



## Letter from the President

My brothers in Christ:

I pray that you had a spiritually uplifting Lent and Holy Week, a joyous celebration of our Lord's Resurrection and a renewal of the grace of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

We had a very productive APC meeting in Dallas at the beginning of May. We were most graciously hosted by Father Nicholas Katinas, renowned for his Texas hospitality, and his wonderful staff. Father Nick had only recently undergone serious surgery but insisted on hosting the meeting. Through our Lord's mercy he is well and was strong enough to keep up with us in Dallas.

We addressed many items at this meeting. One of our concerns is the escalating cost of our medical insurance. I know the battles we face with our parish councils over this expense, but our coverage is excellent. The problem that we encounter is the "catastrophic" illnesses of some of our brothers. Since our rates are based on the experience factor of our group, they go up when the insurance company pays out extraordinary claims. This is why we carry insurance and we surely want all our brethren to be protected in time of need. We all need to be more attuned to taking care of our health, our spiritual, emotional and physical well-being. I know the pressures and stress can be overwhelming at times, but remember that the lord is always with us and we need to allow Him to share our burdens. Our Archdiocese Benefits Committee is doing its best to keep

the rate increase reasonable, but let's do our part by living a healthier life-style. Clergy health and well-being will be a priority at our upcoming national clergy retreat in September.

Father Paul Kaplanis has ably represented the APC and our clergy at the three proposed charter committee meetings and will again travel to Constantinople in June for hopefully the final session. The press release from the Archdiocese dated May 10, 2001 sounded promising. In a correspondence from Dallas prior to the committee's departure, we expressed our faith in our Archdiocesan delegation most competently led by His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios, and in the wisdom of the Mother Church, that the Holy Spirit will guide their deliberations to a mutually beneficial resolution.

We are currently planning our national clergy retreat. Through the good work of Father Basil Kissal, we have secured a fantastic site at a reasonable price. We shall gather September 18-20, 2001 in Naples, Florida to celebrate with His Eminence the second anniversary of his enthronement in America, to discuss concerns related to the well-being of the priest and his family and to share in fellowship. Initial details are included with this issue of The Presbyter and further information will be forthcoming, but do plan to attend and respond quickly with the registration form. Don't delay. It is important that we be together.

My appreciation is expressed to Father Steven Tschlis and Father Chris Margaritis for their efforts in editing, publishing and mailing 'The Presbyter' to all the brethren. It is a very valuable means of communication. In the weeks ahead we will also begin making better use of the APC website. We are working with a potential resource person and hope this will allow us to further develop the site.

May our gracious Lord continue to bless you, your families, your flock and your ministry to His glory!

In His and your service,

—Rev. Nicholas Bacalis

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



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# MAY APC MEETING, DALLAS, TX

The Archdiocesan Presbyters Council met on Tuesday through Thursday, May 1-3, 2001 at the Holy Trinity Church in Dallas, TX.

In attendance were Fathers:

Nicholas Bacalis (New Jersey)  
Timothy Bakakos (Chicago)  
Theodore Barbas (Boston)  
Christopher Foustoukos (Boston)  
Anastasios Gounaris (Detroit)  
Emmanuel Gratsias (New York)  
Jerry Hall (Pittsburgh)  
Paul Kaplanis (Atlanta)  
Nicholas Katinas (Denver)  
Costas Kearas (Pittsburgh)  
Chris Kerhulas (Chicago)  
Stephen Kyriacou (San Francisco)  
James Moulketis (New Jersey)  
Sebastian Skordallos (Atlanta)  
Steven Tschlis (San Francisco)

Father Jerry Hall gave the morning reflection on the upcoming feast of Mid-Pentecost, drawing from the writings of the desert fathers about Christ as the fountain of Life, Christ as the bread for which we hunger, Christ as necessary for our life as food and drink. Father Nicholas Katinas then welcomed the brothers to Dallas on behalf of the Holy Trinity parish and went over our schedule for the next couple of days. He also spoke movingly of his recent surgery that required he miss the celebration of Holy Week and Pascha for the first time in his 38 years as a priest and how happy he was to be attending this meeting of the APC.

## *Chancellor's Report:*

After the approval of the minutes of our October, 2000 meeting and the treasurer's report (current APC account balance: \$6,477.35), Father Michael Kontogiorgis, the assistant chancellor of the Archdiocese, extended the best wishes and blessings of His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios as well as the greetings of Father Savas Zembillas, the chancellor of the Archdiocese. Father Michael reported on a number of ongoing projects and new initiatives. The chancellor's office is currently in the process of developing its own website that

would list the parishes open across the Archdiocese in order to better facilitate transfers, a list of retired priests that are available to fill-in during vacations and on other occasions, a listing of the diocesan chancellors with e-mail addresses to better facilitate national communication, as well as a section available only to chancellors that would list priests available for transfer. Father Michael also spoke of the development of a video/DVD presentation for parish council candidates in an effort to provide quality parish council orientation materials to our clergy. He reported on Father Savas' frequent trips to the seminary over the past few months to meet with the seminarians on a regular basis and offer encouragement and guidance to the next generation of clergy. He informed us that the official sexual misconduct policy of the Archdiocese will be issued shortly. Father Michael also gave an extended report on issues surrounding tax preparation and filing for clergy that is included elsewhere in this issue of The Presbyter. Father Michael is willing to meet with each diocesan clergy syndesmos to discuss tax issues.

## *President's Report:*

Father Nicholas Bacalis gave the president's report and discussed the recent (April 20-21) Archdiocesan Council meeting in Boston at length. Father Nicholas stated that the Archdiocese functioned \$200,000 in the black for fiscal year 2000 and that the operating expenses of the Archdiocese had been reduced by \$1.2 million. Funding from Leadership 100 has helped establish new departments like those of Family & Ministry and Interfaith Marriage. Plans are underway to establish a development office, conduct management training and continue to reorganize staff and departments. Archbishop Demetrios has

appointed an advisory committee for bio-ethics, medical technology and the environment.

## *Committee Reports:*

Reports were then made by the chairmen of various committees: Father Timothy Bakakos, the chairman of the by-laws committee, reported that the Chicago, New Jersey, Boston and San Francisco diocesan clergy brotherhoods have by-laws. The diocesan clergy brotherhoods of Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Detroit and New York do not. It was recommended that the presidents of the various diocesan brotherhoods consider drafting simple by-laws for the approval of their syndesmoi and diocesan bishop.

Father Nicholas Katinas and Father Christopher Foustoukos reported on alumni news and events as well as the many positive developments currently underway at Hellenic College/Holy Cross. Alumni week will be May 16th - 19th. As clergy, we need to focus on and encourage vocations as Archbishop Demetrios encouraged us to do at our meeting last October. It was felt that the school currently had no long term plan and this is a necessary step for its further development and growth.

Father Christopher Metropoulos made a presentation on his efforts to establish a national radio ministry, the Orthodox Christian Network. This effort has tremendous potential and has begun to "take off." OCN recently became a member of the National Religious Broadcasters, helping to make connections with other people in the media that can be of help to the development of this ministry.

Father Anastasios Gounaris and Father Steven Tschlis reported on the need for ongoing liturgical renewal ranging from the need for an official English translation of the Liturgy to the establishing of a text for a "teaching" Liturgy. The

re-introduction of prayers for catechumens, especially during Lent; the kiss of peace among the faithful; the revival of other ancient liturgies like those of St. James, St. Mark and St. Gregory the Theologian to be celebrated at least on their annual feast days; and the need to encourage still more lay participation at all levels of the liturgical life of the Church were discussed.

Father Steven Tschlis also presented a guide written by Deacon John Chryssavgis on the need for our communities to be a place of hospitality and welcome for those with disabilities. Entitled *The Body of Christ: A Place of Welcome for People with Disabilities*, it is hoped that this guide will be printed in the near future by Light & Life and distributed to all the clergy of the Archdiocese. All agreed that our parishes need to be pastorally sensitive to people with disabilities and we highly recommend this booklet.

### ***Clergy Benefits & Care:***

Father James Moulketis and Father Stephen Kyriacou reported on behalf of the Archdiocese Benefits Committee that in spite of the downturn in the stock market we have weathered the storm because of safe investments. The balance of our pension fund as of March 31 is \$48,968,414.74. Clergy who turn 70 automatically receive their pension at that point. The investment committee will be meeting in June to make some decisions concerning our new disability program: \$900,000 to be invested to provide long-term disability for those clergy no longer able to function as a priest. Father Timothy Bakakos, who is also a member of the ABC, reported on the APC/NSP benevolent fund. This fund is intended to provide one-time emergency financial assistance up to \$2,000 for clergy and their families. In several cases, it has been necessary to give monthly support to those who need help on a more continuous basis. The current balance of this fund: \$99,688.43.

Our Aetna health insurance premiums will be going up dramatically as of May 1st. The highest number of claims comes from clergy families in the 35-50 years of age range. The overall health of all clergy, regardless of age, needs to become our highest priority in the years ahead. It is imperative for us to become better stewards of our bodies. The ABC is already looking into different health insurance options and will report on alternatives at the national clergy retreat in September.

The Clergy Assistance Program (CAP) has been a source of great help to a number of at-risk clergy experiencing family and other problems. Chuck Nexton, the CAP representative, is willing to visit every diocese and offer a program called "Clergy Family Wellness."

Father Sebastian Skordallos reported on the clergy-in-crisis program run by the Pastoral Institute in Columbus, GA. Dr. Stephen Muse, an Orthodox Christian, directs the program. The priest is identified by his diocesan bishop as being at-risk for burn-out and/or some kind of ethical or boundary violation, marital crisis or emotional breakdown. If appropriate, arrangements are made for the priest to come to the Pastoral Institute for treatment. The cost is \$1,500 per week. Father Michael indicated that St. Luke's Institute in Washington, D.C. is currently used as the vehicle for clergy care and evaluation by the Archdiocesan Chancellor's Office. Dr. Muse will be invited to speak at our fall clergy retreat.

### ***The Charter:***

Father Paul Kaplanis presented a thorough report on the meetings in Constantinople concerning the new proposed charter for the Archdiocese. It was felt that we as clergy should express our support of His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios, the charter committee and the proposed charter. A brief letter was composed by Father

Emmanuel Gratsias, approved by the brotherhood and given to Father Paul Kaplanis to give to His Eminence commending the work and efforts of the charter committee and endorsing the spirit and principles of the proposed charter.

### ***The Clergy Laity Congress:***

A committee was appointed to prepare the clergy program for the July, 2002 Clergy-Laity Congress that will be held in Los Angeles at the Bonaventure Hotel. That committee consists of Fathers Stephen Kyriacou, Theodore Barbas, Paul Kaplanis and Nicholas Katinas.

### ***The Synod of Bishops:***

The suggestion was made and the consensus of the brothers was that representatives of the APC need to meet with the Synod of Bishops to share common pastoral concerns and better develop and coordinate ministries for our Church in America. His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios expressed his openness to such a meeting. Father James Moulketis suggested that a committee be set up to formulate a number of concerns that need to be addressed. That committee is composed of Fathers Nicholas Bacalis, Chris Kerhulas, Christopher Metropoulos, James Moulketis and Anastasios Gounaris. Among our concerns are: clergy well-being; the development of a permanent diaconate; liturgical renewal; the development of the monastic life. How can we assist our bishops in developing these and other ministries? How can we assist our bishops in making the life of the Church stronger?

Our next meeting will be held on Monday, September 17th, just prior to the national clergy retreat in Naples, FL. In March, we will meet on the 5th, 6th and 7th at St. Paul's Church in Irvine, CA.

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

## RENDERING UNTO CAESAR...

Please note that opinions rendered in this section are not intended to give tax advice. Please consult a tax professional for individual tax guidance and advice.

As of January 1, 2001, the Archdiocese has taken the position that Archdiocesan clergy are "W-2 employees" for income tax purposes, as opposed to "Form 1099, Schedule C, Self-Employed." Please note some differences between these two classifications:

- Health insurance premiums paid in your behalf or reimbursed to you are not taxable income under a W-2; only 50% are excluded on a Schedule C (which means 50% of health insurance premiums are subject to income tax if filing a Schedule C).
- Interest paid on a loan for an automobile that is used for business purposes is not deductible on a W-2; but could be on a Schedule C. Lease payments are deductible on both forms.
- When filing with a W-2, business expenses are deductible on Schedule A, and only if they exceed 2% of your Adjusted Gross Income; business expenses are completely deductible on a Schedule C.
- The likelihood of being audited increases dramatically if filing a Schedule C with only a few Form 1099s.

In a very significant clergy tax case, the United States Tax Court ruled that a Housing Allowance is nontaxable for income tax purposes as long as it is used to pay for housing-related expenses. The court discarded the annual rental value test that the IRS adopted in 1971, which limited nontaxable housing allowances for clergy who own their homes to the annual rental value of their home. The Tax Court also rejected the IRS argument that ALL of a clergyman's compensation could not be designated as a Housing Allowance, even if it were all used to pay for housing-related expenses. This Tax Court decision also strengthens the practice of designating all of a retired clergyman's pension distributions as a Housing Allowance (a practice that the Archdiocese Benefits Office uses). Please keep in mind that this designation can be used fully as long as a clergyman has housing-related expenses that amount to this designation.

Just a reminder of some information contained in the December 20, 2000 letter sent to parish councils and clergy:

- The withholding of FICA, Medicare or Self-Employment taxes is never permitted for ordained clergymen on income received in conjunction with carrying out the duties of their ministry. All ordained clergy are considered "self-employed" for social security and medicare tax purposes. The self-employment rate is 15.3% up to a maximum

income for 2001 of \$80,400, with a 2.9% rate for income that exceeds \$ 80,400 for 2001. Keep in mind that Housing Allowances are excluded from federal and state income taxes (to the extent used to pay for housing-related expenses), but NOT from the self-employment tax.

- All ordained clergy are not subject to the mandatory withholding of federal (or state) income taxes on income received in conjunction with carrying out the duties of their ministry unless they so choose and request. If they do not so choose and request, they would file Form 1040-ES and pay quarterly estimated tax payments (due and payable on April 15, June 15, September 15 and January 15).
- Housing Allowances (which must be designated in advance of payment) are separated from salary and listed in box 14 of Form W-2 and labeled as "Housing Allowance."
- The revocation of exemption from self-employment tax has been extended to April 15, 2002. Form 2031 can be used to re-enter the Social Security system.

—Rev. Michael Kontogiorgis  
Assistant Chancellor  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese  
of America  
New York, NY

# CAREGIVERS MUST BE CARE RECEIVERS

No one can love who has not first been loved. Care for others proceeds from allowing oneself to be cared for. Ministers who do not honor their own legitimate needs for peer relationships, dependency on others and time for relaxation and renewal are placing themselves, their families and their ministry in jeopardy.

As in Jesus' day, we cannot serve two masters. Psychiatrist Gerald May points out in his book *Addiction and Grace* that we are either addicts or obedient to God. There is no middle ground. Ministers who would be faithful to their calling cannot afford not to be intentional about their interior lives and their accountability to God in prayer. They must grow continually in the awareness of their humanness in healthy ways. Being intentional about prayer is a good place to start. This means taking time for contemplation and retreat.

Clergy are leaders of the Church and, like it or not, many persons choose a congregation based largely on how they respond to the minister. Does he have integrity? Does he "walk the talk"? Very little is gained from ministers who exemplify chronic work-aholism and little or no intimacy outside of one-way professional work relationships. Ministers who are burning out (or acting out) are usually assuming too much responsibility for one person. They are trying to answer to everyone but God for everything but the one thing that is most important. To the extent that this occurs the Gospel is compromised.

Jesus' life remains paradigmatic for Christian ministry. Jesus took time to be apart even in the face of continuing suffering all around him. Rather than losing himself while trying to meet each person's immediate needs, Jesus kept his focus on fulfilling God's ultimate purposes in saving all humanity. Modern ministers can afford to do no less.

Suggestions for care of the Clergy

- **Confession and Spiritual Direction:** Attentiveness to the movement of God in the priest's own life is an absolute priority. An ongoing monthly confessional relationship with a spiritual father is essential for every priest.
- **Develop and use monasteries:** Attention needs to be given to developing thriving monastic communities on American soil where Orthodox worship and hesychastic prayer are central. The Church needs experienced elders with an understanding of American culture who are able to serve as confessors and spiritual fathers for priests of local parishes. Those priests whose spiritual lives are thus grounded, serve as bridges between the world of hesychastic silence and continual prayer and the cultural melting pot of the market place in which our parishioners must live and work.
- **Suffer for the right reasons:** There is a difference between taking up your cross and becoming a doormat. "It is the pastor's job to help persons suffer for the right reasons." This goes for clergy

themselves as well. In addiction counseling, we speak of the concept of being an "enabler" of another person's sickness or addiction. Enabling or "codependency" is a useless sort of suffering that the addict's spouse and family members fall into, habitually foregoing their own needs with the intent of "saving" the addict, but in effect only making him/her worse and losing oneself in the process.

Pastors need to recognize the difference between the necessary and intentional suffering of Christian asceticism that leads to life and the unnecessary, involuntary suffering that is a mark of psychological ignorance, codependency, passions and/or mental illness. Spiritual direction and personal therapy are essential to discerning the difference between the two.

- **Support groups:** Clergy need opportunities to relate intimately with their peers. Clergy tend to be surrounded by people, yet chronically isolated emotionally. The priest who cannot consciously allow himself to depend in appropriate ways on others (family, bishop, confessor, fellow clergy, pastoral counselors, friends) cannot expect to be free of the temptation to unconsciously use members of his congregation in inappropriate ways, often with disastrous results for both.

• **Professional consultation and supervision:**

Psychotherapists acquire special training to manage the difficult emotional turbulence that arises in work with disturbed individuals and families. As idealized authority figures, clergy are targets upon which parishioners unconsciously project all sorts of unfinished childhood agendas related to previous trauma and conflicts with their parents. Clergy generally learn to recognize this primarily through hard knocks of "putting out fires in the community. Until they do, dealing with this can lead to low self esteem, overwork, and drains on energy needed for the rest of parish work and family life.

Group consultation can be helpful here. For example, a group of clergy agreed to meet weekly with bag lunch to present situations from their parish to the group, which was facilitated by a psychotherapist. They acted as supports and consultants with each other and grew skilled in discerning the relationships between various psychological and spiritual problems. Additionally, they grew intimate with one another, prayed for one another, and went on silent retreat once or twice a year. This is an excellent way to develop trusted colleagues, get continuing education, learn conflict management and basic personality assessment, as well as further the dialogue between psychology and religion, which is essential to meet the questions of Christian faith, life and worship that are raised by an increasingly

psychologically literate culture.

- **Personal therapy:** Clergy are human and there are times when personal crisis, grief and depression leave otherwise healthy persons with solid faith, vulnerable to psychological distress. Many denominations are setting up networks and funds for clergy and their families to get counseling before things have reached the stage of nervous breakdown or family disintegration. The best way to prevent this is for the priest to discover and stay in touch with his own poverty of spirit and vulnerability so that he can appreciate this in others. Treating himself to a professional relationship in which he doesn't have to take care of anyone, but rather can have someone pay attention to his own feelings and thoughts for purposes of healing and growth is not only personally advantageous, but serves as a good model for others in the parish. Where priests are reluctant to get help, bishops should ask about their emotional state and be prepared to refer them for help as appropriate, advocating for the parish's support.
- **Exercise and good nutrition:** Jesus was a carpenter and worked with his hands. He walked everywhere he went. There were no cars. No planes. No bicycles. No television and movies. His diet was natural and devoid of coffee, doughnuts, mono glycerides and saturated fats. He was probably in very good physical health. No pesticides, lean wild

animal meat, fish and so forth the kind of diet recommended by modern health practitioners. The Orthodox calendar of fasting is excellent not only as a spiritual discipline, but for health reasons. Diet and exercise are vital to maintaining good mental and emotional health, especially when confronting a multitude of human problems on a daily basis.

- **Teach people to worship:** Teach the laity to respond in the Divine Liturgy rather than silently watch the priest "do it all". This requires devoting attention to helping persons pray which in turn requires that the priest do so as well. These mutually strengthen one another.
- **Continuing education for clergy:** Learning is a lifelong endeavor. Participation in seminars, workshops and classes allow clergy the opportunity to rest from having to be "the leader" and provides the time to enjoy fellowship and exchange ideas.
- **Develop referral sources and use them:** There is a need to develop trusted referral sources among psychotherapists to whom the priest can refer and consult as appropriate.
- **Ratio of priest to families:** Parishes are often too large for one priest. Jesus sent the Apostles out "two by two". Larger staffs with associate priests and an active diaconate (some of whom might have pastoral counseling training) could be helpful.

- **Develop friendships outside your parish:** Clergy must have ongoing opportunities for intimacy with peers where they can remove themselves from their role, speak freely and be received with understanding. Jesus had Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Every priest needs a Bethany family to rest and relax with.
- **Know the signs of stress and burn out:** We all need stress for growth. However, too much stress for too long can lead to burn out. Stress wears us down, but we can recover quickly with some rest and relaxation. Burn out strikes at the heart of one's sense of call to ministry. Recovery can take a long time and usually requires more than simply rest and relaxation. Idealistic expectations resulting in anger, depression, guilt, physical exhaustion, cynicism and increasing low self esteem in an ever tightening circle of trying harder to meet everyone's needs, are part of the signs of burnout. Roy Oswald's *Clergy Self Care* has an excellent presentation on this. Be alert to the first signs in self as well as colleagues and be a Good Samaritan to both by getting help!
- **Recognize the value of hierarchy:** Jesus affirmed the faith of the centurion who recognized the value of hierarchy. Paul had the "pillars of the church" to appeal to in crisis. Local clergy depend on the bishops for support. They

need the hierarchy to advocate with parishes to care for their mental health and well being and back them up when controversy surfaces as a result of upholding canon law, etc. Each community should have a pastor care committee whose sole function is to look after the priest. When a priest becomes overly stressed and is hurting, someone should notice, not in order to complain, but to assist and restore.

- **Rest:** Depending on the need, a brief stay at a monastery or an intensive week of rest and reflection at a place like the Pastoral Institute's Clergy Resource center could be utilized BEFORE there is a complete emotional and physical break down or the priest's family collapses under the strain and the parish suffers yet another transition to avoid scandal, etc.
- **Institute Sabbaticals:** Ancient communities recognized the importance of the cycle of rhythm and rest that pervades God's creation. The heart rests between beats. A field lies fallow. A divine mandate sets one day apart for contemplation and worship. The Jubilee year renews the community. There must be time for retreat and renewal. Priests who have served well for a certain length of time should be offered a summer or more extended time for a sabbatical. How it would be used could be worked out in consultation with one's spiritual father and the

bishop. Retired priests could be used to fill in during the interim. All are served by this.

- **Delegate responsibility and equip the saints:** Moses took Jethro's advice and divided up the people into districts with judges to hear their concerns. Jesus commissioned the twelve and then the seventy. The Apostles quickly formed a diaconate to meet the needs of a growing community.
- **Develop a hobby:** So much of parish work is intangible. Doing something with your hands helps give a sense of accomplishment as well as offers an outlet for creativity and refreshment. Woodworking, pottery, painting, music and such, as well as outdoors activities such as cycling, running, horseback riding, hiking and camping are good ways to wind down and celebrate the goodness of God as evidenced in Creation.
- **Turn off the TV:** Television is a mood altering, trance inducing drug which deadens the heart and opens the mind to a variety of the cultural values of consumerism that are in direct conflict with the Gospel. Substitute playing a musical instrument, painting, sculpture, woodworking, games with your children or some kind of hobby or conversation with friends.

J. Stephen Muse, Ph.D. is director of the pastoral counselor training program at The Pastoral Institute in Columbus, Georgia. He and his wife Claudia have three children.

# Ioannis Foundoulis, Answers to Liturgical Inquires

vol. III (Thessaloniki, 1976) pp. 8-22. Question 207.

*Why is the epitaphios placed on the holy altar after the return from the procession at the service of matins of Holy Saturday, to remain spread out there until the leave-taking of Pascha, the Wednesday before Ascension? Wouldn't it be preferable to put it away, since the Lord is risen?*

The placing of the epitaphios on the holy altar is connected with the symbolic meaning that is given to the altar, which represents the tomb of Christ. Thus, after the lamentation at the tomb and the procession of the body of the Lord, which is in some way a representation of the funeral procession of His body, there is a representation of His entombment through the placing of the epitaphios on the holy altar, the tomb of Christ. The answer to this first aspect of the question is self-evident, but the explanation of the practice brought up by the second aspect of the question, that is, why the epitaphios remains spread on the altar until the leave-taking of Pascha, is more difficult.

We must look back at the historical development of the epitaphios. Prior to the 13th century, the priest did not come in at the aposticha of vespers of Holy Friday bearing the epitaphios as he does today, but rather carrying the Gospel Book horizontally on his shoulder, wrapped in the aer. It was also thus brought out in procession for veneration at the trisagion of the doxology of matins of Holy Saturday. The Gospel, according to the symbolic

interpretations of the Fathers, is the icon of Christ, and the aer, according to the same interpretations, represents the winding-sheet of Joseph and Nicodemus, with which they wrapped the dead body of Christ. This symbolism markedly influenced liturgical practice, as well as the form of the aer. In other words, while the aer, as its name indicates, was at first a light cover with which the Gifts were covered for purely practical reasons and which was therefore called "cloud," "veil," or "upper veil," it later began to be decorated with depictions influenced by



the winding-sheet symbolism that was given to it. On it was depicted the dead Christ, the "Lamb," alone, or with angels with fans, or with the four evangelists, or finally in the developed form of the depiction of the lamentation at the tomb, i.e. with the Theotokos, John, the Myrrhbears, Joseph, and Nicodemus.

A number of such remarkable embroidered epitaphia are preserved from the 13th and 14th centuries and thereafter. Among the oldest and most important is the so-called "Epitaphios of Thessaloniki," from the church of Panagouda in Thessaloniki, which is preserved in the Byzantine Museum in Athens. In the center the dead Christ is depicted surrounded by the angels with fans; in the four corners are the symbols of the four evangelists; and at the two ends is the Communion of the Apostles, the "Take, eat" and the "Drink ye all of this." In this way the aer was transformed into an epitaphios. This type of aer-epitaphios is described for us by Simeon of Thessaloniki in his Dialogue: "And lastly you see the aer (after, that is, the other covers of the Gifts in the Service of Preparation)...which is said to represent both the firmament in which the star was and the winding-sheet; for since this often bears the dead Jesus anointed with myrrh and is called the epitaphios, it teaches the mystery quite clearly, as in a picture" (chap. 96).

This change had immediate consequences in the Liturgy as well as in the services of Holy Friday. That is to say that at the great entrance the old simple light aer was placed "on the left arm of the deacon" (Codex of the National Library of Athens 802) or, more exactly, "on the left shoulder of the deacon" (Athens 751, 752, 757, 766, Pantelemon 6277-770, etc.) and, lacking a deacon, the priest placed it "on his own shoulder" (Athens 751, Esphigmenou 120).

After its transformation into an epitaphios the importance of this cover increased and its transfer from the prothesis to the altar at the great entrance took on a form analogous to its importance. Thus at major concelebrations it was carried behind the holy vessels by the deacons "on their heads." This is attested by the codices St. Savas 362 (607) of the 14th century and Athens 754 of the 17th century ("in the back of all, the deacons carry the aer on their heads"), as well as by Simeon of Thessaloniki ("after these come all the rest, and those holding on their heads the sacred article which has the depiction of the naked and dead Jesus" Interpretation, 76). In the representations of the angelic Divine Liturgy, which we have in the apse of many churches of this period (Mistra, Kaisariani, etc.) the procession of the great entrance is depicted in detail, and behind the Gifts come angels bearing the epitaphios "on their heads" with great reverence. The covering of the vessels after placing them on the altar took on a form analogous to Holy Friday, that is, with the recitation of the troparion "The noble Joseph..." while "it was being touched by all the bishops, priests, and deacons" (St. Savas 362). Technical reasons as well occasioned the change in the way in which the aer-epitaphios was transferred at the great entrance. If a priest served with only one deacon, the aer was placed on the back of the deacon ("he takes the aer and puts it on the deacon's back" Athens 749), as is done today, or on the head of the deacon in such a manner as to hang down his back ("upon the head of the deacon...covering the head of the deacon, with the aer from

his forehead to his back with the aer hanging down" Sinai 986). The priest carried the aer in a similar manner when he served alone; he suspended it on his shoulders as is done today, or he put it on his head and back as is done with epitaphios at the procession on Holy Friday. During the period of Turkish rule, aer and epitaphios became separate and the aer returned to its original simple form, while the epitaphios was retained, but only for the service of Holy Friday.

Especially in the service of the Unnailing and lamentation at the tomb the new form of the aer with the depiction of the dead Christ took a central place. While before it was simply the type of the winding-sheet, in which the Gospel was wrapped, now it becomes the body of the entombed Christ. The Gospel is retained and placed out for veneration together with the epitaphios at the aposticha of Holy Friday, and carried in procession at matins of Holy Saturday, but the central emphasis fell on the epitaphios. This is even "entombed," as we saw at the beginning, deposited on the tomb of Christ, the holy altar, after the funeral procession of Holy Saturday.

At this point the answer is found to the question of why the epitaphios remains on the holy altar for all of the paschal period. It was not consonant with the entirely resurrectional color of the paschal Liturgies of the period to carry the aer-epitaphios in the great entrance. Therefore, it stayed and traditionally it remains until today-spread on the Holy Table until the leave-taking of Pascha, even after the separation of the aer and the epitaphios.

Serving the Divine Liturgy on the epitaphios, when it is constructed after the Russian fashion with highly embossed representations, presents certain technical difficulties. Therefore in some churches it is transferred to another altar, if there is one, and on the central altar is spread either a simple epitaphios with a painted body of Christ, or an antimenson, which has His entombment represented on it.

This is the historical derivation and the meaning of this custom. Certainly, the practical reasons that gave rise to its genesis no longer exist because the epitaphios-aer is no longer carried in procession at the great entrance. But even so there are no serious reasons to consider revising the current practice.

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*Translated from the Greek by*

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# AMPEILOEIOS

*This is the first thing you think of.*

*It may be the way he fills the room,  
how morning light seems to flow over him  
and is absorbed into his black cassock.*

*Immediately, this man, his  
long, thick salt-and-pepper beard,  
will cause you to think of little else,  
will have you realise your future  
is never yours  
but a wind you may  
only tack against.*

*Because you have never felt anything as  
love without possession,  
you could think he will want  
something, eventually.  
You think of everyone  
who has ever wanted of you,  
think of yourself  
who has wanted of your life the most.  
But he is simple in greeting,  
muslin arms outstretched, shaking  
the light from his body.*

*For three days, he will love you and ignore you--  
something you find both appreciated and disappointing.  
It is strange how you almost miss the judgement.  
Into evening, he sits at a carved  
table and studies you sit  
opposite, writing or gazing past the balcony,  
learning how not to start a conversation.  
Looking out to a blue vestment of sky,  
you think a benign love is possible.  
The weekend visit becomes an icon  
burning into your sleep.*

*Before you are ready to give  
this up, through a blue-veined wind,  
the long boat at midnight leads  
its ghostly wake into the harbour,  
its fogbell calling.  
At the wharf, you look out over the black-robed water.  
Father holds you in the lightest way  
goodbye, kisses your cheeks, his neutral  
beard brushing you like air.  
And you love the way you are  
lost in the openness of his face. You love  
the way you are lost.*

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



## The Priest and the Sacrament of Confession

*You will only worthily celebrate the sacrament of repentance when you are a lover of souls and not a lover of gain, when you have learned to be patient and not irritable. A great love for one's neighbor is necessary in order to hear confessions worthily - patiently, unhurriedly and without irritation. The confessor should always bear in mind that "there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents" and should hear confessions accordingly.*

*Hearing confessions is a cross for the priest. He hears the ignorance, coldness and sinfulness of every kind, of those who come to him; and, at the same time, he is acutely conscious of his own sinfulness, of his own lack of zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of his neighbor and himself.*



*Confession is a school of self-denial for the priest. How many occasions there are, in hearing confessions, for impatience, irritation, inattention, negligence and sloth. His way of hearing confessions is truly the touchstone of a priest's love for his parishioners. It is evident in his hearing of confessions - for the priest himself can see and his spiritual children can see - whether he is a shepherd or a hireling, whether he is a father or a stranger to his children, whether he seeks his own will or the will of Christ.*

—St. John of Kronstadt (1829-1908)

*People often do not know how to approach confession. One must help them, awakening a feeling of repentance in them, put a few leading questions: have they experienced, during the recent period, any kind of spiritual life (struggle against sin, prayer, self-control, an effort to improve). Have they progressed in anything, or fallen back? Which sin do they consider the most important and which virtue?*

*I often notice, in those who come to confession, a desire to pass painlessly through the operation: either they are content with generalities, or they speak about trifles, keeping silent about the things which ought really to weigh on their conscience. In such cases we have a false shame in facing the priest and, in general, an irresoluteness, such as one feels before every important action, and especially a cowardly fear of having seriously to overturn one's life, full of petty and habitual weaknesses. Real confession, being a beneficial upheaval of the soul, frightens one by its decisive character, by the necessity of changing something, or of simply starting to reflect upon oneself. Here the priest must not be afraid of disturbing this tranquillity and trying to awaken a feeling of genuine repentance.*

*Hear each person's confession as if it were his last confession before death.*

—Father Alexander Elchaninov (1881-1934)



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

# NATIONAL CLERGY RETREAT

September 18 – 20, 2001

Naples, Florida

THEME : THE WELL-BEING OF THE PRIEST AND HIS FAMILY

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS

RESOURCE SPEAKER: DR. STEPHEN MUSE, PH.D.

## REGISTRATION

\$190.00, which includes all meals except the Wednesday evening dinner.

Send registration form (below) and check to :

Fr. Basil Kissal – SS Constantine and Helen – 4115 Sixteenth St., NW Washington, D.C. 20011

## HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS

The Registry Hotel, Naples Florida

(www.registryhotels.com)

Each priest is responsible for his own hotel reservations and expenses. Contact The Registry at (941) 597-3232. Special room rates for Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Gulfview Room – 125.00 per night, single or double occupancy.

Other accommodations available at a higher rate.

## AIRPORTS

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## ACTIVITIES

Golf and Other Activities – Golfing before the retreat begins at the Naples Grande Golf Club on the premises. Fifteen Har-Tru Tennis Courts, a full-service health club, and beach activities along three miles of private pristine shore.

Yes, I will be attending the National Clergy Retreat  
Tuesday, September 18th through Thursday, September 20th, 2001

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parish: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**\$190.00 registration is enclosed**

*(If registration cost is a problem for a brother priest, please contact our APC President Fr. Nicholas G. Bacalis.)*

Please mail this portion with payment (checks payable to SS Constantine & Helen) to:

Fr. Basil Kissal - SS Constantine and Helen - 4115 Sixteenth St., NW Washington, D.C. 20011

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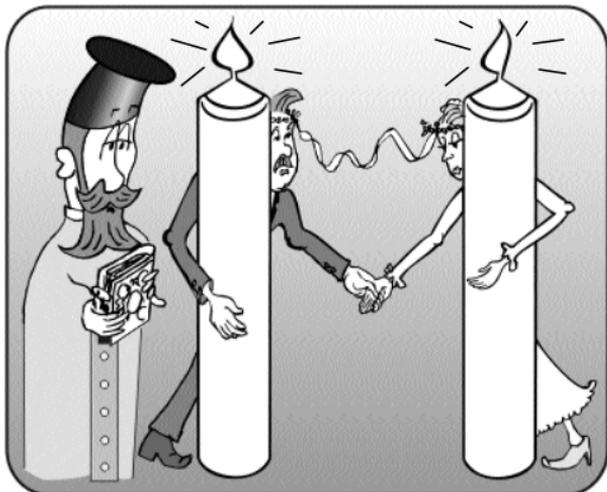
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*Maybe Mrs. Helenopoulos went a little overboard with the wedding candle tradition.*