

O. N. E.

ORTHODOX NEW ENGLAND

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Right: Thousands worshipped along with St. Tikhon's Monastery on Pascha night.



Grace under Crisis

Rev. Joshua Mosher

I will not easily forget this year's Sunday of Orthodoxy. As we love to do each year, many of us gathered at one church to celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy, the witness of true worship. Before and afterward, we also celebrated good fellowship with old friends and new ones. We had some great conversations, with a frequent refrain of what was going on with this "Coronavirus." There was an air of joy but also uneasiness. At the end of the evening, we said goodbye with less confidence than normal, not quite sure what the next week would bring.

I haven't seen any of those old or new friends in person since.

Our parishes entered the season of Great Lent with particular purpose, knowing that these were troubled times, even if we didn't recognize how difficult a season it would become, and how quickly. On March 14, the eve of the Second Sunday of Great Lent, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon asked us to reduce our parish activity to a minimum, with just a handful participating in the Divine Liturgy the next morning.

Grace continued on 4

Life before COVID: Happenings at Christ the Savior, Southbury

Nicholas Yuschak, Jr.

Above: Axios! Axios! Axios! Father Marc Vranes was awarded the Jeweled Cross by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon on Sunday, November 6, 2019 at our annual Pilgrimage in honor of St. Nektarios of Aegina. The event took place at Christ the Savior Church where Fr. Marc once served as our pastor.

Photo: Karina Ross and Christ the Savior Church Facebook Site



Below: As Many As Have Been Baptized Into Christ, Have Put On Christ! On Sunday, February 2, 2020 the infant Maria Josephine Locke was baptized. Congratulations and Many Years to her loving parents Fr. Moses and Matushka Christy Locke and their entire family.

Photo: Christ the Savior Church Facebook Site



Above: Souper Bowl of Caring: On Feb. 9, 2020 the children of Christ the Savior Church, Southbury, held their own "Souper Bowl". After Divine Liturgy they lined up ringing bells inviting parishioners to donate to International Orthodox Christian Charities and to the Woodbury Food Bank. The youngest were bellringers, while the older children held "Thank You" signs and at the end of the line two young ladies held soup pots into which people placed their donations. All told, we sent \$650 to the IOCC and 18 bags of dry goods to the Woodbury Food Bank. We are thankful for the generosity of our parishioners and the participation of our children.

*Photo and caption:
Bob Hanley*



Below: Winter Coffee House 2020: On Sunday, Feb. 23, a host of talented performers entertained a full house crowd at our first ever Coffee House. Presented by CHANGE Homeschool 4H, a night of live music, dancing, art, poetry and refreshments was enjoyed by all! Musicians and performers included parishioners as well as friends, neighbors, and guests.

Photo: Nick Yuschak



Grace from I

On March 17, responding to profound concerns our hospitals were in danger of being overwhelmed with coronavirus cases, His Beatitude directed parishes to close their doors. He acknowledged that he had agonized over this measure, but also said: "I would ask you to be mindful that these actions are taken for the sake of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and even for the larger community. This is an opportunity to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of the neighbor whom we love."

Metropolitan Tikhon extended the suspension of public liturgical services on April 7, a suspension which lasted through Pascha until May 7, when, following the May 1 statement of the Holy Synod, he issued a fresh directive encouraging a gradual and careful reopening, based on the circumstances surrounding each parish.

We have heard much contention over the decisions of His Beatitude, the Holy Synod, and bishops across the globe. For our own diocese, Metropolitan Tikhon emphasized "our Christian responsibility to ease the burden of ... doctors, nurses, first responders" and a multitude of others, he wrote in his April 7 directive. "The measures I am asking us to abide by should be seen as a sacrificial effort from every single one of us... in keeping with the sacrificial love shown by our Lord Jesus Christ in his holy and life-giving passion and death on the Cross...." He added that, while our participation in the Holy Eucharist is the "supreme expression of our

communion with Christ ... every other aspect of our Christian life has the potential to bring us into real communion with our Lord. Now, we have the opportunity and obligation to make use of this time to develop an inner life, which can assist us throughout the remaining time of our lives."

We have entered a new season, in every sense of the word, and now many of our parishes have taken a first step in reopening. But Metropolitan Tikhon's exhortation to develop our inner life in Christ is as essential as ever. This year continues to rush on like an out-of-control roller

coaster, demanding an immediate reaction to the latest crisis while we still struggle to adjust to the jarring turn from last week. Anxiety, anger and even despair surround us. That was true at the beginning of the year, before any of us knew what

COVID-19 might be. It is

ever more true as we struggle with endless confusion over the disease in our midst, and the appropriateness of various responses, while confronting the thorny questions of injustice, racism, and violence in our land. We find that anger, anxiety and despair even inside our churches.

The temptation is to rush to some resolution of our uncertainty. We have received the true faith! We have received the heavenly kingdom! Surely we know exactly the right answer in this moment. But consider another life-changing era: when everyone was looking for the coming of the Christ. Surely this was the day that the Christ would appear to sit upon the throne of David, and establish the kingdom that would never

"This is an opportunity to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of the neighbor whom we love."

fail. Before Jesus began his public ministry, already many wondered if John the Baptist were truly the Messiah. So we aren't surprised that many flocked to hear Jesus preach and to witness the signs and wonders he worked. But all along, even those close to him never quite grasped what sort of Kingdom their Master was establishing. Before his crucifixion, James and John maneuvered to get the most important seats on either side of Christ's throne. And even as the time of the Lord's Ascension drew near, after he had opened all the Scriptures to them, still the disciples questioned, was this the day when he would establish his rule in Jerusalem. Surely this was the day when their expectation would be vindicated.

Instead, those disciples had to allow themselves to be transformed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. They were not vindicated by earthly glory and power, but rather were persecuted after the image of their Master. And yet the great princes and rulers of their age are largely forgotten, while the preaching of the Apostles has never faded, and even we are enrolled as citizens of the kingdom they proclaimed.

Our own age demands we take sides and jump into the latest battles, to heap contempt upon those with wrong opinions, to explain all actions by the worst possible motives. Even Christians, even members of our own

Continued on next page

Below: Pictured on Scout Sunday are Father Steven Hosking and Zachary and Michael Neiss, Altar Boys at St. Alexis. Both boys have attained the rank of Eagle Scout at Troop 471 in Guilford, CT. Zachary's project was rough-hewn log benches at 9 holes on the Rick B Maynard Disc Golf Course. Michael's project was a 45 foot long bridge in Bittner Park located in Guilford. This bridge is on the red/yellow trail and is part of the Rick B Maynard Disc Golf Course. The boys are freshmen at Guilford High School.
Vincent Melesko

St. Alexis, Clinton, honors two on Scout Sunday



parishes, have fallen into these temptations. But like the disciples who desperately wanted to be vindicated in their own lifetime, we need to open ourselves to the grace of the Holy Spirit. We need humility and patience to work on our own souls, removing the plank from our eye before turning to the speck in our brother's. We need the courage that holds to the truth, but without the alloy of mockery or contention. Above all, we need the love that our Savior Jesus Christ taught us, willing to go to the Cross even for us while we were still his enemies, mixed with a healthy measure of simple kindness. These virtues may not change minds or solve our problems, but they do transform lives—our own lives. Then we may begin to speak words of life in our community, and be heard.

Or to say it better in fewer words:

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

(Galatians 5:23–6:2)

ONE +



2020 Diocesan Grant Program supports online outreach

Parishes in the Diocese of New England are encouraged to apply for Diocesan Grants to assist in expanding their online outreach. Many parishes have been experimenting with live-streaming, online meeting services like Zoom, and other opportunities. St. Jacob of Alaska in Vermont has already received a grant to help fund equipments and services, including a dedicated computer, camera, microphones, and internet service. Streaming software can also be a significant expense—for example, while Zoom offers a free version with limited function, a paid subscription

is necessary for live-streaming services to Youtube or Facebook. Other parishes are preparing to submit applications soon.

The Diocesan Grant Program was instituted to promote fresh outreach initiatives in our parishes. Up to 60% of estimated costs may be funded from these grants, with the rest to be covered by the parish.

If your parish would like to apply for a Diocesan Grant, information and application forms are available on the Diocese of New England website: dneoca.org/scholarships_grants

ONE +



SUPPORT ONE STEWARDS

In 2008, His Eminence wrote the following:

“ONE STEWARDS is the answer! So many of us look for the best ways to help ... above and beyond our parish pledge.

ONE Stewards is that answer ensuring the continuance of our many Diocesan projects...”

† Nikon Bishop of Boston, New England and the Albanian Archdiocese

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MEMORY ETERNAL

ONE Stewards 2020 in honor of ever-memorable Archbishop Nikon

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

The 2020 ONE Stewards appeal is in honor of our ever-memorable Archbishop Nikon. He was an avid supporter of ONE Stewards and began the Bishop's Circle Challenge, \$500 or more donation. His example inspired more and more faithful in the New England Diocese to support ONE Stewards and the number of Bishop Circle Donors continues to grow each year.

ONE Stewards
PO Box 1182
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Online Donations:

Check the Diocesan website, www.dneoca.org, for an online way to donate to ONE Stewards and to view a video tribute to our ever-memorable Archbishop Nikon.

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Diocese of New England
Orthodox Church in America
Published bi-monthly

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Rate: \$50.00 per quarter page, \$100.00 per half page, \$175.00 per full page.

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Upcoming

Aug 9

Camp St. Herman/Youth Rally has been cancelled for this year.

Aug 31

Deadline for contributing to ONE Stewards 2020

Oct 23-24

Diocesan Assembly