

Be Ambitious to be Quiet

by Dn. Mark Oleynik

To get my classmates (and me) quiet, an elementary teacher of mine often told us, “people have two ears and only one mouth so we should be twice as ready to listen than speak.” Scripture agrees in the claim that a quick ear and a cautious tongue are marks of real greatness. St. James cries to us: “Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger” (1:19).

As we enter Great Lent—the season of solemnity and quietness—we are taught to not only abstain from foods, but that our fasting also involve our eyes, ears, feet, hands, and all the members of our bodies. Sometimes the lack of our favorite foods is the easier part of fasting while these other aspects prove to be more difficult. To meet these challenges perhaps we (both parents and children) can consider engaging more heartily in the study of quietness.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:11 we read “study to be quiet.” This apostolic advice seems to be a strange ambition for us today. Most are not ambitious “to be quiet”—but rather to make the greatest possible noise in the world. Our society is often ready to hang the biggest medal around the neck of the person who has succeeded in causing commotion. But as followers of Christ, we should strive to live quietly; and peaceably in all godliness and honesty. Silence, to be sure, is not always golden, but it can be the prevailing tone and temper of life. The greatest powers, like the deepest rivers, make little noise. Our perfect example was Jesus before Herod: His silence was more eloquent than any words.

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Image Credit: Orthodox Church in America (oca.org)

Good News! Now!

by Fr. John Reeves

Around the time of Christ, Jewish women lived in anticipation, hoping that they might be privileged to give birth to the Messiah, the Redeemer long foretold by the prophets. As noted in last month's *Trisagion*, the Feast of the Present-ation originated in the Jewish custom to dedicate to God each first-born male who opened the womb, on the fortieth day after his birth. Each such son was consecrated to God, and was possibly the Messiah.

When the Archangel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she would be the one to conceive the Messiah, she is perplexed, however. In fact, she is afraid (*Luke 1*). She is not anticipating giving birth, much less giving birth to Christ. She is, after all, a Virgin, and has no intention to violate her vow to God: to remain in virginity all her life.

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Schedules

| | Coffee Hour | Greeters | Tellers | Servers** |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| March 3 | E. George and M. Stevens | L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky | R. Patel and B. Haupt | Team B |
| March 10 | C. Strauss and P. Doty | M. Thompson and M. Fedkin | S. Stevens and G. Cattell | Team A |
| March 17 | B. Schrauf and L. Radomsky* | M. Leathers and D. Swisher | M. Fedkin and B. Schrauf | Team B |
| March 24 | A. Swisher and C. Swisher* | B. Roberts and E. Miranda | R. Patel and B. Haupt | Team A |
| March 31 | J. Mianda and H. Torbic* | L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky | S. Stevens and G. Cattell | Team B |
| April 7 | Russian Ladies* | M. Thompson and M. Fedkin | M. Fedkin and M. Stevens | Team A |
| * Denotes Fast ** Team A: C. Doty, N. Fedkin, A. Miranda, N. Pelikan, S. Oleynik., D. Sticksles, Jo. Sticksles, and J. Swisher Team B: J. Cadman, M. Doty, P. Doty, K. Kucheryavyy, J. Miranda, B. Oleynik, and Je. Sticksles. | | | | |

■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Meeting Those We Aim to Serve by Fr. Basil Biberdorf

The Chapel of the Holy Spirit is planning a family fun night on Sunday, March 10, from 5-7 p.m. at the Middlecreek Area Community Center (MACC) in Beaver Springs (maccrec.org). During the two-hour event, we will have access to one of the basketball courts, plus the game room and other facilities. The event is open not only to the Chapel and the broader Snyder County community, but also to the families at Holy Trinity in State College.

The MACC usually closes at 5 p.m. on Sunday, so by extending the closing time by two hours, we are increasing access to a hub facility in our mission field. We want to encourage families to spend time together “on us”. There will be no fundraisers or captive-audience evangelism. Rather, we only want the opportunity to meet more of the people we aim to serve, to see them as children of God, and to make clear that our young Orthodox community desires to be fully a part of our neighborhood.

What can really help make the event a success is for some of the families from State College to join us in our service. A good turnout from the hosts is essential to the success of an event like this one, so there are lots of people for our guests to meet and share in the fun.

In order to have a temple to bring those guests to, the Chapel is continuing work on a building design, with the intent to have our plan ready for broader approval by the end of this month. While specifics are still being hammered out, current proposals under discussion all offer a total of between 1,200 and 1,400 square feet of space—divided between narthex, nave, and altar—with options for expansion when the need arises. We are carefully weighing our storage needs in view of the expected uses, making as much use of the space as we possibly can.

As always, the Chapel of the Holy Spirit needs your prayers for our efforts to build and to evangelize in Snyder County. Please consider adding the following to your prayer list: for the Chapel faithful, for our progress on the building project, for our proclamation in Snyder and Union counties, and for Conestoga Wood Specialties in their ongoing stand for life. If you want to support our building project financially, you are invited to do that, too. Just mark your contribution “CHS—Building Fund” when you place it in the offering basket. ■

Proposed Bylaw Changes Increase Representation; Look to Chapel’s Future

Parish Council has called for a vote on proposed changes to the bylaws that govern Holy Trinity at a special meeting of all its members. The assembly will take place following the Divine Liturgy and children’s icon procession on Sunday, March 24.

In addition to codifying practices that have become standard practice over the past several years, the bylaw amendments primarily pertain to the governance and eventual transfer of parochial missions, including the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. The additional section under Article VI (Parish Organizations) anticipate a time when the Chapel will “attain sufficient development and financial security to warrant its becoming a free-standing” church community. It will grant its faithful the authority to petition the Archdiocesan bishop for reception as a mission or parish on the affirmative vote of 80% of its particular membership and two-thirds of the general Parish membership.

In the meantime the new bylaws, if accepted by a two-thirds majority on March 24, will also grant the

(continued—see BYLAW CHANGES, last page)

Be Quiet *(continued from page 1)*

Another facet to quietness is to have the good sense to be “slow to speak.” Most words that have wounded, rankled, and broken hearts—the words that you would give anything to take back—were spoken in haste. It is the mark of a master to be able to hold one’s peace under such circumstances. “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit.” (1 Peter 3:10).

Finally, be ambitious to be quiet when you are tempted to speak evil of others. Much of the sorrow and darkness in our world is due to evil speaking,

Good News *(continued from page 1)*

It is a paradoxical conversation to say the least. Because our celebration falls concurrently with Lent, the paradox is heightened even more. During Lent we also remember another conversation between another woman, Eve, and another archangel, Lucifer. In that case, by twisting the truth, the archangel tempts Eve to betray her relationship with God. And she does so, interposing her own will in place of God’s. The result was sin, death and separation from God.

In this case, Gabriel offers the Virgin “good news,” (the meaning of “Annunciation” in Greek) that she will both be mother of the Messiah and the Mother of God as well. Instead of her own will, her response is “be it unto me according to Thy word.”

Bylaw Changes *(continued from page 2)*

Chapel official representation “with voice and vote” on the Parish Council effective November 2013.

The Parish Council will see additional structural changes should the bylaws be amended. Under the new provisions, members at the annual meeting may expand (or eventually reduce) the number of officers who serve on the Parish Council with a

and most of that is due to a lack of sympathy. When we do speak our words should always be spoken in truth and with love otherwise we should ask God to help us be quiet. If we could perceive the secret struggles and difficulties and heartaches of one another it would not be possible for us to think and speak unkindly towards others.

Jesus frequently said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Our Lord knew that those to whom He spoke had ears; but He also knew that few people know how to use their ears. During this Lenten season let all of our families attempt to use our ears twice as much while becoming better students of quietness. ■

Her answer in Latin, *fiat*, captures well the explicitness of her choice: “Let it be done!” She does not answer merely, “I’ve heard it,” but “May it be done in me!” How different from Eve! With Mary’s response, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (*John 1:13*) Instead of sin, obedience; instead of death, Life; instead of separation from God, communion with Him.

Hence, the backdrop of Lent: like Eve, we have disobeyed. We have inherited death. We have lost communion with God. Yet, as our celebration of the Incarnation commences once more, there is Good News to hear.

Like the Virgin, let us hear it. Like the Virgin, let us say, “Be it done”: God’s kingdom, God’s will, God’s life in us, right now. ■

supermajority vote of quorum (the redefinition of which is also under consideration), so long as there are at least six on the Council at all times.

A summary of all changes with the current and proposed bylaws presented in parallel form will be available online and in the Narthex beginning March 3. There will also be an open hearing on the bylaw amendments at the March Parish Council meeting on Wednesday, March 13 at 7 p.m. ■

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Hell’s Gates: Locked from the Inside

In Luke 15, Jesus tells the story of the Prodigal Son [which we celebrate this month]. This is a rebel who says, “I want my inheritance now!” He then squanders his inheritance in waste, riot, and wantonness. His so-called friends abandon him, and he ends up working in a pigpen. He becomes so hungry, filthy and miserable that he dreams about eating the pods he feeds to the pigs. Then he wakes up. He remembers that the servants in his father’s house are treated better than this. In humility and repentance, he returns home.

The father does not say, “How are you going to pay off your debt?” “Who will be your substitute, so that I can get him back for what you did?” No, he sees his wayward son coming home, and he runs to him, and he hugs him. “My son’s home! My son is home!” That is what the Father does with each of us when we return “home” to Him. There is not a hint of retributive justice; not a hint of wrath... [But] the older brother—by avoiding his younger brother—is also avoiding the father. By failing to forgive, he cuts off the relationship. It is self-exile. The gates of hell are locked from the inside.

Calvinists believe that God’s sovereignty is so powerful that human freedom is nothing. If He wants you to go to hell, you have no chance to escape. Universalists believe God’s Love is so powerful that human freedom is nothing. If He wants you to go to heaven, you have no chance to escape... They both believe that the sovereignty of God trumps everything, and that there is no true freedom for the individual person.

In contrast to both, Orthodoxy says, “God is giving you true freedom. If you want to follow Christ and go to heaven, none of your sins will be held against you. But, if you refuse to forgive your brother, God will not force you. If you choose to stay outside the wedding banquet, then you will spend eternity in a

by Deacon
Joseph Gleason

All Receive God’s Blessings

We all receive God’s blessings equally. But some of us, receiving God’s fire, that is, His word, become soft like beeswax, while the others like clay become hard as stone. And if we do not want Him, He does not force any of us, but like the sun, He sends His rays and illuminates the whole world, and he who wants to see Him, sees Him, whereas the one who does not want to see Him, is not forced by Him. And no one is responsible for this privation of light except the one who does not want to have it.

God created the sun and the eye. Man is free to receive the sun’s light or not. The same is true here. God sends the light of knowledge like rays to all, but He also gave us faith like an eye. The one who wants to receive knowledge through faith, keeps it by his works, and so God gives him more willingness, knowledge and power.

— St. Peter the Damascene

hell that you yourself have selected.” You will nurse that grudge and hold onto it. And since you never let go of the grudge, you’re never going to let go of the suffering, you’re going to never let go of the torment, and you’re never going to rejoice in knowing that your brother has come home, and has been forgiven.

Throughout one’s life, God urges His people to say, “Thy will be done.” God’s will is reconciliation: between Him and you; between you and your spouse; between you and your child; between you and everyone else, regardless of what they have done. This is His will. However, if we spend our lives refusing to say, “Thy will be done,” [C.S.] Lewis says the point comes where God respects our freedom and replies, “Okay, thy will be done.” And that will determine how we spend all of eternity. ■

EDITOR’S NOTE: Dn. Joseph Gleason lives in Omaha, IL with his wife and seven children. This article is adapted from one of his homilies posted at theorthodoxlife.wordpress.com.

Contribute to Matthew 25 Drive

This Lent, *Matthew 25* is organizing a gift card drive to benefit Housing Transitions. Grocery and department store cards of no more than \$25 each will be accepted. Cash offerings, which support our ongoing outreach of helping the needy in our area, may be placed in the alms box.

“Soup-er Sunday” Returns!

Church School students will once again be your hosts for a Lenten lunch of soups, salad, and fruits on Sunday, March 31 (following Liturgy). They will prepare the meal Saturday at 4 p.m. Proceeds from a free-will offering will go to Housing Transitions.

Young Adults to Attend Retreat

The parish’s 18- to 30-year-olds will attend the 8th Annual Young Adult Retreat on Saturday, April 6 at Holy Apostles’ in Mechanicsburg, departing HTOC at 8:30 a.m. OCF/YAF will sponsor registration. To learn more, email youngadults@holytrinity-oca.org.

Tour Holy Land or Russia

You are invited to participate in a pilgrimage to either Israel/Jordan (May 12-25) or Russia (June 23-July 6). Both tours will be led by His Grace, Bishop Michael (Dahulich). For more information and to register contact Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky at (607) 797-1058.

Klaus Kenneth to Speak

On March 26 at 7 p.m., Klaus Kenneth, the author of the Adult Study Group’s Born to Hate, Reborn to Love will speak about his journey to Orthodoxy at St. Tikhon’s Seminary. All are welcome.

For the Record

ORDINATION

- **Dn. Alexandros Petrides**, Penn State OCF Class of ’09, was ordained to the Holy Diaconate January 21 by Metropolitan Savas. Axios!

WELCOME

- **Leoni McFarland** and her son, **Nicholas**. Welcome to Holy Trinity!

■ CAMPUS MINISTRY



OCF members stand in support of children afflicted with cancer at the 2013 Penn State Dance Marathon. The group contributed \$5,824 of the record \$12.37 million raised this year.

OCF Members to Serve in New Jersey and Ukraine

The Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship will travel to the storm-ravaged New Jersey coast this March 22-24 for a weekend of service and prayer. The group will depart Friday afternoon and spend Saturday participating in clothing and food drives for Sandy victims. Following a night of fellowship, the group will attend St. Demetrios Church in Wildwood before departing for home. The trip’s full cost is being underwritten by OCF and generous donors.

This June, OCF Treasurer Christopher McNulty will care for abandoned children suffering from cancers, birth defects, and other complications at two orphanages in Ukraine. Donations for his mission will be accepted at holytrinity-oca.org/mission. Contributors will have an opportunity to learn more about his trip at a Lenten mission benefit luncheon to be held on Sunday, April 7 following Liturgy.

BIRTHS

- **Cadence Juliet Stodart**, daughter of Brandon and Chelsea Stodart, born January 18, weighing 8 lbs. 7 oz. Many years!
- **Ava Katherine Symes**, daughter of Andrew and Rachael (Cattell) Symes, born February 14, weighing 7 lb 1 oz.. Many years!
- **Maria Eszter Veres**, daughter of Peter and Timea Veres, born February 14, weighing 8 lbs. 3 oz. Many years!