

the *Presbyter*

The Publication of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America



December 2000 • vol. V • issue 2

Letter from the President

Christ is in our midst!

I hope that you took time for yourself and your family to refresh during the summer months and that you have gotten the new ecclesiastical year off to a good start.

Again I express my appreciation for the honor of serving as President of our Archdiocesan Presbyters Council. Along with the position comes the opportunity to serve on the Archdiocese Council and the Board of Trustees of Holy Cross/Hellenic College.

I attended meetings of both in the fall and am pleased to report that the experience was uplifting and that our Archdiocese has dedicated clergy and laity who are willing to give freely of their time and talents for the progress of our Church in America. Particularly pleasing was the installation of one of our own, Fr. Nicholas C. Triantafilou, as President of HC/HC. He is a very talented and energetic brother in Christ who will provide visionary leadership to our venerable theological school.

I recently had a personal audience with His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios and can assure you that our beloved leader is very much interested in the well-being of his clergy. He listened very attentively and took notes as I shared with him many of our concerns.

Among many topics discussed were:

- relationship between the priest and parish council
- monasteries and local parishes
- marriages with non-Christians
- divorce regulations and procedures
- deacons with lay professions
- concern for priests in crisis
- the proposed charter
- continuing education
- revival of *The Presbyter*
- national clergy retreat Oct. 2001
- APC web-site

His Eminence and the Holy Synod are already discussing these topics and hope to soon clarify many of these concerns.

Our first meeting was challenging, with 100% participation of your elected representatives. His Eminence started our proceedings by thanking us for our willingness to serve, expressing his gratitude for the sacrifice we are making. He offered an inspirational message on leadership and warned us to avoid a "messiah syndrome".

We should labor diligently in sowing the seed and then allow God to do the work. His Eminence wants us to prioritize vocations since our need for priests is so great. He wants us to involve and engage the young adults of our parishes to increase their participation in the sacramental and social life of our communities. We also had the opportunity to converse with His Eminence during the luncheon he graciously hosted.

Our chancellor, Fr. Savas Zembillas, picked up on the theme of vocations, addressing the issue of seminary graduates who are not entering the priesthood. He will be visiting the seminary regularly to mentor and monitor students who are potential priests. Among the many other topics discussed during our gathering at the Archdiocese in New York were:

Committees were formed to address these issues and report back at the next APC meeting in the spring.

Please share your concerns with your diocesan representatives and if you know of any of our brothers who are in crisis, share this as well so that we may offer help in their time of need.

I pray that you had a joyful Thanksgiving spent with family and friends, and wish you an uplifting Christmas fast in preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

—Rev. Nicholas Bacalis

President, Archdiocesan Presbyters Council
Dean, Ss. Constantine & Helen Cathedral
Richmond, VA



In This Issue...

Letter from the President

Rev. Nicholas Bacalis

Follow Me: Discipleship and Priesthood in the Gospel of Mark

Archbishop Demetrios

Oct. APC Meeting, New York

Rev. Paul Kaplanis

Contemporary & Classic Excerpts on the Priesthood Diocese of Denver Report

Rev. Louis Christopoulos

The Distant, Watery Globe

Rev. Nicholas Samaras

Follow Me: Discipleship and Priesthood in the Gospel of Mark

by Archbishop Demetrios

One of the most important contributions of the New Testament to a proper understanding of the nature and function of the priesthood is the idea of discipleship. Discipleship, a basic concept constantly recurring in the Gospels, is applicable to any effort to fully and accurately describe what it means to be a real Christian, as well as a real apostle. The priest, a genuine priest, epitomizes the characteristics of a real Christian and, at the same time, constitutes in a special way, an apostle. A study of the idea of discipleship in the New Testament could be a fruitful endeavor, yielding significant data for a re-appraisal and a re-thinking of the priestly quality. The present paper aims at contributing to such a study. We will focus on the Gospel of Mark because it is in the Gospel of Mark that we encounter one of the richest and most profound New Testament sources for a substantive discussion of discipleship.

Discipleship as a call

Discipleship begins as a call by Jesus. It is an event, a condition, a status, which is initiated by Christ Himself. This is presented very early in the Gospel of Mark. Already in the opening chapter we encounter the first major instance: Jesus

“passing along by the Sea of Galilee, saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed him” (Mark 1:16-18).

This first call is coupled, without any break in the Markan narrative, to a second call: “And going a little further he saw James the son of Zebedee and Andrew his brother... and immediately he called them...and they followed him” (Mark 1:19-20).

In chapter two of his gospel, Mark offers one more characteristic case: “And as he (Jesus) passed on, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he arose and followed him” (Mark 2:13-14).

The narrative in all these instances is extremely condensed and reduced to a bare minimum. It preserves only what is essential. What is impressive here is the tremendous emphasis on Jesus’ initiative. The call scene is introduced abruptly, with the simplest grammatical conjunction and with no anticipatory references of any kind. As a result, discipleship emerges as a status created exclusively by Jesus and which

starts by a personal calling issued by him. This calling is strongly underlined by the absence of any dialogue and by the predominance of imperatival forms in the phrasing of the invitation. In fact, the invitations in both Mark 1:16-20 and 2:14 look like commands rather than invitations, but the context indicates that this is merely a way of formulation that aims at emphasizing Jesus’ initiative.

At the same time, Mark reports in brief and terse terms the response of the disciples to the call: “and immediately they left their nets and followed him” (Mark 1:18), “and they left their father Zebedee...and followed him” (Mark 1:20), “and he (Levi) arose and followed him” (Mark 2:14). In all cases the answer to the call is immediate and radical, implying a decision of unusual magnitude and a personal commitment of the highest possible degree. The call to discipleship depends absolutely on Jesus and originates in him, but necessitates in turn a series of radical decisions on the part of the would-be disciple. Ultimately, however, the dominant theme is the call, the dominant voice is the voice of Jesus inviting people to the status of discipleship.

This aspect is presented anew by Mark in the episode of the rich young man (Mark 10:17-22). Here the role of Jesus as the one who addresses the call to discipleship is handsomely described against the background of the search for eternal life. The unexpected turn of events at the end of the pericope re-emphasizes the

importance of the human response to the call. The decision of the rich man not to follow Jesus becomes a reminder that Jesus' call to discipleship, no matter how powerful it is, does not eliminate human freedom and responsibility in answering it.

Discipleship as a mission

In the Gospel of Mark discipleship has mission as an inherent component. The call by Jesus to discipleship is an appointment, a fundamental assignment, a mission. One pericope is the text describing the mission charge of the Twelve (Mark 3:13-19). The text starts off with a short solemn introduction that presents the absolute authority of Jesus in calling people to discipleship: "And he went up in the mountain and called to him those whom he desired." Next comes the appointment or mission statement: "and he appointed twelve, whom he also called apostles, to be with him, to be sent out to preach and to have authority to cast out demons" (Mark 3:14-15).

preaching...an indispensable part of mission

The mission described in the above passage has three elements. Those called to become disciples have, as their first assignment, to be with Jesus, to be with him wherever he goes or stays. To be with Jesus is an integral part of the reality of mission as presented by Mark.

The second element revealed in Mark 3:14-15 is preaching as an indispensable part of a mission assignment. Discipleship here is understood as a commission to preaching. The same verb is occurs in the fundamental programmatic passage

Mark 1:14-15: "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God and saying, 'The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe in the Gospel.'" The content and the meaning of the term "to preach" in this instance serves well as an exegetical guide for the understanding of the same term in Mark 3:14.

The third basic element in the passage under study is mission as an authority "to cast out demons" (Mark 3:15). Discipleship in its fullness includes the particular assignment of engaging in a series of activities by which demonic powers are cast out, neutralized, vanquished. This commission seems, at first glance, to address the issue of people being possessed by demons. However, the mission is much wider and deeper. Thus, the "casting out of demons" becomes a sort of code phrase or a condensed statement that implies a huge number of diversified tasks. The common denominator in all of these tasks is the liberation of human existence from any demonic, evil, afflicting power.

In addition, Mark 6:7-13 presents the mission as something immediate, an immediate action that depends entirely on God's protection and providence in matters of food, clothing and means of living in general. The mission charge is accompanied immediately by Mark's report that the twelve began, without delay, their task of preaching, casting out demons and healing sick people. In essence, the mission of the disciples in Mark 3:13-19 and 6:7-13 seems to be in direct continuity with the mission of Jesus.

Discipleship as diakonia

Markan scholarship has very long ago recognized the very unique place that the lengthy unit Mark 8:27-10:52 occupies in the Gospel of Mark.

Christological statements of great importance occur within this unit which has an easily detectable tripartite structure. A characteristic feature of this structure is the clear and elaborate teaching of Jesus on discipleship attached to each of the three major Christological predictions of the passion. The predominant theme in this teaching is the idea of discipleship as service, as diakonia.

the passion for high-ranking positions, is transformed into a voluntarily chosen decision to be last... to serve other people

According to the masterfully structured narrative in Mark 9, Jesus – after announcing his imminent passion and death – notices painfully that the disciples do not understand his saying. Even worse, while he is revealing his inexorably approaching death, they are discussing matters that disclose their personal ambitions and craving for the highest possible rank ("they discussed with one another who was the greatest," Mark 9:34). At precisely this point Jesus reveals the amazing and radical truth concerning discipleship in his name, a truth that will remain a fundamental and vital principle within the Christian community: "And he (Jesus)

sat down and called the twelve and he said to them, 'If anyone would be first, he must be the last of all and the servant of all.'" (Mark 9:35)

The nature of discipleship is here revealed through a drastic changing of perspective. The preoccupation with possessing the first place, the passion for high-ranking positions, is transformed into a voluntarily chosen decision to be last and, as an absolutely necessary corollary, to serve other people. Discipleship within the community of Christ means a consuming passion for diakonia, for diligent and unfailing service. The vision that Jesus presents is not one of position but of function. The call to be a disciple is not a call to a position of honor, power and glory but a call to a dynamic work of diakonia, of care for other people. This message of the Lord concerning discipleship is so absolute that the formulation uses a terminology that does not leave room for exceptions, excuses or reservations. Christ asks and demands that his disciple be the "servant of all." This statement is astonishing in its radical, absolute and extreme demand, a fact that shows its paramount importance.

Jesus returns to the same subject after the third prediction of his passion and death (Mark 10:33-34). The scenario is similar to that of chapter 9. The disciples hear the sad forecast of the impending arrest and execution of their Master in Jerusalem. Yet they do not understand Jesus.

Instead, they harbor their own thoughts and ambitions for positions of power and glory. Christ calls them and explains to them, as in Mark 9:35, that discipleship is service and not a position of power. This time the statements of the Lord are more elaborate and explicit: "You know that those who rule over the Gentiles lord it over them and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be the slave of all" (Mark 10:42-44). The comparison with the rulers of the nations, i.e. with political power, shows exactly what the nature of discipleship as service is.

The teaching on discipleship as service in Mark 9:35 and 10:42-44 emphasizes service as care for others, as love, as being aware of the needs of the community. The priority of diakonia emphasizes the fact that discipleship is not an opportunity for individualistic moral perfection but rather a new orientation of life in which the others, the community, becomes the center of attention and love. A new mentality is presupposed here. A drastically different *modus vivendi* is introduced that is diametrically opposed to the one prevailing in society. What we face in Mark 9:35 and 10:42-44 is a transformed vision of human existence as service. Discipleship as service constitutes the highest state of human existence, a state in which anthropology and Christology merge into an inseparable unity.

Discipleship as knowledge of Christ

Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark is directly related to knowledge. Knowledge of the truth revealed by Christ himself constitutes an essential sign of true and whole discipleship. This is a rather painful subject for Mark, as it becomes apparent to even a hasty reader of his gospel. The Twelve are often depicted in this gospel as people who have chronic difficulty in understanding what Jesus says. They are exceedingly slow in advancing in knowledge of the truth constantly disclosed by Christ. Hence they are rebuked by him in various instances for either not understanding or misunderstanding his teaching and person. One thing is certain: through the motif of the misunderstanding or spiritual blindness of the disciples, the necessity for perception and knowledge of Christ's Person and revelation is persuasively advocated. Time and again Mark presents Jesus as addressing the issue in a language almost harsh and this fact is strong evidence for the importance of the subject.

knowledge of Christ is a matter of the heart

At this point a few passages from the Gospel of Mark ought to be cited. Mark 6:45-52 is the narrative of Jesus' walking on the sea. At the end of this episode, the disciples are astounded. This should not have happened. The disciples were oblivious to the very recent manifestations of Jesus' divine authority. Mark's statement underlines such an inference: "And they (the

disciples) were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened” (Mark 6:52). In this instance, a significant idea is introduced by the comment of the evangelist: knowledge of Christ is a matter of the heart. Perception of the truth of Christ has to do with a disposition of the whole of human existence and not merely intellectual capacity.

Discipleship means knowing Christ

The most significant example in terms of sharp language is to be found in Mark 8:17-21. Here Jesus addresses the disciples with a stern reprimand for their lack of understanding of his teaching. “Do you not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes, do you not see and having ears, do you not hear? Do you not remember? Do you not understand?” (Mark 8:17-21). This series of questions is overwhelming and the message that they convey is plain: discipleship without understanding what Christ is, does and says is simply unthinkable.

Mark 8:27-30 relates the famous episode at Caesarea Philippi. There Christ asks his disciples: “Who do you say that I am?” After they answer by offering various opinions in circulation at the time, Jesus asks again: “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ” (Mark 8:27-29). Jesus expects from his disciples a right, proper and adequate knowledge of his identity. Discipleship means knowing Christ, having an understanding of his person that is beyond opinions, rumors or

vague ideas. Such a deep knowledge of Christ is not the static accumulation of pertinent information. Discipleship as a deep understanding of Christ is a dynamic state of existence in continuous progress, vigilance and alertness. This kind of knowledge is inseparable from any definition of true discipleship in Christ.

Discipleship as a total offering of oneself

The highest point of discipleship presented in the Gospel of Mark is the total offering of one’s self with all the implications that such an offering entails. Already, at the beginning of his gospel, Mark introduces graphically the concept of discipleship that requires radical existential decisions. In the scene of the call of the first four disciples, he succinctly observes that Simon and Andrew “immediately left their nets and followed him (Mark 1:18) and that James and John “left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him” (Mark 1:20). These four people, called by Jesus to become his disciples, abandon their profession, their means of living and their immediate relatives. The same holds true for the call of Levi (Mark 2:14). The drastic decisions and actions described in Mark 1:18-20 and Mark 2:14 are powerful expressions of what discipleship as offering means. Profession and close relatives are normally part and parcel of one’s self. Leaving them is relinquishing the most cherished and indispensable persons and things in life.

In the episode of the rich man’s quest for eternal life (Mark 10:17-22), when the man insists on knowing the best and safest

way “to inherit eternal life,” Jesus says to him: “You lack one thing. Go, sell what you have and give it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Mark 10:21). Jesus’ answer to the rich man’s request ends with a call for him to become his disciple. This call is based on the prerequisite that he must give everything that he has to the poor first and then follow Jesus. This is a tough request which involves – as it becomes obvious – not only his possessions but himself. Mark informs us sadly that the rich man’s “countenance fell and he went away sorrowful; for he had many possessions” (Mark 10:22). There is no real discipleship in Christ without a decision for a drastic disengagement from things and people extremely dear.

...not only his possessions but himself

Total offering of one’s self to Jesus could mean the abandoning of everything, the readiness to give up exceedingly dear possessions or relationships of any kind. It could mean giving one’s own life. The faithful disciple of Christ, if he wants to be sincere, must be ready for any self-sacrifice for the sake of Christ, even the sacrifice of his own life. Here we encounter discipleship in its purest form. The validating reference for such a radical position is to be found in Jesus himself. As depicted in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is the archetype of a total offering for the salvation of humankind. The key phrase in Mark 10:45 says it all: “The Son of Man came to serve, not to be served and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Offering his own life is a dominant Christological motif in Mark that in turn becomes a dominant anthropological motif describing a central aspect of discipleship. At the same time, the concept of service is tied directly to the offering of one's life. Service and total offering are inseparable and indispensable characteristics of being a disciple.

Discipleship and Priesthood

These five aspects of discipleship according to the Gospel of Mark relate directly to the priesthood.

First, discipleship is a call by Jesus. So is priesthood, since priesthood is – in addition to other qualities – a genuine form of discipleship in Christ. The priest has been called personally by the Lord to follow him, to become his disciple and apostle (Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-14). This biblical insight is vital in view of contemporary trends to emphasize the organizational components or the professional dimension of the priesthood. Whenever and wherever the basic New Testament concept of a call by God to discipleship-priesthood has been forgotten or put aside, the quality of priestly consciousness has deteriorated alarmingly.

Second, discipleship is a mission and so is priesthood. This is a mission with a two-fold assignment: to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and to liberate human existence from any demonic, evil or afflicting

power (Mark 3:13-19). Both aspects of such a God-assigned mission must be emphasized because sometimes there is a “targetless” priesthood, or a priesthood that is lost in a confusing multifarious activity.

Third, the nature of discipleship as diakonia opens up another magnificent perspective on the priesthood. Priesthood is service, diakonia both within and outside the Church. The priest, as a disciple and follower of the Lord, has as his first and strongest ambition to excel in serving people (Mark 9:35; 10:42-44). Diakonia is not just one of many human virtues but a whole way of life. The significance of this idea is obvious when one considers the strong tendencies towards an egocentric lifestyle and self-centered professional goals so pervasive in contemporary society.

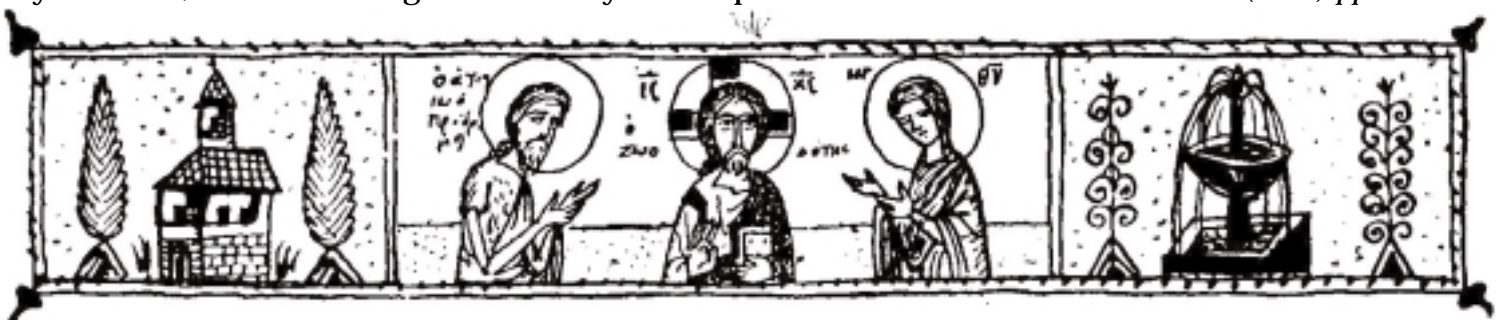
knowledge of Christ is an immense open universe

Fourth, discipleship and consequently priesthood, is a process of continuous growth in knowing Christ and the fullness of truth revealed by him. The knowledge of Christ is an immense open universe, the exploration of which should be a daily challenge and delight for the priest. In an era like ours, of the apotheosis of knowledge and the prevalence of ideological chaos, to know Christ truly and substantially becomes a matter of emergency for any honest priest.

Finally, priesthood as discipleship means a total offering of one's self to Jesus the Lord. In that sense, the priest is not like other professionals. Priesthood is a total commitment that could necessitate even the offering of one's own life. Priesthood as discipleship means a readiness for sacrifice, a willingness to make drastic and painful decisions for the sake of Christ, his Gospel and his Church (Mark 1:18-20; 2:14; 10:29). In the final analysis, Christ is the Lord and absolute priority for any genuine priest who wants to be a genuine disciple; a priority over one's possessions, relationships or even one's own life (Mark 8:34-38).

This last point has been emphasized in an eloquent fashion by a venerable bishop, martyr and saint of the ancient Church, Ignatios of Antioch. Writing to the Ephesians and the Romans on his way to martyrdom at the beginning of the second century AD, he says that only when he dies for Christ, only then could he be a real disciple. Approaching his execution he confesses: “Now I am beginning to be a disciple” (Ephesians 1:2; Romans 4:2; 5:3).

The above essay is an abbreviation of an article written by His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios for the Greek Orthodox Theological Review 30:3 (1985) pp. 271-285.



OCTOBER APC MEETING, NEW YORK

The Archdiocesan Presbyters Council met on Wednesday and Thursday, October 10th and 11th at the Archdiocesan headquarters in New York.

In attendance were Fathers:
Nicholas Bacalis (*New Jersey*)
Timothy Bakakos (*Chicago*)
Theodore Barbas (*Boston*)
Louis Christopoulos (*Denver*)
Mark Emroll (*Detroit*)
Christopher Foustoukas (*Boston*)
Anastasios Gounaris (*Detroit*)
Emmanuel Gratsias (*New York*)
Paul Kaplanis (*Atlanta*)
Nicholas Katinas (*Denver*)
Costas Keares (*Pittsburgh*)
Chris Kerhulas (*Chicago*)
Basil Kissal (*New York*)
Stephen Kyriakou (*San Francisco*)
James Moulketis (*New Jersey*)
Paul Patitsas (*Pittsburgh*)
Sebastian Skordallos (*Atlanta*)
Steven Tschlis (*San Francisco*).

Archbishop's Opening Remarks

His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios opened our meeting with prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit to guide us in our discussions. He welcomed us to New York and the Archdiocese, expressing his gratitude for our hard work in parish ministry. He also noted that the newly elected Council had a good balance of "experience and yet, a freshness" as well. He enjoyed seeing many of his former students around the table.

His Eminence guided us through a passage of the prophet Isaiah from the text of the Septuagint. In this prophetic passage, Isaiah stated that three types of people would vanish in Israel as a result of the people's sins: prudent listeners, wonderful

counselors and wise builders. His Eminence believes that we, as priests of the Most High, must embody all three of these characteristics.

Being a prudent listener is essential to leadership. To *really* listen means not only to pick up on audible sounds, but also to classify, analyze and organize what is heard. The ultimate in listening, of course, is to hear God. A wonderful counselor is not just smart, not merely a good public speaker, but more. A wonderful counselor offers the Word of God in such a way that it produces awe and amazement in the hearer. A wise builder is a person who is creative in a way that serves Divine Wisdom. Priests are architects and builders of souls.

His Eminence discussed his hopes for the future of the Archdiocese, beginning with the need for priests! To emphasize his point, he cited statistics from the Church in Greece. There are about 9 million people in Greece with roughly 9,000 priests currently serving. If we apply this ratio of priests to the Archdiocese in America with roughly 2 million people, there should be 2,000 priests, yet there are only 600 of us. We need more clergy to engage in ever expanding ministries. Our priority must be to encourage vocations and campaign for priests. We must encourage the best of our young people to honor God by serving as priests. Further, we must strengthen Holy Cross to offer the best possible theological training.

After His Eminence concluded his remarks and departed, we discussed the need to encourage vocations to the priesthood. We also discussed the recent Leadership 100 initiative to cover the costs of theological education at Holy Cross, as well as the need to develop a program for the establishment of a "permanent" Diaconate.

Chancellor's Report

Archdiocese chancellor Father Savas Zembillas explained that the chancellor's office has specifically focused on the needs of the clergy. His primary role is to assist in questions of assignment, but he will also make frequent trips to Holy Cross to meet with the senior class, to encourage and mentor them, giving the Archdiocese a human face.

Father Nicholas Triantafilou was recently installed as president of HC/HC by Archbishop Demetrios and hopes are high that his tenure as president will bring much needed stability and growth, both financial and spiritual. Many of our current students at the school are men in their 40's, coming to seminary as "delayed" vocations after a variety of successful careers.

Father Savas reported happily that there is still a greater ratio of active priests to those retiring, but there are more difficult issues. Currently, there are some 30 priests throughout the Archdiocese who are, for a variety of reasons, difficult to assign: men who have burnt bridges with both their parishes and their bishops. There is also the issue of clergy sexual misconduct. The insurance

company of the Archdiocese has mandated that the sexual misconduct policy for clergy be published and made available to the clergy and parishes of our Archdiocese. This will be done shortly.

The Taylor Scholarship Fund has approximately \$7 million and the suggestion has been made that some of these funds be made available to assist in subsidizing clergy sabbaticals. Clergy, especially in smaller parishes, should consider applying for scholarship assistance for further educational possibilities

APC website

Theo Nicolakis, the director of the Internet Ministries office of the Archdiocese updated us on the APC web site developed over the last two years. The web site is intended to serve as a tool to address the need for theological and pastoral resources and to provide a confidential forum for the clergy of the Archdiocese. The members of the APC were encouraged to promote the website among the clergy.

Lunch with Archbishop

At lunch, His Eminence spoke with us about his recent trip to Moscow for the consecration of the newly rebuilt cathedral of Christ the Savior as the senior representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. There were some 200 bishops present for this event. The cathedral is perhaps the largest Orthodox church in the world, with an announced capacity for 15,000 people. It will eventually become the headquarters of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Youth Ministry

Father Mark Leondis, the Archdiocesan director of youth ministry, made a presentation on the use of computer technology to enhance youth ministry. He is in the process of creating new resources for youth ministry to be distributed to parishes nationwide. A series of videos are in production on issues such as substance abuse, sexual abstinence and teen violence. Father Leondis described campus ministry as a spiritual holocaust and hopes to enhance a pan-Orthodox campus ministry program. The development of an Orthodox camping association is on the horizon, as well as the development of an accredited Orthodox scouting program.

Leadership 100

Steve Yonas reported on the efforts of Leadership 100 to enhance the ministries by providing scholarships to seminarians. With current assets of \$53 million and a growing membership, donations of \$1 million a year for the next decade will be made for the education of priests at Holy Cross. Leadership 100 wants to eliminate the burden of excessive student loans carried by our clergy and will, in conjunction with the chancellors' office, begin a survey of clergy education debt. In addition, \$160,000 has been provided to subsidize pensions of retired clergy.

APC business

President, Father Nick Bacalis outlined some of his activities since his election. The president of the APC serves on the Archdiocesan Council, is a member of the charter

committee for the Archdiocese and is on the board of directors for Holy Cross. Father Bacalis met with the president of the Sisterhood of Presvyteres and with His Eminence to discuss a variety of pastoral issues facing the clergy, and attended the installation of Father Nick Triantafilou as president of HC/HC. He informed us that out of 87 students in the School of Theology, 45 are GOA. We discussed the graying faculty of HC/HC and the need for rejuvenation of the faculty. At St. Basil's Academy, plans are underway for the development of a home for elderly, needy clergy. Father Bacalis also informed us that to cover the \$5 million debt incurred by the Archdiocese in recent years, \$4 million in pledges has been raised, with \$2.4 million collected. The proposed Archdiocesan charter is in the hands of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and will be reviewed by a committee of representatives from the Archdiocese and the Patriarchate in the months ahead.

Financial

Father James Moulketis, chairman of the ABC (Archdiocesan Benefits Committee), reported, along with Father Timothy Bakakos and Father Stephen Kyriakou (also on the ABC) that we have \$55 million in our pension fund. In addition to managing our pension fund, the ABC negotiates health care benefits, assists clergy in need in conjunction with the APC president and helps set the clergy remuneration scale. Father Moulketis expressed his concern that we have many clergy who need support and assistance. One indication of this is the high use of the CAP

(Confidential Assistance Program) by the clergy of our Archdiocese. Father Moulketis also raised the issue of federal taxes and the need for the clergy to begin switching from a 1099 to a W-2 as discussed at the clergy-laity. Clearly, much more information needs to be provided to the clergy and parishes of the Archdiocese about this important legal issue.

Father Bacalis, as the outgoing treasurer, reported that we had a balance of \$4,608.39 in the APC account through September. He turned over the books to the new treasurer, Father Basil Kissal. Each diocesan syndesmos was encouraged to forward annual contributions to the APC as quickly as possible.

Committees

Father Bacalis solicited volunteers for various APC committees. Father Steven Tsichlis volunteered to do the APC newsletter, *The Presbyter*, with assistance from Father Chris Margaritis. Father Anastasios Gounaris will chair the Liturgical Issues committee with Father Steven Tsichlis and Father Timothy Bakakos agreed to chair the By-laws committee. Father Basil Kissal is organizing our next national retreat in Washington, D.C. for the 1st or 2nd week of October, 2001.

Discussions

Father Chris Kerhulas discussed a new video series produced by Ellinas Multimedia Productions on the lives of various saints: St. Nicholas, St. Katherine, St. Basil, and soon many more. We saw a tape on St. Nicholas and agreed it was well done and a valuable educational tool.



Photo of His Eminence with APC officers, Father Basil Kissal, treasurer; Father Nicholas Bacalis, president; and Father Sebastian Skordallos, vice-president, taken at the clergy-laity congress last summer.

The next day, Father Emmanuel Gratsias opened our meeting by leading a meditation on eucharistic living and its implications for our lives.

There was considerable discussion of the proposed Archdiocesan charter. A number of theological, canonical and historical questions about the charter were discussed. It was the unanimous consensus of the brotherhood that the text of the proposed charter, with commentary, be distributed to the clergy and lay leadership of the Archdiocese so that guidance is provided when these issues are raised in our communities.

There was also considerable discussion about the necessity of parish adult religious education and spiritual formation. Many of the brothers felt that we need to be more creative in this area and there was a lively exchange of ideas. Father Basil Kissal reported on his work representing the Archdiocese as part of the Religious Alliance Against Pornography. The next APC meeting will take place on the 1st or 2nd week of May in Dallas, Texas hosted by Father Nicholas Katinas and Holy Trinity Church.

—Rev. Paul Kaplanis
Secretary, APC
Pastor, Holy Trinity Church
Raleigh, North Carolina



'The Presbyter'

Editor: Rev. Steven P. Tsichlis
St. Paul Church
4949 Alton Parkway • Irvine, CA 92604-8606
(949) 733-2366 • (949) 733-0962 fax
father@stpaulsirvine.org

Co-Editor: Rev. Chris Margaritis
St. John the Baptist Church
602 Park Avenue • Omaha, NE 68105-2712
(402) 345-7103 • (402) 345-0802 fax
vulcan@akamail.com



DIOCESE OF DENVER REPORT

The Diocese of Denver
Syndesmos has the following
officers and representatives:

Fr. Constandinos Pavlakos – President

Fr. Andrew Eugenis – Vice President

Fr. William Christ – Secretary

Fr. Louis Christopoulos – Treasurer

APC Representatives

– Fr. Nicholas Katinas

– Fr. Louis Christopoulos

Clergy Benefits Committee

– Rev. Constandinos Pavlakos

HC/HC Representative

– Rev. Nicholas Katinas

Two significant events of the past year are the APC National Retreat which was held near Boulder, Colorado, in October 1999. We had an excellent retreat which included presentations by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, and His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah. We thank especially APC former President Fr. Chris Kerhulas and the Coordinating Committee directed by Fr. Nicholas Papedo for their hard work. The clergy participants throughout the Archdiocese thoroughly enjoyed the retreat which included spiritually rewarding presentations, fellowship and visits to the mountains and Air Force Academy. The second event worth noting was our winter clergy retreat at St. Malo's Retreat Center in the Colorado Rockies in February 2000. Clergy from Montana to Texas participated in 2½ days of fellowship with Metropolitan Isaiah. A presentation was made by Father Steven Powley, the only Orthodox Federal prison chaplain in America.

Our Diocese Clergy/Laity will be held in Houston, Texas, April 25-29, 2001. The first 1½ days will be a clergy retreat.

—Rev. Louis Christopoulos
Pastor, St. Catherine's Church
Greenwood, CO

Let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those who wander, visiting all the sick and not neglecting the widow, the orphan or the poor, but always providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and mankind (cf. Proverbs 3:4; Romans 12:27; 2 Corinthians 8:21); abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons and unjust judgement; keeping far off from all greed, not quickly giving credit to an evil report about anyone. Let them not be severe in judgement, knowing that we are all under the debt of sin.

—St. Polycarp, the martyred bishop
of Smyrna (circa 155)

You are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). If we are salt, we should season the hearts of believers. You who are pastors, consider that you are pasturing God's flock. We often see a block of salt put out for animals to lick for their well-being. Priests among their people should be like blocks of salt. They should counsel everyone in their flocks in such a way that all those with whom they come in contact may be seasoned with eternal life as if they had been sprinkled with salt. We who preach are not the salt of the earth unless we season the hearts of those who listen to us. We are really preaching to others if we ourselves do what we say, if we are pierced with God's love, if, since we cannot avoid sin, our tears wash away the stains on our life that come with each new day.

—St. Gregory the Great, pope of
Rome (540-604)

If, lost and worthless though you are, you decide after superficial purification to enter the heavenly, angelic order of the priesthood and to become a chosen vessel suitable for the Lord's use, as St. Paul says (cf. 2 Timothy 2:21; Acts 9:15), then you should keep unsullied the office of which you have been found worthy, guarding the divine gift as would the pupil of your eye. Otherwise, fulfilling your role in a perfunctory manner, you will be cast down from the heights in to the abyss and find it hard to climb out again. The priestly dignity, like the priestly vestments, is full of splendor, but only so long as it is illumined from within by purity of soul.

—St. Theognostos (14th century?)

You cannot cure the soul of others or help people without having changed yourself. You cannot put in order the spiritual economy of others so long as there is chaos in your own soul. You cannot bring peace to others if you do not have it yourself.

—Father Alexander Elchaninov
(1881-1934)

Set your eyes upon Jesus, the only source and the only model of every priestly ministry. With Jesus, by Jesus and in Jesus, become a priest of Jesus.

—Father Lev Gillet (1893-1980)

THE DISTANT, WATERY GLOBE

This is the grey smudge of time.

*Precarious ascent. A place light-
refracted and shimmering.
The far away close to touch.*

*I rest on a fragile balcony
edging
the space of the world.*

*Between my scuffed shoes
and the greywood boards,
the sheer cliff dives below.*

*Vision tenses and swims
when high winds groan louder,
straining the parapet's shaky wood.*

*Through the hours of no horizon,
nothing but the outlying, hazed
blue of water fading*

*into the hazy beginning of atmosphere.
No difference where
water ends and sky.*

*In this rarity of air,
I put up my hand to pluck the floating sky,
palm away a cup of blue.*

*Down and away, distance
flees from us.
Half-visible, the red liquid*

*of the sun's corona
drowns last distinctions,
enters us into a world*

*of lamp shadow and slicklight.
I could be happy apart from my life
where these hours and curvatures bring me.*

*For days, I surface
into a thin spirit
of morning air to view*

*wispy-tissued clouds veiling
the hillsides, yellow sun pooling
shards of mirrors on the ocean.*

*Everything smoky and quiet.
The breath and scent of green leaves.
The trilling of birdlife.*

*Haven't you ever wanted to be so immersed?
I would live here on Oros, finally
alone with silence*

*and wavering light,
in a simple hut,
a fireplace*

*and wood for winter,
a spot on the floor for a bed,
the fluency of prayer everywhere.*

*Give me the space to go grey with this,
the watery height and rim of the globe,
the one distance*

further than time.

*—Rev. Nicholas Samaras
Pastor, St. Michael the Archangel Church
Lecanto, FL*

*This poem was written at the monastery of
Simonos Petras on Mt. Athos.*

*Fr. Nicholas' poetry has appeared in
The New Yorker, Poetry and American Scholar,
and he was awarded the Yale Prize
for younger poets in 1992 for his work,
"Hands of the Saddlemaker".*

The Presbyter

602 Park Avenue
Omaha, NE 68105-2712

Address Service Requested



A.P.C. 2000-2002

Rev. Nicholas Bacalis

President
New Jersey

V. Rev. Sebastian Skordallos

Vice President
Atlanta

Rev. Paul Kaplanis

Secretary
Boston

Rev. Basil Kissal

Treasurer
New York

Rev. Chris Kerhulas

Past President
Chicago

Diocesan Representatives

New York

Rev. Emmanuel Gratsias

Rev. Basil Kissal

Chicago

V. Rev. Timothy Bakakos

Rev. Chris Kerhulas

San Francisco

Rev. Stephen Kyriakou

Rev. Steven P. Tsichlis

Pittsburgh

Rev. Costas Keares

Rev. Jerry Hall

Boston

Rev. Theodore Barbas

Rev. Christopher Foustoukas

Denver

Rev. Nicholas Katinas

Rev. Louis Christopoulos

Atlanta

V. Rev. Sebastian Skordallos

Rev. Paul Kaplanis

Detroit

Rev. Mark Emroll

Rev. Anastasios Gounaris

New Jersey

Rev. Nicholas Bacalis

Rev. James Moulketis

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit No. 848

Omaha, NE

