

O. N. E.

ORTHODOX NEW ENGLAND

Inside this issue:

ONE Stewards	4
Andrei's Story: Life in Prison, Life in Christ	5
Vacation Church School	7

Peter *Also* Walked on Water:

Dr. Al Rossi leads retreat on being a healing presence during COVID

Mary Jane Rodgers

“I know that I DON’T know—
I KNOW that Christ knows—
I trust HIM.”

How many of us would benefit from this God-given prescription multiple times per day?

The parishioners of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Meriden, Conn., were blessed to meditate on such gifts of God’s love and wisdom in an online Lenten retreat led by Dr. Al Rossi on April 10. Dr Rossi is a licensed clinical psychologist and teaches pastoral theology at St. Vladimir’s Seminary in Crestwood, New York. The topic of the retreat was “Peter *also* walked on water.”

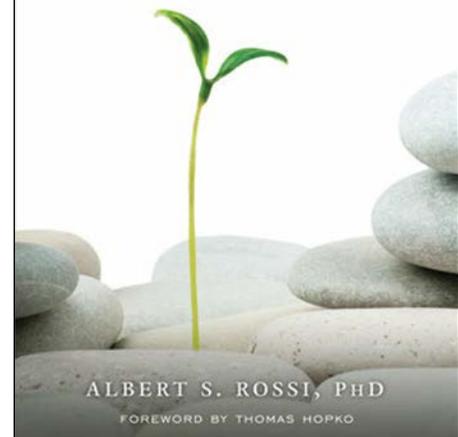
“What does walking on water mean to you personally?” Dr. Rossi asked each of us. This interactive discussion brought up words like focus, strength and trust.

When Peter trusted the Lord by placing his foot on the water and focused on Him, he had the strength to stand and be upheld. When fear disturbed that trust, Peter allowed his eyes to focus instead on the storm and his strength was gone. Have you ever experienced that?

Retreat continued on 1



BECOMING
A HEALING
PRESENCE



Right: Dr. Al Rossi, author of *Becoming a Healing Presence*, led a Lenten online retreat in April.

Retreat continued from I

Dr. Rossi quoted Fr. Thaddeus “Our thoughts determine our lives.”

Peter’s thoughts shifted to his peril. How do we, not only during the Lenten season but at all times, find God’s strength to walk on water as we face the ambiguities in life? Dr. Rossi asked each of us what our uncomfortable ambiguities were. Our church family, separated for over a year by COVID restrictions, grew closer through sharing the unknowns that have sapped our strength and continue to steal our focus.

We found that there were striking similarities in those fears despite the differences of age and life skills within the group of attendees. The insecurities all seemed to echo “I know that I DON’T know.” Dr. Rossi

reminded us “If I KNOW that Christ knows, I can be OK with ambiguity when I trust Him.”

“God became human so humans could become more like God.” So how do we acquire Christ’s strength? Dr. Rossi reminded us with a quote from the Desert Fathers “Where there is no conflict there is no life. When faced with life, move to the Light.” Given that, we need to know that God and His strength are always close to us. How can we know this if our lives are filled with constant activities and noise?

Dr. Rossi stressed the importance of taking time out morning and evening to be in stillness and prayer to get to know Him. Though setting aside time for God is certainly a discipline it does not need to be complicated. Short repeated prayers like “Lord have Mercy” are in actuality asking “Lord have everlasting love and grant me warm healing.” “The Jesus Prayer, ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son

Below: His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, makes archpastoral visit to SS. Peter & Paul, Meriden, Conn. Expressing his care as locum tenens of our diocese, Metropolitan Tikhon has resumed visits to parishes, following local COVID requirements. The Meriden parish rejoiced to welcome him during Lent. He was greeted by parish leaders Donna Leonowich and Greg Mankevich, as well as Fr. Joshua Mosher.

Photos: Rick Comshaw





**Above and Below:
More scenes of His
Beatitude’s visit to
SS. Peter & Paul.**

of God have mercy on me a sinner’ is in essence the same deep request. Prayer is the laying aside of our own thoughts and allowing ourselves to hear God speaking to us. Prayer may not necessarily change the situation but having a working relationship with our Father does give us the wisdom to face it with confidence in His strength.” Dr. Rossi reminded us that life is constant unseen spiritual warfare.

Since most of us had never previously experienced an online retreat, I was curious what various members of our parish had gained from attending. One parishioner mentioned that she had never been on a retreat and attended not knowing what to expect. She felt that Dr. Rossi’s message spoke personally to her current needs and issues. Another person said “It made me feel better to know that I’m not the only one with doubts... other people harbor them as well.

Finally “Dr. Rossi’s message made me realize that I need to and actually can draw near to God. I need to make

Christ a priority and draw closer to Him.”

We all are thankful for the light that Dr. Rossi shed on our hearts as we approached the great illumination of Christ’s love at Pascha. Christ is risen!

ONE +



Giving Above and Beyond: ONE Stewards 2021

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek

Thank you to all who have made 2021 donations to ONE Stewards. As of May 14, 2021, donations have totaled over \$19,000.

The "Bishop's Circle" of donors (\$500 or more) in memory of our beloved Archbishop Nikon continues to grow and sets an outstanding example of "Giving Above and Beyond." **Join this dedicated Bishop's Circle team in 2021.**

Show your support of our diocesan Youth, our diocesan Seminaries, our diocesan Missions, and our diocesan Charity donations during 2021 by supporting ONE Stewards.

Online Donations:

Check the Diocese of New England website, www.dneoca.org, for an online way to conveniently donate to ONE Stewards.



You can always mail checks to the following address:

ONE Stewards
PO Box 1182
Torrington, CT 06790

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Above: The ever-memorable departed Archbishop Nikon visiting the mission parish of Christ the Savior in Maine.

Below: Worship at Diocesan Youth Rally 2014.



Andrei's Story: Life in Prison, But Life in Christ

Amal Morcos, *Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry*

Andrei was 21-years-old when he left the Ukraine to start a new life in America. Instead, he got involved in drugs, committed murder, and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

It took Andrei some time to adjust to life in a maximum-security prison with its violence and restrictive conditions. He felt shame and guilt for his crime and had the added burden of being a foreigner in a foreign land.

Ten years ago, a friend recommended that he contact Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry. OCPM sent Andrei books, an Orthodox Study Bible, pamphlets and icons. He completed OCPM's catechism correspondence course and regularly wrote to the ministry, which responded personally to his letters. "Without exaggeration, that changed my life," says Andrei. "I developed a much better understanding of our faith, discovered the beautiful depth of patristic writings, felt the profoundly warm sense of peace when I read St. Isaac the Syrian."

Right: Andrei prays within his prison cell.



Andrei is now 50-years-old. He will never leave prison but he says he is confident that he can still live a life of peace. "Through the patient and compassionate presence of OCPM in my life, I feel the presence of the Church and the light of the Lord that shines even on this sinner, into this dark depth," says Andrei. "Every day, as I get up before 4:00 a.m. to pray, I have a long list of reasons to thank the Almighty Lord. OCPM is high on that list," he says.

Today, there are 2.3 million incarcerated men and women in the United States, the highest incarceration rate in the world. Scores of these prisoners are ready to repent for their crimes. And they must find a way to reconcile lengthy or even life-long prison sentences.

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry proclaims Christ to men and women who are incarcerated, many of whom are being introduced to the Orthodox Church for the first time. For Orthodox Christians whose lives have been upended by their crimes and prison sentence, OCPM helps them to return to the Faith, offering forgiveness and reconciliation. As a result, families are reunited, marriages are healed, and thousands of incarcerated men and women have a new sense of peace and restored order in their lives.

OCPM serves the spiritual needs of the incarcerated through a variety of ways. We correspond with thousands of prisoners and provide them with books, Bibles, pamphlets and icons. We catechize them in the Orthodox faith through special correspondence courses. We train Orthodox priests and laypersons to personally visit and counsel them in prison.

And we lobby correctional facilities around the country to recognize the Orthodox faith so that Orthodox prisoners can receive the sacraments.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25, our Lord sets out clearly the conditions for inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven. We satisfy the hungry and thirsty. We take in the stranger. We clothe the naked. And we visit the sick and those who are in prison.

We may find it easy to perform most of these commandments, but when did you you last enter a correctional facility to visit a prisoner?

Thousands of men and women are languishing in the battlefield that is prison. Many have experienced the limits of what non-Orthodox ministries offer. They suspect there is more but they don't know where to find it.

OCPM visits and meets prisoners where they are, with the fullness that is the Orthodox faith. Every year, we process thousands of letters from prisoners and personally respond to each one by speaking to their particular situation. We maintain relationships with prisoners across multiple prison transfers and we assist them in finding an Orthodox parish upon their release.

Prisoners like Andrei are no less part of the Resurrection of Christ because they are in prison. OCPM helps prisoners, no matter their sentence, to be connected with the healing power of the Orthodox Church.

Please find out more about how you and your parish can have a vital ministry to incarcerated men and women by visiting www.theocpm.org .

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Vacation Church School at Three Saints 2021:

The Mother of God

July 12—16, 2021

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday

9 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Friday
(Family night begins at 5:00pm)

Located at Three Saints Park:
112 Miller Road, Bethany, CT

Each day we will: Pray, Learn, Sing, Work, Play and Have fun together!!! Fee: \$40 per child. Ages 5 and up (checks payable to Three Saints VCS). Those who cannot afford this fee, or are unable to supply lunches for their children, are urged to

contact Fr. Patrick to discuss other options. NO ONE will be turned away for financial reasons.

Beginning at 5 pm, Friday Family Night will include Vespers sung by children, a Lenten potluck cookout and awarding of certificates of completion. Parents and families are responsible for organizing and running Family Night so please speak to Oana Zarku at 203-715-0442 or oana.basuzharku@yahoo.com .

For more information about Vacation Church School, contact Fr. Patrick Burns: (203) 734-3988 or pneumaticmotives@gmail.com .

Each day your child will need: Bathing suits, towels, extra change of clothes, bug spray and medications (if required.) Participants will be responsible for providing their own lunches (see Fr. Patrick for assistance if necessary). Refrigerators and freezers are on site for use. Snacks, beverages and spray-on sunscreen provided.

Please be sure your children DO NOT bring the following: Cell phones, MP3s/iPods, video games or electrical gadgets of any kind. If any these items are brought, they will be held by a staff member until pickup at the end of the day.

Volunteers: Because our program has grown each year, parents or young adults 16 years and older, are welcome to volunteer for our program. Jr. Staff, as approved by Fr. Patrick, are welcome at a reduced rate of \$20. All potential volunteers must let Fr. Patrick know of their interest in volunteering no later than July 1 so that training and background checks may be completed in a timely manner.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to state and Church guidelines regarding background checks and training qualifications, requests to volunteer made after July 1st will not be considered.

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Upcoming

July 30

Deadline for next issue of the ONE

July 12-16

Vacation Church School at Three Saints Park, Bethany, CT

October 3

FORCC (Fellowship of Orthodox Churches in Connecticut)
Annual Benefit Banquet