



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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August, 2009

Faith and Doubt: Can they both be present at the same time?

by Bishop Kallistos Ware

In the Creed we do not say, "I believe that there is a God"; we say, "I believe in one God." Between belief *that* and belief *in*, there is a crucial distinction. It is possible for me to believe *that* someone or something exists, and yet for this belief to have no practical effect upon my life. I can open the telephone directory for the city of Wigan and scan the names recorded on its pages; and, as I read, I am prepared to believe that some (or even most) of these people actually exist. But I know none of them personally, I have never even visited Wigan, and so my belief that they exist makes no particular difference to me. When, on the other hand, I say to a much-loved friend, "*I believe in you*," I am doing far more than expressing a belief that this person exists. "I believe in you" means: I turn to you, I rely upon you, I put my full trust in you and I hope in you. And that is what we are saying to God in the Creed.

Faith in God, then, is not at all the same as the kind of logical certainty that we attain in Euclidean geometry. God is not the conclusion to a process of reasoning, the solution to a mathematical problem. To believe in God is not to accept the possibility of his existence, but it is to put our trust in One whom we know and love. Faith is not the supposition that something might be true, but the assurance that someone is there.

Because faith is not logical certainty but a personal relationship, and because this personal relationship is as yet very incomplete in each of us and needs continually to develop further, it is by no means impossible for faith to coexist with doubt. The two are not mutually exclusive. Perhaps there are some who by God's grace retain throughout their life the faith of a little child, enabling them to accept without question all that they have been taught. For most of those living in the West today, however, such an attitude is simply not possible. We have to make our own the cry, "Lord, I believe: help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). For very many of us this will remain our constant prayer right up to the very gates of death. Yet doubt does not in itself signify lack of faith. It may mean the opposite – that our faith is alive and growing. For faith implies not complacency but taking risks, not shutting ourselves off from the unknown but advancing boldly to meet it. Here an Orthodox Christian may readily make his own the words of Bishop J.A.T. Robinson: "The act of faith is a constant dialogue with doubt." As Thomas Merton rightly says,

“Faith is a principle of questioning and struggle before it becomes a principle of certitude and peace.”

Faith, then, signifies a personal relationship with God; a relationship as yet incomplete and faltering, yet none the less real. It is to know God not as a theory or an abstract principle, but as a person. To know a person is far more than to know facts about that person. To know a person is essentially to love him or her; there can be no true awareness of others persons without mutual love. We do not have any genuine knowledge of those whom we hate. Here, then, are the two misleading ways of speaking about the God who surpasses our understanding: he is personal, and he is love. And these are basically two ways of saying the same thing. Our way of entry into the mystery of God is through personal love. As *The Cloud of Unknowing* says, “He may well be loved, but not thought. By love can he be caught and held, but by thinking never.”

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON – SATURDAY AUGUST 1, at 9 AM**
- **ST. HELENA’S GUILD MEETING – SUNDAY AUGUST 2, following the Liturgy**
- **INREACH/OUTREACH MEETING – SUNDAY AUGUST 9, after the Liturgy**
- **SUMMER CHURCH SCHOOL for TEENS: AUGUST 10 – 14**
for THOSE UNDER 13: AUGUST 17-21 (6 – 8 M)
- **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY AUGUST 24, at 7 PM**
- **START OF FALL SCHEDULE AND CHURCH SCHOOL: SUNDAY**
SEPTEMBER 13, The Liturgy will begin at 10:00 and Church School at 9:15.

FINANCIAL CONCERNS THIS SUMMER:

Dear Parishioners,

Nearly every summer we experience some level of low cash flow as vacations and other activities influence attendance. The impact of the economic crisis which we all are experiencing has also limited discretionary spending. For these reasons and perhaps others, we find ourselves this summer struggling more so to meet our community’s regular monthly financial commitments. We have done our best this year to limit any extravagant spending and projects and have benefited from the generosity of individuals and parish organizations (the Choir and St. Helena’s Guild) to complete some necessary repair work.

We really appreciate everyone’s consistent efforts in meeting their financial commitments to our budget especially at this time and are grateful when missed Sundays are included.

Thank you for your support of our parish.

In Christ,

Fr. John & Gary Mosser

AN EXTRAORDINARY DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY will held at Holy Assumption Church, Clifton, NJ on MONDAY AUGUST 31 for the purpose of electing a new hierarch for the re-constituted Diocese of New York and New Jersey. Documents related to this process are

available in the glass cabinet by the candle table in the vestibule. At our recent Parish Council Meeting it was agreed that Donald D'Ercole will accompany Fr John to this Assembly as our lay representative.

“COMMUNITY AWARENESS COMMITTEE” – There has been considerable discussion during the last several Parish Council Meetings regarding how our church can publicize events and become better known in our community. We would like to bring together those within our parish who are interested in these questions. Greg Sapnar will chair this committee and coordinate efforts. A meeting will be planned soon; please see him if you are interested or have any ideas.

ATHENA FRANCES PISTON was born to Elizabeth and Michael Piston on July 20. Everyone is healthy and home!

NEW ADDRESSES & CONTACTS:

Elizabeth Casey:

Brendenwood Senior Living
1 Brendenwood Dr.
Room A216
Voorhees, NJ 08043
856-904-5332

Fr. Edward Rommen, father of Tim, is currently undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatment in anticipation of future surgery due to colon cancer. Cards can be sent to:

Fr. Edward Rommen
12064 Harnett-Dunn Highway
Dunn, North Carolina 28334

Mary Shimchick, Fr. John's mother has been moved to new address. She can be reached at:

The Connecticut Hospice
Room 212
100 Double Tree Rd.
Branford, CT 06405

ST. HELENA'S GUILD:

As of July 1st, Carol Ann Curry will be making the reminder phone calls for the Sunday coffee hour hosts. Should you be unable to do your Sunday assignment please make an effort to switch with someone and then call Diane Vozdovic @ 609-288-6833. If you are unable to switch dates, please call Diane so that other arrangements can be made. Thanks to Marie Clifton for being the caller for the past couple of years

The next meeting of St. Helena's Guild will be after liturgy, **August 2nd**. This will be an important meeting as dates will be discussed for food preparation for the festival. Please come, all welcome.

FROM CHRISTINA SEMON:

Dear Prayer Supporters,

Greetings in the Lord!

I want to express my gratitude to each and every one of you for taking time to remember me in your prayers.

It already has been three months of living in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Pentecost was a joyful scene! In Church people held various shades of green leafy branches and wheat. At Divine Liturgy we had a Romanian, American and Irish priest. We were participating in our own real Pentecost together with many others around the world.

Slowly I am learning different things about myself that I did not see before. I am learning from Romanian mothers how to cook healthy foods necessary for my body to have the energy so I could bike to and from my Romanian lesson, and to have the energy to converse and understand Romanians.

My language skills are improving and I am volunteering at the St. Dimitrie Program and the Protection of the Theotokos Family Center. At the St. Dimitrie program, I volunteer to serve food to the homeless and to wash the dishes. The program is short staff for the soup kitchen and I go over once a week to help them. At the Protection of the Theotokos Family Center (PTFC) I go there twice a week and I spend most of my time with the babies and the caregivers. I play with the babies and feed them and change their diapers. There are about six babies that are under the age of two that come almost every week. At both of these activities I am grateful to listen and practice my Romanian.

I hope to write another update in a few of months. Our partnership is important to me and may God help us to keep laboring in His vineyard.

In Christ,

Christina Semon

Summary of the 07-20-09 Parish Council Meeting

The **Monthly Financial Report** was presented by our treasurer Caroline Graham. Weekly contributions during this summer have been very low, resulting in a general fund balance of only \$1,133.0 This balance is not adequate to cover payroll, the mortgage payment, and the PSE&G bill. Therefore it was agreed to transfer money from the food coupon account to cover these expenses. Father John will send a letter to our parishioners reminding them to keep up with their contributions during summer. Caroline also reported that money was accidentally deposited in the memorial fund instead of the general fund, and caused some checks to bounce. Caroline is working to resolve this problem, and is expecting to have it resolved as soon as possible.

Father John reported that the our Diocese has returned to its earlier shape and name as the “*Diocese of New York and New Jersey.*” Metropolitan Jonah is currently the Locum Tenens (temporary administrator) until a new bishop is elected. On August 31st, a meeting will be held in Clifton New Jersey to nominate a person as our new hierarch. Father John and Don D’Ercole will attend this meeting. On Sunday August 16, Father John will be visiting his mother, and Father John Jillions will be our guest celebrant. The church summer school is planned for the week of August 17th.

Father John led an extensive discussion on what he saw as the value, opportunities, and challenges raised in producing our monthly bulletin, *Crossroads*. He acknowledged delays due to the timeliness of receiving materials and the demands of coordinating all aspects of its production himself. He has received some offers recently from parishioners for help in these areas and he is grateful and will set stricter deadlines for the receipt of information. But more significantly he has felt that besides being a vehicle for providing basic community information and announcing the dates for some meetings and activities (all of which could be done on a single page), it should document and remind us of what is truly “going on” in our parish or, in fact, what is not. Here, as has been stated regularly throughout the year, he has been disappointed in the lack of response from our community’s adults in participating in opportunities for growth and education. He shared a recent statement from Metropolitan Jonah that the real problem within the lives of all Orthodox parishes is the need for “spiritual maturity.” He invited and encouraged the Council to be more involved in examining and participating in the process of renewing our parish life. Much discussion ensued, many ideas were offered, and some solutions proposed. It was finally agreed to have a special Parish Council meeting (more of a “retreat”) to explore these issues, utilizing the review and summary of parish life that was prepared by Protodeacon Peter Danilchick from our parish life retreat of 2006.

Parish Council meetings were scheduled for August 24th and September 21st.

SUMMER CHURCH SCHOO PROGRAMS

Though plans are still not formalized, the **Teen Program** (13 and above) will take place from **Monday August 10 – Friday August 14**. Fr. John will coordinate the Program.

The program for the younger children entitled, “**A MIXED BAG,**” will meet from **6 – 8 PM** from **Monday August 17 – Friday August 21**. The themes will be:

MONDAY: PARABLES / TUESDAY: PRAYERS/ PRAYING
WEDNES:GODS GIFTS / THURS: ANGELS (A CLOSER LOOK)
FRIDAY: SAINTS & ANIMALS

SNACKS WILL BE PROVIDED EACH DAY



Fall Festival

September 26 10:00 to 6:00

September 27 Noon to 3:00

Donations of Soda: We need 40 cases (12 cans per case) of soda and 15 cases of water. Please limit your selection to the following: Coke, Diet Coke, Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, Sprite, Diet Sprite, Root Beer, Orange, Bottles of Water.

Baked Goods: Donations of baked goods would also be appreciated. Popular sellers are cookies, brownies, scones, cakes, pies, muffins. Sugar free baked goodies are extremely popular. Ethnic baked goods also a plus. We need a volunteer to coordinate the baked goods for the festival.

Basket Raffle: We are looking for donations of 25-30 baskets. Gift cards are also welcomed. Please solicit businesses that you know for donated items or coupons. Please see Barbara Shimchick or Diane Pasca for details.

Moon Bounce: Donations for the cost of the Moon Bounce would be greatly appreciated. This is a great activity for the kids.

Volunteers also needed!!!!

For more information on the Fall Festival, please see Valerie Olesnovich or Liz Gibbons.



ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS
11 Wilkins Station Road - PO Box 805 - Medford, NJ 08055 (609) 654-4865
The Rev. John Shimchick, Pastor

August 2009

To the Parishioners of OCHC:

Our annual golf tournament/fund raiser is scheduled for Saturday September 12th at the Indian Springs Golf Club in Marlton NJ. Golf starts at 1 pm followed by an awards buffet dinner at the club house. We have averaged a profit to the church of around \$1500 over the last four years and have increased our attendance each year, last year having 30 golfers registered (including two former Philadelphia Eagles players thanks to Joe Pritchard!).

We are asking for your help by passing along our flyer and sponsorship letter to businesses and other golfers. This is an easy way for the church to generate funds with a minimum of effort by our parishioners, as most of the work is done by or at the golf club. As an FYI, our sister parish in Baltimore (St. Andrew) has been averaging a profit of \$6000-\$8000 over each of the past five years and has done this with 90% of the golfers and sponsors coming from *outside of their parish*. The key is getting golfers out to play and non-golfers / businesses to participate as sponsors.

Our flyer and sponsor forms are posted on our website. To those of you who have helped with sponsorships over the past years, THANK YOU!!!

If you need more information on how you can help us, do not hesitate to contact me or Dan Dowiak.

Yours in Christ,

Mark V. Skuby

Daniel Dowiak

Mark V. Skuby
Tournament Co-chairman

Daniel Dowiak
Tournament Co-chairman



**Fifth Annual
Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross
Golf Tournament**

Best Ball Format (with mulligans)!

Date: Saturday, September 12, 2009 Tee Time: 1:00 PM

*Where: Indian Spring Country Club Registration: 11:30 PM
115 South Elmwood Road - Marlton, NJ*

Cost: \$95/golfer (\$380/foursome)

REGISTRATION INCLUDES:

- 18 holes of golf with cart
- lunch ticket at snack bar (near 10th tee box)
- bucket of balls on driving range
- buffet dinner during awards ceremony
- entry into all tournament contests (longest drive, closest-to-the pin, etc.)

All proceeds from this tournament will benefit the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross in Medford, NJ.

-----**Please Return Bottom Portion w/ Payment by September 4, 2009**-----

Name of Golfer #1 _____

Golfers 1 & 2 will ride together.

Name of Golfer #2 _____

Name of Golfer #3 _____

Golfers 3 & 4 will ride together.

Name of Golfer #4 _____



Point of Contact for Golf Group: Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone / Email: _____

Make checks payable to *Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross*
Please send registration information and check to:
Mark Skuby – 234 Belaire Drive – Mount Laurel, NJ 08054
856-802-1664 (home) / 610-348-2132 (cell) / skubydoo81@verizon.net

RESPONSIBILITIES for June, 2009

COFFEE HOUR:

August 2: Liz Gibbons
9:
16: Barbara Mosser & Nellie Kuzmenchuk
23: Joe & Helen Gulka
30: Barbara Hehre
September 6: Svitlana Lane & Viktoriya Stevens

READERS

August 2: Donald D'Ercole
9: Genie Skuby
16: Greg Sapnar
23: Natalka Weismantel
30: Mark Skuby

ALTAR SERVERS

August 2: Anatoly Lane & Eli Nugent
9: Andrew Abdalkah & Paul Clifton
16: Paul Abdallah & Paul Giovanni
23: Stephen Shimchick & Leo Weismantel
30: David Hamaty & Brendon Detwiler
September 6: Anatoly Lane & Eli Nugent

COMMUNION USHERS

August 2: Alexandra & Magdalena Plachuta
9: Kristina Zanghi & Faye Nugent
16: Natalia Rommen & Elisabeth Graham
23: Sierra & Miranda McCleery
30: Kristina Zanghi & Lauren Mosser
September 6: Alexandra & Magdalena Plachuta