

PRAXIS

πραξις



The Ministry
of Teaching



MID-PENTECOST

Mid-Pentecost is celebrated twenty-five days after Pascha, which is twenty-five days before Pentecost. Its icon shows Christ as a twelve-year-old in the Temple, a story found in Luke 2:41–52. The Mid-Pentecost icon shows us the moments described in verses 46–47: “Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.” In the icon, Christ is in the center, surrounded by the scribes and the Pharisees. He sits on a raised, elaborate throne, reminding us of the Ark of the Covenant, the place where God dwells in the Temple, in the Holy of Holies. Christ is clearly the center of everyone’s attention. The others sit below Him—they are not “on His level.” Their hands are raised in astonishment at the teachings of the young Enlightener and Teacher. The icon is a prefigurement of Pentecost, and it resembles the icon for that feast with a similar composition: there, the Apostles sit in a semicircle as the Holy Spirit—the Comforter—descends upon them.

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.

Albert Einstein

If anyone thinks that he is wise, let him show wisdom with good deeds, not by words; and if anyone thinks himself modest, let him leave others to speak of his modesty instead of proclaiming it himself.

St. Clement of Rome, First Epistle to the Corinthians

Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity and sound speech...

Titus 2:7 (NRSV)

Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Those who educate children well are more to be honored than parents, for the latter only gave life, while the former gave the art of living well.

Aristotle

Read the books of the New Testament and make them your constant teachers. If grief befalls you, dive into them as into a chest of medicines; take from them comfort for your trouble, be it loss, or death or bereavement of relations; or rather do not merely dive into them but take them wholly to yourself, keeping them in your mind at all times.

St. John Chrysostom

For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

Acts 22:15

Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and, if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.

C. S. Lewis

Faith is the beginning and love is the end; and the union of the two together is God. All that makes for a soul's perfection follows in their train, for nobody who professes faith will sin, and nobody who possesses love can feel hatred.

St. Ignatius of Antioch

Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.

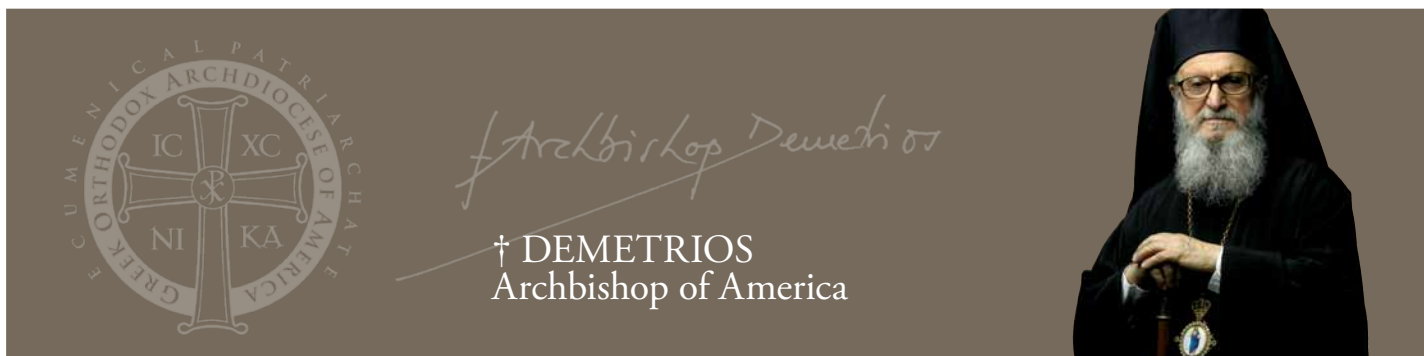
Psalms 119:105

Ideal teachers are those who use themselves as bridges over which they invite their students to cross, then having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, encouraging them to create bridges of their own.

Nikos Kazantzakis

WISDOM, ANCIENT AND MODERN





Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With its focus on “The Ministry of Teaching,” this issue of *PRAXIS* emphasizes a very vital mission of the Church, together with the foundations of our calling and service as religious educators. When we consider the purpose, manner and content of the ministry of teaching as presented in Holy Scripture, we see that the Church has been engaged from its very beginning in instructing people in the knowledge and understanding of God’s revelation through Christ, in the nature of the Christian life, and in the role and mission of the community of believers in the world. It is also evident from Scripture that this ministry of teaching follows the example of the Great Teacher, Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament, particularly in the Gospels, our Lord is addressed regularly as “teacher” (*didaskalos*) or by the corresponding Hebrew term, “rabbi.” He was addressed in this way by those who approached Him with questions (Matthew 19:16) and by others who were seeking healing or mercy (Luke 9:38). His disciples often called Him “rabbi” (John 1:38, 49) or “teacher” (Mark 13:1), and even those who confronted Him and sought His demise used these titles (Mark 12:14). From these passages and many more, we recognize that many who encountered Christ saw Him as Jesus, the superb and incomparable Teacher. As the servants of the chief priests and Pharisees said of Jesus in John 7:46, “No man ever spoke like this man!”

In this ministry of teaching, Christ offered truth in love. Through His words, He directed hearts and minds to embrace God’s revelation through faith and to receive the blessings of forgiveness and communion with Him. He did this by taking His message and ministry to the people. He went to them, at their place and point of need, offering insight and guidance that engendered hope. In addition, Jesus’s ministry of teaching was a ministry of compassion. His instruction was accompanied by an awareness of the plight and sufferings of those around Him. In love, He forgave their sins, healed their infirmities and renewed their faith. Finally, our Lord taught with authority. Certainly, this authority came from His divinity and sinless humanity, but it was also revealed in the truth of His message, in His call to faith and holiness, and in the wonder and astonishment of the people who received His words.

We are called to a ministry of teaching that follows the example of Christ. As we offer truth in love as Christ did (as St. Paul put it in Ephesians 4:15, *ἀληθεύοντες... ἐν ἀγάπῃ*, be truthful and offer truth in love), we should recognize the challenges of the people in our communities and offer what they need. This means that we have a mission to offer teaching that is relevant and to develop programs and opportunities for learning that are consistently available to the faithful and those seeking God. This ministry should also be characterized by compassion. The spiritual needs are significant and real, and so many need assurance and patient guidance. Through our teaching, we are offering the grace of God, thus our attitudes and manner must reveal the love that will transform lives and lead them to salvation.

As a ministry of compassion, our teaching should also be characterized by the boldness and courage that comes from the authority of Christ. Knowing and following the example of our Great Teacher and experiencing the power and illumination of His presence in our lives, we are able to offer truth and the saving message of the Gospel, even in the midst of adversity. In our ministry of teaching, we can have the assurance that what we offer reveals the grace of God and guides those who receive this grace into His kingdom and blessings.

May we keep our hearts and minds focused on our Teacher so that we may fulfill our calling in His service. May I also offer my gratitude and prayers for your ongoing work, affirming that our Lord will grant you strength and wisdom in your offering to Him and others through the ministry of teaching.

With paternal love in Christ,

Archbishop Demetrios
† DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America



Beloved in the Lord,

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.
(Matthew 28:19–20)

These final words of our Lord to His disciples in the Gospel according to St. Matthew were surely transformative for those eleven who were with Jesus—just as they are for the world today. We see that from the beginning of the Church, three key elements were listed for the Apostles as foundational and necessary for the work of the Body of Christ—the Church. The three key elements are: go and make disciples, baptize, and teach.

We are therefore grateful that this issue of *PRAXIS* has been dedicated to the “Ministry of Teaching,” with particular reference to all of those who are called to be the teachers in our churches and local communities.

And so at the outset I would express our common thanks to all who endeavor to be a part of the ministry of teaching. When we look at the teachers in our communities, we recognize that many people are called to participate in this Church ministry: we see our clergy who are trained to teach us through word and worship; we see others who are professionally trained in education and who seek new and innovative ways to make the written curricula meaningful and fresh; and we also see the majority of our teachers, who are people called to the ministry of teaching by their love for God and His Church.

Although our teachers are formed and trained in different ways, they are all united by a core conviction that no matter what they have learned and are endeavoring to share with others, they are also called to witness to those teachings in their own lives. Our best teachers—clergy, trained professionals, or committed volunteers—are always those who live the Gospel that they preach and teach.

But, my friends, as we give thanks for all those who actively share in this ministry of teaching, we must likewise remember that each of us is called to share and to teach the Gospel according to our own abilities. What a lesson we would offer the world as a testimony of our Christian faith if we would even accomplish the simplest aspects of the three foundational commands.

“Go and make...” encourages each one of us to come to our church often—and dare I say—early. We are called to keep our personal witness alive; the gathering of the people of God in worship and prayer is part of the heart of the message. Moreover, this part of the Great Commission of our Lord tells us that we cannot reserve our Christian behavior, comportment and faith just for a closed group of friends. On the contrary: we are told to “go and make disciples of all nations,” not just those living at home.

The command to baptize is equally important for all of us. Before, during and after baptism, we must be prepared to affirm our commitment and our devotion to Christ and His Church. The love of the parents who prepare to bring their child to baptism, the love of the godparents who prepare to nurture the child in Christian faith, and the life of the community of faith are all part of a visible system of teaching in how to be a Christian.

This is why the ministry of teaching in the Church is also set apart by Christ. If we only follow examples, then we may live a Christian life that is not convinced of its truthfulness. The vocation of the teacher is to give us the information we need in order to understand the remarkable gift of the faith that we receive at baptism, that we inherit by the unbroken line of our living Tradition, and that we are called to defend and explain to the world in which we live.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. (1 Peter 3:15)

With all thanks and joy before God for those who participate in this sacred ministry of teaching, I remain,

With every hope in the Good Teacher Jesus Christ,

† NICHOLAS
Metropolitan of Detroit

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions should be 1,000–2,000 words in length and directly discuss education in the theology and tradition of the Orthodox Christian churches. Lesson aids or graphic enhancements may accompany the articles submitted. We also encourage the submission of photographs relevant to parish life (praxis). Please also provide a biographical sketch of the author not exceeding fifty words.

PRAXIS Magazine is seeking submissions of lesson plans based on articles from previous or current issues of PRAXIS. Submissions should use the article as the text/background of the lesson plan. Lesson plans are welcome for any or several age groups. Please send submissions in a Word document with a length of 1,000–2,000 words to tvrame@goarch.org.

Material previously published or under consideration for publication elsewhere will not be considered without prior consent of the editor. We reserve the right to edit for usage and style; all accepted manuscripts are subject to editorial modification. Articles sent by mail should be accompanied by an electronic version on CD-ROM in Microsoft Word for Windows or for Macintosh. Articles in Microsoft Word may also be e-mailed as an attachment to tvrame@goarch.org.

Address submissions to: Anton C. Vrame, PhD, and/or Elizabeth Borch.

CREDITS

Executive Editor	Anton C. Vrame, PhD
Managing Editor	Elizabeth Borch
Design and Layout	Elles Gianocostas
Copyeditor	Aimee Cox Ehlers
Front and Back Cover	Elizabeth Borch
Printing	Lane Press, South Burlington, VT

Photography:

Elizabeth Borch (1, 10, 27, 28, 34), Ray Smith (9), Bradley Borch (13, 15, 20), Joni Zavitsanos (14), Gerry Clonaris (16), Vasyly Aleksyuk (18), Konstantin Sutyagin (19), Archives of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (30, 31), ilker canikligil (32), Becon (36), Holy Trinity Cathedral, New Orleans (37)

Special thanks to our contributors for this issue's Parent to Parent column: Jeannette Adylette, Magda Andronache, Elizabeth Borch, Aimee Cox Ehlers, Zoe Athas Griffing, Fr. Athanasios Haros, Harriette Keen Jacobs, Stephanie Mardigan, Olga Shast McHugh, Anne Loidas Randall and Despina Stavros.

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily the views of the Department of Religious Education.

© 2012, Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. ISSN 1530-0595.

A publication of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, PRAXIS magazine is published three times a year. The subscription rate is \$15 per year. Checks, payable to the Department of Religious Education, should be sent to:



PRAXIS Circulation
50 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445
(617) 850-1218



FEATURES

6 Christ: The Teacher of Teachers

Anton C. Vrame

9 The Role of the Priest in Christian Education

Rev. Dr. Peter G. Rizos

13 Why They Teach

Andrew Constantinou, Joni Zavitsanos, Rosemary Shumski, Gerry Clonaris and Dorothea Love

18 Parenting as Stewardship: The Role of Parents in Moral and Faith Formation

Panayiotis Sakellariou



SERIES & ARTICLES

22 BOOK REVIEWS:

Special Needs and Disabilities Handbooks

Reviewed by Anton C. Vrame

***Exceptional Teaching* – Jim Pierson**

***Let All the Children Come to Me* – MaLesa Breeding, Dana Hood, and Jerry Whitworth**

***The Special Needs Ministry Handbook* – Amy Rapada**

24 Religious Ed Basics: Achievement and Incentives

Basil Xeros, interviewed by Elizabeth Borch

26 PARENT TO PARENT:

How do you help your child focus in Church?

Compiled by Elizabeth Borch

30 The Very Rev. Fr. George Papadeas:

A Priest for All Seasons

Rev. Dr. Miltiades B. Eftimiou

32 How Do Others See Us?

Michael Kinnamon

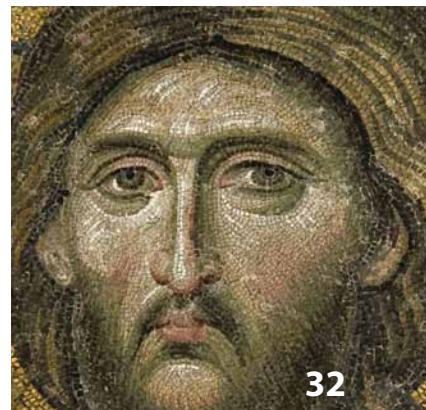
36 A Response to “How Do Others See Us?”

Anton C. Vrame

40 FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Recognizing Teachers

Anton C. Vrame



CHRIST

The Teacher of Teachers



ANTON C. VRAME, PHD

Searching through the Gospels, we find Jesus Christ addressed as or referred to as “teacher” forty-five times. To the disciples, to the people of Israel, Jesus was a teacher. Teaching was a central aspect of His ministry. For example, upon entering Capernaum, the Gospel of Mark reports that Jesus “entered the synagogue and taught” (Mark 1:21). And apparently Jesus was an exceptional teacher, both in terms of content and popularity. Even when the Gospels do not record the contents of Jesus’s teachings, which is often, His message was powerful and influential. The Gospel of Mark states, “And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes” (Mark 1:22).

This made Jesus an attractive speaker, someone you “had to hear.” Many of the great teachings of Jesus were delivered as “lectures” to large crowds. The Sermon on the Mount—the Beatitudes—was delivered when Jesus saw a great crowd of people (Matthew 5:1). But this was not the only time a large crowd assembled to hear Jesus. The Gospel of Luke reports that so many people came to hear Jesus at the Lake of Gennesaret that He “taught the people from a boat” (Luke 5:3). He was so popular as a teacher that the crowds would forget about food and drink, so that Jesus had to provide it, by multiplying loaves and fish! At the tomb of Christ, Mary encounters the resurrected Jesus and addresses Him as *rabboni*, which is Hebrew for “teacher” (John 20:11).

But Jesus also confounded His audience as a teacher. His hearers did not understand the messenger, and rejected Him and His message. He didn’t fit the mold of a teacher of His day. We would say that He wasn’t “certified” or hadn’t attended the “right schools.” For example, in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus teaches in His hometown of Nazareth, and the people ask, “Where did this man get this wisdom...Is not this the carpenter’s son?...And they took offense at him” (Matthew 13:53–58).

We can teach as Jesus taught. By taking a closer look at Jesus’s teachings, we can begin to discern a distinct “style of teaching” that we can imitate in our own ministry of teaching.

Jesus frequently uses metaphors and similes. Remember

that metaphors connect and compare two unlike things in a suggestive or open manner, rather than in a direct or closed manner. The best example of a metaphor might be the “I am” statements of Jesus, as found throughout the Gospel of John. For example, Jesus says, “I am the true vine” (John 15:1–9). If this were a “closed” statement, Jesus would be saying that He was a plant, but obviously this is not the case. The metaphor points to the relationship between Jesus and His Father, and Jesus and His disciples. Reading the entire passage, we can see that life comes from the vine and goes to the branches; to be attached to the vine is to have life, to be cut off is to die, and to bear fruit—love—one must remain on the branch through obedience to Jesus’s commands. Jesus also teaches with similes, using “like” or “as” to make a comparison, as in, “The kingdom of heaven is like...” He gives us open invitations to think about how God’s kingdom resembles a marriage feast (Matthew

“...apparently Jesus was an exceptional teacher, both in terms of content and popularity.”

22:1–14), a mustard seed (Matthew 13:31–32), or a pearl of great value (Matthew 13:44–46).

Jesus asks really good questions, and He allows those He asked to arrive at the correct answer themselves. Perhaps the best example is Jesus asking the disciples, “Who do men say that I am?” and then asking them, “Who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:13–17). The question is open-ended, and those who knew the answer could reply as did Peter. To gauge how effective this style of questioning was, try changing or reversing the phrasing. What if Jesus had asked, “Do any of you think I am the Messiah?” Was Jesus unsure of Himself, thus sowing doubt among His followers? Was Jesus checking the pulse of the disciples? Where would this have gone if they had said no? So by allowing the disciples, in this case Peter, to figure it out for themselves and proclaim their faith in Jesus, they would be blessed as Peter was—as the rock (*petros*) of faith.

Jesus also answers questions with more questions. In Luke 10:25–37, the young lawyer asks Jesus, “What must I do...?” Jesus responds, “How do you read the Law?” This dynamic creates a situation in which Jesus puts the questioner to divulge

what he already knows from the Law and to begin to reflect on it, which the lawyer does, and then asks Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus does not answer the question directly, but follows up with His most distinctive teaching device: the parable.

Parables make up about one-third of Jesus’s teachings in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The parables are unique to Jesus. The Scriptures do not contain other parables in the same way as Jesus taught them. The parables should be seen as open-ended symbols, extended metaphors or similes. Using examples from nature or daily life, the parables tease the hearer into active thought. Their open-endedness leads to many possibilities. It becomes impossible, it seems, to draw only one interpretation from a parable.

The parables have an everyday quality about them. Their characters are often “a certain man,” “a king,” or “a landowner.” In the parables, Jesus does not seem to distinguish between religious and secular life—they are contiguous and point to one another. Issues of faith were part of life and life issues were faith issues. There is usually an element of the “unclean” in them: a Samaritan rescues the traveler; the prodigal works with swine. These would have caught the hearer off guard, requiring rethinking of prejudices and stereotypes. There is almost always a miraculous turn of events, a surprise ending and an element of grace being bestowed. The father restores the prodigal despite having every right not to; the sower has a bountiful harvest despite abandoning his field. Finally, the parables invite the hearer to respond with action and initiate the principles of the kingdom of God. After Jesus tells the lawyer the parable of the Good Samaritan, He asks, “Who proved to be the neighbor?” He then challenges the lawyer to “go and do likewise.”

We can do likewise and learn from this teaching style! We can focus on asking really good questions. At a workshop, a teacher revealed that during Great Lent his high school class was studying the question “Why did Jesus have to die?” Christians have been wrestling with this question since the time of Christ (just read St. Paul). In the discussion, we moved on to “Why did He have to rise from the dead?” and “What is implication of the Resurrection for the world?”

Use metaphors and similes. In a class just after the Super Bowl at Holy Cross School of Theology, I posed the question, “How might the Super Bowl be used in a Christian education class?” The conversation went on for

CHRIST, THE MASTER TEACHER

Christ was the Master Teacher although...

He never had a teacher’s degree...

He never attended college...

He never heard of educational methods...

Yet...

Christ was the Master Teacher because...

He used events, experiences, and language of the people...

He knew how to love others...

He was a role model...

He shared the faith...

He prayed to His Father for help...

He gave Himself for others...

And...

You can follow in the footsteps of Christ the Great Teacher if...

You live the faith...

You teach from knowledge...

You relate faith to life experiences....

You are willing to be a continual learner...

You teach with love, humility, and commitment...

You sow His seeds in the hearts of others.

– Elaine Michaels

From *Sowing Seeds for Christ* (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Religious Education, 1990).

more than half an hour and could have gone on for much longer. The discussion ranged from athletic activity and spiritual discipline to the extremes of capitalism that the Super Bowl demonstrates. Tell stories, whether parables or stories from history and everyday life. We are born, it seems, to love stories, remember them, and learn from them.

Anton C. Vrame, PhD, is Director of the Department of Religious Education.



The Role of the Priest in Christian Education

REV. DR. PETER G. RIZOS

What a priest does in Christian education, as in all areas of his pastoral ministry, he does in the name of Christ and His Church. His “role” is not an ascribed activity or a “part” that he performs for the benefit of passive recipients. It is rather *together with* and as a member of God’s people that a priest fulfills his role in Christian education. This means that the *whole* Church has the responsibility for Christian education. The parish priest, the Sunday Church school teachers and school officers are all in a sense representatives of the parishioners. What they teach may be doomed to failure if their witness is contradicted by the witness of the adult members of the parish.

Although the teaching ministry belongs to the essence of the Church, and responsibility for teaching rests on the whole Church, there are some specific things that a priest can do to help educate his people. The New Testament helps us to gain a proper perspective and context for the task.

According to the posture of the early Church, it was not enough for persons to repent and believe. They also had to be trained or catechized in the Faith until they knew it so well that they could bear convincing witness to it in their daily lives. Their guide during this training period was their teacher. The omission of either preaching or teaching signified unfaithfulness to the Church.

There is evidence of an official teaching ministry in the early Church (see Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 12:28–29; Ephesians 4:11; and Romans 12:6–7). It seems that the ministry of the *didaskaloi* (teachers) was both to know the sound doctrine (2 Timothy 4:3) and to teach it. This is to say that the *didaskaloi* were theologians as well as educators. With the development

and expansion of the order of the catechumenate during the first four centuries, the catechists exercised a similar role, especially in teaching the basic tenets of the Faith to those preparing for baptism. In the early Church, well before the advent of the parish, the chief teacher or catechist of the Church was the bishop, who directly taught catechumens. Many wonderful patristic homilies are, in fact, catechetical lectures delivered by bishops. The prayers and petitions for the catechumens included in the Divine Liturgy provide vivid evidence of the complete seriousness with which our spiritual forebears looked upon Christian education in the life of the Church.

In the absence today of professional catechists to minister to the spiritual edification of the communicants and converts, our Church has ascribed the teaching ministry almost exclusively to the province of the local pastors and their designated assistants: volunteer Church school teachers. The point here is that whereas laypeople teach the Faith in our parishes, the responsibility for the organization, administration and improvement of all religious education programs of a parish rest squarely on the shoulders of the pastor, simply because he is the duly assigned priest. Although the bishop is ultimately responsible and is the chief teacher in his diocese, the priest is the chief steward and teacher of the Faith in the parish. This is made quite clear, for instance, in the “Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America,” Article 17, Section 1, on the clergy:

The Priest by virtue of his canonical ordination and assignment heads and administers the Parish and exercises on its behalf the priestly duties, which consist in shepherding the Parish entrusted to his care...He shall also proclaim the Gospel and impart knowledge of the doctrines, traditions, canons and disciplines of the Church. Further, he shall guide the growth and progress of the Parish in the Christian life through the performance of his pastoral duties.

*...the priest is the chief steward and
teacher of the Faith in the parish*

There is no question that it is the sacred privilege and responsibility of the pastor to oversee every aspect of Church work in his parish. But an ascribed status does not necessarily mean that one has either the time or the professional training to carry out the entailed responsibilities with the depth and total commitment that this position requires.



In the day-to-day performance of his frequently manifold pastoral duties—duties that escape the notice of most parishioners—the parish priest may well see his role primarily as that of pastor and preacher. Educational responsibility is commonly seen as something added, and not properly belonging, to the office. A parish priest often takes on the duties of director of education because no volunteer layperson can be found to do it. Under heavy pressure, the priest may be forced to leave his educational duty with scant attention. It is with good reason that our priests say that they have no time to train their Church school teachers properly.

Note the fair observation made by Fr. George Nicozisin in *The Road to Orthodox Phronema*:

In the American and Canadian parish setting, the parish priest is more than a liturgist, preacher, confessor, counselor and teacher. He is also administrator, organizer, youth director, public relations agent, editor, translator of documents, fund raiser and general coordinator of a host of programs and activities within and without the parish. However, in spite of his burdensome schedule, the priest must not lose sight of his role as leader in the overall program of Christian education in his parish. Great and often will be the temptation to forfeit the burden of responsibility and relinquish his role of leadership.

Pressures of time notwithstanding, the role of the priest is pivotal and decisive as to the success or failure of Christian education in his parish. The possibility for a significant educational

ministry derives in large part from the priest's self-concept and his understanding of the purpose of the Church. The priest is the pastor of the Sunday Church school as well as of the parish. He is its spiritual and inspirational head because he is the overseer of the total parish program. Systematic, thorough teaching must supplement his preaching ministry. The Sunday Church school is the Church itself at work in education and evangelization.

The purpose of the Church is to reveal God the Father through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church perpetuates the mission of the Lord Himself, which includes teaching. The Church is concerned not only with evangelizing the world and saving souls, but also with the growth and development in the Christ-likeness and godliness of its members. "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6-7).

The key words of St. Paul here are "rooted," "built up" and "established." It is more difficult and challenging to establish people in the Faith than it is to find and win people to Christ. The same idea is expressed by St. Peter, in another context: "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). The important word here is "grow." It is quite unlikely that our parishes will faithfully respond to this biblical mandate for Christian education without the whole-hearted commitment and support of the pastor.

Many clergymen who have focused on Christian education have found that it gives breadth and depth to their pastoral ministry. They have found, for example, that Church school teachers often express great willingness to work in other areas of ministry. Christian education can likewise provide a parish priest with the widest possible opportunities to carry out his teaching and evangelistic ministry. In order for this to happen, however, a priest needs to be grounded in Orthodox Christian educational thinking. He must be equipped to exercise solid principles of the field for himself and others in order to realize an effective and fruitful educational ministry.

The role of the priest in Christian education includes giving general direction and supervision to the total program of the parish. This means ideally having a thorough familiarity with the functioning of the Sunday Church school, and having the skills to develop programs of Christian education for parishioners of all ages. He should visit the Sunday Church school as frequently as possible to encourage the staff. He should not run the program because he has too many other duties. As one writer puts it, his particular role is to "develop lay leaders for the

*"As you therefore have received
Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,
rooted and built up in Him and established
in the faith, as you have been taught,
abounding in it with thanksgiving."*

various offices—enlisting, training and directing them instead of running the show."

More specifically, there are at least four practical areas of strategic importance in which a pastor should become a specialist in order to minister effectively to the educational program of his parish: general leadership and helpfulness; administration; building the program; and supervision.

GENERAL LEADERSHIP AND HELPFULNESS

As an overseer (Acts 20:28), the pastor inspires his staff and congregation by keeping the educational work of the parish before the parish council and the congregation. He makes frequent use of the pulpit, the parish bulletin or newsletter, bulletin boards, posters and other media to keep parishioners alert and sensitive to the importance of Christian education for the home and the Church. It is very important to keep parishioners informed and responsive to the needs and progress of the Church school and the total program of Christian education in his parish.

Christian education is taken seriously by parishioners to the degree that they are not given reason to regard it as an isolated, compartmentalized, "cute" activity for children only. "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). When the Lord Jesus spoke these words in His high priestly prayer to God the Father, He wasn't thinking primarily of children! Unless the adult constituency of a parish is awakened to the need for Christian education as a normal and indispensable dimension of Church membership, the children cannot rightfully be expected to take religion seriously.

Translated into practical terms, this means that the role of the priest is to help cultivate a religious climate in his parish. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss specific ways and means of doing this. The fact is that our laypeople today are very ready and receptive to programs of adult Christian education that take account of the concerns and questions that they are asking.

Many pastors have found it helpful to cultivate a circle of theologically informed, discerning and sensitive friends of the Sunday Church school to support enlightened efforts for Christian education. There is much to be gained from setting time aside to take teachers to conferences, training institutes, workshops and lectures on religious education. Providing teachers with timely and relevant reading materials is another very helpful service. A concerned priest shows initiative for cooperation with other priests in his area to share insights, concerns and resources, thereby avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort and expense. In short, the pastor should utilize all the means and occasions available to challenge and lead his people toward a richer and more meaningful program of Orthodox Christian education.

ADMINISTRATION

The priest, by virtue of his educational background and the spiritual authority with which he is vested, is the most appropriate individual to help organize a “Committee on Christian Education” to help plan and coordinate the total educational program of the parish. The Church school director could serve as the executive officer of the board and as an assistant to the pastor in carrying out the educational endeavors of the local parish. The function of the executive officer and the board members is to integrate the three divisions of educational ministry—children, youth and adults—into the total program, and to overcome overlapping or neglect in all three areas.

The pastor’s role is to make provision for various training schools in the program in areas such as teacher training, leadership development, vacation Church school, missions, evangelization and stewardship. The priest should be alert to good facilities, using buildings and classrooms for optimum efficiency. More importantly, the pastor needs to be on the lookout for prospective teachers and workers who could become leaders. One of the greatest assets that a priest can have in building up Christian education is skill in leadership selection.

BUILDING THE PROGRAM

The Sunday Church school is the program of the Church. It is in the pastor’s interest to exercise leadership in the development of a coordinated, balanced and varied program that fits the needs and resources of the parish. He needs to be aware of the archdiocesan curricular materials, adapting them to the particular situation of the local parish. The goal and objectives of the Church school become more real for the staff members

by the use of a procedure manual that includes clear job descriptions and lists of duties. This also helps to instill and promote teamwork. The preparation and publication of an event calendar for the entire year, or a calendar by seasons, is very important for a well-rounded program. This gives the teachers a sense of perspective for the school year and avoids a conflict of dates for events scheduled on the master calendar of the parish.

SUPERVISION

In Christian education, supervision is primarily the duty of the director. However, the pastor and others share this responsibility, and they must carry it entirely in the absence of a director. “Where administration places stress upon organization, operation and management, supervision stresses improvement,” notes one writer. The pastor as overseer of the entire educational program stresses excellence and improvement. His role here is to get his volunteers to see and accept the need for improvement or change. It has been found that modification and adaptation of methodology are more effective initially than trying to revolutionize a program all at once. There is obvious merit in recognizing and building on the accomplishments of one’s predecessors.

Willingness to work closely with the officers and teachers of the Church school in the planning and sharing of insights is an index of effective pastoral supervision. Ability to work within a group, rather than over it, is vivid testimony to the pastor’s faith in the value of each member of the Body of Christ. It shows that the priest recognizes that laypeople have their own spiritual gifts and ministry to be developed and used before God.

Rev. Dr. Peter G. Rizos serves the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Woburn, MA. He is an expert in learning and religious development. He taught at Lowell High School for many years. He also taught religious education at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and has worked in teacher training for the Archdiocese Department of Religious Education. This article was previously published in *The Word* magazine in September 1984.

WHY THEY TEACH

On a Sunday morning in early September 1991, I entered my class with many thoughts running around in my mind and an equal number of butterflies in my stomach. “What do I know about teaching?” “How do I work with these kids?” “What do I say if they ask me a question?” I was a tenth-grader on my first day in the student-teaching program at St. Spyridon Cathedral in Worcester, MA. My first assignment was in the “Nursery 2” classroom with the four-year-olds. Now, twenty-one years later, I am teaching high school students, but I still find myself approaching the classroom with these same questions at the start of every year.

Serving the Church as a religious education teacher is exciting, enjoyable and rewarding. Over the years, I have been assigned to teach different grades, my students have grown up and moved on, and I have even moved to a new parish, St. Vasilios in Peabody, MA. Through all of these changes one thing has remained constant: my role as a religious educator, which is to continue to strengthen the student’s understanding of the Faith and their relationship with God. Through this, the students can further strengthen their relationships with themselves and with each other, and strive toward becoming responsible stewards of their Church, their community and the world.

Each year I enjoy welcoming a group of new faces into the high school classroom. It is in this room that the students will be together for the next four years. They bring with them distinct personalities and abilities; they come from different backgrounds; and they are in different stages in their spiritual walks. There is no greater pleasure in the classroom than witnessing their personal and spiritual growth. I am constantly in awe of their knowledge of the Faith, their ability to come alive when in discussion with their peers, and their eagerness to learn.

Being a religious education teacher allows me the opportunity to learn more about the Faith both outside and inside the classroom. Outside of the classroom, lesson preparation offers



me some extra time to focus on a topic and research Scripture and references to build up the lesson. Inside of the classroom, some of the greatest learning experiences have been the times when I have unexpectedly taken the role of the student. I remember a moment not too long ago when a student threw out a challenging question: “Why should we care?” This question sparked some terrific dialogue among the students and teachers, and it has now become a regular part of our discussion outlines. Keeping this question going through my mind while preparing a discussion reminds me to keep the lessons at a level that is easy to comprehend for the students and to make sure that the lessons always leave the students with a practical application for their lives.

After twenty-one years as a religious education teacher, I look back on my time of service and I am truly thankful for the experiences that I have had, for the lessons I have learned, and for the students that have shared this time with me.

Andrew Constantinou is the graphic designer for the Department of Internet Ministries. He currently serves as one of four religious education teachers for the high school class at St. Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church in Peabody, MA.

WHY THEY TEACH

When reflecting on our eleventh and twelfth grade Sunday Church school class and how things are progressing, I have to call it a work in progress. We have, year after year, bright young faces coming through our doors. We know them to be, as Archbishop Demetrios lovingly refers to them, “our present community,” rather than thinking of them as the future of our beloved Orthodox Faith. They are sometimes fearless, sometimes questioning, over-stressed and overworked in academics and extracurricular activities, honest, wanting to please and wanting to defy at the same time. They are, in a word, human. As I near twenty years of teaching, the students continue to amaze me, inspire me, sometimes frustrate me and always teach me.

The main thing I’ve learned is that if you expect these young people to discuss and grasp deep theological concepts, they will rise to the occasion every time. The readings we choose are not for the faint of heart, yet the students love them and are inspired by them. My co-teacher and I use one core book: Bishop Kallistos Ware’s *The Orthodox Way*. This amazing book is the educational basis for knowing and living our Orthodox Faith to its fullest. We read sections of it in class most weeks, going chapter by chapter, and then discuss what the ideas mean to us personally. To complement this, we take excerpts from such books as *Christ the Eternal Tao* by Hieromonk Damascene, *The Lenten Spring* by Fr. Thomas Hopko and *Prayer in the Unseen Warfare* by Jack Sparks. We read from St. Theophan the Recluse, St. Silouan the Athonite, St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian. We watch videos such as the recently aired “60 Minutes” piece on Mt. Athos and the interview Charlie Rose had with our beloved Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Though we rely on these resources, it is important to note that our inspiration is from the Holy Spirit. Anything good that happens is from God. Therefore, our class is usually nonlinear in nature, as we are open to adapting to the time, situation and experiences of our students each Sunday. We incorporate ancient

Greek and Chinese philosophy in the class to show how God has revealed Himself to all people. By observing other past cultures in addition to that of the Hebrews, we can see our Faith come to life. This is important as our students go to school and work each week with many different people of a variety of faith backgrounds.

We also delve into their personal lives by allowing them to discuss their fears, wants and weaknesses. We share our own faults with them so they know we are in the same boat, all of us, heading toward salvation together. I am a cradle Orthodox, whereas Rob, my co-teacher, is a convert to the Faith. It is a great combination for our classroom as we can provide different aspects of our own faith walk. Our mission, in the end, is to show how the Orthodox Faith is one that, if lived fully, will give us the “peace that surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). It will allow us to endure whatever hardships come our way, and it will inspire us to shine the light of Christ within ourselves so that we can encourage and help others around us.

An important aspect of our class is allowing the students to know that we genuinely care for them and love them. We attend their performances at school when we are able. We invite them to our homes for a movie night and cook dinner for them. We pray for them. In this way, we build a trusting community of the faithful, and we feel interconnected as Orthodox Christians both in this world and in the world beyond. I am blessed, truly blessed, to have these students in my life. I look forward to seeing them each and every Sunday. We are a work in progress; some days we are more successful, while other days we are perhaps less so. Through it all, we try to live the Faith to the best of our abilities, we try to love as Christ loved, and we work together to progress toward our ultimate goal: the salvation of us all.

Joni Zavitsanos teaches at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Houston, TX.



I volunteered to help with my parish's Sunday Church School shortly after my family and I were chrismated into the Holy Orthodox Faith in 1999. I'm the mother of three children, who at that time were ages sixteen, thirteen and five. I had spent many years in the public school system as a parent volunteer, helping kindergarteners and first graders learn to read. Because I have always enjoyed working with young children, I was thrilled to find out I would be teaching the preschool class. It wasn't until several years later that I learned I had received my new assignment by default. Apparently, people hadn't exactly been lining up to teach active three- and four-year-olds!

However, to me, the preschool age has always been one of my favorites. At this stage in their development, children are just beginning to become independent. They love learning new things. Adults have the wonderful opportunity to influence them in a positive way and build a stable foundation for their growing faith. It's gratifying to see how much the children grow and change, not only physically, but also emotionally and spiritually. Sometimes children who arrive in the classroom in tears at age three, experiencing separation anxiety, are the same ones who are wistful in May because it's the end of the Church school year.

I'm sure some people think that the preschool class consists of nothing more than playtime and coloring, but many concepts that are fundamental to our Faith are being imparted. In addition to Bible stories, I teach them about the liturgical life of the Church. The first thing we work on is properly making the sign of the cross. It may take months of repeating and reviewing the motions, but eventually they all learn to properly cross themselves. I also teach the children prayers or parts of prayers. We pray before we eat our snack ("Bless us, O Lord,

and these Thy gifts..."), before the lesson starts, and at the end of class by praying, "Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee," which of course is the beginning of the Trisagion Prayers. My goal is to teach them to give glory to God for all things and that we should be thankful to Him for all of His blessings.

One day we were discussing prayer, and I asked the children who or what we might pray for, expecting them to say something like, "I pray for mommy and daddy and my brother and sister," when a little four-year-old-girl said, "We bless God."

I replied, "No, McKailah, we don't bless God. We ask God to bless us." Then I recalled the prayer, "We praise Thee, we bless

Thee, we glorify Thee." Sometimes the students teach the teacher, even if they're only four years old.

Children can also ask very profound questions. I recall one class in which four-year-old Jacob asked me, "Why can't we see God?"

"I don't know," I replied. I've found it's better to admit that I don't have all the answers. After all, our Faith is one of mysteries. Baptism, chrismation and communion are mysteries that even little children have experienced, as full members of the Church. It's been a privilege for me to teach our

little Christians. I hope and pray that I can continue to help them grow and deepen their faith as they embark on a lifelong journey that will bring them closer to God.



Rosemary Shumski is the Administrative Assistant for the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Christian Education. She organizes the annual Orthodox Institute and is involved with the Creative Arts Festival in her Archdiocese. Rosemary is married to Deacon John Shumski and is a member of St. John Chrysostom Orthodox Church in York, PA.

WHY THEY TEACH

*You, therefore, who teach another,
do you not teach yourself?*

— ROMANS 2:21

One day, after Divine Liturgy at St. Athanasios Church in Aurora, IL, our Sunday school director approached me and asked whether I could fill in for a teacher who needed leave due to an emergency. This was my first exposure to Sunday school teaching. And now, thirty-five years later, I find myself still working with our young (and old) in catechism education. Over the years, I have been involved in many other Church-



related programs, but I never give up the opportunity to stand before our young to review the word of God. So I would like to share the reasons why I continue to be a part of our parish catechism.

1. I've learned more about our Faith than I ever would have otherwise. To be successful as a teacher, I must know what I am talking about. I would never have read so many of our Faith-related materials had it not been for my responsibility to our young. At first, it was a bit of a struggle getting through some of the heavy reading, but I persevered and found myself becoming more and more interested. Now books related to our Faith are just about my exclusive (and most enjoyable) reading materials.

2. I've learned how to prepare. In order to instruct, I must have the students' attention. My material has to be interesting. It's my role to take the teachings of our Faith and present them in a way that will keep them listening. To me this is the most important element of Sunday school education. My first objective in preparing for Sunday is finding the creative element that will capture the interest of the students.

3. I've learned how to present. Teaching has taught me communication. All the studying and preparation in the world goes to waste if it is not delivered to the mind of the student. Often we focus so much on instructing when we should be focusing on communicating. Through the years, I have learned many techniques for grabbing the attention of my students. Handouts, PowerPoint presentations, cliff-hangers dropped in between comments, and getting the students to participate all help open

their minds as I pour in the words of our Faith. I send out e-mail teasers a few days before class (just like the pre-broadcast commercials news folks do on TV) and do an e-mail follow-up—just as I might do in my business and for activities for the Church.

4. Working with our young is an endeavor not to be missed. I find the most fertile minds in our community belong to our young people. When a teacher is properly prepared, the results from the students are staggering. I cannot tell you the thrill I receive when I see my students' eyes fixed on me in a room silent except for the sound of my voice. Then I know that I have entered into their world and brought them to a new level of faith in God.

5. Our young grow up. This may be the one most satisfying benefit. It's amazing how often former students who are now adults come up and thank me. The young sometimes have difficulty expressing their gratitude. We may interpret their blank stares during class as boredom. I've made this mistake often. But it seems that whenever I come to this point, a parent will come along and say things about my work that make me realize that I am not wasting my time. If you are doing it right, when you teach, you will be making a connection that is not only for that moment, but rather for life. You will become someone the young student will look up to forever.

These are just a few of the reasons I've lived a life of instructing our young. The Great Commission commands us to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). St. Paul reminds us of the important role that teachers have in the church order (1 Corinthians 12:28). In Romans 2:21, St. Paul asks, "You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?" All of these principles guide not only when I am standing in front of the students, but also when I am seated at a table with corporate leaders.

But one of the most compelling reasons to teach came to me from a recording I was listening to one day while I was jogging. It was a sermon from my good friend, Rev. Fr. William Chiganos, Protosphyter of Holy Apostles Church in Westchester, IL. Fr. Bill was not sure of the author of this ancient quote, but it is something for all of us to remember:

One who teaches the faith by example is like one who gives others his own wealth.

Gerry Clonaris is from St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church in Charlotte, NC. He is Chairman of the Religious Education Committee of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Council.

Now that you have graduated from high school, what will you do to serve the Church?" My parish priest knew that I would be attending college nearby, and he wanted to keep his young people engaged in the life of the parish. He offered us the choice of joining the choir or assisting with the Church school program. Because I had served as a teacher's aide the year before, I chose to become a teacher. This ministry has allowed me to continue to grow in faith and to share that faith with our children for more than forty years.

My early role models were invaluable; my own Church school teachers, whose dedication was made evident each week, and my parents and grandparents, who quietly witnessed their faith. As a young teacher, I quickly realized that I had so much more to learn! I learned so much from my seasoned co-teachers, and I was blessed with parish priests who provided spiritual guidance that led me to a more focused study of Scripture. I began reading the early Church fathers and mothers, and numerous books about effective teaching in religious education. I first taught the kindergarten class, and over the years, I have taught at each grade level. When I began teaching the high school class, I prepared an index card asking for the name, address, e-mail, telephone number, and the hobbies and interests of each student. I also asked them to list their favorite refreshment for after Holy Communion, and I try to grant each of their requests during the school year. The index cards quickly

We should teach only what could become a true part of ourselves: that which can be fashioned usefully by the soul, mind and heart, not just the memory.

— ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT

help me to better know each student. Demonstrating love and keeping them in prayer has brought me immeasurable joy.

I have had extraordinary experiences as a Church school teacher, and whenever I happen to meet a former student who now has grown children and even grandchildren, I realize what an enormous impact a teacher can have despite having only forty minutes in the classroom each week. I also know that very often the teacher becomes the student. When I taught the high school class at my former parish more than twenty-five years ago, I could not have imagined that one of my students would go on to do graduate work and then attend Holy Cross seminary. He has been the pastoral assistant at my present parish for many years, and he is a fountain of knowledge and a man of deep faith.

Teaching our children to love God as He loves them is a beautiful ministry that continues to enrich and humble me.



Dorothea Love has taught at St. Nicholas in Northridge, CA; the Church of our Savior in Rye, NY; St. Anthony's in Pasadena, CA, where she served as the Director of Religious Education; and for the past twenty years at St. Paul's in Irvine, CA. She is President of the Philoptochos, and she teaches the Women's Study Fellowship class. She is married and has two adult children and three precious grandchildren.

Parenting as Stewardship:

The Role of Parents in Moral and Faith Formation

PANAYIOTIS SAKELLARIOU

During the parish council meeting, the man shot back at the youth director, “It’s people like you who make it so difficult for us parents! *You* are responsible for teaching our kids about the faith. Isn’t that why we pay you anyway?” The youth director had simply suggested that the parish try to find ways to support and equip parents to practice the Orthodox Faith in the home with their children. This dad would have none of it.

A scene like this isn’t too difficult to imagine. But decades of research have proven that families—especially parents—are the primary moral and spiritual teachers of young people. In 1990, the Search Institute conducted a national study asking seventh to twelfth graders to identify the key faith-shaping influences in their lives. The results showed that both mothers and fathers topped the list for talking about faith with their children (“Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations,” Search Institute, 1990).

Going back to the frustrated father, though, many parents are too busy, too tired or too intimidated to seriously live out their faith at home with their children. Many of us still believe that faith formation is the sole responsibility of the priest or Sunday school teachers. If parents are the primary influence on faith development, however, we need to take the responsibility seriously and equip ourselves for it.

The “Orthodox Family in America in Home and at Church” study, conducted in 2010 by the Center for Family Care of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, investigated the needs that parents and priests identified as necessary to equip families to take the lead in the moral and faith development of children. Results suggested the following topics: religious education for families; adult classes on parenting; raising children with strong morals; praying as a family at home and at church. As we deepen our own faith and love of Christ—through involvement in the Church and at home with programs like these—we can better understand this to be our primary role in the home.

Rev. Fr. George Morelli succinctly summarizes the role of parents in a family’s faith formation:

The family as the domestic church cannot foreclose on its obligation to be Christ-centered. Parents cannot assign



their obligation to others, be it the parish priest, teachers or youth workers. Christ must be present in the home from marriage, conception, birth, growth, until all fall sleep unto the Lord in the hope of eternal salvation. (“Orthodox Marriage and Parenting in the Domestic Church: Ladder of Divine Ascent for Marriage,” OrthodoxyToday.org)

MARRIAGE AS THE FOUNDATION OF FAMILY

Marriage is more than human. It is a “microbasileia,” a miniature kingdom, which is the little house of the Lord.

– ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

The crowns received by the bride and groom on their wedding day signify that the couple is called to be the king and queen of their new home, and that together with their children, they are to become a prophetic witness to God. The cornerstone of this little kingdom is the marital bond between husband and wife.

How, then, does the strength of the marital relationship affect parenting and teaching our children? The “Building Strong Families” study in 2002, correlating strong families and parenting, came up with the following instructive finding:

A key—but often lacking—resource for parents is a strong relationship with their spouse or partner. The parents we interviewed who experience an excellent partner relationship...are more likely to feel successful and up to the challenges of parenting. (“Building Strong Families,” a collaborative study by the YMCA and Search Institute, 2002)

A strong and successful marriage, therefore, is the foundation of healthy parenting. What does such a marriage look like? How does it build a strong basis for the raising of children? Let’s take a look at some of its key traits:

1. **Sanctifying.** Allow Christ to enter into the marital bond and sanctify it with His presence. He will then transform and purify the couple’s love for one another, and together they will create an atmosphere of holiness in the family. This teaches our children the importance of piety and worship in the home.
2. **Sacrificial.** “Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21). There must be mutuality in love between the husband and the wife as shown by self-sacrifice and obedience to one another and, together, by obedience to Christ. This will model sacrificial love and obedience to our children.
3. **Caring.** We all have a primary “love language.” Learning what this is for our spouse, be it physical touch, words of affirmation or something else, is critical in showing that

we care. Learning to share our time, our attention and our affection are also important ways to express that we are thinking about our spouse. By doing these, we teach our children to be caring and compassionate.

4. **Forgiving.** Learning how to forgive each other is one of the most important and difficult lessons in marriage. As a result, when our children hear us say, “I’m sorry,” after an argument, they feel safe and learn that their parents love each other in spite of their differences.



Elder Porphyrios has very powerful words that exhort the married couple to become holy for the sake of their salvation and that of their children:

What saves and makes for good children is the life of the parents in the home. The parents need to devote themselves to the love of God. They need to become saints in the relation to [each other and to] their children ... And the joy that will come to them, the holiness that will visit them, will shower grace on their children...Love, harmony and understanding between parents are what are required for the children. This provides a great sense of security and certainty. (*Wounded by Love*)

PARENTING AS STEWARDSHIP

With us everything should be secondary compared to our concern with children, and their upbringing in the instruction and teaching of the Lord.

– ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

For parents, the upbringing of children is the most important and sacred stewardship in life. It begins with conception, in the womb, wherein the mother is called to lead a full sacramental

life during the months of her pregnancy and the expecting parents are to maintain a life of prayer and sanctity in the home. Sister Magdalen instructs, “If we pray...we create an atmosphere in which children taste prayer and God’s presence. If we dwell in this spirit, even without words, even before children can speak, they can acquire a natural taste for prayer, and the desire to know God” (*Children in the Church Today*, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997).

My wife and I have always strived to be good stewards. Yet it never seems to be a linear process. For instance, even though we have carved out time for family evening prayers at our altar, we often end up doing them in the bedroom after our daughters are all tucked in bed. This is either due to our own lack of discipline or because getting them to stay still is more effort than we want to exert! But when we do get all settled and prayerful, it can be very rewarding. Our older daughter loves to read prayers from our little prayer book, and our younger one recites Psalm 23 (“The Lord is my shepherd...”) over and over again.

Striving to become good stewards of our children requires work, commitment and patience. Children are inclined to imitate both the good and the bad, so parents must become good models of Christ-like behavior. We need to guide them in internalizing Godly values and virtues, and in developing skills that will help them become mature, caring adults. We must equip them for living moral lives in an increasingly immoral and impious society. This isn’t easy, but if our efforts begin in our marriage and in our home, God will bless our families so that we become a little church of the home.

St. John Chrysostom eloquently captures this awesome stewardship of raising godly children in our church of the home:

Let us raise our children in such a way that they can face any trouble, and not be surprised when difficulties come. Let us bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. When we teach our children to be good, to be gentle, to be forgiving, to be generous, to love their fellow men, to regard this present age as nothing, we instill virtue in their souls, and reveal the image of God within them. This, then,



is our first task: to educate both ourselves and our children in godliness, otherwise what answer will we have before Christ’s judgment seat? (*Homily 21* on Ephesians)

Panayiotis Sakellariou is Resource Coordinator for the Center for Family Care of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Before working for the Center, Panayiotis spent five years in the mission field in India and Albania. He earned his Masters in Theological Studies at Holy Cross. He lives in Boston with his wife, Shannon, and their daughters, Sophia, 7, and Iliana, 5.



CENTER
for
FAMILY CARE

79 Saint Basil Road Garrison, NY 10524
Phone: (845) 424-8175 Fax: (845) 424-4172
www.family.goarch.org familycare@goarch.org



the Journey of Marriage

IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

written by
Dr. Philip Mamelakis
&
Fr. Charles Joanides

This book invites couples to prepare for their journey together by introducing God's purpose for marriage, some of the challenges they will encounter along the way, and practical advice for preparing together. In simple language, with clear illustrations, and couple activities, *The Journey of Marriage* helps couples explore their own relationship as they consider married life together. This book is designed to be read in collaboration with your parish priest.

... Coming May 30 · 2012 ... 

Facilitator's Manual for *The Journey of Marriage in the Orthodox Church!*

Retail: \$14.95 | Bookstores: \$8.97
Special pricing for Metropolis ordering

Orders can be made through the Greek
Orthodox Archdiocese Department of
Religious Education at 1-800-566-1088 or
online through www.orthodoxmarketplace.com



And so
marriage is a road:
it starts out
from the earth
and ends
in heaven.

—Aimilianos
of Simonopetra

Special Needs and Disabilities Handbooks

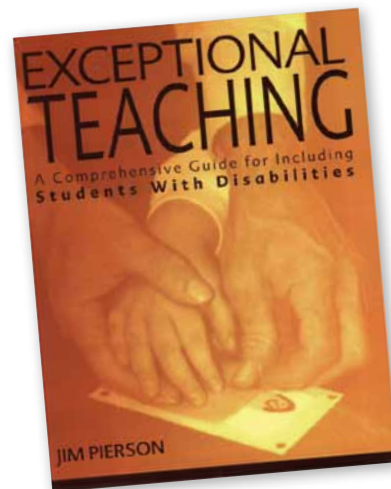
The number of children with “disabilities,” “exceptional abilities” or “special needs” seems to grow every year. Our terminology continues to evolve, creating categories that are as inclusive as possible—words that are not judgmental or derogatory, words that remind us that all children can learn and that not all children learn in the same way. Most of us have heard of autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADD or ADHD), dyslexia, visual and auditory impairments, physical impairments, and more. Students in schools have individualized education plans (IEPs) or something similar to meet the variety of challenges they face.

Although our parishes don’t keep statistics on such matters, I am certain that if we were to do a poll, we would learn that every parish has members—children and adults—with disabilities. Hopefully, the time has passed in all of our communities when a child with an exceptional ability was kept away from the community or, even worse, discouraged from attending. All of us, including those with special needs, are created in the image and likeness of God, capable of experiencing the love of God and of participating in the life of the Church. There is no intellectual, physical or psychological requirement for being baptized and receiving communion or unction. Admittedly, a much larger discussion needs to be held in the life of the Church about these matters.

Meanwhile, Church school teachers, youth ministers and other parish workers need strategies for ministering to those with exceptional abilities. These three books offered by Christian publishers are a good place to begin until we have developed an Orthodox Christian text. (The Department of Religious Education is beginning to work with people to contribute to such a text.) As “generically Christian,” all three books have a biblical basis and include lessons with biblical themes. Of course, an Orthodox Christian–produced resource would be based on our

multisensory environment and our understanding of the human person. In many respects, our richly sensory liturgical environment and our array of practices and disciplines already creates an inclusive environment and offers many approaches for those with different learning abilities.

In a workshop at the 2011 Orthodox Institute at Antiochian Village, participants were encouraged to purchase *Exceptional Teaching*. Those who already knew of the book sang its praises. I came across the other two books while I was searching online for a copy of *Exceptional Teaching*. All three books had to be purchased used at various prices online. And there are plenty of other texts out there.



Exceptional Teaching: A Comprehensive Guide for Including Students with Disabilities

Jim Pierson (Standard Publishing, 2002)

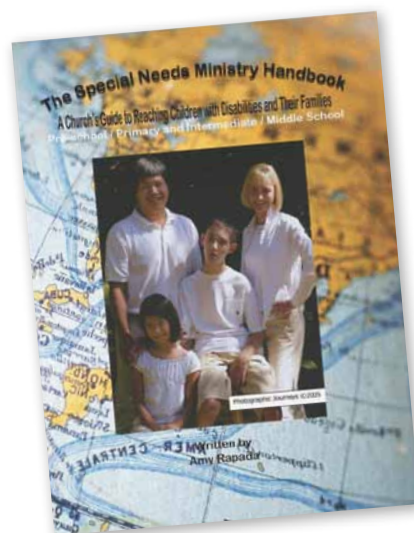
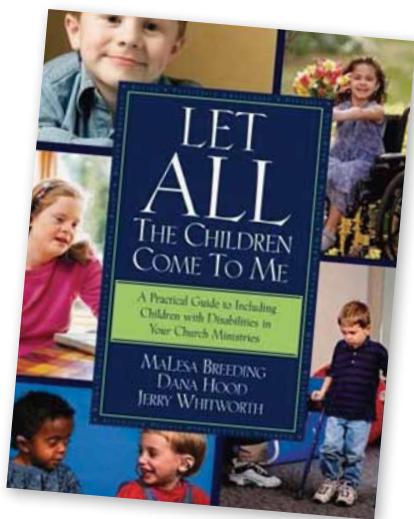
Exceptional Teaching is the most comprehensive and systematic of the three. The sixteen chapters describe a full range of physical, cognitive and health-related disabilities. The table of contents alone will raise your consciousness. Each chapter briefly explains a disability in non-specialist terms and then offers some strategies for including persons with that disability in your

ministry. For example, the chapter on autism reminds us of the range of this spectrum disorder. The chapter includes strategies that can be effective, such as finding tasks that the autistic child can do and involving classmates. The health-related chapters are particularly enlightening. For example, thalassemia or Cooley's anemia is not uncommon among people with Mediterranean ancestry. Depending on its severity, thalassemia can lead to a jaundiced appearance, shortness of breath after strenuous activity, or growth issues. Teachers and youth workers should be aware of how children with this disorder might respond to any planned physical activities or games. In virtually all instances of disabilities, communicating with parents is an essential step that will allow a teacher to better understand what a student is capable of doing, where he or she has limitations, and strategies that the family already uses.

Let All the Children Come to Me: A Practical Guide to Including Children with Disabilities in Your Church Ministries

MaLesa Breeding, Dana Hood and Jerry Whitworth
(David C. Cook Publishing, 2006)

Let All the Children Come to Me is very practical and helpful for a teacher's understanding of disability. It includes creative handouts in a workbook-like format for the teacher's use. This book presents many real-life questions from the classroom experiences of teachers. The strategies are simple and straightforward. For example, the book offers a flow chart about how to modify a lesson to meet the need of a particular student.



The Special Needs Ministry Handbook: A Church's Guide to Reaching Children with Disabilities and Their Families

Amy Rapada (CGR Publishing, 2007)

The Special Needs Ministry Handbook looks more at how to arrange a classroom to better minister to learners with disabilities. This book is helpful because it offers specific strategies for preschool/primary and intermediate/middle school groups. This book has a particularly strong discussion about how to communicate that the parish is inclusive. For example, saying, "We're not really equipped to handle your child's disabilities" communicates a non-inclusive approach. Instead, we should say, "What accommodations and modifications would be most helpful in adapting to your child's disabilities or learning differences?" This book also has reproducible pages for parish use.

No single book is going to respond to all of the questions that those in ministry may have about their exceptional students. We also need to remind ourselves that most of our youth workers and teachers are not experts in these areas. But it is likely that all parishes have someone who is familiar enough with disabilities (e.g., a teacher, a nurse or a physician) that he or she could serve as a resource for a youth or religious education program. All three books emphasize that all students can learn, and that the task of a teacher is to determine what the student can do. They are also very clear in reminding the reader that communicating with parents is the most important step. These three books could spark an important discussion among parish youth workers and teachers about their attitudes and approaches.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BASICS

Achievement and Incentives

BASIL XEROS, INTERVIEWED BY ELIZABETH BORCH

Holy Trinity Church of Dallas, TX, has a well-organized system for recognizing student achievement and attendance. The parish has 400 students on the rolls, with 130–175 regular participants.

Each year on the second Sunday in May, students are recognized with a promotion or graduation ceremony after the Divine Liturgy. The following Sunday, awards are given out in the classrooms. (See the sidebars for lists of various awards.)

Starting in the fifth grade, every student receives a “continuing education” pamphlet to help them start building their personal libraries. For further incentive, there are three main categories of student awards: attendance, achievement and graduation.

The attendance award is given to a student if he or she has been present for at least 80 percent of the scheduled teaching Sundays. (This requirement is relaxed if a student comes from a difficult family situation.) The attendance award is presented with a promotion certificate. This award, which changes every year, might be something like a lapel pin or necklace.

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Awarded to students who elect to do something beyond attending class; task and prize may be determined by the teaching team for each grade

Age or Grade	Task	Award Icon
Age 3	Make the sign of the cross	St. Philip
Age 4	State the name of the church and the priest	Jesus Christ
Kindergarten	Recite the Lord’s Prayer	Three Hierarchs
1st grade	Recite the Lord’s Prayer	Resurrection
2nd grade	Recite the Ten Commandments and name the seven sacraments	St. John Chrysostom
3rd grade	Recite the Creed	Annunciation
4th grade	Complete the <i>Lenten Workbook</i>	St. Nicholas
5th grade	Answer 30–40 questions from the Old Testament	Archangels Michael & Gabriel
6th grade	Answer 30–40 questions from the New Testament	Nativity of Christ
7th and 8th grades	STUDENT’S CHOICE: – Write a paper for the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival – Teach a class – Write a paper on a familiar Orthodox Christian topic	7th grade: St. George 8th grade: Theotokos
9th and 10th grades	STUDENT’S CHOICE: – Write a paper for the Oratorical Festival – Participate in five dinners for the homeless	9th grade: Sts. Constantine & Helen 10th grade: St. Katherine
11th and 12th grades	STUDENT’S CHOICE: – Present a speech in the Oratorical Festival – Assist in the parish’s “Orphan Tree” – Raise money for Support A Mission Priest (SAMP)	11th grade: Baptism of the Lord 12th grade: Theotokos “Quick to Hear”

The achievement award is granted to each student who meets the requirements of the class for the year. These are age-appropriate goals set by the teacher for the class at the beginning of the year. For example, a three-year-old might have to learn to do the sign of the cross, and an older child might have to recite the Creed from memory. Each year, from age three to high school graduation, a specific icon is given as the achievement award. By the time students graduate from high school, they will have a respectable collection of icons. The teaching staff created a list of the icons awarded in order to avoid duplication.

Older children are groomed for participation in the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Students are required to write and present papers for a couple of years before they are of age to participate in the festival in the seventh grade. This assignment is taken seriously. For example, a student is not allowed to participate on the GOYA basketball team if he or she has not written a paper. The winners of the parish-level festival advance to the Metropolis of Denver’s festival. The church awards these students with their own St. John Chrysostom award.

Graduating seniors who have been regular and consistent in the program receive a special graduation gift and diploma from the Sunday school. They are given an icon of the Theotokos “Quick to Hear,” an *Orthodox Study Bible* and six other books. This costs approximately \$150 per student—a

“ARMOR OF GOD” GRADUATING SENIOR PACKAGE

Icon of the Theotokos “Quick to Hear”
(12th grade achievement award)
Prayer rope
Orthodox Study Bible

Additional books and pamphlets, such as the following:

- Pocket-size prayer book
- Book of Orthodox services
- *What Orthodox Christians Believe*
- *Building a Habit of Prayer*
- *How to Read Your Bible*
- *Cultist at My Door*
- *When You Fast*
- *What the Orthodox Church Teaches about Abortion*
- *Treasures of Orthodoxy*
- *Orthodox Answers to...*
- *The Orthodox Church*
- *Are You Saved?*
- *Introducing the Orthodox Church*
- *The Jesus Prayer*
- *The Creed*
- *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers*

CONTINUING EDUCATION PAMPHLETS

5th grade	<i>The Eastern Orthodox Church: Who Are We?</i> <i>Prayer and the Departed Saints</i>
6th grade	<i>Introduction to the Jesus Prayer</i> <i>An Introduction to Prayer</i>
7th grade	<i>Memorial Saturdays in the Orthodox Church</i> <i>Building a Habit of Prayer</i>
8th grade	<i>When You Fast</i>
9th grade	<i>Preparing Proskomo</i> <i>How to Read Your Bible</i>
10th grade	<i>The Resurrection Service in the Orthodox Church</i> <i>Facing Up to Mary</i> <i>Communion: A Family Affair</i>
11th grade	<i>Turned On by the Liturgy</i> <i>Cultist at My Door</i>
12th grade	<i>Treasures of Orthodoxy</i> <i>What the Orthodox Church Teaches</i> <i>about Abortion</i>

worthwhile and useful investment as the students move on to the next phase of their lives.

The teachers are not overlooked in recognition for their devoted service. Each year, teachers get a planner and a book of their choice from various Orthodox catalogs. The book they select may be for their personal use or for classroom use. Doing this has also created a resource library that any of the teachers can draw from. The third Sunday in August, teachers are honored after the Divine Liturgy for the faithful work they do.

This may sound like an expensive program, but the costs are offset in a few ways. The Sunday school does have a budget that is regulated by its director. Funds are available in \$15 increments for proposed craft projects, if approved by the director. Students are given stewardship envelopes for each week and are expected to contribute regularly, so a certain percentage of the program’s budget comes from within. The resource library also saves money in the long run.

Basil Xeros is the Sunday school director at Holy Trinity Church in Dallas, TX. He has served in this capacity for fifty-four years. He is a retired engineer.

Parent // *TO* // Parent

How do you help your child focus in Church?

It was Holy Saturday of last year, the last time my ninety-three-year-old father was able to attend church before his passing on Mother's Day. Before my father got sick, he never missed a Sunday. As he struggled to kneel from his wheelchair, I was struck with the awe and love he had for our liturgy. Despite his illness, he was at home in church. I flashed back to the many, many times as a young girl when I stood by his side in church and felt such love, such a sense of belonging in church. Do our children today know this love, this sense of belonging? Do our children today feel the beauty of God's house as it competes with the TV, computer and electronic gadgets? How can we expect our children to focus in church with so many distractions?

Just like our parents before us, we parents play a major role in raising our children in the church. Although each age brings different challenges, I believe it begins at a very early age and not only while at church. Focus and engagement occur when we are connected to and familiar with our surroundings.

I opened this question to the Orthodox Christian Religious Education group on Facebook. Here are some ways that we came up with to help our children stay focused and connected in church. – *E.B.*

GENERAL HABITS

- Learning to engage needs to become something that happens more than just during a church service. It is something that happens all week long. Church becomes part of the entire family routine: mealtime prayers, family bedtime prayers, donating food and clothes, and reading Bible stories. When God is part of the family on a regular basis, being engaged in church seems to happen on its own.

- I think it is important that parents begin preparing their children on Friday and Saturday rather than when we are frantically getting dressed and into the car for Church. We also need to remove the “frantic” element and make our Sunday preparations a priority like work and school; our children are watching and see what our priorities are.
- I suggest that we tell our children what we want them *to* do rather than focusing on what we do *not* want them to do. “I want you to whisper when you need to tell me something” and “I want you to hold the service book with me,” etc.
- Teach our children to participate in the responses as early as they are able, also the hymn of the parish.
- We spend a great amount of time teaching our children academic information from birth, so why wouldn't we teach them our faith and worship practice as well? Our family's participation in the Divine Liturgy and other services should be as natural as breathing.
- Children begin to engage when they witness their parents engaging.
- If one of our children was sick, one parent stayed home with the sick child and the other went to church with the remainder of the family.
- Expertise with the Vulcan neck pinch was not always the best way to go.
- My parents made very clear that Sunday was for attending Liturgy—no excuses. My dad was always up and dressed sitting in the living room reading the paper waiting for us. The thought never crossed my mind to say I had stayed up too late or that I didn't want to go to church. He set an example—silently. Sunday morning was a day we all got dressed up and went to church. My parents were never too tired or “not feeling well” or had something else to do on a Sunday morning. I tried my best to emulate this example for my daughters. No sports games, no sleepovers, no other activity is more important than going to church on Sunday mornings. It wasn't easy with society's expectations and pressures but we set the rules for our home and stuck to them.
- If you bring them often enough, they learn this is the drill!
- Most importantly, bring them. I might add “on time.”
- We have icons and crosses to see in our home. They don't cover the walls, but each room has at least one icon. We each

have chosen icons that we love and cherish. Our icons and crosses are part of our home and who we are. They are beautiful comfort and reminders that God is with us all the time.

- There are still communities that hold “Sunday school” during church. I grew up with that structure. The only thing it teaches is how NOT to go to church. In our community, the children sit with their teachers through the Divine Liturgy and go to class after Holy Communion. The students, all in all, are pretty well behaved. Ideally, all Church education would take place on another day than Sunday,
- The biggest and the hardest thing to do in the world we live in is to make the Divine Liturgy a priority in your home. If parents focus on this and make the day special, as it should be, from the time your children are infants they will learn to be part of the service and understand the importance of partaking of communion. Children will be respectful and feel comfortable in God’s house if they go to church regularly knowing that Sunday is a special day—a day that the family receives communion.

“...our children are watching to see what our priorities are.”

- “If you have a child with a reactionary character, whatever you want to say to him, say to God first, kneel before God and through the grace of God your words will be conveyed to your child. Children don’t listen with their ears. They will only listen to what we want to tell them when divine grace appears and enlightens them. Your prayers will become a spiritual hug, which embraces your children and captivates them.” – *Elder Porphyrios of Athens*
- I think we must emphasize our own behavior. We must teach by example, but joyful, loving example. Kids spot judgmental, overbearing pietism a mile away, and they flee from it—especially teenagers. Too often we forget to share our joy in



Christ with our children.. I am not telling you anything I haven't struggled with myself. As my kids are now older, I regret the times I was a grumpy, bad example for them. My guidance of my own children improved immensely when I quit blabbing at them all the time, and directed my concerns to God and begged for guidance. He definitely answered me—all to the good!

INFANCY THROUGH PRESCHOOL

- If you wait until children are older and “well behaved” before you decide to go to church on Sundays, your work will be harder to instill values.
- Plan ahead, having a strategy prepared ahead of time reduces stress.
- Don't expect great behavior from a sick, tired or hungry child. This will just frustrate both of you, so plan accordingly.
- Enlist the help of godparents, grandparents and other families. Mixing it up keeps things interesting.
- [Children] encounter God better than we do. I think the biggest mistake parents make (because they are nervous) is keeping the littlest ones in the back. Come to the front, where they can see. It's OK if they sit on the floor. It's OK for them to have a little freedom of movement. I strongly suggest avoiding bringing toys, food, etc., which creates a mess and makes a lot of noise. Trying to force a preschooler to sit quietly without moving is absurd. I used to lay my coat on the



- floor, and when they got tired, they slept near my feet.
- Of course, if your child is really fussing, screaming and having a melt down—yup, it's time to go. Don't worry about the getting the “evil-eye” from other people. They may be struggling with something you just don't know about.
- I would hold [my children] during the liturgy and whisper to them about the crosses, the angels, the people in the icons, what the priest was doing, etc. I would sing with the choir. If they got antsy I always had a pair of prayer beads and a child's hard-page book.
- When they get fidgety, walk around the church perimeter with them.
- Light candles.
- Have special books and bag for church only!
- Talk quietly to your child, engaging their curiosity. Ask them to point to things in the church. Help them to anticipate and watch for what is coming next in the service.
- Although it may be counter-intuitive, bring them to the smaller services and the evening services. It's easier when there aren't many people there for a weekday service, so Teddy gets to hold a candle and march in the procession, or turn on the lights for “O gladsome light.” Encouraging him to sing the correct responses can also help, especially when we get to count the three “Lord, have mercies.” (He's really into counting.)
- Instead of singing simple nursery rhymes and kiddie songs to our toddlers, sing the hymns of our church throughout the day.
- Show your young child how to do their cross and do it with them in church. So many times, I see parents bringing their children to church yet not interacting with them.
- When my son was three and four years old, I would bring paper for him to draw the icons and what he was seeing in church. Afterward I would tell him the stories in the icons. These drawings are very dear to me now.
- We try not to “talk” to them, but point things out very quietly, discouraging chattiness.
- Sunday was, and is, a very special day, so when my daughters were of an age of three, four or five, we would pick out a really pretty dress for church with fancy tights. They had little pocket books, hats and gloves. They knew the day was special because they were all dressed up! Both my husband and I were dressed up too! We were going to God's house for communion.

KINDERGARTEN AND EARLY ELEMENTARY

- Conversations in the car on the way to church were about topics in the lessons. This is a good time to have a family conversation.
- If your children are not habituated to church life, [then their] friends and classmates will have had a head start indoctrinating your children about what should be relevant in their lives.
- On the way to church, tell your child about the [day's] Bible passage, and when it is time for the reading of the Bible, let them know this is the story you told them. On the way home, talk about it again.
- As your child gets older, you can play "I spy" in church. Very quietly, you can whisper, "I see a cross. Can you find it?"
- Prepare a "church bag" filled with Orthodox books and bring it each Sunday. There are many wonderful picture books, such as the "Christina" series [by Maria Khoury] that our children can look at during the liturgy.

INTERMEDIATE AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

- This is a fabulous online resource: "Let Us Attend: Sunday's Gospel for Children" from the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese (www.antiochian.org). They provide illustrated handouts of each Sunday's Gospel.
- Advance preparation of the Epistle and Gospel readings are very helpful and will allow the child to listen for this.
- School-age kids can sit with their friends, provided there is a parent there to keep them focused rather than socializing.
- Each Sunday have your child come up with a question of the week that has something to do with the liturgy. You might be surprised at what they wonder about.
- On the way to church, give them something to listen for, such as, "See how many 'Lord, have mercies' you hear." Explain to them what it means. Have a little checklist of the different parts of the liturgy, and have them check it off as it occurs, such as the little entrance, the great entrance, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, kneeling, communion, etc.
- Upper elementary gets a little challenging. For the boys, some are ready to go into the altar. This depends upon your priest and the development of the particular boy.
- Children in this age group are very able to follow along in the Divine Liturgy books.
- During the petitions, we can silently pray about many things and people. Help your child prepare a list of things or people they need to pray about and pull it out at the right time.
- Children also respond very well to offering the *prosporo*.
- As a Sunday school, ask your priest to show the children what he does with the Holy Gifts during the preparation.

JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL

- When children are having trouble sitting still and concentrating, it's great to discuss that in the religious education program. Why is it hard to concentrate? Why does it seem "boring" sometimes? Acknowledge this with students and discuss how we as adults try to attend and bring ourselves into the place of prayer. Admit to our children that it isn't always easy for us, either.
- As adults, we need to watch our own attitudes and behavior. The best form of teaching is modeling. What is our preparation to go to church? Is it joyful? Is there an identifiable preparation? One thing we have done as a family is seek each other's forgiveness on Saturday evenings before going to church and definitely before receiving Holy Communion.
- Finally, although almost no one attends orthros, it's probably my favorite part of Sunday morning. The Greek/English version is available for download, and the saint/fast/feast/event of the day is emphasized. If the children see this in English, the educational value of the hymns in teaching our theology becomes very clear. One thing we emphasized in our high school class—especially since we live in a very *sola scriptura* protestant evangelical area—is how much of the words of the Scripture are right there, plain as day, in all of our services. Too often, an incorrect criticism of Orthodoxy is that we don't "emphasize the Bible." The best way to encourage focus in church is preparation during the week, talking about what is coming, using the icons to learn, reading the Scriptures and anticipating what the priest will say about the readings' importance to our lives.
- For the high school students, the problem is getting them there. If there are reading parts (especially during complines, vespers, and the Lenten liturgies), ask the priest for permission to let the high schoolers participate in those readings and prayers.
- Arrange for involvement: assigned areas of service, a particular service, certain hymns, antidoron service, flower and icon preparation, candle desk, greeters, etc. This paves the way for the next generation of church leadership.

There are some really great suggestions here! There's one last thing you can do: pray for the children! Sometimes it may not seem that the children are focused but you never know how the Holy Spirit is working in them. Many thanks to everyone that contributed!

The Very Rev. Fr. George Papadeas

A PRIEST FOR ALL SEASONS

REV. DR. MILTIADES B. EFTHIMIOU

Many years ago, I coined this familiar phrase in reference to St. Nicholas. Many groups of people from the United States and Europe took the annual “St. Nicholas Pilgrimage,” sponsored by the Order of St. Andrew, the Archons, to Myra (Demre), Turkey, the actual see of St. Nicholas. I am bringing out the phrase once again for one of the foremost clerics of our time, the Very Rev. George Papadeas, who fell asleep in the Lord very recently.

He, in the footsteps of St. Nicholas, was a modern “wonderworker,” and, indeed, a priest for all seasons, by what he accomplished in his ninety-three years of life. Like St. Nicholas, he was constantly helping people and projects in need. I take great



pride in writing about him because as a young boy in the 1940s, I grew up with this gifted cleric, when he was serving as a deacon to the late Fr. Basil Efthimiou (my father), Dean of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in New York.

I traveled with Fr. George and my father many times, such as on our first trip, accompanying the great Athenagoras to Garrison, NY, to see if this should be the site of St. Basil's Academy. But I knew him even before this, when I took time off from Ira Allen Grade School (across the street from the Annunciation Cathedral in Boston) to accompany my father and Bishop Athenagoras Cavadas, to Pomfret, CT, to visit the first home of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School, erected in 1937. Pomfret, as we usually just called it, graduated some of the most prolific American priests who served as pioneers for the embryonic Archdiocese of North and South America. The young George, from Altoona, PA, was the first to be ordained priest from that first class of 1942. He was immediately assigned to serve the Holy Trinity Cathedral in New York. In the early 1950s, with the blessing of his mentor, he established the first Greek Orthodox Church on Long Island, which soon was to become the St. Paul's Cathedral. In the late 1950s, St. Paul's was to receive international attention when an icon of the Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, wept in the home of a devout young couple. My ministry began under the tutelage of Fr. George shortly after my ordination in 1958, pretty much as Fr. George had done with his mentor, my father, sixteen years earlier.

Fr. Papadeas, a priest for all seasons, will be remembered for many things. Along with Fr. George Poulos, he helped inaugurate the Ionian Village in Greece to acquaint the young in America with their heritage and roots. The printing of his Holy Week service book has helped millions appreciate the beauty of the services. Under his supervision, my first assignment was to develop, along with others, the first series of religious catechetical books for Sunday schools nationwide, at a time when there was sparse material for educating the young in Christian Orthodoxy. At an age when most priests would have retired, Fr. George continued his ministry by establishing communities in Florida. His last one was in Ocala, FL. Mind you, for years he drove for two to three hours every Sunday to conduct services



there. He was ministering to that parish when he fell asleep in the Lord. That was Fr. George, of blessed memory!

Fr. Papadeas will also be remembered for the influence he had on the young. He played a role in assisting the dean of the New York Cathedral in sending a young John Romanides to Pomfret, who, upon graduating from Holy Cross, went on to become one of the foremost Orthodox theologians in the world! He found time to form a New York Cathedral football team, which marched every year in the Greek Parade down Fifth Avenue in full football regalia. They marched past Archbishop Athenagoras, ship owners, lawyers, doctors and statesmen in the reviewing stand, which was situated in front of the cathedral on East 74th Street! That was Fr. George! He assisted the dean in establishing the Greek American Day School at the cathedral.

Space doesn't allow me to review all his accomplishments, such as the founding of the Retired Clergymen Association (RCA). Along with several other luminaries and priests of blessed memory, Fr. George contributed to this major effort, giving a source of comfort to all the retired clergy, in particu-

lar to those in need. RCA continues the work began so many years ago by those pioneer clerics. Fr. Papadeas stood for one thing, which is his legacy to many generations of clerics in the vineyard: hard work in promoting Christ's ministry, whether in building a church edifice, writing books, or confronting the unseen enemy, wherever he might be lurking. His admonition to many of us who looked to him as a role model of pastoral leadership was something he learned from his mentor: *ipomoni kai epimoni*, patience and persistence, in whatever you do, toward His greater glory. This has guided many of us to always strive for the best that is in us to serve our Lord and His people.

May this cleric, "a priest for all seasons," rest in peace among all the other pioneers and luminaries who contributed so much to making Orthodoxy a real presence in the Americas.

Rev. Dr. Miltiades B. Efthimiou is a member of the Holy Cross School of Theology Class of 1957.



HOW DO OTHERS SEE US?

MICHAEL KINNAMON

Your Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Chicago, Your Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, esteemed clergy, brothers and sisters in our Lord: Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, and greetings on behalf of the thirty-six other communions that, along with you, make up the community of Christian communions we call the National Council of Churches. The National Council is not an organization you have joined; it is a relationship you have formed with others who claim the name of Jesus Christ in order that together we might grow in unity and bear witness to the reconciling love and power of our gracious Savior. I pray that my time with you might strengthen that relationship—to the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe that my good friend, Bishop Demetrios, invited me to speak on this wonderful, dangerous topic—“How do others see us?”—first, because he knows that I will speak honestly, but also because he knows that I love the Orthodox Church, including the Greek Orthodox Church, and the great tradition you embody. I am a Protestant Christian; those are the communities within which I have come to know Christ and seek to do ministry and mission in his name. But please hear me: I regard Protestant churches, if I may put it this way, as the evangelical tip of an orthodox iceberg. I believe that God has blessed us, Protestant churches, with gifts that I hope are important to you. But apart from you, apart from the tradition you embody, our distinctive witness has no substance or foundation.

What I want to do in this brief address is to name six *misperceptions* of the Orthodox Church that are held by many of your Christian neighbors. I say *misperceptions* because I believe these ideas are based on false understandings or just plain ignorance—but, in my judgment, Orthodoxy often contributes to these mis-

understandings in ways I will try to identify. The first three are relatively easy. The last three are harder.

1. The Orthodox Church is “foreign,” not truly American. Part of what we try to do in the NCC is enable the churches to know one another—and so, for example, we tell the story of how Orthodoxy arrived in Alaska more than 200 years ago (before my own Protestant denomination was even born on the American frontier), and of how the Greek Orthodox Church was present in New Orleans as early as the Civil War.

But, of course, the real issue goes deeper than history. Last week, we had one of our official visits with a member church, this one with the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church, where our delegation asked the question, “Are you an Indian church with a presence in the United States, or are you an American church with deep roots in India?”—and then watched the room divide over how they answered. I imagine most of you would agree with Fr. Tom FitzGerald when he writes that “Orthodoxy in the United States may no longer be viewed simply as a diaspora composed primarily of immigrants...Rather, Orthodoxy in the United States can only be viewed properly as an emerging local church composed primarily of American citizens of a wide variety of racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds.” But your roots are, indeed, deep in Greece or Russia or other countries overseas, and, as long as critical decisions are made in Constantinople, some Protestants may continue to ask you, “How American is the *Greek* Orthodox Church?”

2. The Orthodox Church is not committed to the ecumenical movement—that is, to the movement that has as its goal “promoting the visible unity of the church in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship.” Once again, a little history can help. The first great document of the modern ecu-



menical movement was an encyclical sent in 1920 by the Holy Synod of the Church of Constantinople “to the churches of Christ everywhere,” calling for a *koinonia ton ekklesion*, a league of the churches. This call that eventually led to the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, where the Greek Orthodox Church—the Ecumenical Patriarchate—was a charter member. When we think of the great ecumenical leaders of the twentieth century, Patriarch Athenagoras and Archbishop Iakovos come immediately to mind, along with Archbishop Germanos of Thyateira and Great Britain, Prof. Nikos Nissiotis and Metropolitan John Zizioulas...You get the picture.

At present, the NCC has five commissions. Three of them have a chairperson or vice-chairperson who is a member of the Greek Orthodox Church. I point this out often when I speak to Protestants in order to inform them that the Orthodox are, indeed, ecumenically committed.

On the other hand, Protestant suspicions are at least somewhat understandable. For example, they can read the numbers, which show that the financial contribution to the NCC of the United Methodist Church, by itself, is roughly fifty times that of all nine Orthodox churches combined. Guess who feels that they are more committed to the work of the Council?

But, again, the issue runs deeper. Protestants think of the one church of Jesus Christ as fragmented into various denominations, and so they seek unity through dialogue aimed at mutual recognition. But, as you know, no Orthodox church thinks of itself as a denomination. For you, the unity Christians have in Christ *is* being manifested in the historical and apostolic church—that is, in the Orthodox Church. The ecumenical problem, as you see it, therefore, is not fragmentation but schism, a falling away from the full truth of the apostolic faith. I will return to this in my last point, but for now I will simply note that these differing conceptions of ecumenism probably leave you feeling like a square peg in a round hole, like “outsiders” in a Council still dominated by Protestants.

3. The Orthodox Church is not involved in struggles for justice and peace in the world.

People who make such a claim, and I hear it a lot, apparently don’t know about the vigorous defense of God’s creation (ecological justice) waged by His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew and by Fr. John Chryssavgis. Orthodoxy, at its best, as in Fr. Alexander Schmemmann’s wonderful little book, *For the Life of the World*, emphasizes that the world is the object of God’s saving love, refusing to restrict the interests and concerns of the church to a compartment labeled “religious.” I

consistently insist that ethics and theology cannot be separated, that our social witness must be grounded in our faith commitments, and I frequently quote such scholars as Fr. Stanley Harakas when doing so.

But, of course, the church and its members do not always behave at their best. All of our traditions have a tendency to turn inward, focusing on the internal life of the church rather than on the church’s participation in God’s mission for the world. I suspect that Archbishop Anastasios of Albania had this in mind in his sermon at the 2006 assembly of the WCC. “Woe to us,” declared His Beatitude, “If, in the twenty-first century, we again relinquish the initiative for social justice to others, as we have done in past centuries, while we confine ourselves to opulent rituals, and to our usual alliance with the powerful.”

4. The Orthodox Church is, itself, divided.

In a theological sense, this is false. Eastern Orthodox Christians share one apostolic faith and are in communion with one another. But in a political sense, as you know better than I do, Orthodoxy in America is divided. Protestants, of course, are horrifyingly fractured; but it is hard for Orthodox to raise this so long as there are multiple jurisdictions in Chicago or ongoing tensions between Moscow and Istanbul—not to mention the split between Oriental and Eastern Orthodox dating back 1560 years. All of this undercuts our witness to Jesus Christ, which is why I am so encouraged by the new Episcopal Assembly.

5. The Orthodox Church is stuck in the past.

This is where you are really swimming upstream in American culture. A culture that revels in the present and treats yesterday as obsolete will have difficulty with the Orthodox emphasis on tradition. My own denomination, the Disciples of Christ, began as part of the nineteenth-century Restorationist Movement in American Protestantism, a movement that sought to “restore” the New Testament church by jumping over the “distortions” that arose during nearly 2000 years of church history. So you can imagine how my Disciples ancestors regarded the Orthodox Church that looks for authority to councils of the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth centuries.

As a seminary professor, I was forever saying to students from my church, “You *receive* the faith, passed down to you as a sacred inheritance. You don’t get to invent it in each new generation!” And I greatly value the presence of Orthodox in ecumenical settings because you insist on making that point.

Still, I think there is a challenge here for both Protestants and Orthodox. A leading Orthodox theologian, Metropolitan John Zizioulas, puts it this way:

The non-Orthodox, on the one hand, seem to be unwilling to take into consideration what has traditionally been conveyed to us, while the Orthodox, on the other hand, seem unwilling to let their tradition (dogmatic or otherwise) be challenged enough by the problems of the day.

I leave it you to determine if he is on target.

6. The Orthodox Church is spiritually arrogant.

This is perhaps the most difficult point to hear, but it must be discussed. I was a professor in Protestant seminaries for twenty-five years. Every time I taught a course on ecumenism, students would get very upset when they read how the Orthodox claim to be *the church* and deny full churchly status to the communities of faith to which these students belonged. Put yourself in their place: They know from long experience that their own Presbyterian or Methodist or Episcopal or Lutheran or Baptist church worships the living Christ, that their church’s mission (guided by the Spirit) has borne spiritual fruit, and that their communities are filled with people who lead lives of faith and faithfulness. And it feels to them like pure arrogance for another church to say, “We don’t recognize you as a church in the full theological sense of that term because you don’t do things the way we do them.”

Now, let me acknowledge what my students often couldn’t see—namely, the arrogance of *their* churches. After 1989, plane-loads of Protestants took off for Moscow and to other Eastern

European cities ready “to convert the communists,” completely overlooking the local Orthodox churches—and that, too, is arrogance in the guise of evangelism.

As I have already indicated, I am not here to suggest that the Orthodox should deny your own self-understanding, that you should back away from claims to embody the tradition of the apostles. But there are ways for making these claims that, in my judgment, could build up our relationships rather than jeopardize them. Let me give two examples:

The first came in 1973, on the occasion of the WCC’s twenty-fifth anniversary, when the Ecumenical Patriarch acknowledged that the Orthodox have been “deeply enriched by the encounter with western church life as well as by material assistance.” This willingness to receive gifts, as well as offer your own, goes a very long way toward overcoming any perceived arrogance. The second is a quotation from Metropolitan Zizioulas:

The Orthodox will never depart from their conviction that the Orthodox Church is the *Una Sancta* [the one church]. This is due to [our] faith that the church is a historical entity and that we cannot seek her outside the tradition historically bequeathed [to us]...But ecumenical experience is taking away all triumphalism from such a conviction. The *Una Sancta* transmitted in and through tradition is not a possession of the Orthodox. It is a reality judging us all (eschatologically) and is something to be constantly received. The ecumenical movement offers the context of such a re-reception that takes place in common with other Christians.

Presented in this way, Orthodox claims to be *the* church can be heard and appreciated by your Christian neighbors.

I hope these remarks have been of use and of interest. I believe that *every* church should periodically ask, “How do others see us?” And I am grateful for the invitation to do so with this Metropolis of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon served as the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Christ in the USA from 2008–2011. This was a talk he delivered at the Metropolis of Chicago Clergy–Laity Assembly, October 7, 2011.



A RESPONSE TO “HOW DO OTHERS SEE US?”

ANTON C. VRAME

Michael Kinnamon’s comments should surprise us. Notice that his observations are not about the theological gifts or insights Orthodox Christians bring to an ecumenical conversation, or about the riches of the patristic and liturgical heritage—things we tout about ourselves—but about how Orthodox Christians present themselves and behave. He focused on our *praxis*, not our *doxa*. Of course, he was asked to reflect on what he “sees.” It’s not usually easy to hear from an “outsider,” but Kinnamon has gently but persuasively challenged us to reflect on our praxis as Orthodox communities, especially the way we present ourselves to the “outside world.” Kinnamon’s observations should lead us into lengthy conversations and reflection. Let me begin the conversation by focusing on two issues.

I believe the Orthodox Churches in the United States live a paradoxical life: American and foreign simultaneously. Perhaps this is the way of immigrant or minority communities when they live within a much larger culture, one that often discriminated against the “other” (and perhaps still does). I’ve noticed that when Orthodox step into the diverse world of an ecumenical meeting, we tend to close in on ourselves. We stick together more (historically, one benefit of ecumenical work was that it increased contacts among Orthodox). We use our foreign languages to communicate among ourselves, sometimes to avoid being understood by others. We spend more time answering questions about ourselves to others. We become more self-conscious of our relatively small presence in the United States, of our less-than-mainstream role in society, and of our differences from the much larger world, especially Protestant Christians.

But we are more American than we realize or care to show. The vast majority of Greek Orthodox Christians in the United States were born in this country and have assimilated well into mainstream American life. We have adopted many of the values of the society and wider culture, especially those associated with middle-class and upper middle-class white America. The life of the Greek Orthodox Church in America is also an American story, because of its patterns of organization as well as the challenge of assimilation with each new generation and with each wave of immigration. Our individual patterns of Church life mirror those in the wider society, but so do our ecclesiastical governance patterns, with high levels of “democratic” and “corporate” structures working in concert with and through synods and councils. We are a hierarchical Church with a strong sense of communal identity, but congregationalism and individualism are also present—if not rampant—among us. Naturally, there are tensions between them, but these patterns and tensions are distinctively American in their personality.

Here I should point out that Kinnamon conflated, wittingly or unwittingly, all Orthodox experience into his observations of the *Greek* Orthodox community. For example, the *Greek* history doesn’t begin in Alaska, which is a Russian story. Rather it begins in Florida with the New Smyrna Plantation or in New Orleans with

the Holy Trinity Church, which Kinnamon did mention. Although we might claim something from Alaska as our common Orthodox history in America, for *Greeks* the story begins in the immigrant experience of America of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As for being stuck in the past, we have to distinguish among three possible paths: respecting our inherited tradition, worshipping the past, and “reinventing” Tradition for each generation. Orthodox Christians sometimes link the first two but fail to recognize how the third reflects the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church today. As Fr. Georges Florovsky said:

The message of Christ is eternal and always the same, but it must be reinterpreted again and again so as to become a *challenge* to every new generation, to be a message which



may appeal to man in his concrete situation. We have not simply to keep the legacy of the past, but must first realize what we have inherited and do everything we can to present it to others as a living thing.

“..we are contributing to Tradition today, now, in the present.”

“Reinvention” is not what you might think it is. As an educator, I am always pleasantly amused when a student “discovers” something that most of us have known for a long time. In my work as a Christian educator and seminary professor, these “aha” moments usually involve one or more of the following: separating essential from non-essential; recognizing that Holy Tradition is not the same as village custom; discovering that an ancient hymn was written in the Middle Ages and then entered liturgical usage; or that there is variety in practice from place to place and era to era. This points out our narrow understanding of the Orthodox Tradition. We often fail to recognize the ongoing contributions of each generation to the life of the Church—and that, therefore, we are contributing to Tradition today, now, in the present. We are not just responsible for preserving a Tradition—we are expanding it because we recognize that the Tradition needs to be expressed today.

When I became the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches, it automatically placed me on the NCC’s Executive Committee of the Board. I asked one of my predecessors for advice. It was simple: “Keep them focused on theology. Simple to say; hard to do.” As General Secretary, Kinnamon did a wonderful job of maintaining a theological focus to the conversation, so my task was easy. But Christians are living in a time of “deeds not creeds.” Theological issues that have no resolution in sight or that appear to be academic hairsplitting can easily take a back seat to immediate matters of immigration, poverty, environmental concerns, education reform, racism, or various forms of injustice and inequality.

While Orthodox are concerned about these matters *for others*, these issues don’t seem to have the same importance for

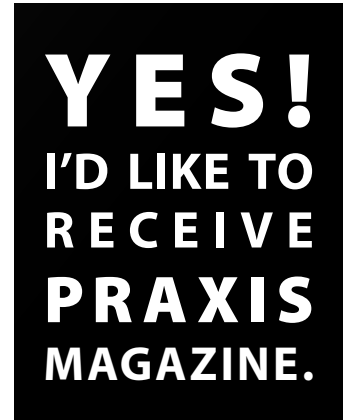
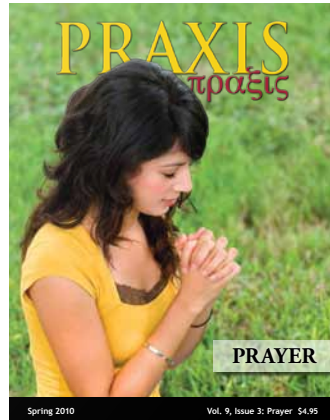
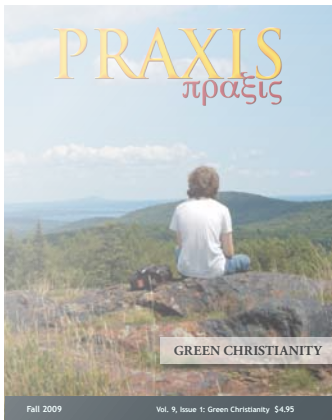
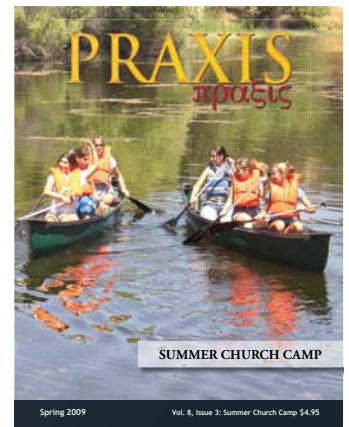
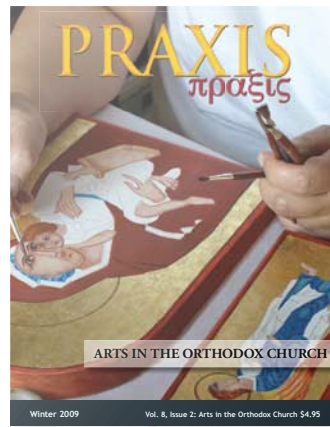
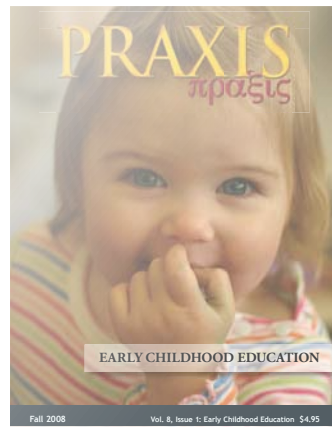
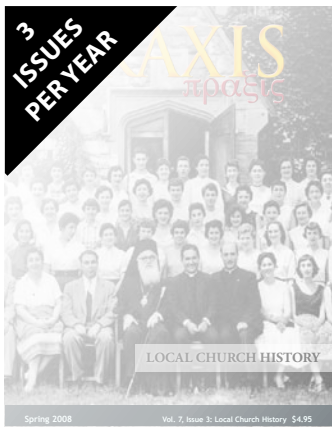
ourselves. There could be a couple of reasons for this. First, our white, middle-class and upper middle-class status has insulated us from some of these issues. When we do involve ourselves in social issues, we select issues and lobby on them with parochial self-interest. Orthodox lobbied hard so that St. Nicholas Church at “Ground Zero” in New York will be rebuilt. Certainly it is a worthy cause, but would we lobby so hard for someone else’s destroyed house of worship? Have we forgotten—or do we choose to forget—that in our families there are stories of immigration, stories of poverty and need for the charity of others to survive, and stories of discrimination?

Second, we can see that these issues *are* divisive in our world. There’s no agreement on which or whose approach will solve them. Psalm 146:3 says, “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.” And we don’t always see how they will ultimately contribute to the *unity* of the Church, which is the point of the ecumenical movement, and which will come about not because we may agree on how to solve a social issue, but because Christians agree on their faith in Christ.

As a result of wanting to stay focused on the theological issues facing Christians, Orthodox tend to speak mainly on those issues—and thus end up speaking abstractly or theoretically, rather than making connections to the practical, the concrete, the social and moral. I can see how it could appear to be a way of avoiding the issues of the world and Church today. In a recent article, theologian Duane Larson stated: “The default position of abstraction is vindicated sometimes because it is simply the safest way to proceed in a challenging conversation. Dutiful attention to the pure abstract terms of an assignment can be conflict avoidant, particular when the abstraction deflects a threat to us of the particular...”

Kinnamon’s observations deserve more attention and further discussion than space allows. I hope that readers will study his comments closely and reflect deeply on each of his points.

In addition to being Director of the Department of Religious Education, Anton C. Vrame is Chair of the Faith and Order Commission in the USA, and is thus one of those chairpersons referred to in Kinnamon’s presentation. Faith and Order is a dialogue of Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christians that began in the 1920s with the work of “speaking together about the Gospel and our church communities in ways that will lead to healing our divisions while honoring our diversity.”



To subscribe, please mail a check and the form at the bottom of the page to:

PRAXIS Magazine
 Department of Religious Education
 50 Goddard Avenue
 Brookline, MA 02445 USA

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (US\$)

1 year (3 issues) within the U.S.	\$15.00
2 years (6 issues) within the U.S.	\$27.00
Canada & Mexico	\$18.00
International	\$40.00
Bulk subscriptions available; call for rates.	

 This subscription is (please check one):

for me a gift (paid for by): _____

Name (on subscription): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Country: _____ ZIP/Postal code: _____

Phone number: _____

Fax number: _____

Home parish name & City: _____

E-mail address: _____

RECOGNIZING TEACHERS

DEAR READERS,

The icon of Philip the Deacon and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26–40) hangs prominently in the Department of Religious Education. An important exchange is Philip’s question to the Ethiopian, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The Ethiopian replies, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” This exchange and the teaching that follows should remind us of the important ministry of teaching in our parishes. Information about Christ and the Orthodox Church abounds, especially in our electronic age. But without someone to guide us, how can anyone understand?

Sunday after Sunday, Church school teachers work diligently to hand forward the Orthodox Christian Faith and way of life to another generation. At the heart of their ministry is helping learners, young and old, understand the Faith of the Church. In this issue of *PRAXIS*, we hope to raise their profile and recognize the important ministry that they offer to the Church.

“And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?” (1 Corinthians 12:28–29). Although St. Paul’s famous ordering of ministries should remind us of the importance of teachers and the act of teaching in the life of the Church, in some ways, this ministry incorporates everything else from St. Paul’s list:

- The work of a teacher is apostolic in that it continues in the footsteps of the apostles, who taught the Faith of the Church. The bishops of the Church, of course, are the ultimate in apostolic teachers because “apostolic succession” is more than a lineage, but the continuation of the original message of the apostles themselves.
- Their work is prophetic in that it sometimes speaks truths that we don’t often want to hear, much like the Old Testament prophets called the people of Israel to renew their commitment to their covenant with God. The work of a teacher is also prophetic in that it points us to the future. There is a popular

phrase among teachers: “To teach is to touch the future.”

- The work of a teacher often appears miraculous, helping often disinterested young people appreciate, desire and actually know the content of their Faith.
- Teachers are often healers because they may actually deal with tears, scraped knees and wounded feelings.
- Teachers should be good administrators, organized and planning for weeks ahead.
- They definitely speak in tongues because they must learn to communicate in the language of young people and know the language of the culture, from songs to films.

The ministry of Sunday Church school teachers is central to the life of the parish, but they cannot do this task alone. Handing forward the Orthodox Christian Faith and way of life is not the sole duty of the Church school. This responsibility belongs to the entire congregation. Those who have been appointed for the task of the ministry of teaching need the support of every member of the parish. Clergy can offer their support by working with teachers to help them grow in their knowledge of the Faith. Parish councils and parish leadership can support teachers by providing resources needed for their ministry. Ensure that a parish budget is adequate to purchase books, supplies and equipment. Invest in equipment, such as DVD players and televisions—barely one-third of our parishes have them. Parents can offer their support by offering to help with a class project or activity. They can ask how they might extend a lesson at home. Finally, and most importantly, parents can stress the importance of learning and growing in Faith by attending to their own learning. When children see adults taking matters of faith seriously, children will begin to take it seriously.



Anton C. Vrame, PhD
Director

Ἰδὸν ἄνθρωπον αἰθίου εὐνοῦχος
δυνατὸς κενταύκος
τῆ βασιλείης αἰθίουλον

παρεβλέσας τὸν Φίλιππον
ἀναβαίτω καθεῖσθαι σὺν αὐτῷ



PRAXIS

πραξις



GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
50 GODDARD AVE., BROOKLINE, MA 02445

