hands and his side. Why does he do that? For recognition. Yes, to show that here he is, the one whom they saw three days before crucified; here he is, risen from the dead in the same body in which he suffered and died. But there's surely more to it than that. What he is doing is showing that, though he is risen from the dead, yet he still bears upon him the marks of his suffering. In the heart of the risen and glorified Christ, there is still a place for our human suffering. When Christ rises from the dead and ascends into heaven, he does not disengage himself from this broken world. On the contrary, he still carries on his body the marks of his suffering and he carries in his heart all our burdens. When he says before his ascension, "See I am with you, even to the end of the world," surely he means, "I am with you in your distress and in your suffering." Glorified, he is still with us. He has not rejected our suffering, nor disassociated himself from us.

We see from the Gospel how peace goes with cross bearing. Having given peace to his disciples, the risen Christ immediately shows them the marks of the Cross. Peace means healing and wholeness, but we have to add, peace also means vulnerability. Peace, we might say, doesn't mean the absence of struggle or temptation or suffering. As long as we are in this world, we are to expect temptation and suffering. As St. Antony of Egypt said, "Take away temptation and nobody will be saved." So peace doesn't mean the absence of struggle, but peace means commitment, firmness of purpose, clarity of vision, an undivided heart, and a willingness to bear the burdens of others. When Paul says, "See, I bear in my body the marks, the stigmata, of Christ crucified," he is describing his state of peace. *IC*

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware is Titular Metropolitan of Diokleia under the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Metropolitan Ware lives in England. This essay was edited from a talk given at the Orthodox Peace Fellowship retreat in Vézelay, France in April 1999.

The King's Jubilee:

A ministry to the homeless of Philadelphia

by Cranford Coulter

> *For we are His workmanship; created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).*

The "Jubilee" in our name stems from the desire to fulfill the Lord's ministry of facilitating the flow of His abundance to those in society in desperate need of a second chance. It is "The King's" jubilee because the ministry and all that we share, all who share it, and every street, park, home, and prison where it is shared belongs to Jesus Christ the King.

In the Law of Moses, every 7th year was to be a Sabbath year and every fiftieth year (the year after the seventh Sabbath year) was to be a Jubilee year when the fields were to lie fallow, all debts were to be canceled, land was to be redistributed, and slaves were to be freed for the year to give them opportunity to earn enough to buy their freedom permanently (Leviticus 25-27).

The Sabbath and Jubilee years were an acknowledgment that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," that land, the most fundamental "capital" in an agrarian society, cannot be owned by men but belongs to the Lord and could thus only be used for a time. They also declared that our God is a God of "second chances." Every seventh and fiftieth year, those who had made bad decisions, landing them in poverty, debt, or bondage were given an opportunity to work themselves into a better situation. The Jubilee was to start with the blowing of horns and the lifting of a great shout, followed by a radical social realignment and land redistribution—another shot for all to live in freedom! But, the Jews never truly observed the Sabbath years or the Jubilee. That is why they went into captivity and remained one year for every Sabbath year they had neglected.

Isaiah 61, pointing to the ministry of Christ and his Church, suggests a continual Jubilee as the Spirit proclaims "the acceptable year of the Lord." The Church was quick to get about the business of the Jubilee. The Epistle of St. James promotes economic equality and balance saying "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away" (Jms. 1:9-10). The Apostle Paul spent one of his journeys collecting to provide for those suffering from a famine, encouraging the Corinthians to give willingly "that there may be equality" (2 Cor. 8:13).

From 1985 to 1988, I worked as a full-time, volunteer prison chaplain and coordinated the work of over 500 volunteers in 10 separate prison populations in

Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties and Graterford State Prison. While serving in that capacity, I learned firsthand of the glaring disparities between rich and poor, between whites, blacks, and browns, and between suburbanites and inner city urbanites. I saw Montgomery County become one of the wealthiest in the country because of white flight from Philadelphia.

Seeking an authentic voice and wanting to address larger and more complicated issues, like land use and zoning, discrimination, addiction, welfare dependency, absentee fathers, and depersonalization in our society, I listened to the inmates at Graterford who told me I needed to help care for the homeless in Philadelphia. I took that as my "Macedonian call" and began serving meals to homeless people one night a week with Deacons Marvin Walker and Les Bodger.

In February 1989, my wife Bethann and I, together with our four daughters, and a few friends, formed The King's Jubilee. We began assisting a storefront church that was already going out three nights each week to feed homeless people in Center City (downtown Philadelphia) by taking responsibility for one night ourselves. The next year, Nancy Karpinski wanted to start serving meals and sharing clothes among the poor (especially the children) on the streets of Pottstown and Stowe. We helped organize that and oversaw that work for several years. One thing led to another until The King's Jubilee had weekly outreaches in seven towns spread across five counties in two states. In addition, there were other deliveries of material aid to various ministries on various occasions. Plus we provided free concerts and picnics in parks, a Monday Evening Bible Institute, and more.

Over time some of these ministries continued independently as local efforts, but most discontinued as conditions changed or volunteers got tired or passed away. We always saw that as OK: "It is accepted according to what a man has, not what he has not." The King's Jubilee continues, however, to serve a hot dinner to between 75 and 175 people in the park across the street from the family court building, at 18th and Vine Sts. in Philadelphia every Thursday evening at eight o'clock. We also distribute clothing, blankets, and toiletries. Some evenings, we give away "power packs" which can serve as a breakfast or lunch for the next day.

We get to know people and try to help in practical ways, like hooking people up with job training, helping people moving into permanent housing with cleaning supplies and equipment through our Operation Clean Start program, and helping people starting out with stocked cupboards and furniture items. We exchange phone numbers so we can stay in touch to try to help people transition into their new neighborhood. We also gather and pass on resources to other front-line ministries who do not receive government money.

My 2004 Scion xB, our mobile ministry platform, has been referred to as a clown car for a couple of reasons: it is rather colorfully decorated with decals, and occasionally spills out more people than it should be able to carry.

The checker-patterned splats on the four fenders and on the tailgate are called

QR codes. They allow people to simply point their smart phones at the code and click and it takes them to our website. I added them to the car (the TKJ Mobile) after I observed someone typing the website into his smart phone while driving next to me and reading the side of my car. This is much safer. The decals always attract interest. People see them as we drive and want to donate or get involved. Recently, we received seven large bags of winter coats that employees at Selas Fluid Processing Corp. had gathered. One had seen the TKJ Mobile and shot the QR code.

Another time, while I was parked at the bank talking on my phone, a woman stood waiting by my window. I ended the call, rolled down my window, and greeted her. She asked, "Do you take in homeless children?" and told me she was about to kick her 26 year old son out of the house. I told her that he wasn't a child, but began to discuss alternatives. Since then, we have been working with this troubled young man who struggles with heroin addiction and his family. He has helped serve on the street and with the cooking. He enjoys helping and is a skilled chef. We see this part of the ministry as homelessness prevention.

The TKJ Mobile is used as sort of a community car. People have used it when their car is in the shop, it has been to Canada to help some poor Vietnamese neighbors bless a baby, it has been to numerous court dates and to the county assistance office, and has met countless buses and trains and a few planes. I put Mercedes stars on it, because the people we carry are worthy of high class treatment. Frequently it runs on gas paid for by others, for which I am grateful. On more than one occasion, five adult men have traveled, more or less comfortably in it, along with a considerable amount of gear. It's when we arrive somewhere to serve and people just keep getting out that I sometimes get the clown car crack. *IC*

For more information, inspiration, or to donate go to www.shoutforjoy.net. Cranford is an OPF member and occasionally posts on our Facebook page.

Peace in the Parish

by Anthony S. Bashir and Fr. John Mefrige

> *Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift (Matthew 5:23–24).*

Pastors, parishioners and parish councils often find themselves in conflict with each other—conflicts that arise from misunderstandings, differences in interests and values, competition for position and power, and sinful actions. St. James teaches that conflict and quarrels are caused by the preeminence of our desires and passions. When left unfilled, these demands and passions lead us to resent and accuse one another; conflict arises, and the result is enmity and our separation from Christ.

Inordinate attachment to our differences and demands often leads us into conflict with one another. The desires for control that fire these differences are self-centered and divisive, seeking their own satisfaction, often at any cost. When they are not satisfied, disappointments arise, leading us to make more unreasonable demands of others, to judge others for not fulfilling our desires or doing what we think is right. We act in divisive ways, and finally punish others or retaliate through our actions, with accusations, arguments, gossip, hatred, and more. Conflict has painful effects on us, wounding and tearing the fabric of our oneness in Christ Jesus.

When conflict in a parish is not addressed in a skillful and spiritual manner, it can become corrosive, with grave consequences for pastors and parishioners alike. The more prolonged and contentious the conflict, the more harm done. Conflict, however, offers us an important opportunity to serve other people as stewards, to grow through these practices toward a union with Christ (theosis) and to give glory to God.

In resolving a conflict, we trust in God's compassion and mercy, taking responsibility for the role we have had in it, allowing ourselves to be restored, genuinely seeking peace and reconciliation, and forgiving each other as Christ has forgiven us. We consider the words of the Prophet Isaiah, who says, "O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for indeed, all that we have done, you have done for us" (Is. 26:12).

God loved us so much that we were reconciled with him through Christ Jesus and redeemed from our estrangement. St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans states, "We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation" (Rom. 5:11). Consequently, there is an urgent need for peacemaking efforts and reconciliation within our everyday lives and within the life of the Church. In fact, peacemaking and reconciliation are essential ministries of the Church. A ministry of peacemaking and reconciliation and its practices are

committed to building up the body of Christ and His Church. The mission of this peacemaking ministry focuses on teaching practices that bring about the resolution of conflict through reconciliation. This resolution allows movement through forgiveness to communion, where once there was conflict and enmity.

In June 2010, Metropolitan Philip (Antiochian Archdiocese of North America) approved the creation of a ministry for peacemaking and reconciliation within the Department of Lay Ministry of the Archdiocese. Since then, several of us (Frs. John Mefrige and Timothy Ferguson, Dr. John Dalack, Anthony Bashir) have sought professional training in peacemaking and reconciliation within spiritual communities. Our approach is grounded in the teachings of the Orthodox Church and incorporates scriptural and patristic teachings. With the approval of the Metropolitan, we have begun to work with a few parishes, focusing on their desire once again to be reconciled one to the other and to let their "light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

This ministry is an initiative in support of our Hierarchy, our clergy, and our churches. The goal is to implement a healthy and spiritual process that focuses on conflict resolution and reconciliation. At this time, the Department is preparing to offer professionally trained crisis-intervention teams to help local parishes embroiled in destructive conflict. It is our belief that the Orthodox Christian mediator is an unbiased person who serves many functions, including convening, facilitating communication and understanding, building trust, modeling behavior, generating alternatives, and bearing witness.

When our department is invited to a parish and given permission to intervene by the Metropolitan, we will follow a specific process that includes an assessment of the current conflict and a determination of readiness for intervention. Our mediation efforts follow a specific process: ground rules are established, opening statements are made, stories are heard, problems identified and clarified, solutions explored, and agreements made. Conflict coaching and conflict mediation have

WHEN CONFLICT IN A PARISH IS NOT ADDRESSED IN A SKILLFUL AND SPIRITUAL MANNER, IT CAN BECOME CORROSIVE, WITH GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR PASTORS AND PARISHIONERS ALIKE.

Pastor, I'm having a little problem with a friend. I wonder if you could have a chat with him."

distinct phases that incorporate the Scriptures as well as the Church Fathers in an open, fair, and honest dialogue directed to reconciliation and forgiveness.

As this ministry grows, we will want to recruit and train qualified individuals within each of the dioceses so as to build a team of well-prepared Orthodox Christian mediators who will be available, as needed, for peacemaking and reconciliation initiatives. Specific information and qualifications concerning team membership will be made available upon request. We will work through the Metropolitan's office so that we might be in contact with local bishops, who could assist us in identifying potential members for this department. Our goal is to create a department that works in harmony with diocesan representatives who are prepared and trained in this ministry to the glory of God. *IC*

For information regarding this ministry or for answers to specific questions, please contact Fr. John or Anthony Bashir at one of the following e-mail addresses: anthony_bashir@emerson.edu, frjohnmefrige@aol.com. *IC* published an article by Fr. John titled "Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution in the Church" in issue 57, Summer 2010.

"Christ is our Reconciliation" was made for Pax Christi International at the Monastery of St. John in the Desert, near Jerusalem.

The idea arose in the context of the movement's program in the Middle East in 1999.

The icon depicts Christ as the source of reconciliation, the source of liberation and peace. It is an icon symbolizing in itself the living connection between Eastern and Western traditions in expressing the peace of Christ.

At present it is displayed at the International Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium.

The upper part of the icon shows the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau, surrounded by St. Stephen, the first martyr; St. Mary Magdalene; St. Sophia and her three daughters, Faith, Hope and Love; St. Clare of Assisi; St. Francis of Assisi; and Sts. Boris and Gleb. A significant element of the story of Jacob and Esau is that, in the end, it was the one who was hurt, Esau, who made the final offer of reconciliation.

At the foot of the picture the title of the icon, "Christ our Reconciliation," is written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.

The central icon in the lower half depicts Jesus teaching his disciples the "Our Father" prayer, which is also written at the bottom in Aramaic. The message is that Jesus is the bringer of peace on "earth as it is in Heaven."

The surrounding, smaller icons depict some other themes from Scripture: Sarah and Isaac, Hagar and Ishmael, the Samaritan woman and Jesus, and the Syro-Phoenician woman.

The Woman Jezebel:

Thoughts on the False Christian Character of Fascism

by Miltiadis Konstantinou and Efstathios C. Lianos-Liantis

> *But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jez'ebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. (Rev. 2:20).*

We should begin with a persistent historical paradox: When fascism and Nazism became the dominant state ideologies in Europe, the great Christian confessions did not resist them. They did not put forward the crucified Christ as a counter to the armbands and swastikas, nor did they contrast the word of Gospel with the hate-filled speech of the fascists. They kept quiet, they went along, they blessed, but they did not oppose. And this stands—and will always stand—as a shameful chapter in the history of the dominant Christian groups of those times. The Church, however, is not (only) its hierarchical bodies and administration; the Church is, primarily, the saints and martyrs of every age. The Church was founded and will ever be founded on the blood of its martyrs; and those Christians who confessed the truth of Christ and were persecuted, imprisoned, and executed by the fascists are its modern boast. As has always happened throughout history, the Christian truth was reconfirmed by the bravery and martyrdom of a few.

No Christian confession today wants to recall Nazi collaborators or accept the timid apology of members who supported them without the criteria of truthfulness. Everyone—almost everyone, if we take into account the unique case of Cardinal Stepinac—has been condemned to oblivion. And one would that after the disclosure of fascism's hideous crimes against unarmed minorities and the Holocaust in its entirety, the Christian world would permanently delete any ideological reference to or sympathy for it. For some, however, this remains fascism's "secret lure."

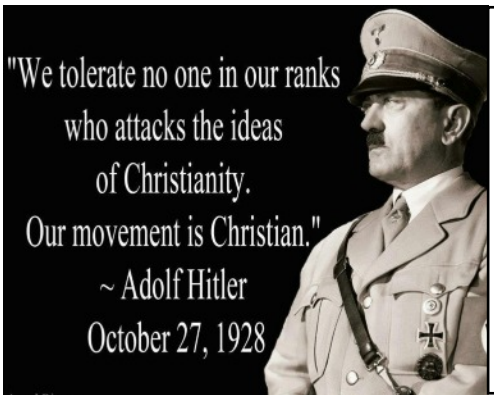
Despite its inherently anti-Christian stance, the lure of fascism as a movement is in how it employs traditionalistic values and "deifies" the concept of the nation (and therefore, the superego of a people), esteeming a particular society solely because it belongs to a certain racial [ethnic, cultural, etc.] group. These are the points that correspond to certain inflexible notions of a part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which—leaving aside the Christian message's universal perspective and the radical equality proclaimed by Christ and his disciples—simply repeats history, and, in a completely arbitrary way, prefers to barricade the Church within the limits of the nation-state, making it hostile toward foreigners and those who are different. And precisely when Christian identity is turned into a paradox, or nullified altogether, at least for a conscientious member of the Church, one adopts a kind of fascism.

In 1933, when the fragile Weimar Republic was succeeded by Nazi totalitarianism, the National-Socialist theorists tried to construct a fake Christian confession, which would serve the fascist state machine. The main thrust of what they called "positive Christianity" essentially negated the fundamental principles of the Christian faith, replacing Christianity with a racist, neo-pagan construct, which simply used the name of Christ. Their stated intentions included the rejection of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture and the "de-Judaizing" of the New Testament (especially the Gospel of Matthew and the Pauline Epistles), the view that the Reformation was being fulfilled in the "messianic" figure of Adolf Hitler, the racial identification of Jesus as an Aryan, and the replacement of Jewish elements of Christianity with ancient German traditions and Druid myths.

A handful of German pastors, theologians, and lay people reacted to these positions, as well as to the creation of the Reichskirche, the Nazi "church," and formed the Bekennende Kirche (Confessing Church) in an attempt to resist the growing fascism in the Protestant confession. In their Theological Declaration at Barmen, the leaders of the Bekennende Kirche noted: "We reject the false doctrine, as though the Church in human arrogance could place the Word and work of the Lord in the service of any arbitrarily chosen desires, purposes, and plans." The leading figures in this small group of exiled Christians were herded into concentration camps and some were executed, even up to the very end of the war. Among those distinguished by the vigor of their spirit are the great Karl Barth and the "martyr" Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The subsequent vindication of the Christian resistance was not complete, however, because responsibility was never assigned to the members of the Church, the common people, who, rejecting Christian love, loved the metaphysical "I" of the nation or the race.

Words and Deeds need to harmonize.

Imagine the Word, incomprehensible without God acting in history. Imagine Christianity, merely a good idea without the Holy Spirit working in the Church. Imagine humanity, utterly lost without the Church serving in the world.



I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME, I WAS NAKED AND YOU CLOTHED ME, I WAS SICK AND YOU VISITED ME, I WAS IN PRISON AND YOU CAME TO ME ... AS YOU ***DID*** IT TO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN, YOU DID IT TO ME. ~JESUS

Christianity can be true only when it is chosen, exists, and ministers with absolute freedom, and is inspired by love, as described beautifully in Greek by Paul. Any other form of Christianity is fake, because it tarnishes the image of man as a creature of God's love and abolishes its expression of the Word's redemptive, loving sacrifice. Fascism is incompatible with this freedom of love—as well as with freedom of expression and conscience—and this is precisely why it cannot be Christian. The Church is the Body of Christ when it accepts and embraces everyone; the Fathers, typically, did not consider those who consciously place themselves outside the Church as adversaries, but rather as "potential" members of the Church. Fascism always operates the same way: it singles out a social group and presents it as "the enemy" in order to incite people's emotions, trigger their instinct for self-preservation, and rally their followers. The Church—the true Church—embraces its enemies; fascism constructs its enemies, and then banishes or executes them.

In the exquisite hymn sung before the Epitaphion on Good Friday, Joseph of Arimathea beseeches Pilate to give him Jesus' dead body with the following words: "Give me the foreigner, foreign as a foreigner from childhood. Give me the foreigner, killed as a foreigner." The first foreigner in Christian history was Christ himself; he who in his earthly life was a refugee, persecuted, a political prisoner, who died as a criminal on the cross, talking about his "kingdom" to a thief.

The foreigner, the "other," is a sanctified entity in the body of the living Church. He is the one whom the community of believers will help and embrace as if he were Christ himself, just as Christ said: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me….Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:35-40). Can this practice of welcoming and actively supporting the foreigner coexist with the abysmal hatred and violence birthed by fascism and similar ideologies?

Today, when fascism is making its appearance once again on the social map, threatening our fellow man, the leaders of the Church should not be silent. A repetition of the errors of the period between the two World Wars and pastoral indifference will lead to a crushing rejection of our ecclesiastical leaders and, perhaps, even Christianity itself. Indeed, Orthodoxy, which is the dominant faith in this country [Greece], was in its golden age when it identified itself with the powerless, when it chose to be persecuted for the truth. As Fotios Kontoglou beautifully describes it in one of his short essays: "The Orthodoxy of that time was like the tortured mother whose children grieved her more rather than herself being complacent. True love is what they call painful love, on which Christ founded his sweet faith." *IC*

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Poetry

a poem:

Christ Has No Body

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body. (Teresa of Avila, 1515–1582)

a prayer:

Lord, teach me

to live as one who calls the whole world home, abiding
humbly, grateful, as a guest and a stranger,
mindful that my home is elsewhere;

to share fully yet humbly the responsibility
of community life with a few
and the work of neighborly peace with all;

to serve all with whom I share
the habitation of this world,
as a citizen of your heavenly kingdom;

to serve your people fraternally,
wherever we find each other,
as a citizen of your Church
and a member together with them of the family of God. Amen

(An OPF member)

a reading:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (1 Peter 2:9-21)

Recommended Reading

Believing in Russia: Religious Policy after Communism

by Geraldine Fagan
Routledge, 2013, 291 pp.
Reviewed by Fr. Stephen Headley

The following article is an expanded review, relevant to this issue's theme, as we continue to also explore the Russian Church's role in Russian society and politics.

The title of this new publication *Believing in Russia* captures the ambiguity the author is studying. On the one hand, there is the question of nationalism: How do politicians encourage belief in Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union? On the other, the question of the plural expressions of religious belief as they have blossomed over the last twenty-five years: How does Russian society "share" common spaces in the Russian Federation? For general readers interested in the subject of religion in Russian public and political life, the book provides a "comprehensive overview of religious policy in Russia since the end of the communist regime," written in an easily accessible, journalistic style. For someone like myself who has published a book on Orthodox parish life in Moscow, and other scholars, this book provides an indispensable complement to any detailed study of what Russians "believe in." Fagan examines the pursuit of privilege of the Russian Orthodox Church, it's relation to national culture, its courtship of the State, and its indisputable place in Russian history juxtaposed against a pluralistic, "secularized" society mostly nominally religious, with a diverse cultural heritage. The documentation provided by 82 pages of notes gathered over the author's ten years reporting from all over the vast Russian Federation for the Forum 18 News Service is invaluable. She draws an arrow through history and tradition, all inclusive empire, Soviet homogenization, and a fractured modern State—not

The altar of the tiny stone church of the parish of St. Stephen and St. Germain in Vezelay, France where Fr. Stephen serves as priest.

entirely lost but looking for its way—that points to a conclusion that "Russian society's continuing failure to reach a consensus on the role of religion in public life is destabilizing the nation."

While most human rights organizations take the moral high ground and blame the politicians for the unfortunate policies and lobbying that characterize contemporary Russia, Fagan does not bring to her analysis a preconceived opinion about who is a devil and who is an angel. She describes in detail different individual's political posturing, time and again showing that the same person changes positions over the same issues, revealing that no neat classification into fundamentalist, conservative, and liberal works in describing the Russian reality. Fagan seeks out this broader understanding of the country Russians grew up in and live in; although one assumes she is Orthodox, she never makes the mistake of thinking she is a Russian Orthodox. She is always alert for elements of the puzzle she hasn't yet grasped. All the authors of books written in English which I have previously read about contemporary Russia—some forty volumes worth—never seem to recover after discovering the appalling lack of legal culture in the Russia Federation. Non-Russian authors are invariably content to point out how the Russian government is violating its own constitution. In the United States, violations of constitutional law do not go unpunished, but in the Russian Federation one is pleasantly surprised if such a contradiction is even noticed. Fagan does not fall into these traps.

Fagan concedes that while many are trumpeting that Russia without Orthodoxy is not Russia, she subscribes to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's claim that the days of homogenous mono-religious nationhood are past and today pluralism is the best policy for the common good of all believers. Such freedom of conscience, the ability to practice one's own beliefs, is foundational to any authentic practice of a belief, be it Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, or Christian. In the past, Russian non-conformity (i.e. the Old Believers) has tended to take an eschatological turn, but in 2013 how does one deal with the Slavophile conviction that "their native land is protected by God"? If Russian Orthodox Christians are ready to admit that the millions who died under Stalin suffered so horribly because of the collective treason of their church, what is left of the notion of Holy Russia?

While "the Kremlin is growing ever more reliant upon cynical identification with national values in order to protect the elite," Putin's state functions more or less incoherently in terms of its own priorities legislating (half-heartedly) communality and obligation for the Russian Church in order to heighten its own sagging national prestige. It is away from the national stage where "the Kremlim's fundamental indifference to religious freedom has allowed junior and regional state officials to pursue an Orthodox-centered religious policy in defiance of federal standards." This fits uncomfortably with the lobbying of the Russian Orthodox Church as it tries to co-opt Russian public space where "the Russian Orthodox Church asserts itself as the definitive expression of Russian nationhood." For Fagan any identification of

Orthodoxy with so-called national values on the part of the elite, who are "oblivious to religious freedom concerns," is a cynical maneuver to protect their own interests.

Fagan claims that individuality is a "central concern to Orthodoxy," but only rarely does she point out how readily this same individualism is a potent tool of state secularism. She concedes that the Church is appalled by the practices of "laicite" in France, but if the Russian bishops were to give up on the collective salvation of the Rus, they believe they would be opening the door to a modern religious market for personal salvation rather than maintaining a vision of salvation as a sacrament. The Patriarchate is looking for a way to resist turning religion from a social to a private affair of individual persons each representing his own faith. As the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church entered the 1990's, they had already decided that they were not prepared to indifferently share spaces with Catholics, or Lutherans, let alone Pentecostals, Baptists, and Jehovah's Witnesses. From outside this is viewed as sectarian! The last two patriarchs lobbied for historical pride of place in a hierarchy of traditional Russia religions. This has had legal repercussions restricting public space for Protestants, who, predictably, "protested."

In fact most people are agnostics or atheists. The fact that one is Kalmyk, for instance, does not make one more Buddhist any more than the fact that one is Russian makes one Orthodox. Seen from the perspective of the Patriarchate however, religious freedom contributes to a much sought after blurring of theological borders in just the way the secular European Union has tried to foster pluralism through secularization elsewhere in Eastern Europe. So how does one undo, deny, or go beyond Russia's Orthodox past? Should all the churches in the Kremlin be re-made into museums, and liturgical services be banned there? Forced arrangements for salvation have always proved catastrophic, but so have forced efforts to secularize. Finally Fagan fears that the future of Christianity in Russia will be compromised by the Orthodox inability in the last twenty-five years to adapt a genuinely pluralistic attitude faced with what was an aggressive Protestant proselytism. Does the one excuse the other?

But who is this Orthodox church that is lobbying for primacy in the Russian Federation? The Russian Orthodox Church is not monolithic. It is in doctrinal unity with all the other synods of Orthodox bishops who define doctrine conciliarly. What is more, there has always been a decentralizing, "strong lateral authority" arising from the prominent roles of spiritual fathers (*startsy*) in the practice of the Orthodox faith in Russia, which was reinforced by the Soviet oppression of the official church hierarchy. Fagan states: "Therefore, the current Church state accommodation is once again the outcome of a balance of very modern interests." In politics this also means that the Holy Synod can only support the Kremlin up to a point in the current atmosphere where the faithful have little good to say about their government.

If for the government an artificial homogeneity of religions facilitates administration, for the Patriarchate genuine freedom of conscience is a purely

religious matter. Fagan insists that from within a political science point of view, because the state regards some of its citizens as second class because of their religion, these citizens will at some point revolt. This point is considered notably true of Muslims. Recognizing Muslims as full-fledged members of society means, as Fagan puts it, recognizing a real Islam "not shaped to fit someone's 'common human values.'" As can be expected from someone working for Forum 18 News Service, Fagan considers such abuse a legal problem for the State to address: "the post-Soviet deterioration of religious freedom for all, across Russian territory, is contributing to perilous fragmentation of the nation's single constitution space."

In section 5, titled "Fight Thine Enemy," Fagan presents an interesting analysis of extra-legal tools invented to close down Protestant churches and sects. A new terminology was popularized with neologisms such as "totalitarian sects," "spiritual security," "canonical territory," and "traditional religions." These were used to generate animosity towards non-established religious groups. What lies behind the possibility of creating prejudice against expressions of Christian faith other than Orthodoxy? While Fagan does not deal with the answer, it lies in the space between two realities: the average Orthodox of Russia has an undeniably limited understanding of his/her faith, yet he/she may well have a basic intuition that whatever truth is revealed about God in the New testament, it is not subject to constant reinterpretation the likes of which they imagine the Protestants and Catholics are introducing—*theologoumena* that relativize the basic truths of the Orthodox faith reducing them to the status of just one more opinion.

When one combines this suspicion of non-Orthodox with the complete lack of pluralism that characterized the twentieth-century secularized Soviet Union, one can grasp the reasons for Orthodox intolerance. Inversely, one could hardly have expected the Protestant missionary to understand, to take into consideration, the Orthodox mindset which they were trying to displace or even subvert, for Western Christianity is separated at the grass roots by some five hundred years of separate "European" histories, and that is despite the first secularization of Russia under Peter the Great. What is lacking is a culture of dialogue that is based on an understanding of where the other party is coming from. A better educated Russian might try to explain to a Jehovah's Witness or a Pentecostal why he cannot accept their expression of Christianity, but that is the privilege of those whose faith has been deepened by a real familiarity with the Bible and Church history.

The secular mentality which many missionaries bring with them to the Russian Federation, even when they are fundamentalists, leads them to suppose that this highly secularized Russia is like where they came from, a place where one can occupy a "religiously neutral zone open to value-neutral inquiry and deliberation." But in Russia there is no continuity between a Christian understanding of the good and a modern Western liberal comprehension of the good. The good belongs to Christ as He loves and to mankind, making a commonwealth of faith called the

Church; and in Russia for the last thousand years, this has meant the Russian Orthodox Church, which has often failed its faithful but has also accompanied them through all their trials. The fundamentalists' materialization of the revealed truths of scripture cannot be expected to capture the Russian sense of what sharing spaces means, for the recent and less recent arrivals have a mobility across continents and oceans that the Russian Orthodox do not possess. Raimundo Panikar writing of Indian converts to Christianity some thirty years ago notes that "the problem of pluralism arises only when we feel—we suffer—the incompatibility of differing world views and are at the same time forced by the praxis of our factual co-existence to seek survival." The issue for some Russian converts from agnosticism to Catholicism or Protestantism, especially those in the northwest of the Russian Federation, the heartland of Orthodoxy, is that their "new" religion means they must separate themselves from a virtual historical cultural matrix to which they in some sense still belong and the incoherence this usually creates in their worldviews.

Fagan diligently, methodically, and with careful analysis chronicles on the one hand how Russia's long tradition of religious freedom is being eroded despite official policy and because of government neglect; and on the other how the current nationalist project to consolidate an exclusive Orthodox Russia is in the face of Russia's "remarkable" ethnic and religious diversity and is doomed to fail. Whatever one believes ought to be the role of the Church in Russian society and politics or interprets the current drama on the Russian national stage to mean, Fagan's book makes a powerful and long overdue contribution to the understanding of those outside Russia of what is real inside Russia. *IC*

Fr. Stephen is an anthropologist, and the author of *Christ After Communism,* a book about lived Orthodoxy in Moscow at the parish level, published by the Orthodox Research Institute.

Vladimir Putin and Patriarch Kirill

Searching Every Which Way

by Alex Patico

The following is not so much a review as a topical commentary on a few readings related to this issue's theme.

A recent article in *UUWorld*, the magazine of the Unitarian-Universalist Association of Congregations, talked of "The End of Church." The author, Fredric J. Muir, is the pastor of a UU church in Annapolis, MD, not far from my home. He notes that figures from Thomas Jefferson to contemporary scholars have suggested that his denomination has a potential to do well in America, yet "we remain a small religious minority." He believes that UU's are being "held back by a pervasive and disruptive commitment to individualism." Although in tune with one of the characteristic strains of American culture, he says, this individualism also presents a problem. How can people who are "allergic to authority and power" also be deeply involved in their society? Muir is asking more than just how his faith tradition can be more successful and expansionary; he is wondering how it can be more conducive to the development of what Martin Luther King and others have called "The Beloved Community." In other words, how can one (recalling the words of Hillel) be "for oneself" while also embracing social consciousness and an ethic of service?

Muir cites Emerson: "No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature," and even, "men are less [when] together than alone." The Beloved Community, in contrast, expresses "the ethical meaning of the Kingdom of God….the divine indwelling that equally graces all people" (citing Prof. Gary Dorrien about King).

Certainly, the latter is more consonant with the standard one gleans from Orthodox tradition: "One Orthodox Christian is *no* Orthodox Christian," we say; we are saved together, rather than in isolation from our brothers and sisters. *Leitourgia* is the work of "the people," not of a lone actor.

But, if this is the case, why are Unitarians so much more prominent in social endeavors than we Orthodox are? Their congregations are regularly engaged in a variety of efforts to seek the common good. Sure, we can point to the Ecumenical Patriarch addressing environmental stewardship, or find archival footage of an Orthodox hierarch marching with civil rights leaders, but no one would say that we have placed our stamp on society to the degree that Catholics, Jews, Quakers, or Brethren have, relative to our numbers. Is there a reason why Matthew 25 is not a Bible verse that we find in the lectionary for our Divine Liturgy?

Another periodical caught my attention. This one, called *Prism,* comes from Evangelicals for Social Action. The articles in a recent issue treated the conflict in Israel/Palestine, air pollution, homelessness, and "transcending the culture wars to build bridges for the common good." One author prayed, "Whether we veer to the traditional or the innovative, may our focus be on Christ alone as we seek to follow him in a world that will change regardless of how we feel about budging."

We Orthodox take pride in the fact that we honor tradition and resist innovation

(at least for its own sake). But would it really be an innovation for us to involve ourselves in the community as the early Christians did? They spread out far and wide spreading the Good News of Christ's life and teaching, and also took care of the sick, protected widows and orphans, held their wealth in common and showed their unique character in "how they loved one another."

It is not as though the concerns for justice, peace, and the poor in other communities are embraced to the exclusion of core values. In the wind these days is a strong current of active searching for deeper and more profound expressions of Christianity. In what is usually called the "Emergent Church"—an untidy phenomenon that is not quite an organization, nor exactly a movement—thousands are looking for ways to go beyond what they have in their own ecclesial backyard. Whether Catholic, Methodist, Baptist or Mennonite, the "Emergents" say they want a more serious relationship with Jesus Christ—less bureaucracy but more joy, less comfort and more challenge. Some form separate gatherings to augment their own church, others propose change in the way of "doing church" in their denomination.

A recent book, *The New Christians: Dispatches from the Emergent Frontier* (Tony Jones), attempts to corral the disparate threads of this surprising and sometimes baffling new development in Christendom. Jones says that, "The modern church—at least as it is characterized by imposing physical buildings, professional clergy, denominational bureaucracies, residential seminary training, and other trappings—was an endeavor by faithful men and women in their time and place, attempting to live into the biblical gospel. But the church was never the end, only the means." He posts, as sidebars throughout his book, a series of brief "dispatches," such as these:

> "Emergents reject the politics and theologies of left versus right. Seeing both sides as a remnant of modernity, they look forward to a more complex reality."
> "Emergents believe that church should function more like an open-source network and less like a hierarchy."
> "Emergents believe that theology is local, conversational, and temporary. To be faithful to the theological giants of the past, emergents endeavor to continue their theological dialogue."

The idea of theology being "temporary" would strike many of us as anathema, yet we can relate to Jones' description of emergents as embracing "the messiness of human life." In our tradition of *ekonomia*, we recognize that intellectual formulations may often miss much of the *mysterion* that is God and His Kingdom.

Interestingly, the Emerging Church is, I've learned, quite open to exploring and accepting key elements of the Orthodox faith. Its members are seriously curious about contemplative and monastic traditions, and interested in rediscovering the Holy Spirit (and the Trinity in general), while they simultaneously "downplay the differences between clergy and laity." They may haul out their pews and bring in overstuffed sofas as part of their "remodeling"—never considering that large parts of the Church never installed pews in the first place!

Personally, I am not ready yet to have communion bread come in "cinnamon raisin or cheddar jalapeno sourdough," as in one congregation the book describes, but I admire the Emergents' urge to seek God Himself, even if the way leads away from the temple they grew up in. They, Jones says, "are pushing over fences and roaming around at the margins of the church in America" like feral animals that have become de-domesticated. Time will tell where the movement leads.

So, while we may have something to learn about *doing* social action, what do we *do well* as Orthodox Christians? Another book I recently finished does a good job of elucidating the soul of our Holy Tradition. *Everyday Saints and Other Stories* features some elements that might cause evangelicals, emergents and Unitarians to blanche: exorcisms, gulags, and superstition. But it also shows the heart of Russian monastic life in all its "messy" richness. Written by a monk of the Pskov Caves Monastery, Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), the book is a series of memoirs and hearsay, a work of non-fiction but as readable as a collection by Gogol. One encounters dozens of figures who have been Fr. Tikhon's elders, peers, or parishioners over several decades, during both the Soviet era and the period of perestroika.

Saints has sold millions of copies in Russia and is available in a dozen languages. The stories told so captivatingly are too long to be repeated here, but the author also offers, from time to time, brilliant and moving passages on life in the faith:

"For us it was somehow completely obvious that Soviet authority would someday live itself out and collapse with a magnificent crash. This is not to say, of course, that it could not seriously ruin our lives, putting some of us in jail, for example, or even getting us killed. But we believed that unless it was the will of God nothing of the sort whatever possibly could happen anyway. In the words of the ancient ascetic Abba Forstus: 'If God wishes me to live, He knows how to make this happen. But if God does not wish me to live, then why should I live?'"

"This new world Fr. Raphael had joined was full of joy and light, and governed by its own particular laws. In this world, the help of the Lord would always come when it was truly needed. In this world wealth was ridiculous, and glamour and ostentatiousness absurd, while modesty and humility were beautiful and becoming. Here great souls and just souls truly judged themselves to be lesser and worse than any other man. Here the most respected were those who had fled from all worldly glory. And here the most powerful were those who with all their hearts had recognized the powerlessness of their unaided humanity. Here the true power was hidden with frail elders, and it was understood that sometimes it was better to be old and ill than to be young and healthy…. Here the death of each became a lesson to all, and the end of earthly life was just the beginning."

Place *Everyday Saints* alongside *The Philokalia* on your bookshelf, if you are not called to enter the monastery yourself. The search is mainly within each of us, after all. Poet Corey Carlson wrote that God's love is "never hidden far, though we seek as though it were. *IC*

(Continued from inside front cover)

Jesus goes out to the front of the soldiers, who with their torches and weapons, want to lay hands on Him. He goes freely, spontaneously, to His passion and His suffering. Jesus cures the servant whose ear had been cut off by the sword of a disciple. Not only is Jesus unwilling that His disciple defend Him by force, but He repairs the damage that the sword has caused. It is the only miracle that Jesus performed during His passion.

The example of non-resistance that Jesus gave does not mean that He consents to evil, or that He remains merely passive. It is a positive reaction. It is the reply of the love that Jesus incarnates, opposed to the enterprises of the wicked. The immediate result seems to be the victory of evil. In the long run, however, the power of this love is the strongest.

The Resurrection followed the Passion. The non-resistance of the martyrs wore out and inspired the persecutors themselves. It is the shedding of blood by the martyrs that has guaranteed the spread of the Gospel. Is this a weak and vague pacifism? NO, it is a burning and victorious flame. If Jesus, at Gethsemane, had asked His Father for the help of twelve legions of angels, there would have been no Easter or Pentecost and no salvation for us! *IC*

Excerpted and edited from a larger work entitled *A Dialogue with the Savior*. Fr. Lev is best known as A Monk of the Eastern Church, as he often preferred not to identify himself by name in his writings.

It is significant how deeply attracted men are by the spectacle of an earthly king and how eagerly they seek after it, and how everyone who lives in a city where the king has his residence longs to catch a glimpse simply of the extravagance and ostentation of his entourage. Only under the influence of spiritual things will they disregard all this and look down on it, wounded by another beauty and desiring a different kind of glory. If the sight of a mortal king is so important to worldly people, how much more desirable must the sight of the immortal King be to those into whom some drops of the Holy Spirit have fallen and whose hearts have been smitten by divine love? For this they will relinquish all amity with the world, so that they may keep longing continually in their hearts, preferring nothing to it. But few indeed there are who add to a good beginning an equivalent end and who endure without stumbling until they reach it. Many are moved to repentance and many become partakers of heavenly grace and are wounded by divine love; but, unable to bear the ensuing tribulations and the wily and versatile assaults of the devil, they submit to the world and are submerged in its depths through the flabbiness and debility of their will, or are taken captive by some attachment to worldly things. Those who wish to pursue the way with assurance to the end will not permit any other longing or love to intermingle with their divine love. Just as the blessings promised by God are unutterably great, so their acquisition requires much hardship and toil undertaken with hope and faith.

—St. Symeon Metaphrastis Paraphrase of the Homilies of St. Makarios of Egypt, *The Philokalia*

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