

Ember Tidings

*The quarterly Newsletter of the Western Rite Parishes
of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America
of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America*

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions should be double spaced for editing purposes, 1,000 to 2,000 words in length and relative to Antiochian Orthodox Western Rite Parishes. Articles sent by mail should be accompanied by an electronic version on 3.5" diskette in Microsoft Word for Windows. Articles for Microsoft Word may also be emailed to *ember@saintpeterorthodox.org*. Address submissions to **Ember Tidings** c/o Father Anthony Miller or Karen Duncan 7601 Bellaire Drive South, Fort Worth, Texas 76132. We also encourage the submission of photographs relevant to the Western Rite Parishes.

We reserve the right to edit for usage and style; all accepted manuscripts are subject to editorial modification.

Letters to the editor are welcome and should include the author's full name and parish. Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space.

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Cover: Altar of St. Andrew, the First-Called, Orthodox Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma., built by Sub-Deacon John R. Dutcher before his falling asleep in the Lord. May he rest in peace.

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Brothers and Sister,

As we come to the Spring Embertide, we are happy to report a number of important milestones in the life of our Deanery.

Primary among these, I would note the recent acquisition of their own meeting space by St. Andrew's in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and the reception of 40+ catechumens at St. Clement's Mission in Muleshoe, Texas. Congratulations to both groups and a hearty "Welcome home" to the latter. Please keep both communities in your prayers.

We also congratulate the Archimandrite John Mangels and the congregation of St. Augustine in Denver on hosting a very successful initial meeting of the Vicariate liturgical commission.

More details on all of the above can be found elsewhere in this issue.

Finally, we wish all a blessed Lent and Holy Week, as well as, a Happy Easter.

Pax,

+ *Archimandrite Daniel*

+Archimandrite Daniel

Saint Caedmon
Died AD 680
Feast Day: February 11

St. Caedmon, although ignorant of the art of poetry, untutored in scripture and advanced in age, by the power of God became the Father of English Poetry. The life and work of Caedmon is recorded by Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*. He was a simple lay herdsman at the double monastery of Whitby under the abbacy of St. Hilda when his Divine gift of verse was revealed. His date of birth is unknown and his death is recorded as between 670 and 680.

Often at night, the servants of the monastery gathered around the table for fellowship and passed the harp around, each taking a turn. When Caedmon saw the harp coming his way he fled in shyness and shame at his inability in verse and song. He always fled from the festivities and the night of his dream was no different. He fled to the stable and went about his work of caring for the cattle. Later he slept and in a vision was called by name by someone standing beside him. He heard a voice saying: "Sing, Caedmon, Sing some song to Me." Caedmon answered "I cannot sing, and therefore I left the feast." To which he heard "Sing to Me, sing of Creation." Caedmon's stammering tongue was loosened and he began to sing to the praise of God the Creator verses which he had never heard before.

Bede records the song he sang for the angel and for Hilda.

Raise we the fashioner now of Heaven's fabric, The majesty
of his might and his mind's wisdom, Work of the world warden,
worker of all wonders, How he the Lord of Glory everlasting,
Wrought first for the race of men Heaven as a roof-tree,
Then made he Middle Earth to be their mansion.

Upon awakening in the morning, Caedmon remembered everything he had sung. He told his foreman about the dream and was taken to St. Hilda. The abbess and others questioned Caedmon about his dream and were satisfied it was a gift from God. As a test he was asked to write a poem on a passage of sacred history or doctrine and upon returning the next morning with the passage he was ordered to take monastic vows.

St. Hilda's scholars began to teach Caedmon sacred history and doctrine which, after a night of thought, he would turn into beautiful Old English poetry. Through his poetry Caedmon sang of the Creation of the World and all of Genesis, of the Exodus, of the Lord's Incarnation and Passion, of the Coming of the Holy Spirit, of the Teaching of the Holy Apostles and many other passages of scripture. Most of Caedmon's poetry is lost or has been rewritten by later poets into different dialects.

Caedmon lived a zealously pious life and died like a saint: receiving a premonition of death, he asked to be moved to the abbey's hospice for the terminally ill, where his friends gathered around him and he died just before nocturns. Although Caedmon is often listed as a saint, this is not confirmed by Bede. §

STATIONS OF THE CROSS



I. JESUS is Condemned to Death.

II. JESUS Receives the Cross.



A Spiritual Pilgrimage Through Lent

Introduction

A while back I was digging through stacks of old periodicals I keep in my office for reference materials. I was looking for a piece published years ago in a now defunct publication, 'Orthodox America', a brilliant piece it was on the discovery of North America by St. Brendan. Alas, I did not find it. In looking at so many old issues of various publications, however, I happened upon a piece published in that same defunct publication written by Archpriest Peter Perekretsov, titled *A Spiritual Journey Through Lent*. The more I thought about it, the more the idea took hold of me to write a similar piece, a pilgrims perspective on Lent based on the gospel lessons of the season.

Prologue

Mark 6: 47-56 - Preparation

Our Lenten pilgrimage begins in darkness on the Sea of Galilee. The apostles were alone, straining at their oars; the wind was against them. So much of our struggle in life is like this: alone, straining against a powerful yet unseen force in darkness. Fear, loneliness, doubt and the destructive thoughts that arise in us are the enemy's tools to hinder our progress, any progress toward holiness. The words of one of our Lenten hymns illustrate the gravity of our struggle: "Christian dost thou see them on the holy ground, how the powers of darkness prowl and prowl around...striving, tempting, luring, goading into sin." When ever we plan a journey in life we expect to encounter snags, delays, interruptions so we make our plans accordingly, then we adjust, adapt, and overcome when difficulties present themselves. On the pilgrimage through Lent to the empty tomb of the resurrection we have an opponent who will use every form of trickery and deceit to stop us in our tracks. The wise fathers of our faith have taught us the basic cause of evil thoughts is the warfare of the devil; we may even say, the warfare waged against us by destructive thoughts is harder than that waged by means of material things. The gospel lesson suggested as a meditation for this holy day introduces us to the inner struggle and shines the light of our deliverance: our Lord saw the apostles struggling and went to them saying: "Be of good cheer, it is I, do not be afraid." He saw them, went to them, He got in the boat with them and the wind ceased. When we struggle on our journey, Christ will see us, come to us, yes, even get in the boat with us - so to speak - and, He Himself will vanquish our terror. The apostles marveled at this and so may we marvel at the power of God poured out on struggling man to lead him out of darkness, beguilement, and enthralment. The very name of our Lord Jesus has power to chase evil thoughts away. Thus do we dedicate ourselves in Lent to an increased attention to the details of prayer, humbling the soul through fasting, and providing an outlet of charity in the way of almsgiving. Before our journey is done, we, like the apostles, may find ourselves greatly amazed in ourselves beyond measure at just how much power there is in His name: Jesus - Saviour.



III. JESUS Falls the First Time.

IV. JESUS Meets His Holy Mother.



On The First Part Of The Journey **Matthew 4: 1-11 – The First Sunday In Lent**

Our Lord went out into a wilderness and there He was tempted by the devil. Most of Lent, particularly the early weeks, are spent in that part of winter when the landscape around us is barren. It may resemble a wilderness in some way but, the real wilderness is the heart of man. Our hearts unchecked and undisciplined, undernourished from a lack of feasting on the word of God and overfed with the food-stuffs of the world are vulnerable to the devil who seeks to capture us, imprison us, and leave us to perish in a prison of sin. The gospel lesson on this Sunday speaks of our Lord fasting (as a matter of fact so did the gospel lesson of Ash Wednesday – Matthew 6: 16-21) The Lenten fast is too often treated like the Jewish law, institutional rules and regulations to follow rather than spiritual discipline which, when combined with prayer and almsgiving, brings the scattered self together in a way that makes our inner self not a wilderness but fertile ground for God Himself to plant the good seed of virtue. The enemy knew our Lord was fasting and tempted Him with food. Our Lord's response repelled the devil and provides holy insight for us: "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve." All our efforts in the spiritual pilgrimage of Lent are intended to produce this very result in us: to worship the Lord and serve only Him. Finally thwarted by the power of the Son of God, the devil left Jesus and, "behold angels came and ministered to Him."

Respite **Matthew 15: 21-28 – The Second Sunday of Lent**

There is a side trip planned today to the Mediterranean coast of Lebanon where we will learn from a Gentile woman something important about faith, worship, and prayer. The woman of Canaan was considered unclean by the Jewish law; between her and our Lord was a chasm of legalities and institutional prejudice. As if her situation were not already difficult enough, she had a daughter severely demon-possessed. What did she do to overcome her travail? She prayed and worshipped and thereby she demonstrated faith. We remember her prayer was very simple, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David." Our personal prayer need not ever be complicated; it must, however, always be personal and from the heart. When it seemed she would be rebuked and chased away from Jesus, the woman of Canaan prayed an even simpler prayer from her heart, "Lord, help me." When she had suffered rebuke, she worshipped Jesus and prayed even more personally from her heart. We must take a lesson from that woman who prayed from her heart, and worshipped the Lord in the beauty of a holiness. There are so many trials in life. Every Christian must turn to the Lord again and again with prayer and waiting, even in the bleakest moments; "Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy-laden and I will refresh you." The Canaanite woman received spiritual refreshment when our Lord turned to her and said, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." Her daughter was healed from that very hour.

To The Mount **Luke 11: 14-28 – The Third Sunday of Lent**

Jesus was in the area of Mt. Tabor to the west of the Sea of Galilee. Mark's telling has our Lord some where on Mt. Tabor. This is the same Mt. Tabor where our Lord was transfigured; today's gospel lesson says something about the trans-



V. The Cross Is Laid on Saint Simon of Cyrene.

VI. Saint Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus.



figuration of man in Christ. There was a man in the vicinity of Mt. Tabor who was possessed of a devil which rendered his faculty of speech useless. This is the third Sunday in a row we have encountered the devil and his demons; Lent is a time to contemplate the gravity of man's struggle to find himself in Christ and the devil's efforts to destroy a man. Only the devil would render a man speechless so that he could not raise his voice in psalms and spiritual songs to the Lord. For our part, we waste a lot of our faculty of speech on vain talk when we could be making full use of the faculty of speech to praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When our Lord had restored the man's faculty for speech, some of the witnesses were so staggered by His miraculous act they attributed the miracle to demons. What followed were our Lord's words, well-known to us: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." When the devil has a man in prison, he will not act in any way to release that man from his imprisonment. Only our good and loving God wills to free men from the enemy's prison house. What's more when a man is so divided in his inner self – torn between the good that comes from God and the destructive power of the enemy working within – his only way to freedom is God. Left unchecked, the house divided is headed for spiritual desolation. When a man is in full possession of all his faculties yet cannot bring himself to praise God and allow his soul to be converted to Christ, he is a man whose inner house, the soul, is divided; the spiritual desolation of such a man is an agony too heavy for him to bear.

What must a pilgrim do to keep his soul free from desolation? This gospel lesson teaches an important spiritual discipline in this regard: if a man will be free to praise God, he must keep guard over his treasure, that is, his soul, where the image of God dwells, and all his household, that is to say, all his faculties, i.e., of speech, hearing, seeing, etc. There is a most chilling epilogue to this lesson. The unclean spirit will often return to a man to test his watchfulness. If the unclean spirit finds that man slumbering spiritually, he will lodge again in his soul to torment, capture, and make desolate what had once been a house swept clean. There is no passive spirituality. The Christian pilgrim must pray, fast, give alms, and keep watch. At the end of this passage our Lord taught us another of the beatitudes: "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it."

Take, Eat, This Is My Body **John 6: 1-15 – The Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Picture yourself in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. You have been on your Lenten pilgrimage for three weeks, you are at the half-way point as you make ready to begin the fourth week and you have already covered a lot of gospel ground. By the time this fourth Sunday arrives, you find yourself hungry, perhaps more than a little weary, you have been tested by now and you have both victories and defeats in the daily struggle to show for it. Though it is Lent in the Church, the outside world grinds on, you are still surrounded by a wilderness: how will you be fed? It was in such an environment the multitude of John's gospel, 5,000 hungry people, found themselves.

The 5,000 had been hiking about Galilee expecting miracles. They had seen or heard of, many hopeless cases of disease healed and even if they did not fully understand the nature of Christ's authority over disease, judgment, and death, they knew it was Jesus who had healed the sick. They were tired and hungry in a pastoral setting and, what's more, the Passover was at hand. It is interesting to note, the 5,000 were gathered in the "Breadbasket of Galilee," the richest wheat growing area around but, as is often the case in man's striv-



VII. JESUS Falls the Second Time.

VIII. JESUS Meets the Women of Jerusalem.



Ember Tidings

ing, though they were surrounded by the stuff with which to make bread to eat, without Christ all that abundance was useless to them. The wheat in the fields could not be used and, we are told, no amount of money would buy enough bread to feed them even if there was a place to go to buy that much bread. There was nothing they could do to escape their predicament but to cling to Christ still more, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:44) Hunger, whether it be spiritual or physical hunger, is an urge that cannot be ignored for long; it demands satisfaction.

Most men take pride if they have never had to rely on some one else to feed them but, what of the poor? Throughout the world, the poor humble themselves to satisfy their hunger. What of spiritual hunger? All men, even the most self-sufficient, must humble themselves to accept the food that comes from God: “For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” (John 6: 33) A man must be humble to receive the food from heaven thus do we pray in the Eucharist: “We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies.”

At the beginning of every week the Church celebrates a feast in which the sons and daughters of God receive the bread that comes down from heaven. At the Divine Eucharist the body of Christ gather with their Lord round their Father’s altar to receive spiritual food in a setting that is neither a wilderness nor a chaotic hodge-podge of sentimentality and emotion but, rather, a setting that is ordered, holy, divine: “This is the bread that comes down from heaven that one may eat of it and not die...and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” (John 6: 50,51)

At the end of the gospel lesson on this Sunday we read the reaction of the 5,000 who were fed that day, “This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world.” To draw closer to Him is the reason we undertook this pilgrimage in the first place, “Lord, give us this bread always.” (John 6: 34)

The Cost Of Discipleship **John 8: 46-57 – Passion Sunday**

The last two weeks of Lent are our Passion-tide when all our attention is turned to the way of the cross of Christ. Now will we be confronted not only with the spiritual struggle within each of us but the reality: we are sinners and without the cross of Christ there is no hope for man, the church or, the world. There is a hymn sung in Passion-tide that contains this verse: “Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee? Alas, my treason, Jesus hath undone thee. ‘Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee. I crucified thee.” There are some and, they are many, who do not believe the salvific acts of our Lord’s passion. In the gospel lesson of Passion Sunday the mob was shameless in their blasphemy, “Do we not say rightly you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” It is difficult to come up with an equivalent insult in any language: it was condescending and denigrating; the mob was so misguided it insulted the Son of God. For your part, has your pilgrimage through Lent convinced you yet of the Lord Jesus’ suffering for your sake? While we are saddled with our sins, yet do we also make our way through a world hostile to the way of the Cross, hostile to the God-man who was lifted up on that cross to save a ruined race. The mob when confronted by the reality of the Son of God sought answers to intellectual questions, “How can that be,” and “How can you prove this?” The same questions are still being asked today. Most people can endure quite a lot of hardship but, they find it unendurable to be different from their friends, neighbors, family. A decision has to be made every Passion-tide and



IX. JESUS Falls a Third Time.

X. JESUS is Stripped of His
Garments



throughout the life of the Christian, to take up our cross and follow Jesus or, to decline it. This decision requires the utmost concentration, perhaps that is why the Church spends four weeks of spiritual training before it comes to the contemplation of the cross, then veils the images in the Church during Passion-tide so that we learn to seek Christ more and more. If one decides to walk the way of the cross, that is, to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus, he must accept scorn and ridicule, sacrifice and repentance: “And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be my disciple.”

The Way Of The Cross **Matthew 27 – Palm Sunday**

“When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death,” thus begins the gospel of Palm Sunday, the second Sunday of Passion-tide and sixth, and final Sunday of Lent. Finally, we are come to the holy city of Jerusalem, and what an entrance. All the pilgrims receive palms blessed in the same Liturgy of the Palms that has been passed down to us in our tradition; there are meaningful antiphons sung with Hosannas to the Son of David. We sing an old and unforgettable hymn, ‘All Glory Laud And Honour’. When we all are inside our Jerusalem, we are confronted with the gospel lesson described above. Over the course of the rest of the Palm Sunday Eucharist and throughout Holy Week, by many hours of prayer and fasting we will be immersed in the reality of what was written by the Prophet Isaiah so long ago, “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” God, our Father, has loved us so much from the beginning of the world that “He gave His only-begotten Son to the end that all that believe on Him should not perish but, have everlasting life.” The last days of our pilgrimage will fill us with many memories of many different people we meet along the way: We will remember the chief priests and elders who plotted to put Jesus to death and we will remember He sacrificed Himself for their sins as well as ours. We will meet eyewitnesses who blasphemed the Lord in His passion. There will be faithful women who ministered to Him. The saintly Joseph of Arimathea will seize our attention with his nobility and courage in securing the body of Jesus from Pilate. Then there is old Pilate himself and his soldiers who scourged Jesus, mocked, and cruelly led Him to Calvary. On the way to Calvary we will recall Simon of Cyrene and Veronica, the women of Jerusalem deeply wailing and the mother of our Saviour whose heart was pierced as she walked the way of the cross with her Son. All of the city was there to shout, “Crucify Him,” and there was Barabbas too. The apostles will be called to remembrance, all of them in the Upper Room “in the night in which He was betrayed.” Judas Iscariot was present at that first mystical supper. There was Mark stripped of his garment at Gethsemane, and John entrusted with care of Our Lady at the foot of the cross and Peter, broken-hearted, for that strong man’s heart gave out when he betrayed his Master three times. In addition, we will be there too. All of us transcending time again to look deep into that week which when it was through had restored the true meaning of life to the world, love. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann has written powerfully of this in his work which I paraphrase here: Our Lord Jesus Christ changed the world. He taught us that in sacrifice a man finds his true self. Man is a sacrificial being who finds himself, finds life itself, in love and love is sacrifice. Through our Lord’s sacrifice love has been restored as the very life of the world; God is love and, where true love is, God Himself is there. It is the light of the God who is love that will penetrate the darkness when the last of our Holy Week prayers have



XI. JESUS Is Nailed to the Cross.

XII. JESUS Dies on the Cross.



been prayed. Our pilgrimage began in darkness with a meditation from Mark's gospel, the apostles were on the Sea of Galilee, it was dark, they were alone and, straining at their oars. Our Lord heard them, went to them, got in the boat with them, and the winds ceased. That is how His love is. The power of His love and the relentlessness with which He pursues humankind is the meditation waiting for us at the end of our pilgrimage.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Tremble.
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree? Tremble.
Were you there when they pierced Him in the side? Tremble.
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
Tremble, tremble, tremble.

Epilogue

Welcome Happy Morning

John 20: 1-10 The Day of Resurrection

Early in the morning, the faithful myrrh-bearing women made their way to the tomb of our Lord to reverence and adore the Body of Christ. If our spiritual pilgrimage through Lent will teach us anything it is to imitate their reverence and adoration of the Body of Christ. Their humble hearts were full of love for their slain master, so should our hearts be prepared to meet the risen Christ who hath trampled down death by His death so that sinful man might die to sin and be raised up in Christ to the life of the new man for, as St. Paul has written, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Christians to the paschal victim offer your thankful praises.
A Lamb the sheep redeemeth: Christ, who only is sinless,
Reconcileth sinners to the Father.
Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous:
the Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.
Speak, Mary, declaring what thou sawest wayfaring.
The tomb of Christ, who is living: the glory of Jesus' resurrection.
Bright Angels attesting, the shroud and napkin resting.
Yea, Christ my hope is arisen: to Galilee He goes before you.
Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining:
have mercy, victor King, ever reigning. Amen. Alleluia.
(Victimae Paschali, The Sequence Hymn of Easter Sunday)

He is Risen!
Indeed, He is Risen!



XIII. The Body of JESUS is Taken Down From the Cross.

XIV. The Body of JESUS Is Laid in the Tomb.



St. Andrew, the First-Called, Orthodox Church

A Mission of the Western Rite Vicariate



St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma had its beginning in the summer of 1996 when a handful of dedicated believers gathered together, led by Fr. Mark Wallace, to begin a mission of the Charismatic Episcopal Church. The desire, over the years, to be in a living relationship with those who have received “*the faith that has been once delivered to the saints*” led Fr. Mark, his wife Susan and members of the Charismatic Episcopal Church to Father Constantine Nasr of St. Elijah church and the establishment of a mission of the Western Rite Vicariate within the Antiochian Archdiocese. In February, 2007, a special series of classes for inquirers was arranged. On May 6, 2007, fifty-two souls officially became catechumens. A few weeks later, with Bishop BASIL’s blessings, (layman) Mark Wallace started serving Matins and Vespers of the Western rite in the chapel of St. George at St. Elijah’s. The group was chrismated on January 13, 2008. The following week, Mark Wallace was ordained a deacon and then a priest on January 20th and 21st respectively and Father Mark celebrated his first week of liturgies at St. Andrew, the First-Called, Orthodox Church. On Christmas Eve, 2008, the congregation of St. Andrew Orthodox Church was blessed to begin services in its own rented space at 6444 N. W. Expressway in Oklahoma City. Thank God for His Grace in leading us to the True Church!



The Altar of Sacrifice

by Presbytera Susan Wallace

“You have pancreatic cancer”—four fearful, life-altering words that no one ever wants to hear. Subdeacon John Dutcher heard them on February 3, 2008. My husband and I had shared breakfast with him and his wife, Nila, just two days earlier. He only briefly mentioned his upcoming doctor’s appointment. Mostly his conversation was filled with excitement about the restoration of the Orthodox Western-Rite and our new mission, St. Andrew. He announced he was going to build an altar for us.

John and Nila had been devout Anglicans. Fr. Bill McMurray had been their priest. Then Fr. Bill became Fr. Basil when he converted to Orthodoxy. A few years later the Dutchers followed him. Fr. Constantine Nasr and St. Elijah welcomed them with open arms. They immersed their family into the Orthodox faith and the beauty of the Byzantine Rite. It restored and anchored their souls. For fourteen years they had been faithful servants in the House of the Lord and they jointly blessed the people of God with their presence at almost every service and event. Subdeacon John would always be the first to arrive at church to help the priests prepare the altar for the Body and Blood of Christ.

John loved God’s Kingdom and blessed us with his enthusiasm for our vision of introducing Americans to the uncompromising ancient faith of their ancestors in the British Isles and northern Europe—the undivided faith of the Church of the first millennium when the entire Christian world, both East and West, was united in faith though practicing different liturgical forms (rites). But Western Orthodoxy with its Celtic expression was lost many centuries ago after the Great Schism of 1054. By the eleventh century it was virtually dead. In the last century it has seen revival because

both the Russian and Antiochian Patriarchates of the Orthodox Church see its value. It seems to be a restoration of unity that had been destroyed a thousand years ago. To have an Eastern Orthodox believer build a Western altar seemed to be symbolic of this unification and an answer to Christ’s prayer in Gethsemane, “*that they all may be one, as You, Father are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*”

To say that the dread news of John’s diagnosis was devastating is an understatement. My heart sank. My own father had died of pancreatic cancer. I knew the road ahead would be hard and short. I was deeply saddened for Nila and their family, and I was disappointed that our time with him would be brief. His prognosis was six months to a year. It would have been normal for him to pull in and spend his last days in the comforting arms of his family. But John was not normal; he began his regimen of chemo-therapy and visited the lumber yard in the same week. Often he was asked, “Are you still going to build the altar?” He replied with an ear to ear grin and a twinkle in his eye, “The Lord willing.” With Nila as his apprentice, the two re-arranged the garage to make ready for the holy task of building an altar.

Many days he was too weak to make it to work, but he would find the energy to mitre a piece of trim work or sand a corner. His St. Elijah friend, Ellis Hannah, and his brother, Mark, would frequently stop by to help him. Nila discovered an antique bronze relief of the Last Supper that would become the focal point of the Holy Table. Although black with tarnish, she spent hours scrubbing every crevice while John stayed focused on his sacred project

Somehow, John’s grit and tenacity became a beacon of hope for our small, fragile band of pilgrims. St. Andrew’s had been worshipping in the beautiful chapel of St. Elijah’s Orthodox Church for eighteen months. My husband, Fr. Mark, had led his congregation of eleven years, Holy Trinity Charismatic Episcopal Church, to this safe haven when our denomination quickly fell apart. Fifty-two of the original seventy-five became catechumens. But slowly our group dwindled to thirty-two as the immensity of the task of starting a mission, especially a Western rite mission, became a reality. I must admit more than once I too wanted to cave into self-pity and walk across the hallway

Parish Profile & News

Ember Tidings



and sit in comfort on one of St. Elijah's pews. But then my husband would remind me, "We can't quit or become weary in well-doing, John is building us an altar."

The Celtic church called the place where the veil is the thinnest between this life and the next a "thin place". As John lived out his last days on earth he seemed to be living in a 'thin place' where he could see beyond this world. Looking death in the face, he chose to build a Table for the celebration of Life. Jesus said, "Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no Life within you." [John 6:53] And just as Jesus pressed through his agonizing pain for the sake of His Bride, John pressed through his pain and suffering for the sake of Christ's Bride. In a way, John and his bride of thirty-five years became an iconic symbol of this eternal relationship of Bridegroom and Bride as they worked side by side for the sake of the Kingdom.

Subdeacon John Dutcher finished his divine assignment in June and reposed on August 8, 2008. St. Andrew's celebrated its first Mass on Christmas Eve in our new location. Now every time we gather to eat at the Table of the Lord, I sense John's big smile and twinkling eyes. He knows now what we can only anticipate, but his sacrificial gift of building a sacred altar so that we might taste true Life allows us to participate with our ancestors at the 'thin place.'

We are called to "overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of our testimony." John has truly overcome by this precious blood and the Word of his testimony is this; "...let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." [Galatians 6:9] §

Saturday, January 24th, at Evening Prayer, His Grace +Bishop BASIL blessed the altar, built by Subdeacon



John R. Dutcher and his wife. Included among those attending were ten from St. Peter Orthodox Church in Fort Worth, TX. We enjoyed the worship and fellowship with everyone at beautiful St. Andrew, the First-Called, Orthodox Church. §



May his memory be eternal+
Sub-Deacon John Dutcher

St. Clement Church, Muleshoe, Texas



On Sunday, February 8th, 2009, Fr. Michael Keiser traveled out to the plains of West Texas and received 41 people as catechumens into the Holy Orthodox Church. St. Clement Church in Muleshoe, Texas began in September 1997 as a small group doing the Office of evening prayer on Wednesday nights and was affiliated with the Charismatic Episcopal Church. Fr. Sergio Leal was ordained to the diaconate in April 1998 and began serving a Deacon's Mass. In November of the same year Fr. Sergio was ordained to the priesthood. In April 2000, St. Clement purchased a church building where they currently worship. In 2006, the Diocese of the South Central along with other dioceses, separated from the Charismatic Episcopal Church and formed another communion.

After much prayer and dialogue with others who have walked a similar path, it was decided it was time to come home. The people of St. Clement church would like to express their gratitude to Metropolitan PHILIP, Bishop BASIL and the Western Rite Vicariate for making a way. To God be the glory! <http://antiochian.org/node/18787>



Liturgy Study Group meets in Denver:

The Liturgy Study Group of the Western Rite Vicariate met in Denver, February 15 - 17, 2009. The meeting was hosted by Rt. Rev'd Archimandrite John A. Mangels, pastor of St. Augustine AOC. Upon arriving the participants were served refreshments at Fr. John Fenton's suite in the Marriott Towne Suites Hotel in Denver, three blocks from the church. All mornings began with Mass, and Fr. John Mangels was celebrant of a sung Votive Mass on Monday in honour of the Holy Ghost. Subdeacon Benjamin Anderson and acolytes, Joel Levitt and Robert Horner served, while Frank Slechta, the organist/choirmaster of St. Augustine chanted the propers, played the organ and led the priests and people in the Gregorian chant, Missa Marialis. Members of the parish provided lunch on both days. Monday, Council Chair, Maria Palucha prepared a beautiful meal of Wiener Schnitzel and other Austrian favorites. Monday evening the Fathers had dinner at Central I Greek restaurant a short distance from the church and Tuesday, Pricilla Sanders and her sister, Ruth Sanchez prepared a delicious Mexican meal consisting of chicken enchiladas with a variety of trimmings. Monday night Vespers and Compline were sung with Frank Slechta and Subdeacon Benjamin Anderson as chanters. Both days were filled with meetings on the Calendar and other important topics. After lunch Tuesday afternoon the group traveled to St. Mark's where Fr. John Connely conducted a tour noting recently completed improvements there. Meetings continued until around 4:30 before adjournment and travel to the airport began. The Liturgy Study Group consists of Chairman, V. Rev. Edward W. Hughes, Vicar General of the Western Rite; Rt. Rev. John Mangels of St. Augustine, Colorado; Rt. Rev. Daniel Keller, Our Lady of Walsingham, Texas, Dean of the North Texas Deanery; V. Rev. John Charles Connely, St. Mark's, Colorado; Rev. Fr. John Fenton, Holy Incarnation, Michigan, Assistant to the Vicar General; and V. Rev. Bernard Kinnick, St. Nicholas, Washington. Thank you to all at St. Augustine for providing hospitality for a productive meeting and good fellowship with good friends.