



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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“For With God Nothing Will Be Impossible.”

by Fr. John

The angel Gabriel said to Mary: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.” ... And Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no husband?” And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you...For with God nothing will be impossible. And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaide of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:34-38)

Our parish Christmas Card, which will be distributed in a few weeks, will feature on its cover the scene of the Annunciation as depicted on the Royal Doors of our iconostas, and highlight words from the Gospel passage above. What God set in motion in the birth of Jesus, celebrated each year on Christmas Day, was first anticipated and announced in this Annunciation scene. We might take Mary's response, “Let it be to me...,” her “yes” for granted. Yet, for generations it has provided the model for how humans might freely respond and cooperate with God's initiative. The poet, Denise Levertov, has noted:

But we are told of meek obedience. No one mentions
courage.

The engendering Spirit
did not enter her without consent.

God waited.

She was free
to accept or to refuse, choice
integral to humanness.

Nothing will be impossible – that might seem to speak of only the Virgin birth of Christ. But maybe it can provide hope for us who have the courage to cooperate with God during the moments of our own opportunities for decision. Again Levertov suggests,

Aren't there annunciations
of one sort or another
in most lives?

Advent – the season that celebrates the realization of an announcement, the impossible – seen and touched, enabled by a moment of courage. Could this year, something impossible happen to us as well?

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON – SATURDAY DECEMBER 1 at 9 AM**
- **ST. HELENA’S GUILD MEETING – SUNDAY DECEMBER 2 AT 9:15.**
- **ADVENT VESPERS – SUNDAY DECEMBER 2 at 7 PM (our choir will begin singing additional hymns at 6:30).**
- **INREACH/OUTREACH MEETING – TUESDAY DECEMBER 4 at Forno’s in Cherry Hill – 7 PM.**
- **FIRST FRIDAY YOUTH ACTIVITY – FRIDAY DECEMBER 7 – bowling. More info coming.**
- **CHRISTMAS PROGRAM & CAROL SING – DECEMBER 16, following the liturgy**
- **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – date will be announced**

THE DECISION FROM OUR SPECIAL PARISH MEETING REGARDING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA:

At our Meeting held on Sunday November 11, the following Resolution was approved. It was decided to withhold the OCA portion of our combined Diocesan & OCA assessments and to put that amount in escrow. We will continue to send in the Diocesan portion of our assessments. Everyone is encouraged to continue to forward these assessments to our church as they will eventually need to be paid to the OCA.

Copies of this Resolution have been forwarded to His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman, our Diocesan Chancellor Fr. Joseph Lickwar, and Diocesan Treasurer, Lawrence Tosi.

Whereas the members of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross have an abiding desire to maintain the unity of the Orthodox Church in America while promoting the integrity and holiness of our Church;

And, whereas, there is a continuing crisis of leadership in the Orthodox Church in America,

Be it moved that the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross will immediately withhold and place in escrow the portion of the Diocesan Assessment that is forwarded to the Central Church Administration, subject to the following conditions:

- We support +Herman, the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Metropolitan Council in the reappointing of the special commission and insuring the new commission can operate independently from any outside influence in fulfilling the seven points of the Metropolitan Council’s resolution of October 16, 2007.
 - We will release 25% of the escrowed OCA Assessments upon the issuing of a full and complete commission report.
- We support +Herman, the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Metropolitan Council in the appointment of a new treasurer and insuring that this new treasurer can operate independently from any outside influence.
 - We will release 25% of the escrowed OCA Assessments upon the release of the first quarterly financial report from the treasurer with evidence that he has complied with the OCA adopted “best practices”
- We support +Herman, the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Metropolitan Council in issuing a report that indicates that all monies misdirected by this and the previous administration are fully restored to the purpose for which they were donated.
 - We will release 25% of the escrowed OCA Assessments upon the restoration of the funds.

- We support +Herman, the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Metropolitan Council in the convening of an All American Council in the fall of 2008 to continue the healing and restoration of the national church.
 - We will release 25% of the escrowed OCA Assessments upon the convening of this All American Council.

CONFESSIONS DURING ADVENT will be heard on Saturday evenings following Great Vespers (which begin at 5 PM) and before the Divine Liturgy from at least 9:30 until 10:00.

SPECIAL PARISH NEEDS: We recently resolved a dispute with **EJH Steel** regarding construction work on our church for which the owner felt he was not fully compensated. The matter was complicated and required the interpretation of a significant amount of billing statements and knowledge of controversial aspects of our construction process. The agreed-upon amount was **\$10,000.00** which we will pay over the next six months.

In addition, our copy machine, which we have utilized for probably 10 years, is not working and is obsolete – repair parts cannot be obtained. We are examining a variety of options – purchase, rental, using a copy service for our monthly bulletin, Crossroads.

If anyone, especially at this time of the year, is able to help with additional contributions towards either of these two needs it would be greatly appreciated.

OUR ANNUAL ADVENT VESPERS SERVICE will take place on **SUNDAY EVENING DECEMBER 2 at 7 PM (the choir will begin singing additional hymns at 6:30)**. The sermon that evening will be delivered by *Fr. Stephen Hutnick* from *SS. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Wilmington, Delaware*.

DEADLINE FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD is **SUNDAY DECEMBER 2**. Please give all information to Wally Loza.

FIRST FRIDAY - YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITY will take place on **FRIDAY DECEMBER 7**. We hope to go bowling. Location will be announced shortly.

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.

Adult Education, December, 2007
Beginning at 9:20 in the church

The following topics with related readings from Sweeter than Honey will be the subject of the Adult Education classes in December.

- December 2: *No class*
- December 9: Modern views of truth, pp 43-52
- December 16: The love of the law, pp 37-42
- December 23: True stories, pp 80-89
- December 30: *No class*

ST. HELENA’S GUILD: NEXT MEETING – *Dec. 2, 9:15 am* - downstairs. Attention: we are looking for a few good men too! Really! We are looking to expand/diversify and would enjoy having you. Please join us. Everyone is welcomed! We need to begin planning for the New Year. Please help be a part of it. *We need you to*

help us get those church projects completed!

- **ST. NICHOLAS VESPERS – Dec 2, 7pm** – Please attend. Light refreshments needed- please see the sign up sheet on the bulletin board.
- **COFFEE HOUR - Back to the Basics** – We are asking everyone to please keep it simple when you are hosting. We greatly appreciate all that you do- but please stick to the basics. Bagels/bread/cookies/veggies/fruit – it’s just to help us refuel our bodies after the fast- it’s not meant to be a full meal. We don’t want anyone to feel put out and or feel they have to compete. There are a few openings during the year. If you would like to host one of those weeks contact the coffee hour coordinator or let her know if you cannot find a replacement when you are assigned. ****Special note:** we have a few parishioners that are highly allergic to peanuts, please label items if possible or keep all ingredient labels if purchased. Please don’t be offended if we ask you to remove certain items from the table.** As always your generous donations are greatly appreciated as they help defer the cost of the supplies for coffee hour.
- **HOLIDAY BAZAAR** – Thank you for your support. Babkas sold out and only a few rolls left.
- **ACME GROCERY RECEIPTS** – Remember to save your grocery receipts from **ACME only**. Place them in the little bag on the bulletin board. We do all the leg work and get “cash” back from participating ACME stores.
- **NEXT MONTHS GUILD MEETING – January 6, at 9:15 am.** Please mark your calendars and plan to attend – no cost – just your warm friendly spirit and good ideas.

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.

Dear Father John, Joe Gulka, and Members of the Choir:

I have played the CD music UNCEASINGLY. What a magnificent gift you have given me. I needed to change the vibrations in my home after I gave my Reiki table away. I felt such sadness and discomfort without it for it had served me for the better part of 25 years. Even though I wanted to give it (I gave it to a Wellness Center in Woodbury) I still missed the wonderful spiritual energy that was imbued in it.

The CD is replacing that which I have been missing. Over and over I allow your beautiful voices to fill me – at times with joy, at times with sadness and longing, but always with such beauty. Thank you for your loving kindness.

At first I felt jealous that I don’t have such a voice to make such beautiful music. The more I listened the more I realized that God wants great and appreciative listeners as well as wonderful singers. I am that.

Thank you again and again – and yet again. I smile as I listen – with gratitude.

Love & light,

Mary Coremin

CHOIR VISITS: Our choir will be visiting shut-ins, home bounds and nursing homes. Please let Josef Gulka know if there is any one you feel would welcome their visit.

RESPONSIBILITIES for December, 2007

COFFEE HOUR

December 2: Linda Wagar
9: Ela Plachuta
16: Andrea Burns
23: ?
25: Christmas Cookies
30: Paul Giovanni

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READERS

December 2: Don D'Ercole
9: Genie Skuby
16: Gary Mosser
23: Greg Sapnar
30: Bob Flanagan

ALTAR SERVERS

December 2: Ethan Detwiler & Paul Giovanni
9: Nick Zanghi & David Hamaty
16: Robert Graham & Matthew Brook
23: Paul Clifton & Anatoly Lane
25: Stephen Shimchick & Brendan Detwiler
30: Paul & Andrew Abdallah
January 6: Ethan Detwiler & Paul Giovanni

COMMUNION USHERS

December 2: Julia & Lauren Mosser
9: Faye Nugent & Julie Skuby
16: Yvette Abdallah & Christina Zanghi
23: Anastasia Handwerk & Christina Zanghi
25: ?
30: Gabrielle Handwerk & Alexandra Plachuta
January 6: Julia & Lauren Mosser