

“Saints, Saintliness and Sanctity”

Youth Rally 2005



by Father John Hopko

Youth Rally 2005 was held at the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston Camping and Retreat Center in Contoocook, New Hampshire, from Monday, August 15, until Saturday, August 20. This is the same site at which the last several Youth Rallies have been held.

According to the Diocesan Guidelines for Youth Rally as presently constituted, all diocesan youth who have completed fifth grade and have not yet celebrated their 18th birthday are eligible to attend the Youth Rally. Adult volunteers serve as cabin and activity counselors.

In my capacity as Diocesan Youth Director, I served as Rally Rector and Director. Fr. Dennis Rhodes served as the Rally Chaplain. Matushka Cynthia Voytovich served as Choir Director. Nona Richards again served as Rally Nurse. A total of eleven other adults volunteered as Youth Rally Staff in various capacities, primarily cabin and activity counselors.



His Grace, Bishop Nikon, enjoyed some time with the Youth Rally participants and staff.

At Rally this year, we had twenty-six participants, with fifteen staff members and two guests,

RALLY TO 8



Some of the Rallyers and staff.

42nd Diocesan Assembly Set

Southbury to host

Christ the Savior parish in Southbury, CT, is all set to host the 42nd annual Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of New England.

Sessions will be held at the church and hall on 1070 Roxbury Rd, with accommodations being provided at the Dolce Heritage, 522 Southbury Rd., in Southbury.

Preparatory packets have been sent electronically to all the parishes in the diocesan with preliminary reports and hotel reservation information and directions. The room rates have been extended to October 12th, and you must mention that you are part of the “Christ the Savior Church” group to get the special rate.

All parishes are reminded that financial obligations must be current to the diocese through August 31st in order to be seated as delegates at the assembly. Contact Fr. Michael Westerberg, Diocesan Chancellor, if you have questions at 203-387-3882.



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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.

October 1, 2005

ORTHODOX EDUCATION DAY
St. Vladimir Seminary, Crestwood, NY

October 2, 2005

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

October 3, 2005

SVS Lectures: Confronting the World in the Second Century
7:00 P.M., Fr. John Behr
Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT

October 6, 2005

Connecticut Deanery Meeting, 7:00 P.M.
Christ the Savior Church, Southbury, CT

October 7-8, 2005

100th Anniversary Celebration
Holy Trinity Church, Springfield, VT

October 10, 2005

SVS Lectures: Liturgical Music and Culture, 7:00 P.M.
Mrs. Helen Erickson
Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT

October 17, 2005

SVS Lectures: Liturgy and Culture, 7:00 P.M.
Dr. Paul Meyendorff
Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT

October 28-29, 2005

42nd DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY
Christ the Savior Church, Southbury, CT

November 19, 2005

Connecticut Deanery Parish Retreat, 9:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M.
"Creating a Mission-Minded Parish"
Fr. Luke Veronis
Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT

November 30, 2005

Diocesan Council Meeting, 6:30 P.M.
Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT

December 2-3, 2005

Connecticut Bible Lecture Series
St. Paul's Letter to the Romans
Fr. Paul Tarazi
Christ the Savior Church, Southbury, CT

Around the Parishes

Ansonia, Connecticut

It was a very warm summer at Three Saints Church, however, we saw many good things happening. Firstly, Fr. Nicholas Timpko was once again back in the altar serving Divine Liturgy – and we wish him and his family many more prayers as he continues his recovery from knee replacement surgery. We as a parish are grateful he's on the road to recovery and back with us.

We had our 5th annual combined picnic with Ss Peter & Paul Church on Sunday, August 21st. The weather, although warm, turned sunny and a good time was had by all. The choir from Three Saints Church sang some folk songs for our entertainment. We also enjoyed the music of a wonderful band. We were also treated to the children and young adults performing traditional folk dances in full costume – what a treat!

Our bookstore continues to grow with new items being added weekly – all are invited to come and take a look – if you don't see what you're looking for, just ask Carol or Steve Zavednak and they can let you know if it

OUR DIOCESE

PEOPLE
PLACES
EVENTS

can be ordered. They have announced that all profits from sales will be donated to our Icon Restoration project which will be underway shortly now that our roof has been repaired.

Fall will see the start of a new church school year and we hope to see the familiar faces and some new ones! Coffee hours have continued through the summer thanks to the volunteers who signed up, and will continue through the fall, so come on down after Divine Liturgy and enjoy some fellowship.

– submitted by Julie Craft

Hartford, Connecticut

The grounds of All Saints Church came alive with the Scarborough Fair Mini-Carnival and Tag Sale.

It was the biggest tag sale for the parish and the first mini-carnival through which the community was invited to the parish for some fun and as a way to introduce more persons to the Church. A highlight of the carnival was horse and pony rides, through the courtesy of Chelsea Ranstead and her horse Fiona, and Chrissy Adamec and her pony Katie. Young and the young at heart truly

enjoyed their equestrian excursions.

The carnival also featured many midway-type games, that were constructed by Peter Malick, Michael Danchak, and Mark Ranstead, with artistic work provided by Susan Ranstead, coordinator of the event. Barbecued food delighted the taste buds of those attending.

The tag sale, coordinated by Mary Beth and Michael Stenko saw the auditorium filled with treasures, as persons line up to grab the best buys at the opening “bell.”

Some of the visitors to the Carnival took the opportunity to see the Church and ask questions about the faith. The day culminated with Great Vespers. Many Years to all who supported the event.

Special thanks to all who assisted with the carnival including Mark Sidorick, James Aerykssen, Hector Lugo, Chris DuBovik, Nadia Lugo; Kelly, Chelsea and Bryan Ranstead; Cali, Alex and George Babey; Sophie D'Angona, Elouise Schmidt, the Andrzejewski family, the Medynski family, the Denisky family, Chris Evans, John Holobinko, Olga and Peter Malick, Chrissy Adamec, Bill Dubee, Grace Izard and any others who gave of themselves. And a special thanks to Fiona and Katie.

Our tag sale help to whom we offer special thanks include: Cathy Vargas, Phyllis Sturtevant, Marsha Coombs, Stasha Church, Olga and Ray Reduker; Sam Wecal and Noemy Wecal; John, Joan, Christian and Katie Holobinko; Paul Stenko, Eugenia, Alexander and Agnes Hanczaruk; Philip Hritcko; James Aerykssen, Clinton Hibdon, Val Olesnovich, Tom, Gail, Allison and Larissa Denisky; Steve Powlishen, and bake sale coordinators, Olga Powlishen and Helen Uremko; Sophie Szymczyk, Chris Evans, Chet Andrzejewski, Olga Mucha, Marion Hancock, John and Andrea Lichatz and Nick, John and James Medynski, and to all who donated items for the tag sale and who brought baked goods for the bake sale.

We joined together after Liturgy on the Day of the Transfiguration of our Lord for our annual Lenten Brunch prepared by Nick Medynski and volunteers. The food and fellowship was great!

And workshops are underway for our 32nd annual Russian Tea Room and Bazaar which takes place 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 5 and noon to 3 p.m. Nov. 6. All are invited to taste the delicious ethnic foods and to treat themselves, to baked goods, plants, ethnic and religious items, crafts and much more!

– submitted by Fr. William DuBovik

New Haven, Connecticut

On Sunday, August 7th, following Liturgy, we enjoyed a parish name's day breakfast in the auditorium. This was a fund raising event for Deacon Joshua Mosher, a student at

A Novice's View of the 14th All-American Council

by Arlene Potter

My journey to the All-American Council in Toronto began at our parish's annual meeting, where I was elected as an alternate delegate. My experience with this level of the operations and procedures of our Church was limited to a Diocesan Assembly held in Terryville, which I had attended in October 2003 and found to be quite interesting. Little did I realize that there would be a significant difference between them.

About a month before the All-American Council was to meet, I was handed a package of council study papers. Five sections each contained a different subject matter: Vision and Identity (36 pages), Orthodox Relations (21 pages), Clergy Formation and Development (37 pages), Parish Health (16 pages) and Evangelization (42 pages). Since I read pretty quickly I thought in my innocence that these study papers would move right along. No problem!!!

The first bump in the road on the way to the All-American Council was when my husband and I started to read the Pillars on our way to Cape May. Since he was planning to attend with me, we would be study partners! We quickly realized that this was not Terryville and that we had our studying cut out for us. Some of the difficulties that we faced were rooted in the highly stylized writings of the bishops, clergy and laypersons of the Church. Imagine two lay people with a history of five years in the Orthodox Church muddling their way through the history, dynamics and the language of these study papers.

Thank goodness that Cape May was about 200 miles away from home!

I really wanted to represent my parish to the best of my ability and both my husband and I stretched our capacity for learning and understanding to new heights. We completed our studies with a much more comprehensive view of

the history and hopes of the Orthodox Church in America. We were ready!!

Several days before we were to drive to Toronto, Father John Dresko, our pastor, notified me that I would now represent our parish as the official delegate. (Our elected parish delegate, Paul Culton, was appointed to fulfill the term of a resigned OCA Pension Board member, and would attend as a member of that board.)

We registered at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto. I was eager to begin even though I was given a bag of materials that weighed close to twelve pounds and contained more information and needed supplies including information for two additional Plenary Sessions – Elections and The Report of the Treasurer/Fair Share.

The next week was a flurry of events and workshops. The liturgical services were awe-inspiring. To be at services with the Primate, bishops and a multitude of priests and laity from throughout North America, including Mexico, Canada and Alaska, was a humbling and breathtaking experience.

Workshops that extended throughout the week were industrious and very informative. Plenary Sessions were preceded by a presentation that gave a comprehensive history and overview of what was to be discussed. Each day, as an

official delegate, I was able to work side-by-side with different clergy and laypeople on the topics that each Plenary Session presented based on the Council study papers. George Ludko and Paul Culton from our parish assisted and guided me through the expectations and responsibilities that lay before me. Thank you, George and Paul.

Much thought and consideration was given to the needs of the Orthodox Church and family as it is today. We looked back on our history and we look forward to growth and improvement for the future.

Elections for various church positions were held at the sixth Plenary Session. I was pleasantly surprised to see that there were plenty of people who were eager to take on the responsibility of the different offices available.

Plenary Session seven was the Report of the Treasurer/Fair Share. I was delighted and proud of Father John as he successfully made his presentation on Fair Share. The proposal passed!

All the summary reports will be presented to the hierarchs for their approval and final acceptance.

With each workshop and decision I made, I tried to represent each and every one of you to the best of my ability. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to represent our parish.

(Arlene Potter is a parishioner of Holy Trinity Church in New Britain, CT)



*(L-R)
George Ludko
and Paul Culton
help out the
"rookie,"
Arlene Potter.
(Photo: Paul
Salina)*

Taking Offense

by Father Andrew Morbey

I don't know what is so terribly awful – I mean, relatively speaking – about offending people.

First of all, if – broadly speaking – giving offense is a sin, so too is taking offense. I think giving offense is often by far the easier sin to repent of. Indeed people fall over themselves to do so, especially where “nice” is considered among the highest virtues (among many Canadians, Minnesotans; not among many New Yorkers, it seems to me). But taking offense is a sin Very Difficult to Extract Oneself From.

To put it another way, giving offense is often one of those “warm” sins. Not always but often enough. But taking offense is typically a cold, cold sin, and bound up deeply with self-pity, anger, hard-heartedness.

In fact this is why giving offense is considered a bad thing – it provokes taking offense, and taking offense is a deadly, nasty, spiteful, hard sort of thing. God knows! People damn themselves from their own lips, even at Confession: “Oh, I’ll forgive them, Father, but I’ll never forget!”

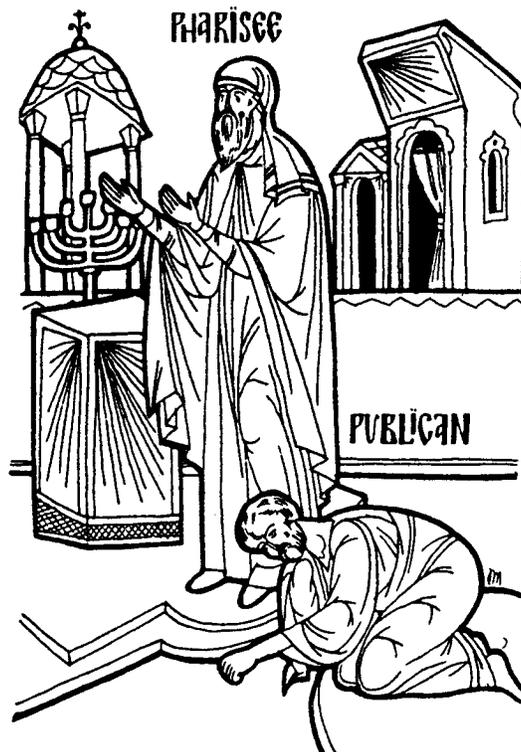
No, no, dear brothers and sisters – taking offense is really among the worst of sins. Or rather, falling into the temptation to take offense is among the worst. The thought goes through our mind – “that is offensive!” / “I’m deeply offended!” – it passes through our mind, in a blink.

It passes through – let it go! – but to entertain it – one of the terms used in the spiritual literature is to “nurse” it – ghastly, that! – to entertain

offense it is spiritual death in a way that “merely” giving offense isn’t. Our people are pretty good at taking offense.

So first of all – taking offense is a difficult, often intractable sin. But secondly, the worst thing about being offended is that the words sometimes are, in fact, true!

Now while it is true that (alleged) truth-speaking can lead to a multitude of sins, because some people wield the truth like a weapon



and don't give three figs about how they hurt and cripple others and make things worse by being “truthful” – God spare us from those who “just want to speak the truth!” – but plenty of people take offense at words or deeds spoken or done truthfully, without malice... (even, dare I say it, pastorally!) And especially by those who have the “right” to “offend” – that is, in principle, to chastise, to hold accountable...

Often – in the best cases – these very words are offered without malice, but certainly pointedly. After all – sometimes someone has to speak sharply, firmly, decisively. O dear! Is the recipient offended? hurt? Give me a break!

Sometimes we need to be hurt – probably much less often than others might want to hurt us – and less than we might think that we ought to apply the lance, granted – but still...

Finally, dear brothers and sisters, just mean what you say! If you want to contradict, contradict. If you want to chastise, chastise. If what you have to say might offend – think twice, or even two or three times, or (as it is said that Metropolitan Leonty liked to say, quoting Polish Jews in the tailoring business) measure seven times before you cut.

But if it is worth saying, after of all this – please don't apologize! You are probably doing some one a favor! (Not yourself of course! It would have been easier by far to schmooze and make nice...) Please, don't second guess and wring your hands.

Unless, of course, you acted out of malice, or ignorance... Then ask for forgiveness – not for offending, but for being malicious or stupid or hard-hearted!

I think the advice given by Alcoholics Anonymous is very sound: if you take it personally, don't take it seriously; if you take it seriously, don't take it personally.

(Fr. Andrew Morbey is Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Minneapolis, MN)

The Reality of Evil

by Fr. John Garvey

Evil is a word that disturbs most of us. Secular people are put off by its theological overtones; many religious people are rightly concerned with the way it is too frequently used about others, and seldom about ourselves. And this discomfort takes place in a society in which a belief in the reality of evil (seen as something transcendent, something with power) is considered a quaint superstitious remnant, and is equated with, say, the denial of evolution or a belief in fairies.

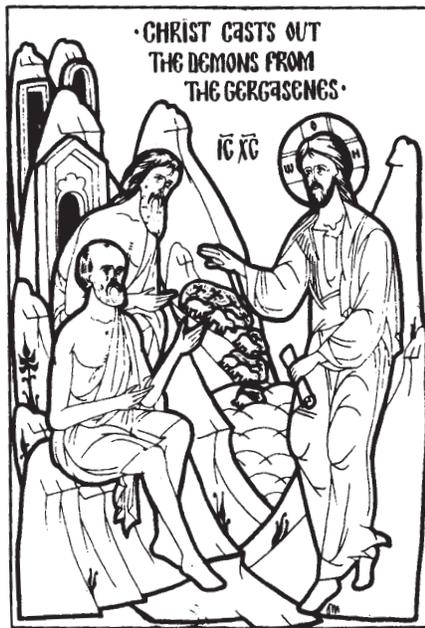
But then disasters like the recent tsunami happen, and atheists say to believers, "Explain this! If God is good, how can this terrible thing happen?" They see it as, well, an evil, or anyway something so horrible that it seems to rule out the idea of transcendent or even immanent goodness. Better an ultimately meaningless universe than one with such apparent contradictions.

Or take the discomfort that settles over the language when someone like Hitler or Pol Pot comes up. "Hitler was insane," it's said; or "He must have been psychotic." But the mystery of evil here is that Hitler had followers who were not insane, and there is no real evidence that he was anything other than sane, and so were his followers. The guy who stands ranting on the street corner about how the CIA is reading his thoughts doesn't usually gather a flock, and is a long way from the man who rallied Germany to mass murder, or from Charles Manson, Jim Jones ... or a man I once met who was surrounded by such a powerful aura of evil that it scared the hell out of me.

The discomfort is understandable. Evil brings up too many easy dramatic associations – images from *The Exorcist* and Gustave Doré's illustrations for Dante's *Inferno* – and conjures up a nearly Gnostic sense that Satan is another kind of God, a bad one, doomed ultimately to fail, but with

godlike powers. This has always been resisted in Christian theology, but it tempts the popular imagination.

I suspect that another source of discomfort with the notion of evil is that it introduces us to territory we seem to have left as a society, and even as Christians. That is, we have somehow lost the idea that life really does involve a struggle for light against darkness; a series of choices between good and evil; a sense that we must ultimately choose between life and death, and that there is something that draws us toward darkness and death.



There is something that does not love humankind, and it goes deep. All religious traditions have understood this. Satan in the book of Job is part of God's court, but the way he helps out is through destruction. The Buddha is tempted by Mara, in a way not unlike the temptation of Christ in the desert. We dilute our understanding of the darkest human possibilities by reducing them to a set of psychological problems.

Henri Nouwen once told me, after he read the Desert Fathers, that

Christians should avoid importing psychological concepts into those areas of Christian thought where the traditional vocabulary served perfectly well. And the traditional vocabulary, including that used by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, was a lot more comfortable than most of us are with the idea of evil and hell. We have sentimentalized our understanding of God's relationship to humanity. It is curious that we should have begun doing this in such a blood-drenched century as the last one. So we try to explain the Holocaust, Hiroshima, the killing fields of Cambodia, My Lai, Jonestown, the Manson family, September 11, all without any reference to radical evil, or the power evil has to take us over, one by one, or as a society.

It goes without saying that the invocation of religion does not help us out of this dilemma, since the history of religion is so studded with evil events, done in God's name.

But to deny that evil is real is to deny something we really do experience, out there – that is, in our suffering world – and in here, in our own hearts. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has said that the line between good and evil runs through every human heart, and it is essential for us to keep this before us every time we use the word.

A recent tragedy on the Red Lake Chippewa reservation showed us what happened to a sixteen-year-old boy, his father a suicide, his apparently abusive mother in a nursing home after an accident brought on by drunken driving, sent against his will to live with his grandfather, ridiculed by his classmates. Internet chat rooms seemed to be the only places he communicated freely, often with neo-Nazi racists, and his postings show him to have been rather articulate, and tortured. The result of whatever life poured or beat into him was the

EVIL TO 7

EVIL FROM 6

murder of nine people, and his own suicide. He was fascinated by death and drew pictures of the dead, dying, and zombies. He loved the myth of Hitler.

I thought of W. H. Auden's lines, from "September 1, 1939":

I and the public know What all school-children learn: Those to whom evil is done Do evil in return.

But the mystery of good (a more profound mystery than the mystery of evil) is that so many do not. Evil scares us, and should, but we fall for a lie if we think it is stronger than goodness. Satan is the father of lies, and the truth is that there are so many people who, having been beaten, do not beat others in return. This involves choices, and responses to temptation.

There are children of abuse who do not abuse, people who have been bullied whose response is to refuse to pass that pain on to others, people whose pain-filled lives have even led them – this is a miracle, I think – to gratitude.

I know a woman whose own background was terribly hard, who was for a while a thief and a prostitute, whose husband died of AIDS, who because of her own serious illness had to give up her child, and whose response to all this is to thank God that she and her husband met a monk who helped them both to a better way of living, that her child is alive and well cared for.

She is a person whose purity of heart and goodness shame me and make me grateful for having met her. Evil, even demonic evil, is real. What she reveals is deeper, and more true of the world.

(Fr. John Garvey is a priest of the Orthodox Church in America and columnist for "Commonweal", where his article first was published. His most recent books are "Orthodoxy for the Non-Orthodox" (Templegate Publishers) and "Death and the Rest of Our Lives" (Eerdmans).)

Sitka Icon

Our Lady of Sitka Icon will be featured at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, 165 Park Drive, Boston, MA. on Tuesday, October 18. Akathist will be served at 7:00 P.M.

Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church, 285 Alden Avenue, New Haven, CT, will host the Icon on Wednesday, October 19. Akathist will also be served at 7:00 P.M.

This Icon has been attributed to a famous Iconographer, Vladimir Lukich Borovikovskiy (1758-1826), a protege of the Empress Catherine II who was instructed at the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg, Russia.

Painted in the style of the Kazan Mother of God Icon, on canvas, the Sitka Mother of God Icon is 36 x 17 1/2 inches in size. An exceptionally beautiful and detailed riza of silver covers the Icon of the Theotokos and Christ child, and the Image of God the Father blessing from above.

St. Michael Cathedral in Sitka received the Icon as a gift from the laborers of the Russian American Company in 1850, two years after the Cathedral was completed. Even with their meager wages, these men generously made their contribution to the Church.

Miracles have been attributed to the Sitka Mother of God Icon over the years. It is believed that the gaze of the eyes of the Theotokos have led to the restored health of those who prayed before the Icon.

Because of the peaceful gaze of the Theotokos, the Icon has been described as a "pearl of Russian ecclesiastical art of ineffable gentleness, purity and harmony...." And "...the most beautiful face of the Mother of God with the Divine Child in her arms is so delicately and artistically done that the more one looks at it the more difficult it is to tear one's gaze away."

Originally part of the main Iconostasis at the Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel in Sitka, Alaska, the Icon is now permanently located on the far left side of the Iconostasis in a special place of honor.

FORCC News

The annual scholarship banquet of the Orthodox Christian Churches in Connecticut (FORCC) will be held at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Hall, Park Avenue, Bridgeport, on October 2nd. We will venerate our icon, *The Protection of the Theotokos*, for the first time.

In addition, of course, all the scholarships will be given out to the young people from throughout Connecticut that applied for them. Choosing a few students to be given the honor was a difficult task, indeed, as all the applicants had impressive accomplishments. Congratulations to all the winners (listed in the September 2005 issue of *Orthodox New England*).

Father Costas Sitaras, Executive Director of St. Basil Academy, will be the guest speaker. Topic of presentation will be "The Orthodox Family."

Deacon John Zarras, Senior Facilities Project chairman, has organized a committee to review the senior facilities project and develop future plans. Discussions on the senior facilities project will get underway at our October 20th meeting.

You are cordially invited to attend our meetings. They are held on Thursday evening from 7:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. Meeting schedule is as follows: Thursday, October 20th at St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church, Orange. Thursday, November 17th at Three Saints, Ansonia (election meeting).

– submitted by Barbara Ann Dixon

PUBLICATION DEADLINES

December Issue
November 1st

January Issue
December 1st

PARISHES FROM 3

St. Vladimir's Seminary. Approximately \$1,000.00 was raised to help defray school expenses.

Saturday, September 10, Father Michael held a Molieben service for all the people who are in the teaching profession (college, public, private, Sunday School, tutors, teachers aides, etc.) We thank all of them for their dedication to the education of our youth. Father Michael also served a Molieben on Sunday, September 11 for the entire church school, students, teachers and parents as they started the new church school year.

Congratulations to Patrick Ross, recent graduate of the Officers Candidate School/U.S. Marine Corps. Patrick is a senior at Ohio State University.

There is still time to join us on Monday evenings for the SVS lectures. Father John Behr will be guest speaker on October 3. Topic of discussion will be the Confronting the World in the Second Century. Mrs. Helen Erickson, will be guest speaker on Monday, October 10. Topic of discussion will be on Liturgical Music and Culture. Last, but not least, Dr. Paul Meyendorff will discuss Liturgy and Culture on Monday, October 17.

Final lecture is on Monday, October 17. Please join us for great fellowship. Parking is free and so are the snacks.

We have many events scheduled for the Month of October – do hope

you can join us. Wednesday, October 12 we will sponsor the Stremsky Family Children's Choir from Russia. Wednesday, October 19 pilgrimage stopover for the Wonderworking Sitka Mother of God Icon from Alaska Akathist at 7:00 P.M. On Sunday, October 23rd, the Yale Slavic Chorus. October 30th, we will have a Parish Open House from 3 –5 P.M. with conducted tours and explanation of our iconography

– submitted by Barbara Ann Dixon

RALLY FROM 1

for a total of forty-three participants, about the same number as last year.

The theme for Rally 2005 was "Saints, Saintliness and Sanctity." Therefore, the educational sessions of the Rally were concerned with the lives of the saints. All participants – Rallyers and Staff alike – received a pre-prepared packet about their patron saint as part of the Rally educational program.

The daily schedule for Rally followed the rhythms that have been established over the last several Rallies that have been held in Contoocook. Liturgical services are held every morning, afternoon and

evening in the beautiful chapel.

Educational sessions are held in the earlier part of each day and other activities, such as time at the waterfront, arts and crafts, sports and games, etc., are held in the latter part of the day.

One evening during Rally we went on a field trip to the Canobie Lake Amusement Park. The culmination of Rally was the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on the last morning of Rally, Saturday, August 20th. We were also blessed earlier in the week with a visit from our Diocesan Administrator, His Grace, Bishop Nikon, of Boston.

(Fr. John Hopko is the Director of the Diocesan Youth Department)



Campfire at Rally

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