

# Diocesan Assembly set for the North in October

Preparations are being finalized for the 41<sup>st</sup> Diocesan Assembly to be held on October 29-30, 2004. Holy Trinity Church in Springfield, Vermont, and Holy Resurrection Church in Claremont, New Hampshire will co-host the assembly.

All of Friday's activities (registration, the first plenaries, Vespers, Social Hour and the Banquet) will take place in Springfield, Vermont. The Saturday schedule will take place in Claremont (Divine Liturgy, brunch and the final plenary session).

Hotel accommodations have been arranged for everyone at the Holiday Inn Express in Springfield. Clergy and lay delegates may call the hotel at (802) 885-4516 for room reservations. Special assembly rates are available for both Thursday and Friday nights. The special rate is \$72.00 per night plus 9% Vermont tax. Reservations must be made by September 20<sup>th</sup> and you must specify the Holy Trinity group reservation to ensure the special rate.



*Holiday Inn Express, Springfield, Vermont, site of the 41<sup>st</sup> Diocesan Assembly.*

As with all diocesan assemblies, parishes must be up to date with their respective diocesan fair share as of September 1<sup>st</sup> in order to have a lay delegate seated at the assembly. Any parish in arrears will have their lay delegate seated as an observer. Contact Diocesan Chancellor, Fr. Michael Westerberg, if you have any questions about your parish status.

Registration forms and any other necessary information will be sent to each parish at the end of August.

## Tentative Schedule 41<sup>st</sup> Diocesan Assembly

### Friday, October 29, 2004

#### *Holiday Inn, Springfield*

Registration	8:30-10:00 A.M.
Molieben	10:00 A.M.
First Plenary	10:30-1:30 P.M.
Lunch	1:30-2:30 P.M.
Second Plenary	2:30-5:30 P.M.

#### *Holy Trinity Church, Springfield*

Vespers and Confessions	6:00 P.M.
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#### *Elk's Club, Springfield*

Social Hour	7:00 P.M.
Buffet Dinner	7:30 P.M.

### Saturday, October 30, 2004

#### *Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont*

Divine Liturgy	8:30 A.M.
Brunch	10:30-11:30 A.M.
Third Plenary	11:30-1:00 P.M.

## BOOK REVIEW

### A new and valuable addition

*Good and Faithful Servant  
Stewardship in the Orthodox Church  
edited by Anthony Scott*

Reviewed by Fr. John Dresko

There are multitudes of books about "stewardship" on the market today – "how to," "the theology of," "successful examples of," and others too numerous to mention. All of these various books are available at the local bookstore or through one of the many internet book seller

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Diocese of New England • Orthodox Church in America

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**O.N.E. (ORTHODOX NEW ENGLAND)**

Diocese of New England, Orthodox Church in America  
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*His Beatitude, Metropolitan HERMAN, Locum tenens*  
*The Very Reverend John J. Dresko, Editor*

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## ON THE DOCKET

A listing of upcoming events in the Diocese.  
Please forward any dates you wish to be included to the Editor.

September 8, 2004

*Connecticut Deanery Meeting*  
*Christ the Savior Church, Southbury, CT*

September 10-12, 2004

*"Women, Where are you in the Life of the Church – Called to God's Purpose in Ministry" Conference*  
*Antiochian Village, Ligonier, PA*

September 20, 2004

*SVS Adult Education Institute, 7:00 P.M.*  
*Marriage: The Pursuit of Wholeness and Holiness*  
*Dean John Erickson*  
*Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT*

September 27, 2004

*SVS Adult Education Institute, 7:00 P.M.*  
*New Testament Readings for the Marriage Service*  
*Professor John Barnet*  
*Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT*

October 2, 2004

*Annual Orthodox Education Day*  
*St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY*

October 3, 2004

*Annual FORCC Scholarship Banquet*  
*Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Bridgeport, CT*

October 4, 2004

*SVS Adult Education Institute, 7:00 P.M.*  
*Marriage and Asceticism*  
*Father John Behr*  
*Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT*

October 11, 2004

*SVS Adult Education Institute, 7:00 P.M.*  
*Contemporary Challenges: Divorce, Mixed and Inter-faith Marriages, Cohabitation*  
*Father Alexander Rentel*  
*Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT*

October 18, 2004

*SVS Adult Education Institute, 7:00 P.M.*  
*Contemporary Challenges: Same-sex Marriages*  
*Professor Peter Bouteneff*  
*Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT*

October 29-30, 2004

*41st Diocesan Assembly*  
*Holy Trinity Church, Springfield, Vermont*

# Around the Parishes

## Hartford, Connecticut

Letters and photos from some of the students in our Church School at All Saints have been sent to Alaska as part of our participation in Outreach Alaska. The mail will be going to youth at St. Nicholas Church in Nondolton, Alaska, a parish founded in 1890. The Very Rev. David Askoak serves the parish. We all are looking forward to hearing from our Alaskan "neighbors" in the faith.

Congratulations to Tamara Gudelski and Jason Rosado who were recently united in Holy Matrimony. Many years!

Congratulations, too, to our choir director, Michael Stenko, who was selected to direct the choir at the national FOCA convention held recently in New York. We were all gratified that others can enjoy the talents of our director and thankful that he shares them in service to the Church. Many Years!

Workshops are beginning for our popular 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Russian Tea Room and Bazaar. Mark November 6 and 7 on your calendars and join us for great food, fun, fellowship and much more.

## OUR DIOCESE

PEOPLE  
PLACES  
EVENTS

And speaking of calendars, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November we will welcome His Beatitude the Most Blessed Metropolitan Herman and others for a Hierarchal Divine Liturgy in commemoration of our 90 years of witnessing for Christ in the capital region of our state. A celebratory banquet will be held following Liturgy at Old Farms Inn in Avon. We are soliciting ads for our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative book. If anyone is interested, drop a line requesting a form to us at 205 Scarborough Street, Hartford, CT 06105. Many thanks!

– submitted by Fr. William DuBovik

## New Britain, Connecticut

Summer is coming to a rapid close. Fr. John and his family enjoyed a two week vacation and came back rested and relaxed. Thanks to Fr. David Koles, who came and served in Father's absence.

After a couple of years of very few church school and young adult aged youth, the parish is now on an upswing. A reinvigorated church school is being planned, and a late teen-young adult group has begun what will hopefully be regular get-togethers. We have eighteen young people between 16-24 and a number of young couples just start-



(L-R) Fr. Nicholas and Anastasia Timpko and Lydia and Fr. Michael Westerberg stand at the bell tower of Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow. They were part of the OCA delegation returning the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God to the Russian Church in July. (Photo: Lydia Westerberg)

ing families. Thanks be to God for all His gifts to our parish in the faithful generations populating the Church!

Memory Eternal to Stephen Dobosz, a life-long member of the parish, who fell asleep in the Lord recently. May God grant him rest with the saints and console his family and loved ones!

## New Haven, Connecticut

Congratulations to proud parents Steven and Rebecca Edwards on the May 16<sup>th</sup> arrival of newborn son Noah. Noah has a sister Alexa (17 months) and a brother Jacob (5 years). Rebecca is enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of Florida. Of course, the very proud great aunt and great uncle, Matushka Lydia and Father Michael Westerberg are beaming from ear to ear. May God bless all with good health and many years

Thursday, June 17, we were honored to host the FORCC meeting. Father George Coca of St. Dimitrie Romanian Orthodox Church in Bridgeport led a discussion on the movie "The Passion Of Christ".

We thank Father Sergius Halvorsen and Father John Pawelchak for serving while Father Michael and Matushka Lydia were traveling with Metropolitan Herman as members of the delegation returning the holy *Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God* to Russia.

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sites. And virtually all of them are written from a protestant or fundamentalist perspective.

For the first time (at least in English), there is now available a volume of writings about the principles of stewardship from an Orthodox Christian perspective. *Good and Faithful Servant* (SVS Press, 2003) is a collection of articles written by Orthodox writers and theologians about the various aspects of stewardship and edited by Fr. Anthony Scott.

A general comment must be made about this volume: while quite possibly indispensable to a decent Orthodox library, and without a doubt valuable to those entrusted with teaching and preaching about stewardship, it is not an easy read and is probably not something the average parishioner would normally pick and up and effort through.

The volume begins with the “theological and scriptural building blocks” regarding stewardship. Examinations are undertaken of such wonderful patristic writings as St. Clement of Alexandria’s *Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved?* (by Jaroslav Pelikan), the writings of St. Gregory Nazianzen (by Bishop Hilarion Alfayev), ancient Syriac writings on healing the body (by Susan Ashbrook Harvey) and early monastic literature on “The Power of Detachment” (by John Chryssavgis).

In addition, there are chapters on “Stewardship and the Tithe in the Old Testament” by the late Fr. Michael Prokurat, and “Stewardship and the New Testament” by John Barnet, currently teaching New Testament at St. Vladimir’s Seminary. Finally, there is a chapter on how the Church of Constantinople acted as stewards under the Ottoman Turks.

It is these chapters that are the most difficult chapters to read but also the most necessary. The average Orthodox Christian views “stewardship” as either something vaguely “protestant” or some fancy word denoting another attempt to put a

hand into one’s pocket or wallet.

These “building block” chapters build the theological and scriptural proof that stewardship is a way of life that is not only something Christians think about, but is necessary to our salvation.

One cannot read these chapters without be struck by how stewardship principles are mandated by everyone from the Old Testament preachers and prophets, our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles, through early monastics and Fathers of the Church, even when under great



stresses like a Church under the Ottoman yoke.

All took the same view of stewardship: it is the principle of caring for all of God’s creation as something that is temporarily gifted to us by God with the charge that it be offered back to Him. Our very lives, our families, our bodies, our time, talent and treasure – everything – is given back to God. One who does not do this is not faithfully adhering to the teachings of the Lord, the Scriptures, or the Church.

This reviewer must confess, however, that struggling through Hebrew proofs in the Old Testament, Greek proofs in the New Testament, what Syriac writers implied in their writing, and how early monastic literature condemns the consumerism that tempts every human being, was very difficult

reading. The average parishioner would have to be motivated greatly to make this effort.

On the other hand, the final five chapters of the book take this essential theological and scriptural proof and put it into a context more accessible to the average North American Orthodox Christian.

Professor John Erickson writes a wonderful historical overview of Orthodox stewardship in America. For the first time in history, our Church in this land was placed into a context where it was not provided for by a government. It was (and is) the responsibility of individual Orthodox Christians to care for and maintain the viability and health of parishes, dioceses and the Church as a whole.

In 1915, shortly before the Church in this land was severed from her Mother Church by the Russian Revolution, there were “over 300 parishes, a seminary, an orphanage, a monastery, a ‘women’s college,’ and a national center and savings bank to serve the needs of recent immigrants.” (p. 123) Virtually all the funding came from the Church of Russia.

Following the revolution in Russia, funding was cut off and by 1922, total receipts by the Church from the faithful was \$2,557! Expenses needed to run the Church were over \$100,000.

In addition, the threat from charlatans and the attempts to seize parish properties led to the inclusion in by-laws and articles of incorporation of clauses deeding the parish property to the people of the parish. While this protected the property at that time, it also led to the rise of a false “spiritual vs. material” mentality that is not stewardly and exists even down to this day. We deal with the problems of that Church worldview still.

Fr. Thomas Hopko writes a chapter “On Stewardship and Philanthropy: Forty Sentences.” This is a chapter that every Christian should read during Great Lent – one

## REVIEW FROM 4

“sentence” per day. It is a well written, inspiring and deep journey into the spirituality of stewardship. It broadens the very narrow of view that many have of stewardship as “giving money.”

Dr. Paul Meyendorff offers his thoughts on “Offering You ‘Your Own of Your Own’: Stewardship in the Liturgy.” He shows how stewardship has been an integral part of the liturgy. In the early Church, someone from the community would be assigned the task on a given week of bringing the bread and wine that was to be used as the offering. Indeed, the liturgy itself is “offering” all that we have and are to God.

In each liturgy, the priest lifts those offerings to God and says, “Your own of Your own,” reminding us that all we offer belongs to God in the first place and is offered to Him. But we are also reminded that whatever we offer to God (especially seen in the liturgy) is accepted, blessed and returned in a greater blessing than we could have imagined. When we live as stewards, what we offer to God is not consumed by Him, but blessed. Liturgy is stewardship.

“Ethics and Stewardship” is an examination of the relationship between the two by Fr. Stanley Harakas. “Ethics” can be defined as “what ought to be done.” Fr. Harakas takes a journey through the definition of “ethics” to the application of ethics principles in the way Christians behave as stewards.

He uses 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, a classic scriptural passage on stewardship to demonstrate how an ethical Orthodox Christian gives, including almsgiving as an essential ingredient. Care for the poor has a special weight for an Orthodox steward.

Finally, Fr. Anthony Scott gives an overview of “Philanthropy and Stewardship” in contemporary Orthodox America. He examines motives of giving and why people do not give in our Church today. One truly astounding list he gives is one of some individual philanthropic gifts given by Orthodox Christians recently to various institutions, ranging

from gifts to Brown University (\$35 million) to a gift to the University of Illinois (\$1.5 million). He then examines reasons such generosity and philanthropy is lacking in the Church. It is a chapter that everyone in the Church should read.

**I**n summary, *Good and Faithful Servant: Stewardship in the Orthodox Church* is a book that should be on every Orthodox pastor’s desk. It should be an essential resource for every member of a stewardship committee. It should be in every parish library.

But set aside some time to read it – it cannot be rushed through. It also challenges every supposition many Orthodox Christians have about stewardship. Be prepared to feel indicted!

*Fr. John Dresko is Director of Stewardship for the Orthodox Church in America.*

*Good and Faithful Servant Stewardship in the Orthodox Church*  
edited by Anthony Scott  
SVS Press, 2003  
ISBN 0-88141-255-4

## Fellowship of Orthodox Churches in Connecticut

**T**he Fellowship of Orthodox Churches of Connecticut (FORCC) announces the recipients of their 2004 Scholarships. **The Smerznak, Medak & Kidwell Scholarships** (\$1,000.00 each) were awarded to *William P. Kopcha* of Southbury, studying Chemistry at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. *Eleni Sarigianis* of Orange, studying Spanish at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

**FORCC Scholarships** (\$500.00 each) were awarded to: *Megan Cook* of Stratford, studying Animal Sciences/Behavior at the University of Rhode Island in Rhode Island.

*Stephen Csernica* of Trumbull, studying Chemical Engineering at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

*Elizabeth Searforce* of Waterbury, is focusing on a B.A. Degree in Education from Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, Connecticut.

*John D. Williams*, of Shelton, studying Biology at Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut.

All recipients will be honored at a banquet to be held on Sunday, October 3, 2004, at the Holy Trinity

Greek Orthodox Church, Park Avenue, Bridgeport. Protopresbyter John N. Kaloudes, Development Director for the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), will be the guest speaker. Topic of discussion will be “Orthodoxy and the Family.”

Donation is \$35.00 for Adults and \$10.00 for Children under 12. Advance ticket sales only. For tickets, contact your Parish representative, or Nina Kosowsky @203-924-0936. *Tickets deadline is September 27<sup>th</sup>.* Tickets **will not be sold** at the door.

Proceeds of this dinner provide major funding for FORCC. Please join us for great food, fun, and fellowship. Meet, greet old acquaintances and make new ones.

Forms to place ads in our Benefit Banquet Program book are available at your local parishes. **ALL ADS MUST BE PAID AND RECEIVED BY September 15<sup>th</sup>.** Mail completed form with check payable to FORCC, to Bill Balamacci, 106 Southport Woods Drive, Southport, CT 06490.

Next meeting is scheduled for September 16 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Park Avenue, Bridgeport. HopeLine presentation will follow the business meeting.

– submitted by Barbara Ann Dixon

# “Women, Where are you in the Life of the Church? Called to God’s Purpose in Ministry”

(LIGONIER, PA) A wealth of experience and encouragement in ministry will be shared at the pan-Orthodox conference, “Women, Where Are You in the Life of the Church? – Called to God’s Purpose in Ministry” Friday through Sunday, Sept. 10-12, 2004 at Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center east of Pittsburgh in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Open to all Orthodox women, the conference offers an opportunity to pray and explore together both traditional ministries and emerging ones, such as health care chaplaincy and deaconess. Early registration is encouraged.

Over twenty Orthodox women from six Orthodox jurisdictions – Antiochian, Greek, OCA, Romanian, Serbian and Ukrainian – are coming together as presenters for a series of nine workshops about new and existing parish ministries, community ministries, and liturgical life and arts. In addition, several projects will be announced as the group’s focus for the next two years.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Helen Creticos Theodoropoulos of Chicago will address “Called to God’s Purpose: Faith, Transformation, and Service.” Dr. Theodoropoulos presently teaches Patristic theology at St. Sava Serbian Orthodox School of Theology in Libertyville, Illinois. Dr. Anthony Bashir, Boston, co-chair of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Lay Ministries, will lead an interactive session “Discover Your Spiritual Gifts,” and Demetra Velisarios Jaquet, M.Div., Denver, a pastoral counselor and hospice chaplain, will speak on “Courage to Minister.”

Saturday afternoon workshop presenters will explain how to prepare for or begin ministry in a variety of areas, including: Chaplaincy, Fr. Steven Voytovich; Pastoral Counseling, Megan Brightwell; Crisis Ministries, Paula Kappos, “Zoe For Life”; Parish Pastoral Care, Aleksandra Gopsill;

Parish Ministries to Women, Khourye Joanne Abdalah; Monastic Life, Sr. Nonna Verna Harrison; Deaconess, Anne Marie Mecera; Chanter, Choir Director, Reader, Preacher, and Altar Server, Pani Matka Christine Holet.

“Tips and Tales” from women in ministry on Saturday evening will feature storytelling and suggestions from experience in these areas: Pastoral Listening, Khourye Joanne Abdalah and Demetra Velisarios Jaquet; Chaplaincy, Presbyteria Mary Cowles and Sarah Byrne Francis; Crisis Ministries, Alexandra Kemrer and Paula Kappos; Parish Ministries to Women, Alina Buzdugan and Alexandra Gopsill; Deaconess, Teva Regule; and Missions, Maria Gallos and Doreen Anna Hoskins.

The conference is co-sponsored by Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center and the Women’s Orthodox Ministries and Education Network (WOMEN), a network for women interested in spiritual growth, theology, lay ministry, and the restoration of the deaconess. Co-Chairs are Fr. Michael Massouh, Executive Director of Antiochian Village, and Demetra Velisarios Jaquet, WOMEN Chair.

On Sunday afternoon at the conference conclusion, the WOMEN Network will elect new board members to two year terms at its Annual Meeting, open to all. Each woman elected by consensus will identify her own project focus, process, and outcomes, and WOMEN will support her with print and Internet publicity, networking, peer encouragement and accountability, mentoring, and grant writing resources. Projects may range from establishing a functioning planning committee over the next two years, to creating and implementing an outcome-oriented program at the parish, diocesan, or archdiocesan level, or in the ecumenical community. To propose a project area, contact [womenusa@aol.com](mailto:womenusa@aol.com) before

the conference.

Conference registration includes all meals, lodging, and conference materials, and ranges from \$167 per person for four people per room to \$253 for a private room. Commuter rates are available, and late registration fee after August 15th is \$50.

Visit:

[www.OrthodoxWomensNetwork.org](http://www.OrthodoxWomensNetwork.org)

on the Internet to download and print the registration form.

Phone Antiochian Village at:

724-238-3677

to receive a registration form by U.S. Mail.

E-Mail:

[avcenter@antiochian.org](mailto:avcenter@antiochian.org)

or

[womenusa@aol.com](mailto:womenusa@aol.com).



## PUBLICATION DEADLINES

November Issue  
October 1<sup>st</sup>

December Issue  
November 1<sup>st</sup>

**PARISHES FROM 3**

The annual FORCC benefit dinner is on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Anastasia Avgerinos has graciously volunteered to be our ticket coordinator.

Caitlin Mitchell was awarded the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents' Superintendent/Student Recognition Award. Criteria for the award were leadership, service to the school, academic prowess relative to ability and a service to others in the community. She also received the Excellence All Around and Attendance Award from the Turkey Hill School in Orange and received awards for Athletics and Physical Education. Caitlin will be entering the seventh grade in September.

Congratulations to proud parents Nathan and Anne Cooper on the June 25<sup>th</sup> arrival of newborn daughter Grace Victoria. May God bless all with good health and many years.

Once again, the Orthodox Christian Library Outreach (OCLO) group of our parish is hosting the SVS lecture series. This year's topic is "Does Christian Marriage Have A Future?" Lectures will begin on Monday, September 20 for five consecutive Monday evenings, culminating on October 18. Lectures begin at 7:00 p.m. and conclude at 9:00 p.m. Please join us as we become better acquainted with our faith. Refreshments are served and parking is free. Flyers and details have been mailed to your parish.

- submitted by Barbara Ann Dixon

**Norwich, Connecticut**

We just finished up another successful Sunday school year. As has been our tradition the last couple of years, the Sunday school students, the teachers, many of the parents and of course Father Dennis went to a Norwich Navigators baseball game on June 6<sup>th</sup>. We all had a good time while it lasted, however the game was rained out and never got under way.



*Norwich parishioners prepare for the Brooklyn Fair.*



*His Grace, Bishop Nikon, presents gramota to Anne Jarrow on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

Our children and parishioners worked on kits for the Gifts of the Heart program, sponsored by Church World Service. They put together 20 School Kits for children in Afghanistan and 16 Health Kits for children in Iraq.

His Grace, Bishop Nikon, visited our church on May 22, 2004 for Vespers and dinner with members of the Parish Council; and also on May 23, 2004 for the Divine Liturgy. During his visit, long-time parishioner Alice Jarrow was honored on the occasion of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Although her physical health did not permit her to attend the service, Bishop Nikon read the text of a grammota awarded to her by Metropolitan Herman and then delivered it to her at her home following the Liturgy.

Congratulations to Alison Pyott, Ronda Janowicz and Kate Herman who were received into the Holy Orthodox Church. Many, many years to them all.

We also wish many years to Kate Herman and Rob Johnson who were united in marriage on May 29, 2004.

Our parishioners have been working very hard to prepare for the Brooklyn Fair in Brooklyn, Connecticut. We will be selling both potato pierogi and kielbasa sandwiches at the four-day event. This is a first for us and we will be having many pierogi making session between now and August 26<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully we will do well and this will be the first of many years at this popular fair. This will be our major fund raiser for next year's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

-submitted by Vincent and Marlene Melesko

# On War

Naturally, this Christian patriotism we have spoken of requires from each of us as great a service as possible to the nation. The value of such service is even more significant if it is rendered unselfishly – free of any material calculations and considerations. A person serves the country in one way or another when he participates in its life by, for example, expressing himself in the press or in civil elections, etc. In this, one must strive to bring benefit to the whole country, the whole people, and not to one’s own personal or party interests – then one’s conscience will be at peace. It may be that one will not attain great external success, but let him, nevertheless fulfil the duty of a patriot and a faithful child of the nation in an honorable and Christian manner.

There is a saying, “In misfortune, a friend is known.” Love for the nation is most clearly manifested in times of national trials and troubles. We all know how it feels when someone close to us is ill. We do not want diversions or satisfactions. In our sorrow and concern, we sometimes cannot even eat or drink or sleep. One who truly loves one’s nation will manifest similar feelings during times of national troubles. If our heart is filled with nothing but our own personal experiences and interests, if we moan and sigh while our deeds remain far from our words, then our love for the nation is poor indeed.

One of the clearest and most self-denying struggles of service to one’s homeland is to die for the nation. A Christian soldier is a defender of the homeland, and clearly fulfils Christ’s precept, “there is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s brethren.”

War in itself is absolutely evil, an extremely sad phenomenon and deeply contrary to the very essence of Christianity. Words cannot express how joyous it would be if people ceased to war with one another and peace reigned on earth. Sad reality speaks quite otherwise, however. Only some dreamers far removed from reality and some narrowly one-sided sectarians can pretend that war can be omitted from real life.

It is quite correct to point out that war is a violation of the commandment, “Do not kill.” No one will argue against that. Still, we see from the Holy Scripture that in that very same Old Testament time when this commandment was given, the Israelite people fought on command from God, and defeated its enemies with God’s help. Consequently, the meaning of the commandment, “Do not kill,” does not refer unconditionally to every act of removing a person’s life. This commandment forbids killing for revenge, in anger, by personal decision or act of will. When our Savior explained the deep meaning of this commandment, He pointed out that it forbids not only actual killing, but also an un-Christian, vain anger.

Nevertheless, in a conversation with the apostles about the last days, the Lord told them, “You will hear of wars and reports of wars. See that you are not distressed: for all this must be.” With these words, the Lord refutes all statements that war is avoidable.

True, we have already examined the fact that war is a negative phenomenon. Yet, it will exist, sometimes as the sole defense of truth and human rights, or against seizure, brutal invasion and vio-

lence. Only such wars of defense are recognized in Christian teaching. In fact, we hear of the following event in the life of St. Athanasios of the Holy Mountain.

Prince Tornikian of Georgia, an eminent commander of the Byzantine armies, was received into monasticism at St Athanasios’ monastery. During the time of the Persian invasion, Empress Zoe recalled Tornikian to command the armies. Tornikian flatly refused on the grounds that he was a monk. But St. Athanasios said to him, “We are all children of our homeland and we are obligated to defend it. Our obligation is to guard the homeland from enemies by prayers. Nevertheless, if God deems it expedient to use both our hands and our heart for the common weal, we must submit completely ... If you do not obey the ruler, you will have to answer for the blood of your compatriots whom you did not wish to save.” Tornikian submitted, defeated the enemy and rescued the homeland from danger.

In a conversation with Mohammedans, about war, St. Cyril the Enlightener of the Slavs said, “We meekly endure personal offenses; but as a society, we defend each other, laying down our lives for our neighbors...”

One can, of course, sin and sin greatly while participating in war. This happens when one participates in war with a feeling of personal hatred, vengeance, or vainglory and with proud personal aims. On the contrary, the less the soldier thinks about himself, and the more he is ready to lay down his life for others, the closer he approaches to the martyr’s crown.

Metropolitan Philaret, “*On the Law of God*”

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