

# THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Where Do We Go From Here? by Fr. John Reeves

Last summer, parish ministry leaders pondered and prayed about options for our future growth. Specifically, they were as follows:

- A. **Do Nothing (in regard to Real Estate):**  
*Purchase no additional property but possibly add a second service to the Sunday schedule, i.e. an "early" liturgy in addition to the current format.*
- B. **"Hive Off" Another Mission Congregation:**  
*Maintain HTOC as the "mother church" for a second mission to be planted in a new community about a half-hour's drive from here (our first mission being the Chapel of the Holy Spirit).*
- C. **Keep Our Sparks Location for a Ministry Center, but Relocate Worship to a New Site:**  
*The current location could be a student center or community outreach location.*
- D. **Purchase Adjacent Property When It Becomes Available:** *Utilize adjoining facilities for offices, classrooms, and meeting space.*
- E. **Relocate to New Site:** *Build a new, traditionally-designed church on a suitably located site.*

Leaders analyzed each option, its strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats each might pose. This information was then evaluated by clergy staff for completeness: Were the right questions asked? Were the solutions proposed realistic and attainable? Did the option advance or hinder our mission?

Finally, this spring, Parish Council met in working session on May 18 to review the options and narrow

the field for the church-at-large to begin to arrive at consensus over the coming months. The result of many months of deliberation, discussion, and debate was ultimately to present two options for parish consideration: **Options "D" and "E"**.

The other options were rejected in part because they either split the parish into two congregations—the early service congregation and the late service congregation, or the mission congregation and the "mother-church" congregation—or because of cost. (Option "C" was by far the most costly of the five.) These were not the only considerations, either for Options "D" and "E", or against the first three.

The Council is to be commended for its willingness to sift through all the options and give the parish the benefit of its collective wisdom. Two things emerged during this process. Parish Council is united in wanting our parish to grow further, in obedience to the Great Commission; and Council believes strongly that our parish needs to remain "one in essence, and undivided." (Where have we heard that before?)

Where does this leave us now? Over the summer, both options will be displayed on "response boards" in the Parish Hall. Everyone will have the opportunity to ask more questions and reflect honestly over what might be the best choice for our future. An informational meeting will be held early this fall, for open response and reflection. A parish vote could be held as early as the annual meeting in late autumn. ■

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## Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Tellers	Servers**
June 2	E. George and M. Stevens	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	S. Stevens and B. Schrauf	Team B
June 9	J. Vaughan and B. Roberts	M. Thompson and M. Fedin	M. Fedin and G. Cattell	Team A
June 16	B. Schrauf and L. Radomsky	M. Leathers and D. Swisher	D. Carroll and B. Haupt	Team B
June 23	E. Files and M. A. G. Anthony	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	S. Stevens and R. Pivul	Team A
June 30	Russian Ladies	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	M. Fedin and M. Stevens	Team B
July 7	TBD	M. Thompson and M. Fedin	TBD	Team A
* Devotes Fast	** Team A: M. Doby, A. Miranda, N. Pishin, S. Oeynik, D. Stekler, Jr. Stekler, J. Swick, and J. Swisher Team B: J. Cadman, P. Doby, N. McFarland, J. Miranda, B. Oeynik, S. Pivul, L. Rode, and Jr. Stekler.			

## ■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

# Out of the Depths, I Cry Unto Thee

by Fr. Basil  
Biberdorf

At every vespers service we sing “Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice.” In the wake of the death we have witnessed recently, particularly the monster of a tornado last month in Moore, Oklahoma, words like these become the unutterable cry of the heart. It was an EF5 tornado, the strongest category with 200+ mph winds, and estimated at over one mile wide, which destroyed two elementary schools at dismissal time and wiped entire neighborhoods off the map. Parents and rescuers were left to search for children, other loved ones, and pets in the rubble, working against time, power outages, and road closures to save those whom they could. At the end of the confusion and chaos, the final death toll stood at 24, including 9 children.

What kind of God lets this happen? We could ask the same thing about the EF5 tornado that struck Moore previously in 1999, killing 40, or the EF5 that struck Joplin, Missouri, in May 2011, killing 162. Indeed, we ask the same thing about all manner of disasters of any origin. How can God allow this? Why doesn't God do something?

The mystery for us is that God *has* done something. Fr. Thomas Hopko summarizes: “John Chrysostom has a sermon where people say, ‘Why doesn't God do something?’ And he says, ‘What do you want Him to do?’ And then he went through this whole litany of everything that God does: He creates the world, we fall. He sends the prophets, He gives the Law. He gives the Commandments. Finally, he sends His own Son. Ultimately, he is crucified. What more is there? So when Jesus, hanging on the Cross, says, “It is fulfilled (*tetelestai* in Greek, sometimes translated, “It is finished”), it doesn't simply mean it's the end of the story. It means that it's the total accomplishment of *everything*. Everything now is done. Nothing more can be done.”

## Chapel News Briefs

- **CHAPEL REVIEWS PRELIMINARY BUILDING DESIGNS**  
*On March 14, six Chapel members met with a builder to inspect initial sketches of church floor plans and elevations. After a time of discussion, the group asked to see some changes before proceeding further, including a higher roof line in the nave section, windows in the altar, and a bigger porch.*



- **A SECOND “FAMILY FUN NIGHT”** held last month was again well-received by the community. This Chapel outreach sponsors a popular area center to remain open for two extra hours, providing free admission for anyone to use the facility. Four new families were welcomed that evening.
- **A \$1,000 DEVELOPMENT GRANT** was awarded to the Chapel by the Archdiocese last month. The funds will pay for a specialist to train the Choir.

The whole world—not just humanity, but the entire created order—was corrupted because of us. Before the Fall, there was no sin, and there was no death. Before the Fall, the destruction we witness from these disasters could not even be contemplated, for, without death, there is no true disaster. In the Fall, not only man is corrupted, but all of creation. “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned,” as St. Paul puts it in Romans 5:12. And, lest we condemn Adam, we must acknowledge that each of us would have sinned in the same way, insisting on *our* way rather than God's, and the same destruction would be the result.

(continued—see OUT OF THE DEPTHS, last page)

place that would make them feel at home. They thought they were offering their children a better life. Now, in some sense, America has taken away their children. Here is that hard truth again. If their children are to practice Orthodoxy, they will have to believe it, they will have to want to practice it. The faith will have to be their own.

Let me stress that there is no such thing as a “convert church,” but there are convert-friendly Orthodox churches. Even a church that is largely made up of converts must, in the end, be a church that welcomes all Orthodox people... There are cradle Orthodox priests who are as on fire as any convert will be in their lifetimes. You see, this is not about ethnicity. We are not talking about the “convert era,” but a “convert-friendly era.”

The worship in these churches will be in English, and the people—all the people—will be singing. You will see lots of children, and chrismation rites and adult baptisms will not be strange, mysterious events. The list of their children who are headed off to church camp will be long. Some of these churches will have tight budgets, but they will be tight because they are struggling to cope with growth, not decline. You will find people being called to the priesthood, the diaconate, and other forms of service.

In conclusion, let me offer this parable. I have a friend who wants to be Orthodox—more than

anything. He has for a number of years been visiting a nearby Orthodox church. But there's a problem. You see, this friend also has business that takes him to Chicago, and when he is there he worships at All Saints Orthodox Church, a vital, convert-friendly parish. He sees the Orthodox life there and he wants it like life itself. His problem is that he cannot find it where he lives.

For five years, he has been struggling. One year at Pascha, he witnessed this painful, sad scene. This service, of course, is the high point of the Christian year. Yet, at the high point of that service, as a small choir entered the sanctuary singing, “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death,” the members of the congregation stood in silence—watching.

My friend saw this and, trust me, this was not what he was looking for. He wanted Orthodoxy, for himself and for his family. He wanted more, not less. He still does.

If there is to be unity in Orthodoxy in America, that unity will emerge out of the sacramental life of the Church. We will sing unity into existence. We will pray unity into existence. We will confess unity into existence. It can happen no other way. We must live the faith and then give it away. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: This essay was adapted from an address given by the author at the 2006 Orthodox Christian Laity Conference. It appears courtesy of [antiochian.org](http://antiochian.org).

## Out of the Depths *(from page 2)*

God has done something. He ascended the Cross. He partook of the death He did not create, suffering it as one for whom nothing could be more alien. He, too, cried out, “Why have You forsaken me?” with the groaning and anguish that went far deeper than ours could. He, too, cried from the depths. Life Himself entered into death in order to wage war against it, in order to liberate us from it.

Where is God in all of this? On the Cross, His arms open wide in the embrace of His beloved. Those who have reposed have entered into a death that is not permanent because of this embrace. “For as in Adam, all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Fr. Basil wishes to acknowledge Chad Bird, who wrote an article that inspired this one. We will include a link to his original article, as well as a link to Fr. Thomas Hopko's talk, “Word of the Cross” at [holyltrinity-oca.org](http://holyltrinity-oca.org).

## ■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

# What Do Orthodox Converts Want?

by Terry Mattingly

Back in the early 1980s, I was active in a [Baptist] church in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois... What I discovered through [my experience as the church's finance chairman] is that there is no connection whatsoever between how much a family gives to the church and how much money that family makes. Instead, I found that the key connection is faithfulness in worship. If you attend the Sunday night service at a typical Baptist church and look around at the 40 people there in comparison to the 200 or 300 in attendance on Sunday morning, you will find that about 80 percent of the church's giving is accounted for in that group.

The bottom line: The Sunday night experience in a Baptist church is very similar to that in Saturday evening Vespers services in an Orthodox church. As Bishop Antoun told me once, if you look at who attends Great Vespers and comes to confession, you are looking at about 80 percent of the service, the giving, and the energy in most parishes.

Who comes to Vespers? Who comes to confession? Who comes to the feasts, and why do they come?

The American converts are not looking for some kind of post-Vatican II, carved-down liturgical experience. They have that all around them. They are not trying to cut the service down another 15 to 20 minutes so that more young people will hang around—as if that would work... You see, the people who want to worship, want to worship... Also, the converts want their children to be Orthodox. They are looking for churches that will offer their children a winsome, living faith that they will want to follow...

The converts also want good preaching, since many come out of church traditions that place an incredible emphasis on preaching... However, the

“These three things God requires of all the baptized: right faith in the heart, truth on the tongue, [and] temperance in the body.”

— St. Gregory the Theologian,  
*Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

converts do not believe that preaching is the only sacrament, which is the rule in most of evangelicalism. They want to worship with all of their senses. They want to worship with their whole bodies...

Let me be blunt. Americans who visit an Orthodox church will judge the vitality of that congregation based on how many people sing and take part in their worship. That is really unfair to many Orthodox who were raised to stand in quiet holiness, but it's the truth.

Americans will want to take part in the service. If they have mustered up the courage to walk through the door of an Orthodox church in the first place, they're not going to want to just sit or stand once they're in there. They will feel left out, if there is no way for them to sing, if there is no way for them to take part in the service. The church will have just sent them back out the door. Let me repeat: Americans will judge the spiritual vitality of an Orthodox parish on whether or not the congregation is reverently and enthusiastically singing, praying, and participating in worship.

In my experience of Orthodoxy, I have found nothing more poignant or more painful than talking to ethnic parents and grandparents whose children have left the faith. They can't understand. They thought America was going to be a wonderful place. They thought America was going to be a

## VBS Registration Now Open

Vacation Bible School 2013 “*Running the Race. Going the Distance.*” will be conducted June 17-21. It begins at 5:15 p.m. (except when following an earlier 5 p.m. Vespers that Wednesday and Friday) and ends at 8:30 each day. All children from Pre-Kindergarten through “rising” sixth graders are welcome. There is no cost to participate. Visit [holytrinity-oca.org](http://holytrinity-oca.org) or see the Parish Hall display for more info. or to register.

## You are Cordially Invited...

Your prayers and presence are requested for the ordination of David Smith to the Holy Diaconate on Saturday, June 29 (Ss. Peter and Paul). The service begins with the episcopal greeting and vesting of Bishop Melchisedek at 8:30 a.m. with Hours and the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy following. All are invited to attend a celebratory luncheon at Duffy's Tavern afterward (RSVPs are required by June 15 and can be made by emailing [ordination@holytrinity-oca.org](mailto:ordination@holytrinity-oca.org)).

## Thank You, First Responders!

Holy Trinity's new First Responders' Ministry offered invaluable service this Pascha. If you are in need of medical assistance, see a Greeter immediately.

## Servers to Hold Annual Retreat

All boys eight years of age and up are invited to attend Holy Trinity's annual altar servers' retreat on the eve of Pentecost (Saturday, June 22). Participants will serve the Memorial Divine Liturgy (9 a.m.), eat brunch together, rehearse entrances, enjoy a fire safety refresher, and conclude by 1 p.m.

## Robe Donations Being Accepted

Generous benefactors are sought to help us add to and replace altar robes for our ever-growing Servers ministry. \$1,500 is appreciated for 7 new robes.

## Mentor Training Rescheduled

Staff from Bridge of Hope will conduct training during VBS on June 20 (location to be determined) for all parishioners interested in helping an area single mother. See the weekly bulletin for details.

## ■ CAMPUS MINISTRY



## University Recognizes Many OCF Members with Awards

Several Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship members were distinguished by the University for achievements this past year. Zachariah Mandell and Christopher McNulty (outgoing Vice President and Secretary, respectively) received Evan Pugh Scholar Awards (given to juniors and seniors in the top 0.5% of their class) and Evan Bittner (incoming V.P.) earned the President's Freshman Award (4.00 cumulative GPA). President-elect John Carpenter merited undergraduate piano jury recognition and was placed on the School of Music Dean's List. Joseph Nakpil was given the Joseph Paternost Award (for Russian Studies) and accepted into the Schreyers Paterno Fellows Program (Comparative Literature) and National Slavic Honor Society. Congratulations!

## For the Record

### BAPTISM

➤ **Eszter Maria Veres**, daughter of Peter Veres and Timea Czabai, baptized May 11, sponsored by Adri and Diana Van Duin. Many years!

### CHRISMATION

➤ **Brian Edward Troyan**, chrismated on May 4 (Holy Saturday). Many years!

### NEW MEMBERS

➤ Newly commissioned 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. **Zachary Bare** and his wife, **Elizabeth**, arrived May 18. Both are recent Shippensburg U. graduates. Welcome!