

# Holy Trinity Seminary Newsletter

## Листок Свято-Троицкой Семинарии



№2(22)

2007

*Свято-Троицкая  
Духовная Семинария  
поздравляет своего ректора,  
Высокопреосвященнейшего  
митрополита Лавра с  
40-летним юбилеем  
архипастырского служения.*

*Многая Лета!*



*Holy Trinity Orthodox  
Seminary wishes to  
congratulate its rector, His  
Eminence Metropolitan  
Laurus, on the occasion of  
the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his  
archpastoral service.*

*Many Years!*

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**ПОСЛАНИЕ СВЯТЕЙШЕГО ПАТРИАРХА АЛЕКСИЯ  
ВЫСОКОПРЕОСВЯЩЕННЕЙШЕМУ МИТРОПОЛИТУ ЛАВРУ**

*Его Высокопреосвященству, Высокопреосвященнейшему Лавру,  
Митрополиту Восточно-Американскому и Нью-Йоркскому,  
Председателю Архиерейского Синода Русской Зарубежной Церкви*

Ваше Высокопреосвященство!

Молитвенно пребывая с Вами, через наших посланцев сердечно приветствуем и поздравляем Вас по случаю знаменательных торжеств, посвященных сорокалетию Вашей архиерейской хиротонии и Вашему тезоименитству.

Возрастая при обители преподобного Иова Почаевского, основанной на Карпатах приснопамятным Владыкой Виталием (Максименко), Вы от юности возлюбили Христа и всем сердцем возжелали последовать Ему. Невзгоды военного времени, забросившие Вас в далекую Америку, лишь укрепили в Вас это стремление, и в Свято-Троицком монастыре в Джорданвилле Вы приняли монашеский постриг, а затем и священный сан. Желание Ваше, родившееся еще в детские годы, сбылось в трудных жизненных условиях материальной скудости, не препятствовавшей, однако, духовному горению.

Ваша пастырская чуткость и усердие к возложенным послушаниям побудили Архиерейский Синод Русской Зарубежной Церкви избрать Вас для посвящения в епископский сан. Ответственно неся послушание секретаря Архиерейского Синода в шумном Нью-Йорке, Вы не оставили монашеского подвига, продолжая участвовать в жизни родной обители, где спустя несколько лет приняли бремя настоятельства.

Видя Вашу духовную мудрость и многоопытность в управлении, Господь поставил Вас у кормила Русской Зарубежной Церкви в непростой для нее исторический момент. И вот, настал знаменательный день Вознесения Господня 2007 года, когда вся Церковь Русская вкупе с сонмом святых Новомучеников и всех святых земли Российской, предстоящих Престолу Божию, возрадовалась о свершении той миссии, которую Пастыреначальник Христос возложил на Ваше Высокопреосвященство. Восстановление некогда утраченного единства стало драгоценнейшей жемчужиной в венце Ваших трудов на благо Святой Церкви.

Ваше Высокопреосвященство! В праздничный день торжества Русской Зарубежной Церкви, духовно разделяемого Церковью в Отечестве, желаем Вам крепости, здоровья и мудрости в нелегком Вашем служении, дабы, взирая на Ваш подвиг, вверенная Вам паства укреплялась в единстве церковном, препобеждала искушения и получала обильные дары Божией благодати.

С любовью о Господе

† АЛЕКСИЙ  
ПАТРИАРХ МОСКОВСКИЙ И ВСЕЯ РУСИ

*Москва: 3 сентября 2007 г.*

CAMPUS NEWS APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2007

**Liturgy of Apostle Mark served at Holy Trinity Monastery**



With the blessing of the Holy Synod, the Liturgy of St. Mark was served for the first time at Holy Trinity Monastery on Tuesday May 8, 2007. Archimandrite Luke

(Murianka), Dean of Holy Trinity Seminary, and Hierodeacon Seraphim (Baltich), fourth-year seminarian, celebrated. Seminarians were present to assist in the altar and participate in the choir under the direction of Hieromonk Roman.

The service is the original, traditional liturgy of the Alexandrian Church, used by the great hierarchs of Christ Athanasios, Cyrill, Makarios, Dionysios and others. Manuscript texts of this liturgy date back to the fourth century, but more ancient fragments exist. Although the order of the service has developed over the course of many centuries, we are assured that the author of this liturgy is indeed the Apostle Mark. The most recent text (dating to 1585 during the time of the Greek Patriarch of Alexandria Meletios Pigas) was approved and published by St. Nektarios of Aegina.

At the present time, this liturgy is served once a year on the feast day of Apostle Mark in Thessalonica, at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary in Brookline, MA, and now at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, N.Y.

**OISM Excursion to St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Monastery**



On April 27, 2007, seminarians from Holy Cross, St. Tikhon's, St. Vladimir's, and Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminaries gathered for a pilgrimage at the Monastery of St. Nektarios

near Roscoe, New York. The purpose was for common prayer and brotherhood among the Orthodox seminarians of North America.

St. Nektarios' Monastery provided a perfect setting for an Orthodox retreat. Set remotely in the beautiful Catskill Mountains, it was possible to leave behind worldly cares. The group attended the Athonite-style services with beautiful Byzantine chant. The seminarians helped the monks in their labors and shared in common meals. Abbot Joseph gave a spiritual talk to the seminarians along with another group of Orthodox pilgrims. We wish to thank the Abbott and the brotherhood of St. Nektarios Monastery for their hospitality shown to the visiting seminarians.

**Fifty-Ninth Annual Commencement**



Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary held its Fifty-Eighth Annual Commencement on Monday, May 28, 2007. The ceremonies began with a procession from the monastery refectory to Holy Trinity Cathedral, where His Grace, Bishop Gabriel, visiting from Manhattan, celebrated a Service of Thanksgiving (Moleben) with the assistance of Seminary clergy. After processing from the church to the Graduation Hall, Archimandrite Luke, Dean of Holy Trinity Seminary, officially opened the proceedings. His Eminence, Metropolitan Laurus was not able to attend this year's graduation festivities due to his travels throughout different dioceses in Russia following the signing of the Act of Reestablishment of canonical ties between the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church, which took place in Moscow on May 17<sup>th</sup> in the Christ the Savior Cathedral.

The Commencement Address was given by Dr. Vera Shevzov, Associate Professor of Religion at Smith College, and author *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution* (Oxford, 2004).

Awards for academic excellence were given to Ephraim Willmart (first year), Nikolaj Fedkiv (third year), Novice Sergii

(Tkac) (fourth year), and Konstantin Nogovitsyn (fifth year); Sergio Silva (second year) and Novice Vitaly (Fedchenko) (third year) were given awards for diligence. The degree of Bachelor of Theology was awarded to Monk Savvaty (Lewis), Denis Lvov, Konstantin Nogovitsyn, and Felipe de Oliveira. Following the conferring of diplomas, Felipe de Oliveira offered a response on behalf of the graduates.

Before conclusion of the official part of the days program, Deacon Vladimir Tsurikov announced the recent release of the publication of Nikolai N. Glubokovsky's "Biblical Dictionary". The manuscript of this Dictionary had for several decades been preserved in Holy Trinity Seminary's archives, and has been published as a joint publication by Holy Trinity Seminary Press, the Publishing House of the Moscow Theological Academy and the Trinity St. Sergius Lavra. The Dictionary includes a foreword by His Holiness Patriarch Alexy, His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus and an introduction by Father Leonid Grilikhes and Fr. Dmitri Iurevich, both from the Department of Biblical Studies of the Moscow Theological Academy. This publication has been made possible by the efforts of the Centre for the Study of Russian Orthodoxy in the Diaspora. After reading excerpts from the forewords of Patriarch Alexy and Metropolitan Laurus, Bishop Gabriel and honored guests were presented copies of the Biblical Dictionary.

Holy Trinity Seminary would like to thank Professor Vera Shevzov for her Commencement Address; and its honored guests, Mr. Robert McHugh, Associate in Higher Education from the Office of College and University Evaluation of the State Education Department; Dr. Penelope Klein, Director of the Central Library Resources Council; and Consul Vladimir Khlebnikov from the Consulate General of the Russian Federation, for their participation.

### **Litany Spring Meeting**

On June 5, 2007 Holy Trinity Seminary hosted the Spring Meeting of LITANY. LITANY (Libraries Interested in Theology Across New York) is a consortium of libraries and librarians in Upstate New York that is devoted to the promotion of theological librarianship and collaboration for the sake of enhancing the services and collections of its member libraries (<http://litany.sbu.edu>). Representing Holy Trinity Seminary were Deacon Vladimir Tsurikov, Director of Archives and Library Service, and Hieromonk Cyprian Alexandrou. Other libraries were represented by Jim Mancuso of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Paul Spaeth of St. Bonaventure University, Bill Kanalley of Siena College, and Joy Niswander and Elizabeth Siekawitch of Elim Bible Institute.

The meeting began with a presentation by Deacon Vladi-



mir Tsurikov on the history and significance of Holy Trinity Monastery and Seminary. Specific attention was devoted to the Seminary's role in the preservation of Russian Émigré collections, followed by an introduction to the Seminary's scholarly resources.

The visitors had the opportunity to visit the Seminary's Museum. On exhibit were sacred and liturgical items, as well as items of imperial provenance.

Of specific interest to the visitor was the Monastery's print shop of St. Job of Pochaev, which since its establishment in the early 1940's has seen the publication of hundreds of titles of religious and historical nature both in Russian and English. After viewing the Holy Trinity Cathedral, the tour ended with a visit to the Monastery's icon studio where the iconographic tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as the theology of the icon, were explained by resident iconographer Monk Theophan (Jensen).

The day concluded with a business meeting; LITANY members came to an agreement to share resources with member libraries and elected a new treasurer. Holy Trinity Seminary looks forward to the next meeting, scheduled for the fall of 2007.

### **Deacon Vladimir Tsurikov elevated to the rank of Protodeacon**

On August 15/28, the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, Metropolitan Laurus, Rector of Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary, elevated the Seminary's Assistant Dean, Deacon Vladimir Tsurikov, to the rank of Protodeacon. Protodeacon Vladimir Tsurikov is a graduate of Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary (class of 1993), and completed his graduate work at Middlebury College (class of 2000). He has conducted post-graduate work at the History department of the University at Albany, and is enrolled in the external studies department of the Moscow Theological Academy. He was ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop Hilarion in 1993 at Holy Trinity Monastery. In 1997 Deacon Vladimir Tsurikov began teaching at the Seminary and was assigned as Secretary of Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary. Since 2000 Deacon Vladimir Tsurikov has been serving the Seminary as Assistant Dean. Currently his responsibilities also include supervision of the Archives and Library of Holy Trinity Seminary.

**Holy Trinity Monastery and Seminary celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Metropolitan Laurus' episcopacy**

The festivities commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Metropolitan Laurus' consecration to the bishopric started on Friday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. That day, Metropolitan Laurus celebrated an early Divine Liturgy at the monastery's main church, Holy Trinity Cathedral. Co-celebrating were His Grace Bishop Michael of the Diocese of Geneva and Western Europe and His Grace Bishop Peter, Vicar-Bishop of the Diocese of Chicago and



Mid-America, as well as a number of visiting clergymen who came to honor the Metropolitan on his namesday.

On Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, an Akafist was served before the icons of the Mother of God of Pochaev and of Saint Job of Pochaev, the heavenly patrons of the Monastery. Later that day, Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany, and Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan,

served the All-Night Vigil together with Metropolitan Laurus, Bishops Michael and Peter.

On Sunday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, Holy Trinity Monastery welcomed His Eminence Onuphry, Metropolitan of Chernovitsa and Bukovina and abbot of the Pochaev Lavra; and Archbishop Evgenii of Vereia, Rector of the Moscow Theological Academy and Seminary, and Chair of the Synodal Educational Commission. Archbishop Evgenii has visited Holy Trinity Seminary in the past on several occasions, and has been crucial in laying the foundation for the fruitful cooperation between the Moscow Theological Academy and Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary.

The festivities at the Monastery on Labor Day Weekend also marked the restoration of brotherly communion between the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church. On Sunday afternoon, an official delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate, led by Metropolitan Isidore of Ekaterinodar and Kuban arrived at the Monastery with the wonderworking "Reigning" Icon of the Mother of God. They were accompanied by Archimandrite Tikhon Shevkunov, prior of Sretensky Monastery, and the Sretensky Monastery Choir. An akafist was served before the Reigning Icon of the Mother of God, in which all the faithful

sang and prayed together with arch-pastors, clergymen and choir. Archbishop Hilarion of Australia and New Zealand, Bishop Agapit of Stuttgart and Bishop Merkurii of Zarsk also arrived to join Metropolitan Laurus in his anniversary celebrations.

On Monday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Labor Day, Divine Liturgy was served jointly by the clergy of the Russian Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate. The festivities of the entire day were dedicated to the commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Metropolitan Laurus' episcopacy. The Liturgy was sung, jointly by the choir of Sretensky Monastery and the Holy Trinity Monastery and Seminary Choir.

The Seminary and Monastery communities are grateful to Metropolitans Isidore and Onuphry, Archbishop Evgeny, Archimandrite Tikhon, the Monastery choir of the Sretensky monastery, and all pilgrims for having joined us in celebrating this very significant anniversary celebration.

**Performance of the Sretensky Monastery Choir attended by Seminarians**



On Tuesday, September 4, 2007, a group of seminarians from Holy Trinity Seminary went to New York City to attend the Sretensky Monastery Choir's performance at Lincoln Center in Manhattan. Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), abbot of Sretensky Monastery in Moscow, invited the seminarians and made it possible for them to attend.

The choir began with some selections of Russian and Byzantine sacred chants and continued with Russian folk songs, and romances. Director Nikon Zhila and about forty singers gave a command performance, which drew much eager applause. Many pilgrims who had been at Holy Trinity Monastery on the previous weekend and clergy were in attendance. We would like to express our gratitude to Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov) for inviting our students and for organizing the choir's visit to the U.S.

НОВЫЕ СЕМИНАРИСТЫ / NEW SEMINARIANS



**Больбот Дмитрий Олегович**

Родился 5 августа 1981 года в Омске, Россия. В 1998 году закончил среднюю школу и поступил в Педагогический Университет, где получил неполное высшее образование. В 2003 году из Омска переехал вместе с семьёй в Краснодарский край. В 2005 году поступил в Кубанский Государственный Университет на заочное отделение, где и сейчас продолжаю учиться. С 2004 - 2006 гг. прислуживал в Казанском храме города Славянск-на-Кубани Краснодарского края. С сентября 2006 г. по август 2007 г. по благословению митрополита Лавра проживал и нёс общее послушание на российском подворье Свято-Троицкого монастыря в Джорданвилле. Желая получить духовное образование и послужить Церкви Христовой, обратился за благословением к владыке Лавру и, получив разрешение, прибыл в Джорданвилль.



**Маширов Дмитрий Дмитриевич.**

Родился 26 мая 1990 года в городе Санкт-Петербурге. В апреле 1999 года вместе с семьёй переехал на пос-

тоянное место жительства в Германию. Решение поступать в семинарию пришло ко мне семь лет назад, когда я решил стать церковнослужителем. Проводя в церкви много времени, принимая участие в богослужениях и общаясь с духовными наставниками, с каждым годом я всё больше убеждался, что не мыслю своего будущего без основательного богословского образования, которое даёт семинария.



**Jovan B. Marjanac**

I was born in Zavidovici, in Serbian Bosnia on January 23 1986. I live in Toronto, Canada with my mother Bosa and my sister Renata. My father passed away from illness in 1999. In Canada I obtained a minor in Political Science at the University of Toronto. I enrolled at Holy Trinity Seminary with the blessing of His Grace, Bishop Longin, of the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate of New Gracanica, and with a scholarship from St. Michael the Archangel Serbian Orthodox Church's Corporate Directorium. I come to Holy Trinity Seminary because of the rich Orthodox tradition preserved in the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, particularly in Jordanville. It is truly Orthodoxy, as taught by the Holy Fathers. As such, I want to partake as much as possible in the spirituality of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and hope to be able to relay this to the Orthodox and others world-wide. More practicaly, my goal is to prepare myself to be worthy to serve God and the Serbian people.





**Zacchaeus Johnson**

I was born and raised in Maine. After being raised in Protestant Faith; I converted to Orthodox Christianity at the age of nineteen. At Holy Trinity Seminary I hope to grow in my Christian faith and learn more about the Orthodox Church and It's Divine Services.

Moscow for the services celebrating the reunification of the Russian Orthodox Church. Michael is also an avid cyclist, basketball player and outdoorsman, and hopes to spend some of his weekend free time exploring the rivers and lakes in the scenic countryside surrounding the Jordanville seminary.



**Николай Хасыэр**

Я родился в 17 января 1976 года в Китае, в Хайларе. Мой дед был первым христианином в моей семье. 20 лет назад я впервые услышал от моего дедушки, работавшим в Красном Кресте об одном особенном, значительном и интересном месте - Джорданвилле. Раньше в моём родном городе было много православных русских, которые эмигрировали туда после революции. Моя сестра Вера закончила иконописную школу при МДА. Я в 2003 году поступил там же в регентскую школу, которую окончил в 2006 году. И сейчас я очень рад, что по воле Божией попал в это чудесное место. Надеюсь здесь проникнуться духом церковной жизни, познакомиться ближе с монашеской жизнью и выучить английский язык.



**Michael Hritz**

comes to Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary from Milford, CT. He was born and raised in neighboring Stratford where he holds the position of choir director at St. Nicholas Church. Michael Hritz did his undergraduate study in electrical engineering at the University of Connecticut and also holds a Masters in Music Education (voice, conducting) from the University of Bridgeport. He has taught music in two states as well as in England at every level from elementary school to university. He has been a presenter and conductor at the ROCM music conferences, and was recently invited to sing with the ROCOR choir in



HOLY TRINITY SEMINARY  
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS  
MAY 2007

**Your Eminence Vladyka Gavriil, esteemed archpastors and pastors, monastic brethren, students of the seminary, fellow Orthodox Christians, and visitors:**

Today we are participating in a three-fold celebration. First, we have celebrated Pentecost, the joyous feast of the descent of the Holy Spirit and today's related day of the Holy Spirit; second, we celebrate the feast of this monastery and seminary and the graduation of students from this school. While every commencement from an Orthodox theological seminary is momentous insofar as it welcomes a new rank of potential teachers and pastors into the community of the Church, this year's commencement is particularly noteworthy since it comes about a week after a third special event that is still fresh in our minds—the restoration of Communion between the Russian Orthodox Church inside and outside of Russia. Greeted by Patriarch Alexei as a “second Pascha,” the restoration of Communion has inaugurated a new era in the history of Orthodoxy in Russia and abroad. I am honored that I have the opportunity to share this three-fold celebration with all of you here, and especially with the graduating students.

In thinking about these three celebrations and a common theme they all might share, I came to pause on one which, given the historical timing of this year's commencement, it seems we are almost obligated to consider. It is a theme I am sure many of us as Orthodox Christians have thought about, especially those of us who were raised in a diaspora environment. On this occasion we might consider it again—namely the theme of home and homeland, along with the related topics of sojourn and exile.

The feast of Pentecost celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and their subsequent gift of speaking in tongues. The Apostles' ability to converse with the peoples of different languages signaled the gathering of peoples from all nations “home” to the Church. The gift of communication among diverse peoples made it possible for one-time strangers and aliens to more readily become citizens and members of the single household of God (Eph 2:19).

Commencement from an institution of higher learning in general, but a seminary and a theological school in particular, is also an occasion to think about the notion of “home.” On the one hand, this very special place has been your “home” for the past years, and recalling my own years at two seminaries, I can say with certainty that Holy Trinity Seminary will remain

a type of home for you for the rest of your lives. In spite of any imperfections, it will continue as a source of inspiration, the voices of its teachers will continue to echo in your minds and hearts as you make future choices and decisions, and the liturgical life in which you were so fortunate to participate will nourish and sustain you for many years to come.

Finally, though highly complex and involving numerous theological, ecclesiological and political issues, the processes that have been underway for the past several years and that have culminated in the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion on May 17 have also involved the notions of home and homeland. We have only to remember the greetings sent by the monastic community of Optina Pustyn' to the IV All-Diaspora Council last year, in which it likened Russian émigrés to the sons of Israel, “who, while in Babylonian captivity, never stopped thinking of Palestine, of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and could find no other consolation except singing their song to the Lord. The Almighty God, who both punishes and shows mercy, returned His Chosen People from the Babylonian Captivity to their homeland.”<sup>1</sup>

Orthodox Christians often think about God in association with particular places, including homelands. We remember how God's promises in the Old Testament revolved primarily around land, around a “place for his people” where he would “plant them” so they could “live in their own place and be disturbed no more.” (2 Sam 7:10)

A testament to the Lord's presence in the land was the temple. God's glory filled the temple, the house of the Lord. Orthodox Christians have historically drawn on the Book of Psalms and the account of the building of Solomon's temple in their explication of the meaning and symbolism of their own churches. We recognize the continuity between Jerusalem's temple and Orthodox churches as God's abode and God's resting place. Russian Orthodox pastors in their sermons have traditionally urged the faithful to attempt to fathom that God is indeed present within churches, and like Jacob of old be able to proclaim, “Surely the Lord is in this place; How awe-inspiring is this place! This is none other than the house of God.” (Gen 28:16-17) Speaking about God's presence, the priest, Fr. Pavel Svetlov, writing in the city of Nezhinsk in 1894, described a church as a place where “all the rays of divine light converge. They do so to a degree that is impossible outside because of the special laws and conditions governing spiritual life.”<sup>2</sup>



This very monastic community here in Jordanville has also been referred to as a type of “home.” Vladyka Averkii, speaking on this very day in 1975, a year before his death, recalled how pilgrims traveling to the monastery from all over America and Canada to celebrate its feast day, had given it the name “a corner of Holy Russia”—suggesting that for the faithful Russians émigrés living in this land, the monastery was a type of “home away from home” because of its cultural and spiritual heritage.

Orthodox Christians have also associated homelands with nations, and nations with the history of redemption. While this is a prominent theme in the Old Testament, it is present in the New Testament as well. In the Book of Acts, 17: 26-27, we read:

*From one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him.*

Inspired by this passage, the late nineteenth-century dean of the seminaries in Podolsk and later in Vologda, Fr. Nikolai Malinovskii, explained that God guided not only individuals but also entire societies since the perfection and well-being of each person depended in part on the community in which lived. Fr. Nikolai even referred to an ongoing divine census of sorts, by which every newborn person is registered within the nation or people (*narod*) in which he is born. To each people, Fr. Nikolai maintained, God had appointed its time and its own place on earth, the limits of its existence and multiplication, and the degree of its prosperity. Each people had its own will that guided it to a particular goal, which was distinct from the goals of other peoples. Despite these differing goals, however, within the general flow of world events, one could perceive a single, unified will guiding matters to a single end.<sup>3</sup>

Given the association of homeland with God and divine providence, it’s not surprising that the idea of homecoming is often a source of great hope and anticipation—and is one of the central themes in the Bible. Even in the New Testament, we see homecoming greeted with joy in the story of the prodigal son. We understand that beginning with the biblical account of the Adam’s expulsion from paradise, which resulted in the exile of all future generations upon this earth, humans inherited an insatiable spiritual longing, a longing not merely for land or “home” in themselves, but for a communion with God, with which one’s land or “home” was often associated. Precisely because Orthodox Christians have such a strong sacramental sensibility, certain places have become almost inextricably bound up with accounts relating to experiences of God, Christ, the blessed Theotokos and the saints. There-

fore, longing for a “homeland” is also often inseparable from long-established collective historical memories of the presence of and visitations by God and the saints in these places, experiences that Orthodox Christians understand as signs of the life of the world to come. We see this in the words of Fr. Alexander Elchaninov, who wrote while in exile in Paris in the 1920s:

*We must dwell in constant communion with that part of...Russia which is... the Russia of miracles, heroic deeds, martyrdom. This communion is possible if we establish here also the same intense religious life, creating here in exile an extension of our homeland.*<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, Scripture and the church fathers also warn us of the spiritual dangers associated with the notions of “home” and “homeland.” Two are particularly noteworthy. The bounties often associated with the notions of homeland can lead to spiritual inattentiveness. A land or “home” that is meant to be the site of a living relationship with God and Christ, a place that is inseparably tied to and sustained by memories of God’s works and blessings, can instead become treated as ours to control and manipulate. Moses warned the Israelites of this danger before their entry into the promised homeland after their forty-years in the wilderness:

*The Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of with flowing streams...a land of wheat and barley...a land where...you will lack nothing.... Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments... When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them...then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God...Do not say to yourself, ‘My power and the might of my own hand has gotten me this wealth.’...If you do forget the Lord your God...I solemnly warn you that you shall surely perish. (Deut 8: 7-20)*

The comforts and sense of contentment often associated with “home” and homeland can also distract us from God. St. John Chrysostom describes the effects that the shortsightedness associated with such comfort can breed. We become like worms who “turn about from the earth to the earth and from this to that and ...become stupefied by our own imaginations” and are no longer willing or able to look up even for a little while to the enjoyments of Heaven that God has placed before us.<sup>5</sup>

A second temptation involving the notions of home and homeland arises precisely when we associate these with the holy. The temptation involves a false sense of confidence that often comes with feeling comfortable or “at home” in a holy place. The prophet Jeremiah issued a warning concerning this disposition, alerting us that God’s presence among

us, in the temple or elsewhere, is in part contingent on our own behavior and attitudes. “If you truly act justly one with another, if you do not oppress the alien or the widow,” the Lord maintains according to Jeremiah, “then I will dwell with you in this place and in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors.” At the same time, the Lord also warns that if you “steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely...and then come and stand before me in this house...and say “We are safe!—only to go on doing all these abominations,” this he will not tolerate. It is noteworthy that at the beginning of the twentieth century, on the eve of Russia’s 1917 revolution, Orthodox clergy in Russia frequently reflected upon such moments in redemption history when God did not spare even the Ark of the Covenant or the Temple when it came to his response to the collective sins of his people.

In contrast to the experiences of God as connected to land, temple, and homeland, we also know of the experiences of God associated with exile. Generally when we think of exile, we don’t think of a wonderful state of affairs. We generally think of loss, alienation, and severance from that which constitutes a person’s core identity—family and friends, familiar surroundings, the home, the homeland. It also often implies physical hardship and sometimes even death. It is not a fate for which most people would wish.

And yet the church fathers and desert fathers time and time again point us spiritually to the path of exile. The radical proclamation that the Word of God—that same glory that filled the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem—had become flesh and dwelt among us, redirected Christian thinking away from land in this world to the homeland of eternal life, to the Kingdom of God that is “not of this world.” In this vein, the Apostle Paul called for the brethren at Philippi to recognize their citizenship as one of heaven; and St. Gregory of Nazianzus maintained that “everyone that is of high mind has one country, the Heavenly Jerusalem.”<sup>6</sup>

Setting their hearts and minds on this Kingdom, the patristic authors and desert fathers urged their fellow “friends of Christ,” “to aspire to live in exile, free from the conditions and ways of [one’s] home country” so that, as St. Theodore the Ascetic wrote, we might be loosened from “the entanglements of our locality and enjoy the blessings of stillness undistracted.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, while often involving physical and psychological hardships, exile as a way of being implies internal detachment from unessential distractions, a freedom from intrigues and the shackles of possessions. Stripped from attachments that accompany familiar surroundings, family, and friends, a person finds himself or herself dependent solely on God, Christ, and the saints. An exile also

learns the virtues of watching and waiting. It can be a time of purification and renewal.

The condition of exile does not mean that people necessarily isolate themselves from the world around them. God’s directive to the exiles from Jerusalem shows they were still to participate in the world around them. They were to build houses, plant gardens, and “multiply there,” as the Lord said. The Lord directed them to seek the welfare of the place in which they lived, because its welfare was their welfare. (Jer 29:5-7) Yet despite their settlement, the exiles remained sojourners who were never entirely “at home.” They were oriented elsewhere.

We have testimonies from the late second century, when Christians were still a nationless people, that the sojourner was a living ideal. The anonymous letter describes how Christians lived as follows:

*[They] cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language of custom. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech; they do not follow an eccentric manner of life... They live in their own countries, but only as sojourners. They have a share in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them every fatherland is a foreign land.*<sup>8</sup>

St. John Chrysostom reiterated the same ideal when he maintained that “if thou art a Christian, no earthly city is yours. Of our city, ‘the builder and maker is God.’ Though we may again gain possession of the whole world, we are but strangers and sojourners in it.”<sup>9</sup>

\* \* \*

So, gathering here today on the feast of the Holy Spirit to mark the end of another academic year and to pray with the graduates as they embark on the next leg of their journey, let us remind ourselves that, as Orthodox Christians, ultimately there is really no way of spiritually “going home,” if we understand “home” in purely geographic terms. Let us also remind ourselves that we are not alone in our sojourn. As the pillar of fire accompanied the Israelites in the desert and God accompanied the people into exile, so today we celebrate the same Spirit to whom we also pray to abide in us and among us on our journey. We thank the Lord that along the way we have monastic communities such as this one, which, in the words of St. John Chrysostom, are as “lights shining from a lofty place...preserving from shipwreck those who gaze on them, and not letting those who look thither walk in darkness.”<sup>10</sup> It is thanks to such spiritual beacons that we, individually and collectively, are kept from forgetting our ultimate destination and dispersing through aimless wandering while sojourning.

We also have each other; as the apostle Paul tells us, we are called to bear each other's burdens (Gal 6:2), to seek to do good to one another (2 Thess 5:12), and to serve one another with whatever gift each of us has received (1 Pet 4:10). Joined in Christ, through the grace of God's Spirit, let us rejoice and pray that that same Spirit will lead us into the land of righteousness, and, as we hear in the Panikhida service, will grant unto us the "homeland of our heart's desire, making us again citizens of paradise."

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**(Endnotes)**

1 "Privetstvie Soboru ot dukhovnika Optinoi Pustyni," 7 maia, 2006. <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/synod/2006/5privetstviyeop.html>

2 Sviashchennik Pavel Svetlov, *O znachenii khrama v dukhovnoi khristianskoi zhizni* (Moscow, 1894).

3 Protoierei Nikolai Malinovskii, *Ocherki Pravoslavnago dogmaticheskago bogosloviia* (Kamenets-Podolsk, 1904), 403-05.

4 Fr. Aleksandr Elchaninov, *Diary of a Russian Priest*. Trans. by Helene Iswolsky. (Crestwood, NY, 1967), 39.

5 John Chrysostom, "Homilies on Hebrews," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1<sup>st</sup> series. Edited by Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1994) 14: 473-74.

6 Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration XXXIII, "Against the Arians and Concerning Himself," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1<sup>st</sup> series. Edited by Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1994) 7: 332-33.

7 St. Theodore the Great Ascetic, "A Century of Spiritual Texts," *Philokalia*. Compiled by Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth. Trans. by G.E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1981) 2: 24.

8 "The So-called Letter to Diognetus," in *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. by Cyril C. Richardson (New York, 1950), 216-17.

9 John Chrysostom, Homily XX, "Concerning the Statues," 1<sup>st</sup> series. Edited by Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1994) 9: 456-57.

10 John Chrysostom, "Homilies on Timothy," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1<sup>st</sup> series. Edited by Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1994) 13: 456.

**CALENDAR 2007-2008**

*First Semester*

Sept. 6, 7	Entrance Exams
Sept. 10	Beginning of Classes
Sept. 11	Beheading of St. John the Baptist
Sept. 21	Nativity of the Mother of God
Sept. 27	Elevation of the Cross
Nov. 21-25	Thanksgiving/ Autumn holidays
Dec. 4	Entrance of Theotokos
Dec. 14	End of classes
Dec. 17	Beginning of Exams

*Second Semester*

Jan. 21	Beginning of Classes
Feb. 12	Three Hierarchs
Feb. 15	Meeting of the Lord
March 10-14	First week of Great Lent
April 7	Annunciation
April 21-25	Passion Week
April 27	Pascha
April 28-May 2	Bright Week
May 5	Continuation of Classes
May 9	End of Classes
May 12	Beginning of Exams
May 22	St. Nicholas
May 25	Commencement

UPCOMING EVENTS



**OISM**  
**(Orthodox Inter Seminary Movement)**

**2007 Fall Event**

Hosted by Holy Cross Theological Seminary

November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>

1<sup>st</sup> OISM Theological Symposium

*In honor of the sixteen hundredth anniversary of the repose of*

***St. John Chrysostom***

Papers from each OISM member school will be selected to be presented by the author at the symposium to be held at Holy Cross Theological Seminary, November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

*Papers will address*

***The Significance of The Life and Works of***

***St. John Chrysostom For Today***

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