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Our Journey Together as Orthodox Christians

In Community

Journeys That Intertwine and Moments Along the Way—by Fr. Marc Dunaway

Recently I was asked to tell the story of our journey to Orthodoxy to a group of twenty young, college-age people who had gathered in the Saint James House. I told them about how the leadership of our churches (known then as the Evangelical Orthodox) travelled all the way to Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1985 to ask the Patriarch how we could enter the Orthodox Church. We were very disappointed when we did not receive an answer. In fact, the Patriarch even refused to meet with us. We returned home for a follow-up meeting at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary in Brookline, MA. There we were again rebuffed as the head of the Greek Church in America sat briefly with our leaders and told us that as far as his bishops were concerned we simply did not exist. “Don’t call us,” he inferred, “we’ll call you.” After he left tempers flared and one of the leaders vented his frustration and at the same time his relief saying, “Thank God, we were about to crawl into a casket with a dead man and close the lid.” It was a dark day for

our guys.

I then told the young people how just a few weeks later a smaller group of our leaders was able to meet with Patriarch Ignatius of Antioch as he was visiting in Los Angeles. After listening the Patriarch turned to Metropolitan Philip, head of the Antiochian Church in North America, and said, “I want you to help these people however you can.” It was a dramatic turn. By September of 1986 all of our leadership was invited to Engelwood, NJ to meet with His Eminence. And here, as I was telling the story, I became unexpectedly emotional and my voice cracked as I told them how when we walked into the Chancery on the final day of our meetings, tables were spread with white cloths and china plates and gold utensils for a meal that had been prepared for us. We were being welcomed home. The same priest who had vented his frustrations

“I want you to help these people however you can.”



Metropolitan PHILIP at St. John’s – April 2, 1987
Pictured with him left to right: Fr. Marc Dunaway, Protodeacon Pat Lamb, Fr. Jack Sparks, Fr. Philip Armstrong, Dn. Harley Cranor

Making Vestments

by JoAnn Webster

In the summer of 1991, our parish contacted Lara Kuznetsoff in New York, a lady who made Orthodox vestments, and invited her to come to Alaska to teach some of the women in our parish how to sew them. Melinda Kendall, Barbara Parker and I volunteered to learn. Lara arrived with yards of beautiful purple patterned fabric called brocade, bolts of gold galloon (braid), gold fabric crosses in several sizes, fringe, buttons, cording, interfacing, and satin lining. She spent several days showing us how to make a pattern, how to fit the vestment to each person, and finally all the steps in sewing and assembling a vestment. We learned the Greek and English terms for each piece, and began the process. The upper room of the St. John School became our workshop, as we began the task of assembling each set.

Each priest's set consists of a sticharion (alb), phelonion (cape), stole, two cuffs, belt and shield. Each piece is lined, a gold cross is placed in the center and sewn, and the galloon is stitched all around. The stole, cuffs and shield are interfaced with a very stiff horsehair interfacing between the brocade and lining, for body. The priest wears the shield after being given permission to hear confessions.

For the deacon, a lined tunic is made with open sides that are hooked together with buttons and cording loops, then a long stole and two cuffs complete the set. With each piece, the design on the brocade must be exactly matched and gold crosses placed just so in the pattern. So the whole process is labor intensive, to say the least! When we finished our first two sets, Fr. Marc and then deacon Michael Dunaway modeled them for us (see photo next page). That first set is still in use, 23 years later.

Since then, the three of us have made many more sets. Most of the fabric and supplies come from a company in New York City. Melinda does the ordering, then the three of us get together and complete the sets, as needed. Three years ago, Archbishop Joseph brought us some beautiful green brocade from Syria, and we were able to make several sets for both priests and deacons.

The different colors of the vestments correspond to the different seasons of the year. For example, purple is used during Lent, green for Pentecost, red for Christmas. Gold is the "default" color, when other colors are not available, or during seasons where a certain color is not called for.

In addition to the vestments, altar cloths and chalice coverings are made, as well as the "aer", or cloth used to cover the communion elements. The aer is worn over the shoulders of the deacon who carries the chalice during the great entrance, and is then used to cover the chalice at the altar, until the bread and wine are consecrated by the priest, asking the Holy Spirit to come down and bless the elements.

Why do the priests and deacons in the Orthodox Church wear such elaborate garments? St. John Chrysostom explained, in the 4th century, that we should not think of the

priest as a *man* offering the Eucharist, but as the *Hand of Christ invisibly stretched forth*. Vestments help to remind us of this.

Here is some information about each garment, with the Greek and English name:

Sticharion (Alb, Tunic) worn by the priest as an under garment in white, symbolizing the baptismal garment, and by the deacon as an outer garment of brocade.

Epitrachelion (Stole) meaning "on the neck". This stole worn by priests and bishops represents the Grace of the Holy Spirit descending on them. It is usually made of brocade, draped over the back of the neck and hanging down to the bottom of the Sticharion. There are usually two rows of fringe at the bottom to show the second rank of ordination to the priesthood. The bishop's stole has three rows of fringe at the hem showing the third rank of ordination.

Orarion (Deacon's Stole) is a long panel of brocade wrapped around the body or hanging over the left shoulder. It represents angels' wings and is often embroidered with the Angelic Hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Epimanikia (Cuffs) symbolize the bonds that Christ had tied to His wrists when He was taken to Pontius Pilate. The right cuff reminds us of Christ's power over all enemies. The left cuff symbolizes the purity and spirituality of the person wearing the cuff. These are the same for deacons, priests and bishops; made of brocade and used to keep the long sleeves of the Tunic out of the way.

Phelonion (Cape) symbolizes Christ's scarlet robe, and is worn by priests only. It is a large, cape-like vestment which slips over the head, and usually has a cross or icon on the back.

Poyas (Zone, Belt) worn by priests or bishops over the stole and around the waist. It symbolizes the gift of strength given by God to those who serve Him.

Epigonation (Sword, Shield) symbolizes the "sword of the spirit" which is God's word. It is worn by both priests and bishops, hanging down on the right thigh, above the knee.

Sakkos (Tunic) symbolizes the tunic Christ wore, woven from top to bottom without a seam. Worn only by bishops, it is an outer garment worn over the Sticharion, Epitrachelion, and Zone. Made of brocade, it is short-sleeved and hangs to just below the knee, and is fastened on the sides with small loops and bells.

Omophorion symbolizes Christ the Good Shepherd who carries on His neck the lost sheep He has found. Worn only by bishops, it is made of brocade and worn over the neck and shoulders.

Crown (Mitre) symbolizes the Bishop's power in the Church, as well as the crown of thorns worn by Christ. Worn only by bishops, it is made of fine materials, gold threads and jewels, icons and crosses.

Dikiri and Trikiri are the two and three-branched

candlesticks used by a bishop to bless the congregation. The Dikiri represents Christ's two natures: both God and man. The Trikiri represents the Holy Trinity.

Orletz (Eagle rug) This is a small round carpet upon which a bishop stands in the church. The eagle reminds the bishop to rise above all earthly things, and to search for spiritual rewards instead. It also shows that the bishop is to rule or govern over a particular geographical area.

When deacons, priests and bishops enter church, they enter another world. Before each vestment is put on, it is blessed and kissed, and a special prayer is said while it is being put on. This is a very solemn and holy procedure, quite different from the way we dress in the morning! If you ever have the chance to watch the vesting of a bishop (sometimes done down in front of the altar steps), it is a beautiful experience, and one you will always remember.



Melinda Kendall, Fr. Marc Dunaway, Fr. Michael Dunaway and Larisa Kuznetsoff

Winter 2014 Events



Martha Zink married Sean Fisher on January 3, 2014. They are pictured here with Sean's daughter Kira.

(Photo by Juliana Streff)



God grant you many years Peyton family. Steve, dad Charlie, Cheryl and Glenna joined us through Chrismation this Holy Saturday.

A Man of Commitment

by Mary Alice Cook

Two wars brought Tom Johnson to Alaska in 1968 – the “hot war” in Vietnam and the “cold war” with the U.S.S.R. A farm boy from Michigan who was raised a Baptist, Tom was in college in the late sixties, with a 1A draft status. He opted to join the Air Force and receive training as a security specialist. For two years, he worked in a huge antenna field on Elmendorf Air Force Base, where he monitored Russian air activity. The Russians occasionally sent fighter planes to the very edge of U.S. air space, just to see what would happen; the Americans, in turn, talked about “pushing the button” when Russia overstepped its bounds. It was a game, Tom says, and he enjoyed his part in it.

While in Anchorage, Tom became friends with fellow airman Larry Hartman. They in turn got acquainted (through attendance at a local Baptist church) with a group of girls, who introduced them to “Action Life Meetings,” led by Fr. Harold Dunaway, who was then the Campus Crusade for Christ representative at Fort Richardson Army base. Once a month, a large group of young people got together at different homes to listen to Fr. Harold’s teaching, sing, share testimony about their faith, and, oh yes, to enjoy the food!

Tom recalls Fr. Harold at that time as an athletic man, a tennis player and table tennis champion, who taught a message of grace, rather than law. Listening to Fr. Harold, Tom got excited, for the first time, about his own faith in God. Fr. Harold, says Tom, could “read” people; he had a way of seeing potential in people who could not see it in themselves. He and Kh. Barbara were able to discern God’s will for people, to figure out where they needed to be and what they needed to do. As Tom would find out many times during the next forty years, Fr. Harold could push him – and many others – to do things they would not have done on their own.

Tom and build the house on Fern chorage. He people working raise one of the sight of the stairs rec room,

Tom recalls the building of the Cathedral in the early 1980’s as an amazing community effort, a pattern that was repeated in many projects...

Larry helped Dunaway’s Street in Anchorage recalls twenty together to walls, and the house’s down-“wall to wall”

with kids in sleeping bags. But by the summer of 1971, Tom had left Alaska and was stationed in Maryland, assigned to the NSA. He heard that Fr. Harold had resigned from CCC to start an organization called Maranatha North, and, after his discharge, he decided to go back to Anchorage, where he attended UAA and studied engineering.

But Tom was not yet ready to settle down. After a year at UAA, he worked a few months for the Alaska highway department, then returned to Michigan to help his brother remodel the family’s old farm house. When they were finished, Tom had another change of heart, and headed back to Alaska once more. In January, 1973, he went to work for Arctic Glass in Anchorage, and shared a house with Peter Benson and Russell Labrecque. On June 24, as he returned with Joe Dunham from a Mt. Baldy climb, Tom met Maye Lourie, who had just arrived at the Big House from Vermont, to pay her brothers a visit. Tom lived at

the House for a few months during the winter and spring of 1974, during which time he and Maye fell in love and Maye decided to stay in Eagle River. They were married in May 1974. Jennifer (Moore) Stogsdill bought property near the Big House in 1975, and started building an A-frame chalet. Tom and Maye later bought this little house, enlarged it, and continue to live there today.

“Big change,” says Tom, “is not me.” And yet, since Tom first became part of the group gathered around Fr. Har-



Tom — 1970 in the Air Force

old and Kh. Barbara Dunaway, he has been not only a participant in major changes, but, often, a strong and quiet leader as well. Around 1976, a system of elders and deacons was introduced at Maranatha North, and Tom served as a deacon. He watched over the people assigned to him, and helped them with everyday physical problems like moving or cleaning. Within a short time, Fr. Harold asked Tom to become one of six elders. Elders presided over the house churches of that era, served Eucharist, delivered homilies, performed weddings, held weekly meetings with their people. They wore vestments, and Tom, the former regular Baptist, felt “weird” wearing a clerical collar. But he, and the others, did it because Fr. Harold said it was necessary, and they trusted his leadership.

In 1987, when the church was brought into canonical Orthodoxy, its clergy was given a choice to be ordained or to step down. The same quiet sense of service that caused Tom to accept the position of deacon and then elder also motivated him to realize that the responsibilities of his position would likely increase, and that he had little inclination to be a scholar. He chose to step down as a member of the clergy. But there would be many other ways he would serve St. John’s church in the next 26 years.

Tom recalls the building of the Cathedral in the early 1980s as an amazing community effort, a pattern that was repeated in many projects, right up to the construction of St. Sergius Chapel. Keith and Anna Haley and Kathy Stone designed the stained glass windows in the cathedral nave; Tom cut the glass pieces for those windows, as well as the glass in the dome.

During the last decade, Tom served on both the Parish Council and Finance Committee, and he observes that recent years have not seen many community-wide building projects. Neither are changes in worship and music happening as frequently as they once did. Now, he says, the church is more mature, which can be either good or bad. The danger is that the community will become lethargic; it’s important, he believes, to always be looking for things to do. These days, St. John’s is a more visible presence in the greater community of Eagle River, and even in Anchorage. He cites our involvement with the ministries of the Crisis Pregnancy Center, Clare House, Soup Kitchen, Orthodox Christian Fellowship, and others as examples of the “building

projects” that are going on now.

Tom gives much credit to the leadership of Fr. Marc—who encourages parishioners to bring new ideas for ministry to his attention and then, with his blessing and that of the Parish Council, work to develop them. This is where we see growth and vitality in the community.

Tom was a mainstay in the choir for many years, and can always be counted on to work quietly behind the scenes, as when he and Maye gave the church social hall a makeover a few years ago. Hospitality has been a way of life with Tom and Maye; over 30 individuals (and one family) have lived in their basement apartment, which was also a bed and breakfast for ten years. Fr. John Downing has lived there since July, 2003, and he depends on Tom to help him keep his finances organized.

More change, however, is on the horizon for Tom and Maye. On March 31, 2014 Tom retired from a 41+ year career with Speedy Glass, during which he managed the company’s Fifth Avenue location in Anchorage, and the Eagle River shop. Now, the man who once saw himself as one who avoided big changes is set to make a huge one. On May 12, Tom and Maye plan to leave their home in the far north and move, for a time, to Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, where they will manage the Hawaiian Oasis B&B. The decision to do this was not made lightly; they talked it over thoroughly, carefully considered both pros and cons, received the enthusiastic blessing of their three children, and decided to go for it. Tom says that they would not be making this move if there was not an Orthodox church in Kona. The church is a little mission, and they plan to be involved to the extent they are able. At the Hawaiian Oasis, Tom and Maye will work together, as they always have; Maye will prepare the guests’ breakfast and oversee the rooms. Tom will take care of maintenance and the lawn.

Tom says he was never called, as his dad was, to be a farmer, although he missed that life from time to time. Neither did he see himself as someone who could undertake a major move like the one he is about to make. But as he learned from Fr. Harold over the years, people can surprise even themselves by making an unexpected turn on a beckoning road and finding out where it will lead. Years ago, Tom chose the road over which God led him to a home in Alaska. Now he is eager to experience, with God’s help, a new one.



Tom looking very happy in “retirement”.

Blessed Women ~ Busy Lives

By Kfi Christine Rogers



The Sisters of Mary and Martha Society (also known as the Antiochian Women of St. John’s) have been very busy in recent months! We held our annual Christmas Bazaar in November, raising over \$1600 for the Diocese project, which this year is a fund for the Syrian Orphans. Our Advent retreat and almsgiving project was in support of the Clare House, a local charity serving women and children who are victims of domestic abuse. We filled 22 bins with bedding for the residents to use, and many talented seamstresses spent the morning sewing pillow cases for the children. We also spent that morning decorating our Cathedral social hall for Christmas. In January, we were thrilled to invite Dr. John Dalack to Alaska, where he gave a two day retreat on marriage and parenting, which was very well attended not only by our parish, but other local Orthodox Christians. Dr. Dalack gave a very inspiring series of talks, which culminated at a tea hosted by John and Lesa Morrison. Patricia Bower is heading up the monthly Good Works Basket which features a new organization each month. Each year a Lenten retreat is eagerly attended and enjoyed by the women. God has blessed our parish with so many talented and giving women.

Laura Temple, Maris Kelly and Maye Johnson work on pillow cases (above)



Jennifer Stogsdill, Phebe Dyal and Lesa Morrison work on making Bethany Hall beautiful for Christmas. (right)

Scenes from Holy Saturday. April 19, 2014



The people of St. John's follow the cross in the procession.



We take turns going under the bier and dying with Christ.



The vestments of Lenten purple. . .



Fr John Rogers enjoys spreading the basil leaves and rose petals symbolizing celebrating the victory of Christ's resurrection.



turn to joyous Paschal white.

the year before now turned to show the Metropolitan his coat tails. He said, "Take a look your Eminence, because you'll never see them again. There is no turning back now."

A few months later Metropolitan Philip and Archdeacon Hans travelled all the way to Alaska and in the first days of April consecrated our building, chrismated 248 people and then ordained our clergy. We became Saint John Orthodox Cathedral. It was the only time Metropolitan Philip would ever visit us in Alaska, but what he did was graft us into the Orthodox Church, into the living branch of the Patriarchate of Antioch. That was twenty-seven years ago.

Just two weeks after the meeting with the young people in the Saint James House, Kh. Betsy and I travelled to Brooklyn, NY to represent Saint John's at Metropolitan Philip's funeral. He had died of a heart attack on Wednesday, March 19. On the next Tuesday morning, nine priests stood outside the beautiful brownstone Cathedral of Saint Nicholas. Our black robes and purple stoles whipped about in the chill wind of an overcast day as we awaited the hearse. Then we took up the casket and carried the body of His Eminence into the Cathedral where our Bishops and small group of clergy and faithful waited solemnly. The eulogies of the next few days had a common refrain. They spoke of Metropolitan Philip's courage, generosity, and vision. But it was the burgeoning crowd that showed this even more. His family was there, a brother, nieces and a nephew. There were clergy who had been his friends since childhood. They spoke and sang much of the services in Arabic. In times of grief people naturally draw back to what is most deeply familiar and comforting. But this was not the only crowd. There were also the "converts" like us. A few were there who had dined with Saidna Philip that day in Englewood. There were converts to Orthodoxy from other groups too, like the priests who had once been students together at Oral Roberts University and those who had formerly been Episcopalian. There were even politicians who spoke of his continued involvement in the needs of his homeland. Gathered as one were many who at one time had been embraced in the open arms of Metro-

politan Philip.

His last journey began when priests in black robes and purple stoles took up his coffin once more and carried it out into the cold rain, singing "Christos anesti..." (Christ is risen...) as it was placed into the hearse to begin the long drive to Antiochian Village where he would be laid to rest. As we returned into the crowded church a fellow priest embraced his wife and burst into tears. All of us are on journeys. Our paths intertwine with others in ways we could never have expected. I cannot imagine what might have happened to our own community here in Eagle River if we had not come into the Orthodox Church, but I am certain it would not have been right. The years since we became Orthodox have been mostly rich with growth, but they have also had their times of painful conflict and tension. Jesus did say after all, "In the world you will have tribulation." I know now that he did not just mean tribulation from outside persecutors as I thought when I was younger. He also meant tribulation sometimes from within.

It just goes to show, however, that what we need most on this journey of life is a firm hand on the tiller, forbearance with one another, trust in God to guide us, and most of all an eye fixed clearly on our final destination, the Kingdom of God. There an unimaginably greater banquet awaits us and an even larger reunion with family we have yet to know.



Metropolitan Philip ordains St. John's priests.

Pictured with him left to right: Steve Dittbrender, Fr. Jack Sparks, Dn. Chris Sorensen, Fr. Paul Jaroslaw, Fr. Michael Molloy, Dn. Pat Lamb, Fr. Philip Armstrong (Greek priest from Anchorage), Dn. Harley Cranor

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Saint Emmelia

By Mary Ann Northey

Last year I wrote in this column about St. Macrina the Elder, the grandmother of St. Basil the Great. When a young couple recently told me they wanted to name their baby “Emmelia,” I looked up the name and learned that St. Emmelia was the mother of St. Basil the Great, and so was the daughter-in-law of St. Macrina the Elder. Genes alone cannot explain why there were so many saints in this amazing family; faith and culture must surely play a greater role.

St. Emmelia was born in the 4th century. Her father was a Christian martyr, executed in the years prior to Constantine I’s conversion. From childhood she desired to remain unmarried, but was well known for her beauty. For her own protection she felt it necessary to choose a godly man to marry. She chose St. Basil the Elder, who was at that time a lawyer and quite well to do. St. Emmelia and St. Basil had five sons and five daughters. Their oldest daughter, St. Macrina the Younger, was by this time beautiful, intelligent, and wise. Her father had betrothed her to a young man of notable ability and steadfast faith, but he died before the wedding could take place. St. Macrina considered herself bound for life to this young man, so she decided to stay with her mother permanently. After the death of St. Basil the Elder, the young St. Macrina helped her mother with the nine younger children, and according to one account, St. Macrina the Elder also helped in the raising of these children. When St. Basil the Great, St. Macrina’s oldest brother, returned from school with an education in rhetoric, worldly ambitions, and a good opinion of himself, Macrina quickly took him down a peg or two and turned his ambition toward an ascetic life.

St. Macrina’s second brother, St. Naucratius, chose the life of a hermit and devoted himself to serving others, but died at the age of 27. St. Emmelia was inconsolable at the death of her son, until the young St. Macrina convinced her mother that her grief must be tempered by the knowledge that Christians do “not grieve as those who have no hope.” On her daughter’s advice, St. Emmelia divided her property among her children, retaining only meager possessions, and retreated, with her eldest daughter, to a family property on the banks of the Iris River in Pontus to found a convent. Women joined them, living under one roof and sharing everything in common, working, eating and praying together.

St. Macrina’s third brother, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, returned from school well versed in Greek philosophy but weakened in his faith. At his sister’s urging, he returned his heart to Christ, and followed St. Basil into the monastic life. They established a men’s monastery across the river from Sts. Emmelia and Macrina. There, St. Gregory later wrote “The Life” of his sister. Their youngest sibling, St. Peter of Sabaste, later became the head of this monastery, and a sister became St. Theosebia the Deaconess.

Sts. Emmelia and Macrina lived in their convent many years, until the mother reached old age. She fell ill in 375 and her son, St. Peter, helped care for her. St. Emmelia is reported to have said, “To you, O Lord, I give the first fruits, and the tithe of the fruit of my womb, the first fruits is my oldest daughter, and the tithe is this, my youngest son. Let this be for you a rightly acceptable sacrifice, and let Your Holiness descend upon them.” She died on May 8/21 in 377 and was buried beside her husband in the chapel at their estate in Annesi, where St. Naucratius was also buried. The Greek Church celebrates her day on January 3, with her son St. Basil. The Russian Church celebrates her day on May 30 with her husband, St. Basil the Elder, and her mother-in-law, St. Macrina the Elder. St. Emmelia, great mother of saints, pray to God for us.

