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THE TRISAGION

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Ken Wells (far right) joined 14 members of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in attending the 36th Annual March for Life on Washington, DC. In all, about 300,000 people participated.

A BRIEF RELECTION ON THE MARCH

by Ken Wells

This year was my first year to attend the March for Life. I did not know what to expect, but the March certainly did exceed all expectations. The number of people who attended was staggering, beyond anything I could have imagined.

The politicians gave their speeches with much precision. They struck right to their points and drove them in. Some compared the plight of the pro-life community to that of America against terrorism, saying that we can endure the threats of pro-abortionists and outlast them. They promised to work as hard as they can to stop the funding of abortion clinics, and to give money instead to abortion alternatives.

Along this line is where Metropolitan JONAH spoke. He spoke not of condemning the women who had abortions, nor even those giving the abortions, but rather showing them love that they may find other means. As

(continued, page 3)

**THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA:
VISION, VOCATION, MISSION, IDENTITY**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is the third part of a four-part series on Metropolitan JONAH's vision for the Orthodox Church in America. This article was first published in Divine Ascent, the journal of the Monastery of St. John of San Francisco.*

Part III: The Marks of the Church

The Church's four characteristic "marks"—unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity—are at once the Church's content and identity, constituting both her vocation and mission. They are our goal; it is our challenge to actualize them in our lives, both personally and corporately, in order for us to be the Church.

Before anything else, these characteristics are marks of Christ Himself. Jesus Christ is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit; He is the focal point of our unity, and the very context of our relationship with God and one another as His Body. Jesus is the ultimate criterion of holiness: the man transparent to God, revealing God, incarnating God, and imparting that holiness which is participation in God's very life, which lifts us up from the world of sin and corruption.

Christ is the essence of catholicity or wholeness, in that "all things were created through Him and for Him ... and in Him all things hold together" (*Colossians 1:16-17*). He is also the source of universality because He embraces all things and permeates all things, and all things exist in Him. And He is the foundation of apostleship, the apostle and high priest from God, (*Hebrews 3:1*) Whose obedience reveals Him as transparent to God, speaking only the words of Him Who sent Him (*John 3:34*), and doing whatever He sees the Father do (*John 5:19*), transforming and redeeming the world.

Our vision as Orthodox Christians is always first and foremost Jesus Christ. His message is our message: the coming of the Kingdom. His life is our life. His mission is our mission: the salvation of all mankind and its union with the Father in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Our task in the midst of this is constantly to repent, to have this vision renewed in us, and to purge our lives of everything contrary to the vision and incarnation of Christ in our lives. These are the marks of Christ; and if we share His life, we also share these marks.

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MARCH FOR LIFE REFLECTION *(continued from page 1)*

Metropolitan JONAH pointed out, personhood, as viewed by the Orthodox, does not have a series of litmus tests, but is the image and likeness of God.

We are all made in the image and likeness of God; this includes the unborn babies, the desperate mothers, people who have committed abortion, and even those who coerced the women into the abortions. God's love is not just for the one who is already doing as He has commanded, but to all. We are to restore the likeness of God within each of us, and by doing so we will restore those around us.

For me, this was a confirmation of a conversation that I had with a young girl who professed to be pro-choice. The young lady to whom I spoke was not pro-abortion, but was just looking for ways to help out expectant mothers and their babies. She told me about how after an abortion, the girl's life is turned upside down. The girl's soul is torn and shattered. This is where we can help, if not by anything else, by prayer for the mothers and their babies.

As my words are insufficient to describe the event, I ask each of you to talk with the others who had gone, but even more so, I implore you to participate next year. Until the next March for Life, let us pray not only for those we love, not only for those we know, not only for the unborn babies, not only for the expectant mothers, but for the abortionists and those who are pushing the expectant mothers towards abortion.

Glory to Jesus Christ; Glory Forever!

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RETREAT

The Antiochian Village Conference and Retreat Center in Ligonier, PA, will be hosting a Marriage Enrichment Retreat the weekend of February 27 through March 1, 2009. It will be led by the Reverend Dr. Charles Joanides, a licensed marriage and family therapist and pastor of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Newburgh, NY. He holds a Ph.D. in Family Studies and runs a small private practice specializing in reclaiming marriages.

The weekend schedule is designed to be refreshing (a true break from the "busyness" of daily life) and help couples draw closer to Christ and each other through retreat workshops and liturgical services. The retreat begins with Vespers on Friday and ends with brunch following Matins and Divine Liturgy. A candlelight dinner follows Vespers on Saturday night.

The all-inclusive retreat package is only \$309 per couple. For more information or to obtain a registration form, stop by the Parish Office or email barli@antiochianvillage.org.

HOLY DAYS AND FASTS DURING FEBRUARY

The Meeting of Our Lord

Vespers, February 1, 7pm
Liturgy, February 2, 9am
(Blessing of Candles)

Beginning of the Lenten Triodion

Liturgy, February 8, 10am
Fast Free Week: February 8-14

Memorial Saturday

Vespers, February 20, 7pm
Liturgy, February 21, 9am

Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare Sunday)

Liturgy, February 22, 10am
Omit meat beginning February 23

HOUSE BLESSINGS UPDATE

For those unable to schedule an appointment to have their homes blessed in January, Fr. John will be accepting appointments through Sunday, February 22. Please call Dn. Alexander at 321-4473 to schedule your appointment.

HOLY LAND TOUR

Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky of Binghamton, New York will be making a presentation on his travels to the Holy Land on February 24 at 7:00pm in place of Orthodoxy 101. He will also be talking about his upcoming tour to the Holy Land in Fall 2009, God willing. It promises to be an interesting and informative evening, complete with slides of his past visits. Coffee, tea and desserts will be provided. Bring a friend and learn a little bit more about Palestinian history, both ancient and modern.

CAN YOU SING?

Can you sing? Are you interested in singing in the choir? Maybe you only want to sing at Pascha. Maybe you want to sing Vespers but not Liturgy; or, vice versa. Contact Dr. Bob Roberts (rfr3@psu.edu). He would be glad to hear from you as he plans choir practice schedules for Lent and Pascha.

FEBRUARY SCHEDULES

Coffee Hour

February 1 — Spaghetti Dinner hosted by OCF (with the Russian Ladies)
February 8 — Julianne Vaughan and Elaine Stewart
February 15 — OCF
February 22 — Leslyn Radomsky and Beth Roberts

Greeters

February 1 — Anne Swisher and David Swisher
February 8 — Beth Roberts and Ed Miranda
February 15 — Mark Radomsky and Leslyn Radomsky
February 22 — Melody Thompson and Mark Fedkin

FROM THE DESK OF DEACON ALEXANDER

To be a Christian, St. John Chrysostom once said, one must not only pray, read Scripture, and praise God in worship, but also give (*see sidebar*). These actions are not merely suggestions or recommendations that are beneficial to our spiritual lives, but instead must be acquired behavior that is practiced so often that it becomes second nature to us.

It has been a year since I began working as chaplain with the students of OCF here at Penn State. Witnessing their love of Scripture and their dedication to both personal and corporate prayer here at Holy Trinity has been edifying and exemplary. But these things alone do not make a Christian.

That is why with great joy I can report that for the first time in the history of Holy Trinity, OCF will be taking part in THON, the largest student-run philanthropy in the world dedicated to conquering pediatric cancer. By directing their time, talent, and treasure to our local community, our fellow parishioners are not only offering themselves to this noteworthy cause, but are truly being transformed by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Through various fundraising activities, including “canning” in Philadelphia and a spaghetti dinner in the Parish Hall, OCF has reached and surpassed their initial goal of \$2,250. They will continue raising funds until THON weekend, when Larissa Moser and Sarah Rauterkus will join over 700 dancers and go non-stop—without sitting or sleeping—for 46 full hours.

If you would like to join in their efforts, you can donate online at THON.org. Please also pray for our dancers and consider coming to the Jordan Center the weekend of February 20-22 to show your support.

To Be a Christian

The sun gives forth light; it cannot help doing so. Animals breathe in and out; they cannot help doing so. Fish swim in rivers and the seas; they cannot help doing so. What, then, are the things which a Christian cannot help doing?

First of all, a Christian cannot help praying. To be a Christian is to regard God as a loving Father; and it is natural to talk and listen to one's parents.

Second, a Christian cannot help praising God and giving praise to Him. To be a Christian is to affirm God as Creator of the universe; and when a Christian looks at the beauty and glory of what God has made, praise and thanksgiving pour from the lips.

Third, a Christian cannot help being generous. To be a Christian is to acknowledge that everything belongs to God and the human beings are merely stewards of what they possess; so they naturally want to share their possessions with those in need.

Fourth, a Christian cannot help reading the Scripture and also studying the insights of other Christians. To be a Christian is to rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the Spirit speaks to us through the Scriptures and through the insights of our spiritual brothers and sisters.

— St. John Chrysostom