



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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THE E100 AND WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON

by Fr John

By now if you have been following the Daily Planner or reading your emails you have reached the end of the first of twenty sections of “Essential” Bible Readings – every five days we’ll be starting a new section. Our goal on one level is to come to know either again or for the first time something about the essential or basic stories and characters that form the foundation of our story as Christians. Gradually if we keep at it, we will start to acquire an essential vocabulary that we will return to again and again as we progress through the Bible. But if we keep our ears open this vocabulary of reoccurring words, themes, and personalities will be repeated throughout our services and liturgical hymns and will form the basis in understanding each of the Feasts throughout the liturgical year.

Several years ago I came across this passage from a sermon presented by St Cyril of Jerusalem to those who were recently baptized:

You were called Catechumen,
When the word echoed round you from without;
Hearing of hope, and knowing not,
Hearing of mysteries, and understanding not;
Hearing of scriptures and knowing not the depth,
No longer does it echo round you, but within.
For the indwelling Spirit henceforth makes your mind a divine habitation.

What I hope for you and myself is that this biblical language will no longer be images on pages or expressions that we hear – but words of life that will continually echo within us (throughout not only the Sunday morning liturgy, but throughout each day – like the melody of a good song), bringing joy and consolation, but also raising some important questions – making our mind a divine habitation.

For that to happen, however, we will need to be active readers. Get into a daily habit and reading routine. Find a quiet place. Turn off the TV or radio. Don’t even turn the coffee pot on

yet! Keep a journal, a note pad, some index cards. Jot down the sentences you enjoy or don't understand. Listen actively during our worship, especially the liturgy.

For those with young children, you can also be reading with your kids. The company that has produced our Daily Planners also has a family reader, called – **Big Bible Challenge**. It is designed for children 6-12 years old and explores the big story of the Bible through 100 selected Bible passages, just like the E100. For more information and how to order, see:

<http://www.scriptureunion.org/products/big-bible-challenge-e100-kids>

What's really going on with this acquisition of language and vocabulary is to teach us how to use our own words differently, especially when praying. They say that a child "speaks his or her first word." But in reality, the first word to come out is the result of thousands of words that have been shared and placed within them in stories, songs, and comments during their early lives (and even in the womb). So, it is with us – we hope that the words echoing within us will lead to an authentic expression of words before God in prayer.

Coming to know the Bible, its stories, characters and language better will be successful when we come to know Jesus Christ in "better" and more profound ways. An important expression of this in Orthodox prayer is found in reciting the Jesus Prayer – repeatedly calling upon the Name of Jesus. To help us learn how to do that we will be cooperating with the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Marlton in presenting the Orthodox writer, Frederica Mathewes-Green (who previously spoke to us back in our old church). Frederica will be speaking in our parish on **Friday March 2** and at Prince of Peace on **Saturday March 3**.

In our Adult Class, which will resume meeting on Sunday January 15, we will be working through her book: **The Jesus Prayer: The Ancient Desert Prayer that Tunes the Heart to God** – copies have been ordered and will be arriving soon. Pastor Brett Ballinger, at Prince of Peace, is also interested in her book: **First Fruits of Prayer: A Forty-Day Journey Through the Canon of St Andrew of Crete** which we also will look to during Great Lent this year. The Canon of St Andrew of Crete is a liturgical text we will actually be praying through during the First Week of Great Lent. It provides a profound means of exploring the nature of life, sinfulness, and redemption through Biblical references and imagery.

So, what's really going on as we work through the E100 is the hope that through words we will come to know Jesus - the Word Himself – in more honest and authentic ways.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON – SATURDAY JANUARY 7 at 9 AM.**
- **ST. HELENA'S GUILD MEETING – SUNDAY JANUARY 8 at 8:15.**
- **INREACH MEETING – SUNDAY JANUARY 8, following the Liturgy.**
- **THE WAY – FIRST SESSION – SATURDAY JANUARY 14 at 3:00.**
- **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: MONDAY JANUARY 16 at 7 PM.**

- **DEADLINE FOR JANUARY CROSSROADS: SUNDAY JANUARY 22** (This year I want to hold fast to this deadline – materials that are sent after this date cannot be guaranteed to appear in the upcoming Crossroads).
- **NEXT CAREGIVERS GATHERING** will take place on **MONDAY JANUARY 30 AT PIETRO'S RESTAURANT**, near the Old Marlton Circle, at **7 PM**. Contact Genie Skuby RSVP and for more info.

MATCHING DONATION PROGRAM FOR HOLY CROSS: Thanks to everyone's help **WE REACHED OUR GOAL!**

GOLD ORTHODOX CROSS PIN, prepared by Charles Castley is available from Ellie's Boutique for \$5.00.

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES: Wednesday December 14: by Carol Ann Curry.

Treasurer, Dan Dowiak presented the financial report. The account balances are as follows: The General Fund balance is \$16,308.16, the Memorial Fund balance is \$47,808.20, the Food Coupon Fund balance is \$1,781.09, the Choir Fund balance is \$2,850.57, and the Capital Improvement Fund balance is \$4,581.20.

The parish has received a generous bequest from the estate of Tiffe Ritzheimer. This gift has been placed in the Memorial Fund and is being earmarked for Special Projects and Mortgage Relief.

We are still awaiting the lampadas – they have been ordered from an Orthodox Liturgical Supply store in Ottawa, Canada.

The census of OCHC will remain at 85. Although some people have left OCHC, others have become more active and requested envelopes.

Fr. John and Gary Mosser continue to work on the areas required by the Fire Marshal to reach compliance. The Ansil System and Complete Fire System were inspected last week. There is a problem with one of the emergency signs which will have to be fixed.

The Council reviewed the "*Policies, Standards, and Procedures of the Orthodox Church in America on Sexual Misconduct*" and agreed to comply with the requirements of the policy (this yearly review and acknowledgment is required annually by the OCA).

The Council is gathering information on additional artwork for OCHC. The two areas being considered are an outside cross to be placed on the building facing the road and an icon located above the archway over the steps leading up to the main church entrance (one consideration is the icon entitled: "The Communion of the Apostles." An additional concern because of the intense afternoon sun is whether this would need the availability of certain fade-resistance paint or need to be a mosaic). Both of these projects are in the preliminary stages of fact finding.

Our Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2012. In anticipation of this

meeting, council will begin preparing reports which will be made available for parishioner review prior to the meeting.

The Parish social hall is scheduled to be painted on Saturday, January 28th (preparation will take place on Friday evening, January 27). Upcoming events for 2012:

- Three part educational series on "Healthy Choices" (first offered this past year) - 1/22, 1/27, 2/5
- Annual Parish Meeting - 2/12
- Pre-Lenten Luncheon - 2/19
- Forgiveness Sunday /
- Covenant House Benefit Concert with Seneca High School - 2/26

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RESPONSIBILITIES for January, 2012

Readers

- January 8: Gene Dubiago
- 15: Leslie Lane
- 22: Paul Bauer
- 29: Nataalka Weismantel

COFFEE HOUR LIST FOR JANUARY - MAY 2012: Please check your date and mark your calendar now so as to avoid any confusion. If your phone number has changed or you switched your date with someone else, please let me know so I can keep the list current. **CONTACT CAROL ANN CURRY (856-985-4649) or Diane Vozdovic (609-288-6833).**

RESPONSIBILITIES: On your Sunday, you are host/hostess for the day. You will be responsible for setting up the coffee hour and cleaning up (sweeping the floor, wiping down the tables, cleaning the coffee pot, and taking out the trash) afterward. A suggested coffee hour could include 4 dozen bagels, cream cheese, butter/margarine, fruit (such as sliced apples or oranges, grapes, fruit salad, etc.) and cookies or cut-up cake. Please bring 1 pound of coffee (to replace what was used that morning), creamer, and juice (2-64oz. bottles of juice). Please take home all items that are not consumed. Keep in mind that coffee hours should be simple and serve as a snack after church and not a meal. Also, if anyone plans on bringing a cake or anything additional to celebrate an occasion during coffee hour, please contact that week's host and inform them of your plans. This will avoid duplication of refreshments.

JANUARY

- 1 Carol Ann Curry
- 8 Barbara Mosser & Nellie Kuzmenchuk
- 15 Maureen Sapnar
- 22 Margaret Little
- 29 Keeler Family

FEBRUARY

- 5 Val Olesnovich
- 12 Diane Zanghi
- 19 Pre-Lenten Luncheon (MEAT FARE)
- 26 Marie Clifton

MARCH

4* Joe & Helen Gulka
 11* Genie Skuby
 18* Ellie Kuzma & Daughters
 25* Abdallah Family

APRIL

1 Debbie Chong
 8 Ela Plachuta
 15 PASCHA
 22 Leslie Lane
 29 Diana Pasca

MAY

6 Andrea Burns
 13 Mother's Day - hosted
 by Men of the parish
 20 Hamaty Family
 27 Natalka Weismantel

2012 HOUSE BLESSING SCHEDULE

As has been the usual practice, Fr. John will assume that he will be visiting all parishioners. If, for any reason, someone would not like their home to be visited please give him a call or leave a message in the church office.

Each home will be called in advance and those who are home during the day may be called on a different day. Homes not included in the general areas listed below will be contacted to set up a time.

January	6:	Cherry Hill/Maple Shade
	7-8:	Medford/Tabernacle area
	10:	Moorestown
	11:	Voorhees
	12:	Leisuretown
	13:	Collingswood/Haddonfield
	14:	Marlton/Mt. Laurel
	15:	Bordentown
	17:	Elm/Folsom
	18:	Willingboro/Burlington
	19:	Gloucester /
	20 & Following:	Make Up

Here are some ways of preparing for the blessing of your home:

- * Set aside a place for the service (usually a table in the dining room or kitchen).
- * On the table place an icon, a candle, a bowl for Holy Water, and a list of the names to be remembered - divided into two lists, living and departed.
- * A person holding the candle may lead Fr. John throughout the home.

TROPARION

When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan
 the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.
 For the voice of the Father bore witness to You
 and called You His beloved Son.
 And the Spirit in the form of a dove
 confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
 O Christ, our God, who have revealed Yourself
 and have enlightened the world, glory to You.