



# St. Silouan the Athonite

## Orthodox Mission Parish

### QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2014

things... by virtue of His incarnation manifested at the Nativity. Is it not in Christ-like stewardship, then, that by grace we attain to the son-ship proclaimed at Theophany?

And financial stewardship is by no means least among the various ways that we offer to God all that we are and all that we have. On the contrary, we see in Holy Scripture that financial stewardship in particular flows from our confession of the Gospel (2Cor 9:13). St. Paul urges his Corinthian flock to render a monetary gift for the church in Jerusalem – not under obligation or compulsion, not dutifully or begrudgingly, but freely, liberally, and gladly – in witness to the self-emptying love of Christ (8:8-9, 9:7). What does this look like? The Apostle points to the example of the church in Macedonia:

*... [I]n a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means... of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favour of taking part in the relief of the saints... [T]hey gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us (8:2-5).*

Show the trees you care. Read the **green** version of this newsletter at [stsilouan.org](http://stsilouan.org).

As the parish of St. Silouan the Athonite, we have our own unique take on poverty and thanksgiving. On poverty, because we're a small parish of modest means, without property, sheltered within the walls of St. John's Mission. On thanksgiving, because instead of viewing material reliance on the Mission as an ill to be **[continued on p. 16]**

### Dear Fellow Parishioners,

What can you get for just a nickel?

From the mystical realities of the Nativity and Theophany, we turned our gaze momentarily to a spreadsheet on a power point slide. A financial report. A budget. Another AGM.

What a buzzkill. What a jolt from the sublime to the mundane.

Or, perhaps not. What is a parish budget, after all, if not a concrete, collective commitment toward the stewardship of Christ's Church?

Stewardship, we're told, is profoundly spiritual. Stewardship is Eucharistic, and the Eucharist is stewardship. Stewardship, in its broad sense, signifies the Church's continual thank offering of all things for all things, which are from God, "thine own of thine own... on behalf of all, and for all." Stewardship, then, is the constitutive action of the Church as the body of Christ who is Himself the Offering par excellence for all humanity and all



## Mark your calendars:

### What?

**Pre-Paschal Chapel Cleaning** – Join in this Lenten *podvig!* Contact Linda ([ioanna.tis.kamares@gmail.com](mailto:ioanna.tis.kamares@gmail.com)) and/or Kathy ([k.wlasenko@hotmail.com](mailto:k.wlasenko@hotmail.com)) to help out.

**Lazarus Saturday** – Divine Liturgy followed by traditional Mission fish-head soup

**Palm Sunday** – Orthros; Divine Liturgy; Bridegroom Service

**Holy Monday** – Pre-sanctified Liturgy

**Holy Tuesday** – Bridegroom Service

**Holy Wednesday** – Mysterion of Oil

**Holy Thursday** – Orthros; Vespereal Liturgy followed by bread and soup; 12 Gospels

**Holy Friday** – Royal Hours (children to decorate Epitaphion); Great Vespers; Burial Service followed by silent vigil

**Holy Saturday** – Vespereal Liturgy; Acts of the Apostles; Removal of Epitaphion

**Holy Pascha** – Orthros & Paschal Liturgy followed by Agape meal; Vespers of Love followed by Agape meal

**Bright Monday** – Divine Liturgy

**Leave-taking of Pascha** – TBA

**Ascension** – TBA

**Pentecost** – Orthros; Divine Liturgy followed by Agape meal

**Apostles' Fast**

### When?

Saturday, 5 April  
10am

12 April  
9<sup>30</sup>am

13 April  
8<sup>45</sup>am; 10am; 7<sup>30</sup>pm

14 April  
7pm

15 April  
7pm

16 April  
7pm

17 April  
7am; 6pm; 8<sup>30</sup>pm

18 April  
12pm; 3pm; 7pm

19 April  
4pm; 10pm; 11<sup>30</sup>pm

20 April  
12<sup>01</sup>am; 4pm

21 April  
9<sup>30</sup>am

Wednesday, 28 May

Thursday, 29 May

Sunday, 8 June  
8<sup>45</sup>am, 10am

16-29 June

## VISITATION: ARCHIMANDRITE ZACHARIAS OF ESSEX



Mid-February, we received a blessing eight years in the asking, one unparalleled in the history of the Parish of St. Silouan: Archimandrite Zacharias of Essex in our midst. Fr. Zacharias, the direct disciple of

Elder Sophrony, the direct disciple of our patron St. Silouan the Athonite, spent four days with us in prayer and reflection. He alternately addressed our clergy, the people of St. John's Mission, the youth, and finally the general congregation. His visit culminated with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and an Agape meal.

As an added perk, our parish was pleased to play host to a crowd of our brothers and sisters, some 160 strong, drawn mostly from other Orthodox communities in the GTA. It was a joy to serve them and to worship with them.

A video recording of Fr. Zacharias' remarks is available at [stsilouan.org](http://stsilouan.org). The following excerpts, Fr. Zacharias' own words, are offered as a small sample of his gifts to us:

*... There is one passion which is the most fearful of all, namely, despondency, [which means] spiritual laziness, a lack of care for eternal salvation.*

*... All our civilization is the result of spiritual despondency.*

*... One who thanks God is a stranger to despondency.*

*... When we enter the grace of thanksgiving, we acquire the right kind of godly zeal, which befits the children of God.*

*... The Divine Liturgy is where we are taught how to give perfect thanks to the almighty and beloved God in a manner worthy of Him.*

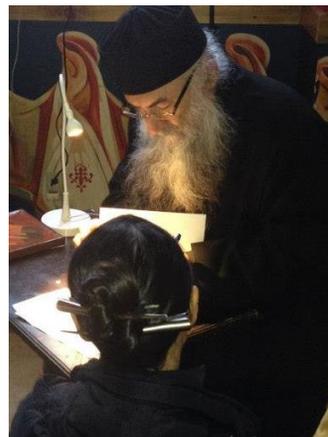


*... If we have put all our life in those things we offer Him, bread and wine - all our faith, all our love, all our humility, all our repentance, all our expectation of Him - then He will do the same: He will fill the gifts with His life, and return them to us. And we make this exchange of our little life with the boundless life of God, in the Liturgy.*

*... The spirit of God is the spirit of humility that illumines the heart to see all the benefits of God and to offer thanksgiving to Him. So, humility and thanksgiving go hand in hand for the faithful. And thanksgiving cleanses the eye of the heart. Then we acquire a spiritual vision, to know the*

*traces of God's benevolent providence everywhere, and to follow these traces which are the traces of His will. And in His will, there is life!*

*... The Lord Himself said, "I am the Way." It is important to*



*know His Way. We know that the sign of His Way is humility... To be humble and meek, these are the two conditions necessary for us to walk in His Way.*

*... If we have humility, and zeal which directs all the powers of the soul towards God, then we are building the Temple of God within us.*

*... A negative thought which we accept against our brother is in fact an attack against God's Temple in him... And "whoever destroys the Temple of God, him shall God destroy."*

*... There are many ways of [building up the temple of God in our fellows]. One important way is to pray for one another.*

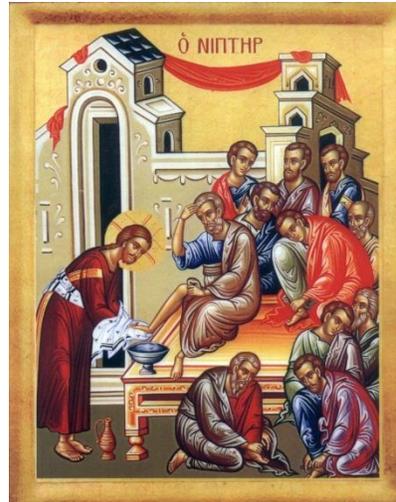
*... The constant in our life, like the constant in a mathematical formula, is what Job the Righteous said: "Blessed be the Name of the Lord forever"... Let pain come. Any kind of pain. And make it energy for prayer. And the end result will be beautiful.*

*... If we love our immortal soul, then we will never justify ourselves but always condemn ourselves before God. And in doing so, we will fulfil all the commandments.*

*... Building the Temple of God in us and in our fellows is our destiny. That's why the Lord says, through his Apostle, that we should not let any corrupt communication come out of our mouth. But we should speak good things which can inform with grace the heart of the listener. And this is a lesson by St. Paul how to be co-workers with God in the building up of the Temple of God in our fellows.*



# HOLINESS IS WHOLENESS



## Deacon Pawel

In a way that it is difficult for an outsider to imagine, the Mission and the parish are truly inter-dependent. They are ideally one piece of one woven fabric. To appreciate this, fully, one has to be involved in both the Mission and the parish. To

know one without the other is to be unable to see the wholeness that actually exists, the one with the other. The Mission is the foundation upon which the parish is built. The "spirit" of the Mission permeates the "spirit" of the parish. However, it is perhaps no accident that the Mission preceded the parish. Or did it? Worship has been key to the life of the Mission from its very beginnings. As Fr. Roberto wrote in "The Poor Our Masters," describing the development of the life of St John's:

*Orthodox faith, theology and worship should colour and shape Orthodox diaconia. Gradually a pattern of life developed centered around the Divine Services, all-night vigils and vespers services in a chapel that, although only the size of a small room, was in constant use.<sup>1</sup>*

In the Mission, and in the parish, the teaching of St. John Chrysostom that the Church should have two tables, one for the Lord and one for the poor, is

<sup>1</sup> See <http://stsilouan.org/article/poor.html>.

realized as a way of life. This is one of the most important lessons that those who come to the Lived Theology School (to learn what *Orthodox* mission is) have to grow into. It is one of the reasons why Lay Missionaries (formerly interns) have always been fully involved in the life of *both* the Mission and the Mission parish: and contributed greatly to, and benefited greatly from, both.

As Metropolitan Kallistos so eloquently put it in a retreat talk on the words of the Liturgy, "Let us go forth in peace":

*Let us reflect on what happened at the Last Supper. First there was the Eucharistic meal, where Christ blessed bread and gave it to the disciples, 'This is my body,' and he blessed the cup, 'This is my blood.' Then, after the Eucharistic meal, Christ kneels and washes the feet of his disciples. The Eucharistic meal and the foot washing are a single mystery. So, we have to apply that to ourselves. We go out from the Liturgy to wash the feet of our fellow humans, literally and symbolically. That is how I understand the words at the end of the Liturgy, 'Let us go forth in peace.' Peace is to be something dynamic within this broken world. It's not just a quality that we experience within the church walls.*

*Let's remind ourselves of the way in which St. John Chrysostom envisages this liturgy after the Liturgy. There are, he says, two altars. There is, in the first place, the altar in church, and towards this altar we show deep reverence. We bow in front of it. We decorate it with silver and gold. We cover it with precious hangings. But, continues St. John, there is another altar, an altar that we encounter every day, on which we can offer sacrifice at any moment. And yet towards this second altar, an altar which God himself has made, we show no reverence at all. We treat it with contempt. We ignore it. And what is this second altar? It is, says St. John*

*Chrysostom, the poor, the suffering, those in need, the homeless, all who are in distress. At any moment, he says, when you go out from the church, there you will see an altar on which you can offer sacrifice, a living altar made by Christ.*

Whilst this quote may appear to be directly relevant to the service of the Mission it actually makes no difference what your situation in life is. The "liturgy after the Liturgy" is to be lived wherever you are and whatever your life consists of. It is equally valid for families, the home, the workplace, social life – for all aspects of your life.

The great blessing of this place is in being able to live a whole Christian life. One would hope that if St. Basil, or St. John Chrysostom, walked in the door of the Mission they would recognize this place as something familiar to them and somewhere where they would find everyone striving to live both the Liturgy (and the other services of the Church) and the *liturgy after the Liturgy*. As some ancient liturgies have it, "Let us go forth in peace to love and serve the Lord." There are no limits on either the love or the service. Holiness is realized in a life wholly lived.

## PARISH GROUPS AT THE MISSION

For clarification: members of the parish *are very welcome* to serve at the Mission. The parish council is working with the clergy to define and coordinate opportunities for parishioners to practice stewardship by serving at the Mission. Meanwhile, feel free to take the initiative yourself, either as an individual or as a member of a group.

- Individual: please contact Dn. Theodore at [frdeacon.theo@gmail.com](mailto:frdeacon.theo@gmail.com).
- Group (or to be part of a group): please contact Dn. Pawel at [livedtheologyschool@yahoo.ca](mailto:livedtheologyschool@yahoo.ca).

Let's make it part of our Lenten journey to resurrect the parish's service at the Mission!

# NUMBERS

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>Budget 2014</b>	<b>Jan-14</b>	<b>Feb-14</b>
Donations-Indiv/Org		\$ 4,785.00	\$ 9,195.30
Donations (Anon)		\$ 1,088.05	\$ 795.30
Candle Collections		\$ 512.00	\$ 353.11
Kids/Youth/St.Mary retreats inc			
St.Silouan Bookstore		\$ 410.00	\$ 1,725.00
<b>Income Total</b>		<b>\$ 6,795.05</b>	<b>\$ 12,068.71</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Rector's Stipend	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 2,291.66	\$ 2,291.66
Caretaker	\$ 4,950.00	\$ 412.50	\$ 412.50
Mission rent	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00
Choir Budget	\$ 14,690.00	\$ 1,361.66	\$ 1,211.66
Phos Budget	\$ 2,140.00		
<b>Total Sunday Liturgy Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 54,080.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,465.82</b>	<b>\$ 4,315.82</b>
Clergy Visitations/Retreats/Honorar	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 4,120.49
St.Silouan Children/Youth	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 500.00
St.Mary of Egypt Retreats	\$ 750.00		
Travel expenses	\$ 500.00	\$ 71.81	
Counselling services (St.Macrina)	\$ 3,000.00		
Tithing	\$ 10,000.00		
Retirement	\$ 26,000.00		
<b>Total Parish Activity Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 52,750.00</b>	<b>\$ 671.81</b>	<b>\$ 4,620.49</b>
Liturgical supplies	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 1,043.95	\$ 401.56
Renovations/Maintance	\$ 7,000.00		
Candles (offering)	\$ 2,000.00		
Chapel furnishing	\$ 500.00		
<b>Total Chapel Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 13,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,043.95</b>	<b>\$ 401.56</b>
Bookkeeper	\$ 3,300.00	\$ 275.00	\$ 275.00
Administrative Assistant	\$ 1,980.00	\$ 165.00	\$ 165.00
Auditors	\$ 600.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Telephone/Internet	\$ 1,000.00		
St.Silouan Bookstore		\$ 1,077.21	
Office Supplies (Include Postage)	\$ 1,200.00		\$ 104.76
<b>Total Office Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 8,080.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,567.21</b>	<b>\$ 594.76</b>
<b>Budget 2011</b>			
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 128,410.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,748.79</b>	<b>\$ 9,932.63</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-\$ 128,410.00</b>	<b>-\$ 953.74</b>	<b>\$ 2,136.08</b>

# STEWARDSHIP: NUTS AND BOLTS

Your parish council has recently rededicated itself to nurturing the practice and understanding of stewardship within our parish. This initiative will receive our sustained focus over the coming months and years. We will continue our discourse on the spiritual meaning of stewardship, in church, in these pages, and otherwise. We will also continue to encourage our members to offer their gifts to God and to His Church by making specific pledges of time and money on an annual basis. We are grateful for your cooperation and your patience as we fine-tune a new-ish set of practices around an ancient principle of our Christian Faith. We welcome your questions and input: feel free to approach any parish council officer, especially our Stewardship Officer, Milutin Drobac. Meanwhile, in the interest of transparency and mutual confidence, we offer the following answers to questions you may have about the administration of our fledgling stewardship program.

## *Why should I fill out a stewardship pledge form?*

- For your own sake. "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them," we read (Romans 12:6-8); "... in service, then in serving; ... the one who contributes, in generosity." The practice of formal annual stewardship pledges is meant to provide each of us the occasion to reflect prayerfully on our unique combination of gifts... and, as we face into the uncertainty of the coming year, to act on faith by making a solemn, specific commitment to God and to each other.
- For the parish's sake. In time, we hope, stewardship pledges will increasingly account for total parish revenues. This will enable the parish to operate from a more

stable, reliable revenue base month to month. Eventually, we expect to budget on the basis of stewardship pledges, so that we can all experience giving as active participation in our shared life and work.

## *Who will see my stewardship pledge?*

- Not the clergy. By design, the clergy will never handle stewardship forms or have access to information about the financial contributions of individual members.
- One parish council officer collects and handles stewardship forms, as is necessary to administer the program.
- The parish bookkeeper keeps and accesses stewardship forms, as is necessary for administrative purposes.
- The parish council and bookkeeper make every reasonable effort to preserve a maximum of confidentiality. The parish council does not retain, access, or discuss information pertaining to the financial contributions of individual members.

## *How will the information on my stewardship form be used?*

- Eventually, we expect to equate parish membership with formal stewardship. See below. Therefore, as needed, we may publicize a list of current stewards.
- We will not publicize information about the specific contributions of individual members. The call to stewardship is an appeal to the spirit of love and gratitude, not a play on our sense of shame and vanity.
- The parish council will use the information pertaining to Agape meal and volunteer pledges to coordinate those activities.
- The parish bookkeeper will use the information pertaining to financial pledges to process transactions, and for administrative purposes.
- The bookkeeper may at various times provide the parish council with non-identifying information about financial

pledges (see page 9) in order for the parish council to administer, monitor, and improve the stewardship program.

*What happens when I pledge volunteer hours?*

- God bless you! You can expect to be contacted during the year about opportunities to fulfil that pledge by labouring on behalf of the parish in any number of ways.
- The parish council is working closely with the clergy to define and coordinate stewardship projects. Some of these – e.g. chapel cleaning – will recur regularly, while others may be one-offs. Naturally, some stewardship initiatives may consist of participation in various works of St. John's Mission.

*Can I be a member without being a steward?*

- Currently, yes.
- Eventually, we expect to equate parish membership with formal stewardship. This is consistent with the longstanding requirements for membership set out in Article IV, sections 3 and 4 of our parish Constitution and By-laws.

*Can I be a steward without being a member?*

- Yes. God bless you.

*What if unforeseen circumstances affect my ability*

*to fulfil my pledge?*

- Did you get an unexpected raise, promotion, bonus, or other windfall? Praise God!
- Are you suffering adversity? Lord, have mercy!
- In either event, simply inform the parish council Chair, currently Aaron SanFilippo, that you need to revise your pledge mid-year. He will not pry. You can fill out another form, and Aaron will advise the bookkeeper accordingly.

*I donate to St. John's Mission. Isn't that the same thing?*

- No, it isn't. God bless you for your donations toward the many good works of St. John's Mission. Many of our members give regularly to St. John's as well as to St. Silouan's. We encourage it! But to be clear, financial stewardship of the parish consists in a pledge to make donations payable to St. Silouan's Parish. Only in this way would your donation contribute toward the budget items on page 6. Bearing this in mind, direct your dollars where your good heart desires!

*Where can I get a stewardship form?*

- At [www.stsilouan.org](http://www.stsilouan.org).
- Or, at our bookstore, Pangar, during the Agape meal following any Sunday morning Divine Liturgy.

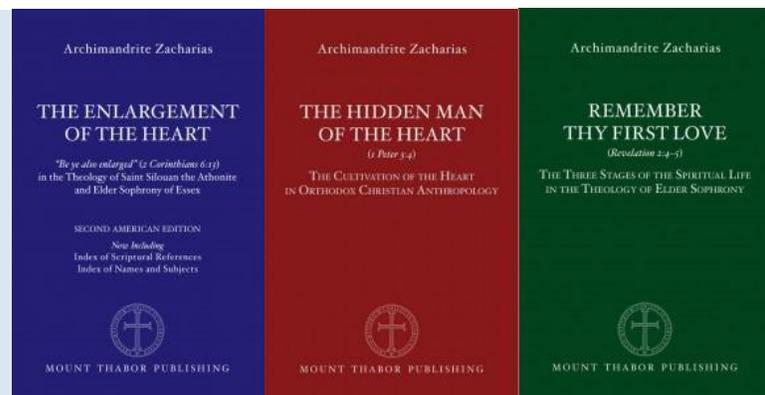
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*Remember Thy First Love*

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Laurentiu Albu,  
Parish Bibliographer

... every Sunday during the Agape meal.

## VITAL STATISTICS OF STEWARDSHIP

As the parish council promotes the practice of stewardship at St. Silouan's, we will monitor and report on the following indicators of our progress as a parish:

- 41 households comprising current parish membership, according to 2014 membership forms submitted
- 76 % of households participating in stewardship by pledging one or more of the following for 2014:
  - a. a financial contribution of a specific dollar amount; and/or
  - b. serving on an Agape team; and/or
  - c. a specific time commitment as a volunteer labourer
- 51 % of households pledging a financial contribution of a specific dollar amount
- 54 % of households pledging to serve on Agape meal teams
- 24 % of households pledging specific time commitments as volunteer labourers
- \$5,215 amount of total financial stewardship pledges, per month
- 55 % of actual parish revenues attributable to stewardship pledges, Jan-Feb 2014
- 61 % of 2014 budgeted expenditures covered by stewardship pledges\*

\* Omitting "Retirement" budget line, the source of a planned deficit for 2014.

# AGM 2014

We held our parish annual general meeting (AGM) on 26 January 2014. Thanks to all of our members who participated constructively, which is itself an act of stewardship. Feel free to request a copy of the minutes from Aaron SanFilippo. Meanwhile, here are some highlights:

### *Changing of the Guard*

- Incoming parish council officers: Nicolaie Atitienei, Nataliya Nebrat, Kristin Ostensen
- Outgoing parish council officers: Dorothy Kovach, Naomi Funk, Jennifer Venner
- New parish council Chair: Aaron SanFilippo

### *2013 Financial Report*

- Total revenues = \$116,663, up 8% over 2012
- Net income = \$23,164
- Cumulative net income to date = \$98,336

### *2014 Budget Overview*

- Parish voted, adopted 2014 budget reflecting:
  - budgeted expenditures = \$128,410
  - projected revenues = \$121,400
  - projected net income = (\$7,010)

### *New "Retirement" budget line = \$26,000*

- St. John's and St. Silouan's are cooperating toward purchase of annuity to top up Fr. Roberto's retirement income
- Total annuity, preliminary estimate: \$100,000-\$200,000, depending on retirement date
- Parish council and St. John's board remain in discussion re details

- Parish should assume liability for approx. 26%-28% of total, depending on retirement date
- \$26,000 intended as first instalment
- Parish members are invited to target 2014 bespoke donations to "Retirement" budget

#### Building R&M

- Parish council in discussion with St. John's board re parish contribution toward building reno project over 2-5 years
- Preliminary estimate: \$100,000 total
- Parish council awaits details from St. John's board
- Meanwhile, budget \$5,700 initial contribution

#### Looking to the future

- Parish should consider aiming toward paying a full-time salary for a full-time priest
- Feasible by 2018 or sooner, under conservative assumptions: 5% annual revenue growth
- Meanwhile, consider uses for existing and projected cumulative surplus

#### Members' Ideas\*

- "Rainy day" planning: what to do about revenue volatility/risk?
- Youth budget should support activities beyond summer camp
- Consider purchasing house for future priest
- Allocate part of "Tithing" budget to support St. John's LTS program

\*The parish council sincerely appreciates this and further input, which we promise to give their due consideration during the year.

## KNOW YOUR PARISH COUNCIL



**Father Roberto Ubertino**  
Rector  
Parish Council President,  
ex officio



**Nicolaie Atitienei**  
Youth Officer



**Milutin Drobac**  
Stewardship Officer



**Nataliya Nebrat**  
Treasurer



**Kristin Ostensen**  
Secretary



**Aaron SanFilippo**  
Chair



**Linda van Voorthuizen**  
Events Coordinator



**Kathy Wlasenko**  
Events Coordinator

## HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Heartfelt congratulations to Christopher Fryer and his sponsor Peter Drobac for Chris' chrismation on 15 December 2013. Welcome home!

Your editors reached out to Chris to invite him to share a reflection on how this joyful occasion came to be; unfortunately, we were unable to reach him. So instead, we'll share our reminiscence about Chris' time with us.

Many of us felt blessed to get to know Chris during the short while that he was with us. Some of us will miss his calm and quiet demeanor most, others his keen wit, others his contemplative nature. When we think of Chris, we'll think of his apparently inexhaustible curiosity about a limitless range of things, and of the seemingly encyclopedic knowledge which he accumulated by it. We'll recall what a superb conversationalist he is, always having something interesting or incisive to say on any topic – from theology to technology, from philosophy to fish – without ever being overeager to say it, but rather, being content to listen also. We'll remember him as an avid student of Byzantine chant and a formidable adversary at Settlers of Catan. And as a fellow who is as skilled with his hands as he is dexterous of mind, building things, fixing things, harvesting things. We'll remember subtle distinctions, such as that between sharpening and honing, or between steampunk and cyberpunk. And when we're around a table eating good food and drinking good beer, we wish he too were still around.

Having only just welcomed Chris fully into the parish and the Orthodox Church, we were sorry to have to say farewell so soon when he announced in January that he would be moving back to his other home in BC. He will be missed.



We wish Chris all the best in Vancouver. We pray for him, with hope that he'll visit soon and often.

## FINDING THE DIVINE IMAGE

Melody Hung took the name Mary Magdalene as she received the sacrament of Holy Chrismation on 26 January 2014. May God grant her and her sponsors Efraim and Jane Pfeil many, many years!

Over a *cuppajo* with your editor, Melody reflected on her journey of faith:

*Q: Can you share a few details about your personal background and interests?*

*A: I'm from Taiwan. I came here [to Toronto] in 1996 with my daughter. I like to listen to classical music, and have collected over a thousand CDs. I also love to read.*

*Q: And your background in terms of faith?*

*A: For Chinese people, religion is more cultural. It's a mix of Confucius and Taoism. We worship our ancestors, different kinds of idols, and go to the temple. But I wasn't very pious. When I was in university, I was more interested Buddhism, because it seemed more intellectual to me. I was drawn to study and to the pursuit of knowledge more than to religion.*

*Q: How did you first come to Christianity?*



A: When my daughter was younger, I decided to send her to Christian Sunday School so she could make friends and learn about Western culture. Unexpectedly, during worship, the songs really touched my heart, in a way I cannot explain. There was this feeling that someone really knew me. So I started to attend worship, and was baptized after two years.

Q: *Do you recall a particular moment when you realized you wanted to become a Christian?*

A: One time, I asked my daughter to pray before bedtime. And she recited 1Peter 5:8: "Be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." I didn't know she was reciting scripture she learned from Sunday School. I was shocked, and I thought, "Wow, how can she pray such beautiful words?" That touched my heart, and at that moment I believed something bigger was at work.

[Melody was baptized in Taiwan in 1995, and immigrated to Canada with her daughter in 1996.]

Q: *How has your knowledge of the Christian Faith progressed after arriving in Toronto?*

A: Throughout the years, I attended a number of different churches and experienced different protestant worship services. I moved from the Baptist denomination to more charismatic styles of worship, and from there to the Christian Missionary Alliance, which had a stronger Scriptural emphasis and deep teachings. These different experiences helped me experience different faces of God, and understand my faith more deeply.

Q: *How did you first encounter the Orthodox Church?*

A: In 2006, I was invited to the chrismation of one of my friends, Libby Wallace. Although I couldn't understand the service (it was all in Greek!), I enjoyed the style of worship, from the singing to all the symbolism.

Q: *At what point did you begin to feel drawn toward the Orthodox Faith?*

A: In April 2011, I was looking for a place to have a retreat, but everything was booked. A friend of mine suggested St. Mary of Egypt Refuge. So I registered for this course taught by Professor Paul Ladouceur called *Orthodox Spirituality*.

Though I was the only Evangelical there, I enjoyed studying the teachings of the Fathers, and the style of prayer. I also fell in love with the way they sing! So Mary Marrocco suggested I come to St. John's Mission on Friday mornings (Orthros). I had just moved to the East end one month prior, so it was really convenient for me. Otherwise, I probably wouldn't have come. So I feel it was really God's providence. I started attending Orthros every Friday morning.

At the time, I was also looking for a new church, but didn't find one that fit, so I decided I might as well just come here for Sunday worship too. This was around September of 2011.

Q: *What stands out in your memory about your early experience in St. Silouan's Parish?*

A: By January 2012, I approached Fr. Roberto because I felt I needed to get involved so that I

could learn about Orthodoxy. And then suddenly I was a hearer! I was so surprised the next Sunday when I was called up. I had no idea. So, apparently I became a hearer.

*Q: How were you learning about Orthodoxy during this time?*

A: I studied a lot. I listened to a lot of sermons from Ancient Faith Radio. I read a number of books, including *Great Lent* by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, as well as the *Triodion*. I loved the *Great Canon of St. Andrew!* Because I love how they put the Old Testament and the New Testament together to teach us not only how to pray, but also how to live. And I also took courses on Orthodoxy at Trinity College. All this gave me new ways to taste and see the goodness of God.

*Q: How did you come to a point where you knew you wanted to become a catechumen?*

A: I actually left the Orthodox Church for a while because I wasn't sure if it was for me. But I missed the services, and came back during Easter. And I felt encouraged by a number of people from St. Silouan's, especially Paul Tadros and Iryna Ozimko.

After being away for some time, I still felt pulled back towards Orthodoxy, as I felt that the Orthodox worship and way of life is truly God-centered. So I came back to St. Silouan's and became a catechumen. After a few months, I came to the point where I wanted to commit and become truly a part of the community of Orthodoxy.

*Q: How did you experience the actual day of your chrismation?*

A: Before the service, I was nervous about what to do, even though I had seen so many people chrismated. I had invited quite a few non-Orthodox friends, so I was also nervous about how they would experience this. But everyone who came really enjoyed and was moved by the worship.

As for myself, it felt like a conversion experience, like St. Paul encountering God on the way to Damascus. I truly felt it to be a new beginning to the next stage of my faith journey.

*Q: How do you look back on the succession of steps you've just described?*

A: Looking back, I can see God's hand with me all the way. Every denomination, every tradition is part of the Church of Christ, and they have all been formative in my journey. Coming to the Orthodox Faith, for me, is about going deeper into your soul with God. Becoming more truly yourself, and becoming like God. I have been blessed by the community at St. Silouan's, and I feel at home here. I feel that the Orthodox Faith has helped me truly – I cannot say fully, but truly – to understand what it means to be made in the image of God, to see His image in others, and to experience that. As Richard Schneider says, the whole world is an icon.

[Thus concluded our chat, fittingly, on the Sunday of Orthodoxy.]





## YOUTH-WISE

### **Michael Luciuk**

Youth have done a number of events. The youth went trampoline-ing in January and had some special time with Fr. Zacharias on February 14. We had a parish Ski trip on March 1 that had sixteen people out. We also had the youth participate in a *Paraklesis* on March 21. We are currently planning a movie night; times will be announced soon. Please come out if you haven't yet!

The senior Phos group has been going through the Old Testament this year. Many tribulations and miracles have been explored by the youth, but the true test of their scholarship will be the "Part-the-Frozen-Water Test" at the end of next class.

### **REFLECTION: A HEART-OPENING EXPERIENCE**

#### **Mia Milanovic, Youth**

I had the privilege of attending Fr. Zacharias' visit with the youth. It happened to fall on Valentine's Day and the topic he talked about to us was Love. I have never met such a humble man before: he kept apologizing for not being better prepared and tired from travels. Even though for parts of his talk he read off a paper you could feel the words came from

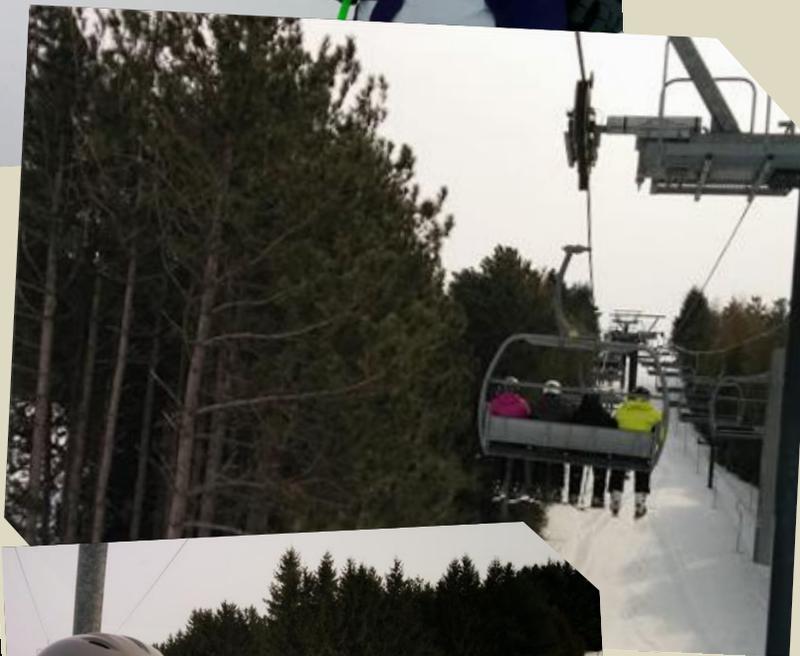
the heart and had a huge impact on every youth in the room. We learned how important love is, and that God's love is unconditional. He made me see another side to life and I hope to portray the impact Father Zacharias had on me with the following story.

Every afternoon I find myself strolling through the maze of my mind. Today, I stumbled upon the door of love. I was expecting a pink, joyful room filled with hearts, hugs, romantic music, dancing and Hershey's Kisses. A room much like what stores are transformed into around Valentine's Day. When I walked in I found a museum of memories, but what struck me instantly is that they were not loveable memories at all; or so I thought. There were clips of me arguing with my mother in a car, my father viciously taking away my phone while we were walking, and my sister forcing me to go early to bed. Confused by the meaning of love, I wandered around the room in a daze and decided it was best to leave this place and open yet another door, this one labeled archives. Here I found a book of different ways to say, "I love you." This time I expected to see a variety of ways to say the phrase in different languages: *Te amo, Je t'aime, Volim te, etc.* However, once again I was mistaken. In the book was written: "put on your seatbelt," "watch your step," and "get some rest". I took a second or two to process what I had just seen and instead, in that time, I felt a surge of warmth in my heart, an emotion so strong and encompassing it needed no explanation or further contemplation— it was love! People say all the time that we learn something new every day and in fact, today, I learned a crucial life lesson: that there are many ways to say, "I love you," and they can come in a variety of forms, actions, shapes and sizes. We just have to keep our ears open and listen. Fulfilled and satisfied with the successful completion of today's mind maze, I returned to the world around me committed to finding creative ways to spread love...

"Sis, can you *please* take out the trash?"

(What? Exercise is good for her health and I said *please*).

P.S. I love you





**[Dear Fellow Parishioners, cont'd p. 1]**

remedied, we give thanks for our relative freedom from material burdens, and we seek to use that freedom to glorify God. In allocating what resources we do have, our starting point has been to ask how we can transform the material advantages of

our connection to St. John's into spiritual benefits. Accordingly, over the years, our parish budgets have reflected commitments to liturgy and gospel that might not have been possible had we borne the material burdens of a "typical" parish.

Meanwhile, with our founding pastor quickly nearing retirement, we look ahead to a new chapter in our life as a parish. Like a lens, this circumstance focuses our minds on a new aspect of stewardship. What commitments will each of us make today and tomorrow, in the hope of continuing this bizarre and blessed phenomenon where Greeks and Serbs and Bulgarians and Romanians and Ukrainians and Russians and Copts and Taiwanese and Filipinos and Jews... and just plain Canadians... approach the same chalice every Sunday at 155 Broadview Avenue? How, practically, will we honour His Grace, Bishop Gregory's injunction to extend our hearts and our embrace ever outward?

In that regard, your editors have suggested before that one of the most critical commitments we can make as a parish is the commitment to support our clergy. As a matter of long-run financial priority, it's difficult to imagine how additional parish funds could be deployed to greater effect than if they were used to support a net increase in total clerical manpower, so to speak, between Mission and Parish. What better way, at this point in our life, to leverage a material advantage to our spiritual benefit? For instance, we as a parish have begun to discuss the possibility of supporting a full-time parish priest, as distinct from the executive director of the Mission. While we've lacked for nothing under Fr. Roberto's care, we have grown in numbers; God willing, we will continue to grow in numbers as we grow in faith.

Should we not plan today to support the priest who would minister to the congregation we hope to be tomorrow?

At our AGM, we examined a hypothetical scenario in which our parish budget accommodated a full-time priest's salary while sustaining all other fiscal commitments at their 2013 levels (adjusted for inflation). We noted that as a purely fiscal proposition, such a scenario would be feasible by 2018 if, in the interim, parish revenues grew at an annual rate of five percent. We noted further that five percent annual revenue growth sustained over five years would be a modest, even low-ball aspiration for this parish by historical comparison, both in proportional and in absolute terms. Stating the obvious, we observed that under the deliberately pessimistic assumption that the current pool of financial contributors remains fixed, we would achieve this goal if every financial contributor increased his or her personal contributions by five percent per year. A nickel on the dollar.

This is not an exercise in prognostication. We are not forecasting what our parish revenue growth likely will be, or how our 2018 budget likely will look. Rather, by sketching an outline of what appears to be highly attainable, we hope to animate the question of whether it is not in fact highly desirable. We mean to posit a tentative vision of our parish's vocation so as to stimulate a stewardly response – both in terms of thoughtful, prayerful reflection and discussion, and also, if the will is there, in terms of our specific stewardship commitments.

A stewardship pledge is, of course, a very personal decision. It constitutes that particular steward's response to his or her own peculiar circumstances and, most importantly, an expression of that steward's own desire to give with joy and thanksgiving. With regard to financial



stewardship specifically, the act of parting with our money is itself an important element, no doubt. But beyond that, in the view of your editors, we should experience stewardship as positive, active participation in our collective work. That is to say, in liturgy. On the basis of the foregoing, as we make and fulfil our stewardship pledges, each of us can, if we wish, trace a straight line from our personal decisions to a shared outcome. For instance, if we as a parish adopt the objective of supporting a full-time priest, then in a very real sense, the person who gave \$10 in 2013 and the person who gave \$10,000 can both contribute meaningfully toward that end by donating an additional \$0.50 or \$500, respectively, in 2014. A nickel on the dollar.

Is this an absurd view of it? It is not absurd. It's mathematical.

At our Slava, Fr. Roberto called on us to renew our desire to be like the Apostles. "What does it mean," he asked us, "for you, for me, for each of us, to leave everything and to follow the Lord?"

"Ask yourselves," Fr. Roberto challenged us, "how can we give ourselves more to Christ and to one another?"

Then he hinted at the basis of an answer: "In concrete ways. In the most practical ways that only love can make up."

It is a blessing to see our members continually giving of themselves, of their time and energy and talents and material gifts, in concrete and practical ways, in countless acts of stewardship. Acts which, reminiscent of St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, are themselves expressions of thanksgiving, but which also provoke further thanksgiving (9:11-14). It is precisely in this spirit, and to enable its fruitful operation, that your parish council aims to administer our parish's stewardship program in all of its dimensions. In that effort, we are ever grateful for your cooperation, your input, and your prayers.

Wishing all of our members a blessed Lenten season, and a joyous Pascha, we remain your servants,

The Parish Council

## Regular Schedule of Liturgical Services

### Wednesday

11 <sup>30</sup> am	Noon Prayer
4pm	Reader's Vespers or Anointing
6 <sup>55</sup> pm	Bridges
8 <sup>25</sup> pm	Compline

### Thursday

11 <sup>30</sup> am	Noon Prayer
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### Friday

7am	Orthros (or Divine Liturgy)
11 <sup>30</sup> am	Noon Prayer

### Saturday

12pm	Noon Prayer
6pm	Vespers

### Sunday

8 <sup>45</sup> am	Orthros
9 <sup>45</sup> am	Divine Liturgy
12pm	Agape Meal

For confession, or discussion with a priest, call Father Roberto at 416 466 1357 x3 or 416 466 5877.

## St. John the Compassionate Mission – Hours of Ops

<b>Wednesday</b>	8am – 12pm	Volunteers
	11 <sup>30</sup> am	Prayers
	1pm – 4 <sup>30</sup> pm	Drop-in
	4 <sup>30</sup> pm	Dinner
	6 <sup>55</sup> pm	Bridges/Lectures
	8 <sup>25</sup> pm	Compline
<b>Thursday</b>	8am – 11 <sup>30</sup> am	Work/Drop-in
	11 <sup>30</sup> am	Prayers/Lunch
	1pm – 4pm	Work/Drop-in
<b>Friday</b>	7am – 8 <sup>30</sup> am	Orthros (or Divine Liturgy)
	8 <sup>30</sup> am – 11 <sup>30</sup> am	Work/Drop-in
	11 <sup>30</sup> am	Prayers/Lunch
	1pm – 4pm	Work/Drop-in
<b>Saturday</b>	10am – 11am	Coffee Hour
	11am – 1pm	Lunch/Drop-in
	Seasonal	Seasonal
<b>Sunday</b>	8 <sup>45</sup> am	Orthros
	10am	Divine Liturgy
	12pm	Agape Meal
<b>Other Services</b>		
<b>Thursday</b>	1pm – 3pm	Housing
<b>Friday</b>	12pm – 2pm	Diabetic clinic
<b>Thursday – Friday</b>	1 <sup>30</sup> pm	Foot care

## Lord, have mercy...

Our members have asked all of us to remember the following persons in our daily prayers:

### **Newly Enlightened**

Christopher  
Melody

### **Catechumens/Hearers**

Anne  
Biancamaria  
Lyn  
Matthew  
Rachel (Irene)  
Simon  
Stephen (Seraphim)

### **Suffering**

Kyle  
Liz  
Paul  
The Syrian people

### **Recently Departed**

Debra  
Innocent  
William

### **Sick**

Katia  
Kenneth  
Gheorghe  
Ioana  
Natalita  
Nagy  
Peggy  
Toni  
Shelly  
Zamfira

### **General**

Priest Michael  
Anastasia  
Stepan, Vera, their  
unborn child  
The people of  
Ukraine and  
Russia, and their  
political leaders