



# Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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**NOVEMBER, 2007**

## ***A DISCOVERY***

**by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom**

Prayer is the search for God, encounter with God, and going beyond this encounter in communion. Thus it is an activity, a state and also a situation; a situation both with respect to God and to the created world. It arises from the awareness that the world in which we live is not simply two dimensional in the categories of time and space, a flat world in which we meet only the surface of things, an opaque surface covering emptiness. Prayer is born of the discovery that the world has depths; that we are not only surrounded by visible things but that we are also immersed in and penetrated by invisible things. And this invisible world is both the presence of God, the supreme, sublime reality, and our own deepest truth. Visible and invisible are not in opposition neither can they be juxtaposed like in an addition sum. They are present simultaneously, as fire is present in red hot iron. They complete each other in a mysterious way which the English writer Charles Williams describes as "co-inherence": the presence of eternity in time and the future in the present, and also the presence of each temporal moment in eternity, past present and future all-at-once eschatologically, the one in the other as the tree is in the seed.

Living only in the visible world is living on the surface; it ignores or sets aside not only the existence of God but the depths of created being. It is condemning ourselves to perceiving only the world's surface. But as we look deeper we discover at the heart of things a point of balance which is their finality. There is no inwardness to geometric volume. Its finiteness is complete. The world of such forms is capable of being extended but cannot be deepened.

But the heart of man is deep. When we have reached the fountainhead of life in him we discover that this itself springs from beyond. The heart of man is open to the invisible. Not the invisible of depth psychology but the invisible infinite, God's creative word, God himself. Returning to ourselves is thus not a synonym for introversion but for emerging beyond the limits of our limited selves. St. John Chrysostom said, "When you discover the door of your heart you discover the gate of heaven." This discovery of our own depths goes together with the recognition of the depths in others. Each has his own immensity. I use the word "immensity" on purpose. It means that the depth cannot be measured, not because it is too great for our measurements at all.

The immensity of our vocation is to share the divine nature, and in discovering our own depths we discover God, whom we could call our invisible neighbor, the Spirit, Christ, the Father. We also discover God's immensity and eternity in the world about us. And this is the beginning of prayer, the recognition of a three-dimensional world of time, space, and a stable but ever-changing depth.

Prayer is the relationship between man the visible and the invisible x. This is why I said that prayer is a search, an exploration of this invisible world of our own depths which God alone knows and he alone can reveal to us. And it is by prayer, gropingly at first, in the dawn of a new vision, that we seek and find God and ourselves in a co-relative way. Then later, when a clearer light has shown us what we can see of the invisible and the visible transfigured in the light of its own immensity and the eternity in God, prayer becomes a state. It also constantly remains a situation, as I said at the beginning. While we are seeking, part blind with partly restored sight, our first steps in prayer take the form of astonishment, reverent fear and a sense of sadness. We are astonished at the discovery of ourselves which is also the beginnings of knowledge of God; we are astonished to see the world open out towards God's infinity.

We are afraid, glad and terrified when we come into the presence of God's holiness and beauty. We are also sad, both for ourselves and the world. It is sad to be blind, it is sad to be unable to live the fullness of our vocation, to be trapped again and again in our own limitations. It is sad to see our world without God, vacillating between life and earth and unable to choose life once and for all or to escape once and for all from death. Wonder and sadness are thus the two sources of our prayer. Both arise from our encounter with the world's depths, which have begun to be revealed to us in their totality. Without this encounter, our world and the forces at work in it are incomprehensible and often monstrous; we are bewildered and afraid.

[from Metropolitan Anthony Bloom's book, *Courage to Pray*. This will be the study guide for our Small Group Study sessions to be led by Tim Rommen at Bob & Bonnie Flanagan's home on Mondays – October 29, November 5, 12 & 19 from 7:00 – 9:00. Copies of the book are available from Tim. The Flanagans live at: 951 Mercer Dr, Haddonfield – close to Rt 295 South and off Warwick Rd., Call Bob & Bonnie for directions: (856) 672-9474]

### ***UPCOMING MEETINGS***

- **PIROHI SESSIONS – FRIDAY NOVEMBER 2 & SATURDAY NOVEMBER 3**
- **ST. HELENA'S GUILD MEETING – SUNDAY NOVEMBER 4 AT 9:15.**
- **BRASS RUBBING WORKSHOP on NOVEMBER 10 from 9:30 – 3:00**
- **MINI BAZAAR – SATURDAY NOVEMBER 17 & SUNDAY NOVEMBER 18**
- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON - SATURDAY NOVEMBER 24 at 9AM** (Tanksgiving Weekend) We're making brownies-homemade this year for our college students, and our homebound folks.
- **INREACH/OUTREACH MEETING** – next meeting will be announced.
- **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** – date will be announced

**A SPECIAL PARISH MEETING** will be held on **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 11** to discuss and determine specific actions our community might take as a response to the ongoing crisis

within the Orthodox Church in America. This meeting will take place promptly right at the end of the liturgy and it is essential that all parish members attend.

**A SMALL GROUP STUDY**, working through Metropolitan Anthony Bloom's book, *Courage to Pray*, will take place the home of Bob & Bonnie Flanagan on Mondays **from October 29** until November 19 (from 7-9). **Tim Rommen** will be leading the study and he has copies of the book available. Please join us for study, food, and fellowship!

**A COLLECTION BOX FOR THANKSGIVING ITEMS** will be located in the Social Hall. We would also like to collect a few turkeys as well for the Community Luncheon, and St. Vincent De Paul in Medford. See Diana Pasca if you are able to contribute to these collections.

**LECTURE BY DR. KYRIAKOS C. MARKIDES**, author of *The Mountain of Silence: A Search for Orthodox Spirituality* will take place on **Saturday November 3 from 12:30 – 3:30** at St. Elizabeth Chapel at the St. Katherine Drexel Mission Center & Shrine, 1663 Bristol Pike, Bensalem. Tickets are \$10.00. See Fr. John if you are interested in attending.

**YOUTH GROUP – TEENAGERS** - the inaugural meeting will take place at our church on **November 2 at 7PM**. **Tim Rommen & Kim Rommen** will be leading the group.

**SEMINARIAN FAMILY SUPPORT**: As our parish has been doing for several years, we will be helping to brighten the Christmas of a seminarian and his family. This year we will be helping **Seminarian Christopher and Gretchen Maciolek**. He is from Minnesota and is a second year student at St. Tikhon's Seminary. They have two children – Basil, age 4 and Maria, age 2 and our expecting their third child in February. They are planning a trip back home during Christmas and would welcome gas cards.

There will be a Christmas tree located in the basement that will have tags representing the various needed items.

**CHURCH SCHOOL BAKE SALE** will take place on **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 11**.

**ONE BOOK – ONE HOLY CROSS PARISH**: This year the adult education class and a variety of sermons and other events will be based on the book, *Sweeter than Honey: Orthodox Thinking on Dogma and Truth* by Peter Bouteneff, assistant professor of dogmatic theology at St. Vladimir's Seminary. Copies of the book are available from Fr. John for \$12.00 a piece.

**See the November Study Guide on the next page**

**ADULT CLASS PLANS FOR NOVEMBER: SWEETER THAN HONEY**

## November 11: Dogma and Dogmas

- Read pages 19-21; 195-top of 198

What is the common understanding of dogma?  
How does the author differ from that common understanding?  
Does dogma have a positive or negative tone to it?

## November 18: Truth

- Read the following: pp 43-51

How is truth a relation?  
How is truth an action?  
How is truth a person?  
How do these ideas differ from the common understanding of the concept of truth?

## November 25: Modern views of truth, Part 1

- Read the following: pp 43-51

Questions to be developed...  
“Dogma and Truth” pp 13-14  
“Orthodox Christian Particularity”, pp 14-16

**A BRASSRUBBING WORKSHOP** will take place at our church on **SATURDAY NOVEMBER 10** from 9:30 – 3:00 (9:30 – 10:00 will registration with coffee/etc). Registration will be \$5.00 and there will be a \$5-8.00 additional fee depending on the size of the item one wishes to work on. An example of a brass rubbing is in the side glass case in the vestibule. A sign-up sheet will be located on the bulletin board near the kitchen.

**MIMI HOLIDAY BAZAAR: Saturday Nov. 17 (10AM-2PM); Sunday Nov. 18 (Noon-2PM).** Order your holiday treats (babka and nut rolls) by signing the **pre-order form** on the bulletin board or by calling Kathie Pierman (856-845-7656) Ann Plescia (856-983-4441) or Diane Vozdovic (609-288-6833) or email kats@snip. St. Helena’s Boutique will also have some items for those last minute shoppers. Pierogies will be for sale the weekend of November 3 & 4 and offered to the public Nov. 17 & 18.

**OUR CHOIR’S CD – “WITH UNCEASING VOICE”** is now available! The cost for the CD is \$15.00. It contains over 64 minutes of our own liturgical music, sung by our church choir. The CD has been professionally mastered and produced with a six page full color insert

containing background information on the individual pieces, our church and choir. The CD disk itself is illustrated with composite image from the iconography in our parish. This has been a long undertaking requiring much work from Joe and the choir. Your purchase will support our church and the choir's outreach and charitable efforts and is sure to make great Christmas gifts for all of your friends and relatives.

**OUR ANNUAL ADVENT VESPERS SERVICE** will take place on **SUNDAY EVENING DECEMBER 2 at 7 PM.**

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**RESPONSIBILITIES for November, 2007**

**COFFEE HOUR**

November 4: Diane Vozdovic  
11: Genie Skuby  
18: Barbara Shimchick  
25: Barbara Hehre

**READERS**

November 4: Diana Pasca  
11: Greg Sapnar  
18: Julia Mosser  
25: John Shust

**ALTAR SERVERS**

November 4: Matthew Brook & Ethan Detwiler  
11: David Hamaty & Robert Graham  
18: Paul Clifton & Anatoly Lane  
25: Stephen Shimchick & Andrew Abdallah

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**COMMUNION USHERS**

November 4: Julia Mosser & Anastasia Handwerk  
11: Julie Skuby & Faye Nugent  
18: Yvette Abdallah & Christina Zanghi  
25: Gabrielle Handwerk & Alexandra Plachuta