

Connecticut Youth Gather to Serve

On Saturday, July 26th, twenty-five young people from all around Connecticut gathered at Saints Cyril and Methodius Church, Terryville, CT, for a retreat entitled “Called to Serve,” a service-oriented Orthodox Christian retreat and service project for young people between the ages of six and twelve.

This retreat was hosted by Saints Cyril and Methodius Church on behalf of the Connecticut Deanery of the Diocese of New England. The retreat began at 2:00 P.M. with registration and a make-your-own-nametag project. Then the youth enjoyed some ice-breaking and getting-to-know-you activities.

The main presentation on the topic of the day was give by the host pastor, Fr. John Hopko. Fr. John stressed that every person has been made by God to be loved by God. Every person in turn, then, has the responsibility to reflect God’s love back to Him through love and service of neighbor.

Among other Scripture passages, Fr. John reviewed the story of the Good Samaritan with the young people reminding them that every other human being is our “neighbor,” deserving our love, care and an attention. The main activity of the day was the putting together of twenty-five “health kits,” which will eventually be distributed to Iraqi children adversely affected by recent events in that country.

Each kit contains the following items: a hand towel, a washcloth, a toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste, a bar of soap, a comb, a fingernail clipper, and six Band-Aids. All of these items



Father John Hopko and the participants in the youth retreat on July 26th. (Photos: Macrina Hopko)

were placed in a large zippered plastic freezer bag, so that they could then be shipped to Iraq via a charity based here in the United States.

After putting together the Health Kits the children learned to sing a version of “Blessed is the Man.” (the First Kathisma) that they later sang at Vigil. Then 120 slices of pizza, lots of soda, and numerous cookies were consumed with gusto by those gathered – children and adults.

During the retreat the adults present, together with the children who were taking a break from their activities, viewed a video about the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC). The retreat closed with the Vigil service at 6:00 P.M. All the retreat participants stayed for Vigil and

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Gifts from the Heart packets are filled for the children of Iraq.

Diocese to assemble in October

The annual Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of New England will be held on October 24-25, 2003, at Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church in Terryville, Connecticut. Registration forms, hotel information, etc. should be arriving in your parish shortly. All parishes are reminded that financial obligations to the diocese and to the Orthodox Church in America are to be up-to-date as of September 1st in order to have a lay delegate seated at the assembly. If you have any questions, contact the Chancellor.



O.N.E. (ORTHODOX NEW ENGLAND)

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

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Please mail donations and subscription requests to: V. Rev. John Dresko, 95 Butternut Lane, Southington, CT 06489.

ON THE DOCKET

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

September 11, 2003

Connecticut Deanery Meeting
St. Nicholas Church, Norwich, CT

September 22, 2003

SVS Fall Lecture Series, 7:00 P.M.
Tradition: The Making of a People, Fr. Paul Tarazi
Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT

September 29, 2003

SVS Fall Lecture Series, 7:00 P.M.
Formation & Tradition of the Creed, Fr. John Behr
Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT

October 6, 2003

SVS Fall Lecture Series, 7:00 P.M.
Christian Initiation: Yesterday & Today,
Dr. Paul Meyendorff
Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT

October 13, 2003

SVS Fall Lecture Series, 7:00 P.M.
Tradition and Traditions, Dr. Peter Bouteneff
Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT

October 20, 2003

SVS Fall Lecture Series, 7:00 P.M.
Keeping Tradition Alive, Dean John Erickson
Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT

October 24-25, 2003

Annual Diocesan Assembly
Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church, Terryville, CT

TODAY'S CHURCH

Consuming God's Creation

by Father John Dresko

On August 14, 2003, as many Orthodox Christians were getting ready to leave home for the services celebrating the Dormition of the Theotokos, a massive blackout hit the northeast United States and Canada. Over 50 million people were plunged into darkness. Air conditioners on a hot and humid day failed. People were trapped in elevators and subway trains. Millions of people were ordered to boil their drinking water because purifying systems shut down. People in greater Cleveland had no water at all because the pumps

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Around the Parishes

Meriden, Connecticut

Here it is - the end of summer and we have been very active here at Ss. Peter & Paul Church. We were blessed to have Bishop Nikon visit us on Ascension and celebrate Divine Liturgy. After services, Anne Belejack, Helen Gucwa, and Zena Ostrowski hosted a coffee hour.

In June, Father Timothy Lowe celebrated his 20th anniversary of entering the Priesthood. Our Parish Council sponsored a coffee hour in his honor. On June 18th, our Seniors met at the Manor Inn in Southington for a welcome to summer luncheon. All who attended had a good time.

On June 29th, we celebrated our parish's name day. We were pleased to have Father Vladimir Eremine from New Britain celebrate Divine Liturgy with Father Timothy and Deacon Sergius Halvorsen. We were also honored to have Valerie Yova Sheets, Executive Director of PSALM, visit and sing with our Choir. As we were venerating the Cross, Father Timothy passed out wooden crosses he received from Bishop Timothy of Jerusalem during Father's recent trip to the Middle East. Our plans

OUR DIOCESE

**PEOPLE
PLACES
EVENTS**

to have a procession and bless the four sides of the Church were upset by a late morning rain shower. After, we all traveled our Community Center for a catered dinner.

On July 10th, our Brotherhood held their annual Parking Lot Picnic at our Community Center. The weather cooperated with a dry, although hot evening. All enjoyed the good food and conversation.

We were excited to hear that Paul Leonowich was selected as Teacher of the Year at Vinyl Technical School. Paul teaches sciences at Vinyl Tech and is now competing with teachers from the 16 other technical schools in Connecticut for the statewide Teacher of the Year.

We were happy to hear that BreAnna Berra graduated from Quinnipiac University. She is now in North Carolina on an internship. We were also happy to hear that Petty Officer Michael Zahariadis safely returned from a tour of duty on the USS Roosevelt in the Middle East. He is presently stationed at Whidbey Island Naval Station in Washington.

We were saddened by the recent passing of Peter Herida. Peter was a friend to many in our Parish and successfully overcame a severe weight condition, having lost 560 pounds. Peter was author of "The Battle of Survival" and appeared on several TV talk shows relating his story. Check out the web site he authored at



Valerie Yova Sheets, Fr. Timothy Lowe and Vladimir Morosan visit in Meriden.

www.bigpete803.com. May his memory be eternal!

We are looking forward to the next few months since we have several activities planned. We will be holding our Annual Church Picnic in late summer and our Brotherhood will be sponsoring their famous ham and cabbage dinner. Give us a call if you would like to join us.

-- submitted by John S. Nighyew

New Haven, Connecticut

Summer was a slow time at our parish and now everyone is wondering, "where has the time gone?" Fall certainly has a way of sneaking up on us. Everyone is refreshed from his or her summer vacations, the children have returned to school and we are ready to get into the swing of things.

Ann Kunde is a proud grandmother. Her grandson, Eric Silverfein, graduated from Tulane Medical School in New Orleans, Louisiana and will be doing his internship at Baylor University Hospital in Houston, Texas. Her granddaughter, Kerri Sobolewski, will be a practicing Clinical Psychologist at the Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Congratulations and Many Years to all.

Anastasia Avgerinos volunteered to be our FORCC benefit dinner co-coordinator. Please see Anastasia for tickets before September 23.

August 10th we held a homemade delights breakfast fundraiser for the Mosher family (Joshua, Jenny, Elias and Ephraim) to help defray costs of tuition and living expenses. Joshua will be entering St. Vladimir's Seminary as a full time student. Menu consisted of homemade baked goods, muffins, scones, breads, coffee cakes, cinnamon rolls, oven-baked French toast, quiches and casse-

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that bring water from Lake Erie had no electricity to keep them pumping. Food began to thaw out and spoil. People could not phone loved ones because all the phones in the house were cordless and needed electricity to send their signals to the base station. Cell phone relaying stations quickly became overloaded, rendering cell phones useless. There were immediate thoughts of terrorism. Thankfully, it was only some problem in the massive grid that provides electricity and not some planned act.

Reporters, for those of us who could still turn on televisions and radios, began to report on the emergency. In New York City, people began to trickle out of their stifling buildings. In place of rioting and looting, people spread out blankets and made the best of it. Picnic dinners sprouted up in the middle of concrete and asphalt. Whole families – some three and four generations deep – sat down together for a meal and conversation for the first in weeks, months, and even years. Everyone kept an eye on everyone else in the neighborhood. People lucky enough to have cars inching their way out of the city picked up total strangers who needed to go in the same general direction. The general message in reports during the blackout was that everyone was making the best of it, even enjoying the simplicity of the Spartan lifestyle imposed on them.

This event, while certainly difficult and even potentially tragic, proved one thing to everyone involved. We do not need many of the things that we have convinced ourselves are necessities. Most people profiled in the affected areas were getting along just fine. In fact, many said they were having a great time. Countless selfless acts were noted. People shared what they had to ease the strain for others.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, of blessed memory, taught that one clear sign of the Fall and Sin was when man no longer exercised *dominion*

over creation, but began to *consume* it.

Man as consumer is exalted in today's world. There are numerous protections in place to protect consumers. There are Offices of Consumer Protection in various levels of government. When we watch television, commercial after commercial exhort us to be discerning consumers. We are seduced by the advertising culture into selling ourselves out for the acquisition of material items that we have been convinced are necessary to live an adequate life in today's world.

Some facts about "consumerism":

- From 1975 to 1991, credit card interest payments increased 463% per capita in the United States.
- The average American household owns eleven credit cards and pays more than \$1000 in interest on those cards. Forty percent of Americans say they have "great difficulty" making their payments on those cards.
- Harvard University economist Juliet Schor found that for every hour of television watched per week, annual spending increased \$208.00.
- Twenty-five percent of people who earn more than \$100,000 per year said that they need to earn more to afford life's necessities.
- From 1983 through 1992, personal bankruptcies hit a new record every year. From 1992 to 1995, the rate leveled. In 1996, increases led to 1,000,000 bankruptcies, and in 1997, there were 2.35 million. This was eight times the rate during the Great Depression. Seventy percent of those were "Chapter 7" bankruptcies (no assets), with credit card debt averaging 90% of total income. In 2002, 30,700 bankruptcies were filed each week. (*The Wall Street Journal*)
- Typical bankruptcies in 1999 involved a well-educated, middle class Baby Boomer with large credit card debt. (*Studies at the Universities of Texas and Pennsylvania*)
- The United States totals approximately 5% of the world's population. The United States consumes approximately 25% of the world energy resources.

An Orthodox Christian attempting to live a sound Christian life has to be challenged by these facts. If consumerism is antithetical to living a Christian life, why is it so rampant, even infecting individual Orthodox Christians and parishes? The answer is simple: none of us, whether individual or parish, is immune to the seductive whisperings of this world.

Orthodox Christian stewardship is essential to a healthy Christian lifestyle. That does not only mean that we are generous in donating our time, talent and treasure to God and His Church, but also that we put the things of this world into their proper place in our lives. Each of us must examine our lives, the priorities we have set in our lives, and the way we interact with God's creation.

The facts noted above are truly sobering. We cannot deny that we live in a credit card society. Plastic is used to pay for everything. The difference today is that people no longer pay their balances off each month. There is no stigma attached to debt. In fact, each day's mail brings yet another "pre-approved offer."

How can a Christian not look at renegeing on debts as a sin? It is, in fact, stealing. We are convinced that the acquisition of "things" will make our lives easier, happier, and more fulfilled. So we acquire more and more, but find less and less satisfaction. Not only that, but then we find ourselves facing the reality of the monthly bills coming in each day's mail.

But when we live that consumer lifestyle, what does that say about us as Christians? How can we really accept that people making over \$100,000 (putting them in the top 2% of Americans in earning power), feel that they need to earn more to afford life's "necessities"? Are the necessities that expensive, or has our understanding of "necessities" become so perverted and distorted that we will *never* afford them?

Meanwhile, what happens to

FORCC News

The Tenth Annual Benefit Dinner will be held on Sunday, October 5, 2003, 1:00 P.M. at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church Hall, 5456 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT.

Donation is \$35.00 for Adults and \$10.00 for Children under 12. Advance ticket sales only. For tickets, contact your parish representative, or Bill Balamaci 203-521-7697, and Nina Kosowsky 203-924-0936, **before September 23, 2003**. Tickets **will not be sold** at the door.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, OCA, will be the honored guest speaker. His topic will be: "The Orthodox Church in America in the 21st Century".

Menu consists of a Crudite Table with Cheese, Vegetables & Fruit, Tossed Garden Salad with Balsamic Vinaigrette, Stuffed Breast of Chicken or Porketta Au Jus, Rice Pilaf and Vegetables, Brownie Ice Cream Sundae, Wine, Soda, Coffee & Tea.

The Pan Orthodox Choir will sing various musical selections. Proceeds of this dinner provide major funding for FORCC. Please join us for great food, fun, and fellowship. Meet and greet old acquaintances and make new ones.

The annual FORCC Scholarships have been awarded and the recipients will be introduced and honored at the banquet. They are:

SMERZNAK, MEDAK & KIDWELL SCHOLARSHIP

\$1000/each awarded to:

Nicholas Eleftherios Afentoulis

St. George Orthodox Church/Norwalk (GOA)
College: Rochester Institute of Technology
Course of Study: Computer Engineering
Leading degree: Bachelors and Masters

Debbie G. Bakes

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church/Bridgeport (GOA)
College: Brandeis Univerdity
Course of Study: Mathematics and Biology
Leading degree: Bachelor of Science

F.O.R.C.C. SCHOLARSHIPS

\$500/each awarded to:

Ashley Cipu

St. Dimitrie Orthodox Church/Bridgeport (OCA)
College: Loyola College
Course of Study: Undecided Liberal Arts
Leading degree:

Kathryn Demont

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church/Bridgeport (GOA)
College: University of Connecticut
Course of Study: Business
Leading degree: Bachelor of Science

Vasiliki Ann Tsombanor

St. George Orthodox Cathedral/Hartford (GOA)
College: Bucknell University
Course of Study: International Relations Major
Leading degree: Bachelor of Arts

Mary Eleni Yeotsas

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church/Bridgeport (GOA)
College: Barnard College
Course of Study: Pre-Medicine
Leading degree: Bachelor of Science

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Finished bags are stacked for delivery.

stood together in church, participating in singing and reading the service.

As a parting gift, Fr. John gave all the participants a small tube of toothpaste. In doing so he asked each participant to take a moment every day (perhaps, even, while brushing their teeth!) to remember with gratitude the blessings they have received and to think about how to help and serve others who might not be so blessed. The retreat was a wonderful and uplifting event, enjoyed by all that participated. In conclusion, special thanks are extended to all the adults who accompanied the children to the retreat, as one of the requirements was that every young person be accompanied by a parent or guardian for the full duration of the event.

Diocesan Funeral Guidelines

These are diocesan guidelines periodically repeated for the edification of the faithful. All parishes in the Diocese of New England follow these guidelines. -Ed.

....all things should be done decently and in order.... (1 Corinthians 14:40)

The Orthodox Liturgy of Death (a term used to describe all services – panikhidas, requiems, Divine Liturgies – that are usually celebrated in connection with death) presupposes that the deceased had been baptized, was a communicant of the Eucharist and, in life, strove to be obedient to the Lord's commandments in pursuit of that "holiness without which no one will see God" (Hebrews 12:14).

Through prayer and remembrance, the function of the Liturgy of Death is to incorporate and affirm the departed in the death and resurrection of Christ, which are the very content of the life of the Church. The primary – and probably only – function of the Liturgy of Death is to make and proclaim that connection – and even identification – between the death of each Christian and Christ's death. "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3).

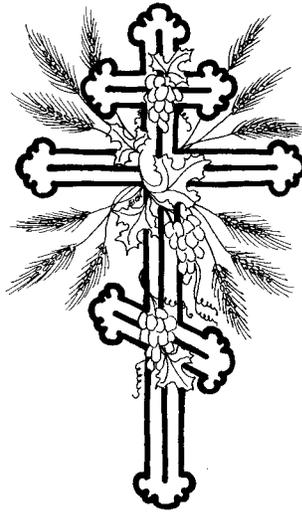
The Liturgy of Death celebrates the tragedy of the spiritual and physical death of each Christian as being the very sign and victory of Christ's death and resurrection. In that way, the Liturgy of Death preserves the unique Christian vision of death – and life – and calls on the rest of the community to persevere more deeply and zealously in the baptismal way of dying and rising in Christ, so that one's last breath can become a witness to the "glory of the Father." It was, after all, to living people that Saint Paul wrote: "You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God"

(Colossians 3:3). "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth" (Revelation 14:13). They are "blessed" because their death is their final and supreme offering, witness and "Eucharist" through which the Lord is declared and "made known." The death of an authentic Christian builds up the community of faith, enabling it to declare more powerfully that "death is no more!"

I. LITURGICAL EXPRESSION

A. Place of Service

- The body of a departed



communicant of the Church should be brought into the temple, at least on the day of burial.

- According to traditional Orthodox practice, the casket is to remain open until the end of the service.

B. Services

Presently there are two main ways of celebrating the feast of Christian death, ways that reflect the inner experience of the Church:

- A panikhida service is sung in the funeral home (or the temple) on the eve of burial. Funeral matins

(requiem) is celebrated in the temple on the day of burial. In principle, the requiem may "stand alone" and does not "require" Divine Liturgy.

- The body is brought into the temple on the eve of burial and the requiem is sung. Divine Liturgy is celebrated on the day of burial, provided Orthodox family members and friends of the departed are prepared to receive Communion. (Divine Liturgy, however, is precluded during Great Lent, when weekday liturgy is forbidden.)

C. Times and Days of the Liturgy of Death

- Burials may not be celebrated on Sundays during the year, the body is not to be brought into the temple on that day except towards evening.
- Burials should not be celebrated on Great Feast days and the body should not be brought into the temple, except towards evening.
- Burials may not be celebrated on Holy Friday, Holy Saturday or the Sunday of Pascha. The body is not brought into the temple on those days.

D. Memorial Services (i.e., Panikhida Services)

- Requested memorial services should not be celebrated during Holy Week.
- The practice of celebrating requested memorial services after Sunday Liturgy should not be encouraged for it tends to nominalize the Liturgy in which all – the living and the dead – have already been incorporated into the Kingdom of God. The practice tends to disintegrate the Eucharist from the reality of death when, in fact, it is precisely the Eucharist – as the sacrament of the Kingdom – that most fully and adequately "proclaim the Lord's death and confess his resurrection" (cf. Hebrews 12:22-24). the best time for memorial services

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on weekends is Saturday, before evening vigil.

**II. NON-COMMUNICANT
“MEMBERS”**

Non-communicant “members” (that is: people identifying themselves as Orthodox, who may have attended church services in life and even supported the church financially, but who willfully did not receive the Eucharist at all), are not to be brought into the temple upon their death. By refusing the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of membership, and membership as sacrament, they have refused as well to “proclaim the Lord’s death and confess his resurrection” (1 Corinthians 11:26) – which is the very content of the Liturgy of Death and of Orthodox Christian life.

The burial of such people, not taking place in the temple, may only include a memorial service, with the celebrant vested only in a stole. The service may include scriptural readings for the dead.

**III. THE BURIAL OF
NON-ORTHODOX PERSONS**

The burial of non-Orthodox persons is done in the same manner as the burial of non-communicant “members.”

IV. SUICIDE

Like “non-communicant membership” (which is a form of suicide), suicide itself remains a profound tragedy and sin that should elicit from the community of faith a deep prayer for forgiveness, repentance and sorrow – for the sake of the suicide and for the members of the community as well.

The Orthodox Church normally denies a Church burial to a person who has committed suicide. However, special pastoral considerations may allow a determination to be made, in consultation with the Bishop, to permit a service of burial. Such a determination has, as its goal, to build up the community of faith

and not lead it to scandal of confusion.

V. THE BURIAL OF MASONS

Upon the death of a freemason, the family of the deceased must choose between masonic services and Orthodox Christian burial. If a masonic service is chosen, the body is not to be brought into the temple and the priest may not celebrate any service at all – except to commit the body to the grave (if he is asked to do so) with the singing of “Holy God....”

If a masonic’s spiritual immortality and tend to view the disconnection of soul and body as the natural end of life. This is not a biblical teaching: a soul-less body and a body-less soul are not “natural.” Death is the sign and fruit of sin, and the mutilation of a human person.

VI. CREMATION

- The witness of the catacombs and the tombs of martyrs and saints reveals that it has never been the Christian practice to cremate the dead. Therefore, this practice is not encouraged at all. Cremated remains are not to be brought into the temple for services, or for any other reason.

- Although cremation is not encouraged and funeral services over cremated remains is forbidden, cremated remains may be buried with the singing of “Holy God....”

**VII. AUTOPSIES AND
ORGAN DONATION**

Autopsies and donations of bodily organs after death may be done so long as respectful care is exercised toward the body. In a broad sense, all Christian bodies, as anointed temples of the Holy Spirit, are “relics,” and they are organic components of the wholeness of human personhood.

These guidelines do not preclude any additions as may be needed.

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roles, crab cakes and shrimp, pancakes hot off the griddle, assorted cold cereals for the children, coffee, tea and fruit juices. Great fellowship was had by all. Thanks to Susan Papademetris and Alexis Swan for coordinating this event.

On August 17th, the Ladies Auxiliary held their Patronal Feast Day at Brazi’s in New Haven. Parishioners were invited to join in the “Dutch treat” luncheon.

Once again, our parish is sponsoring the SVS lecture series. This year’s topic is “Living Tradition.” Lectures will begin on Monday, September 22nd for five consecutive Monday evenings, culminating on October 20th. 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

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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, 2003. Mail completed form with check payable to FORCC, @ 472 Stratfield Road, Fairfield, CT 06432**

– submitted by Barbara Ann Dixon

**PUBLICATION
DEADLINES**

**November Issue
October 1st**

**December Issue
November 1st**

**January Issue
December 1st**

NPR Commentator to Speak at Education Day

CRESTWOOD, NY - St Vladimir's Seminary will host the 34th annual Orthodox Education Day on Saturday, October 4, 2003. The annual event draws scores of people from the tri-state area and beyond for a day of worship, fellowship, education, and entertainment. Guests will enjoy foods from many lands, a children's booth, and specialty exhibits.

This year's theme is "Orthodox Tradition Yesterday and Today." The event's featured speaker will be Frederica Mathewes-Green, commentator on National Public Radio and highly acclaimed author. Afternoon workshops on subjects ranging from iconology, liturgy and patristic

theology to developing a parish website and the challenge of sexual abuse, will explore the various aspects of the day's theme.

The seminary is pleased to welcome Metropolitan Herman, the primate of the Orthodox Church in America and president of the school, who will preside at the 9:30 A.M. Hierarchical Liturgy. The choir of St Mark's Orthodox Church of Bethesda, MD, under the direction of Scott Cowan, will sing responses to the Liturgy, along with the St Vladimir's Seminary Chorale. There will also be a memorial service for departed friends of the seminary at 4:00 P.M. The day will end with Vespers.

An afternoon program will feature a Festival of Music featuring visiting choirs and culminating in a youth concert with recording artist Peter Jon Gillquist.

An invitation is also extended to all youth from around the country, especially participants from organized youth gatherings such as the All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America, the National Convention of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, as well as Orthodox camps. It is the seminary's hope that this day will serve as a reunion for young people.

CONSUMING FROM 4

those whom God has put into the path of our lives in order that we might use what He has given us to His purposes? Can I really acquire more possessions, getting into deeper and deeper debt, while crying that I can give nothing (time, talent or treasure) to the poor, the needy, or the Church?

An Orthodox Christian steward lives as if the world and all of creation is a gift that God has placed into one's hands. We are going to be called to account for that gift and must return

it in as good or better condition than we received it. A consumer mentality truly places us between two masters and we must choose. Our choice will lead to one of two things: life or death.

The "Great Blackout of 2003" was not really a blackout. It was a chance to see life in a simpler, more wholesome, less consumptive way. We are enslaved to the consumption of this world. Only Christ and a return to exercising dominion over creation instead on consumerism will free us from this sin. Each of us should

try to rededicate ourselves to a Christian, stewardly approach to those things that God has blessed us with, serving the one true and holy Master. The simplicity imposed on us in the blackout is a worthy voluntary pursuit.

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24 RSV)

(Fr. Dresko is Director of Stewardship for the Orthodox Church in America.)

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