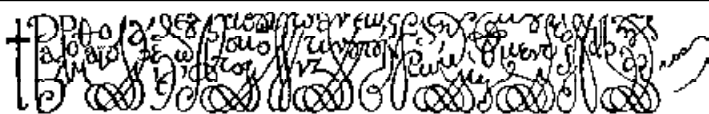




Messages from the Patriarch and Archbishop



Τῷ Αἰδεσιμολογιωτάτῳ κυρίῳ Χριστοφόρῳ Μυτροπούλῳ.
Προέδρῳ τοῦ Συμβουλίου Πρεσβυτέρων τῆς Ἱερᾶς
Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς, τέκνῳ τῆς ἡμῶν Μετριότητος ἐν
Κυρίῳ ἀγαπητῷ, χάριν καὶ εἰρήνην παρὰ Θεοῦ.

Τό ἀπό κς' Ἰουλίου ἐ.ε. γράμμα τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγαπητῆς ἡμῖν
Αἰδεσιμολογιότητος μετὰ χαρᾶς ἐκομισάμεθα καὶ μεθ' ἱκανο-
ποιήσεως ἐπληροφορήθημεν περὶ τῆς ἐπανεκλογῆς αὐτῆς ὡς
προέδρου τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκοπικοῦ Συμβουλίου Πρεσβυτέρων.

Ὅντως τό φιλόχριστον καὶ λίαν πεφιλημένον ὑμῖν
πρεσβυτέριον ἀποτελεῖ τόν στυλόβατην τοῦ ἔργου τῆς
στρατευομένης Ἐκκλησίας, διακονοῦν τόσον εἰς τὰ ὑψιστα
μυστήρια καὶ δὴ καὶ εἰς τό μυστήριον τῶν μυστηρίων, τὴν
Θείαν Λειτουργίαν, δι' ἧς ἐξαγιαζεται τό ἀνθρώπινον γένος
καὶ ἡ κτίσις ὅλη, ὅσον καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐξυπηρέτησιν τῶν
παντοίων ἀναγκῶν τῶν πιστῶν, ὑλικῶν καὶ πνευματικῶν.
Οὐδεὶς ἀγνοεῖ τοὺς κόπους καὶ τὰς θυσίας, εἰς τὰς ὁποίας
ὑποβάλλεται ἕκαστος πρεσβύτερος ἀντιμετωπίζων ἐνίοτε τὴν
ἐλλειψιν ἀναγνωρίσεως καὶ κατανοήσεως τῆς ὀφελιμότητος τοῦ
πολυσχιδοῦ καὶ εὐεργετικοῦ ἔργου αὐτοῦ. Ὅμως ἡ μεθ' ὑπομονῆς,
πραότητος καὶ ἀγάπης ἐξακολούθησις τοῦ ἀγιαστικοῦ καὶ
φιλανθρωπικοῦ ἔργου ὁδηγεῖ τελικῶς, εἰς τὴν ἐπιβράβευσιν αὐτοῦ,
ἂν μὴ πάντοτε ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὡς συμβαίνει κατὰ τό πλεῖστον,
ὁπωσδήποτε ὅμως ὑπὸ τοῦ δικαιοκρίτου Θεοῦ, Οὕτινος δέν
διαφεύγει τὴν προσοχὴν οὔτε ποτηρίου ψυχροῦ ὕδατος ἢ προσφορά,
οὔτε γογγυσμός τις ἀνεπαίσθητος ἐκπνεόμενος.

Συγχαίρομεν τὴν ὑμετέραν αἰδεσιμολογιότητα ἐπὶ τῇ ἐπανεκλογῇ
αὐτῆς καὶ δι' αὐτῆς καὶ πάντα τὰ μέλη τοῦ Συμβουλίου, ὡς καὶ
πάντας τοὺς φιλόχριστους πρεσβυτέρους, τοὺς ἔχοντας ἐπωμισθῇ
τόν βαρύν ἅμα καὶ ἐλαφρόν καὶ χρηστόν ζυγόν τοῦ Κυρίου.

Ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἀπονέμομεν ὑμῖν πᾶσι τὴν πατρικὴν καὶ
Πατριαρχικὴν ἡμῶν εὐλογία καὶ εὐχὴν, πάλιν καὶ πολλάκις
δεόμενοι ἐκτενῶς τοῦ Κυρίου ὅπως στηρίξῃ ὑμᾶς πάντας ἐν τῇ
ἐπιτελέσει τοῦ δυσχεροῦς καὶ ἅμα ὠραίου ἔργου τοῦ εὐαγγελισμοῦ
τῶν ἀνθρώπων, χαριζόμενος ὑμῖν καὶ ταῖς οἰκογενεαῖς ὑμῶν ὑγείαν
καὶ ἀκμήν δυνάμεων καὶ εἰρήνην καὶ βίον ἀδιάταρακτον καὶ
μακρόν ἐν καρποφορίᾳ πολλῇ καὶ καλῇ.

Επὶ πᾶσι δέ τούτοις ἐπικαλούμεθα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς τὴν χάριν
καὶ τό ἄπειρον ἔλεος τοῦ καλέσαντος καὶ ὑμᾶς Κυρίου
καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Ἐκ τῆς Ὁρθόδοξης Διακονίας τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁσίου Ἁγίου.



October 18, 1996

Dear Father Christopher and all of
the Reverend Fathers of the
Archdiocese,

Greetings to you in the name of our
Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

To have been enthroned as Archbishop
of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
of America brings with it many
responsibilities. The most important
of these is to provide the kind of
pastoral care and guidance that the
Faithful in this country deserve.
I am so very thankful to have all of
you, the dedicated clergy of our
Archdiocese, to help me in this task.

As we proceed to fulfill this
responsibility in the months and
years to come, my first concern will
always be for the clergy. Indeed,
while we have all been called to
proclaim the Gospel of Christ, it is my
firm belief that we can only answer
this calling properly if, as the chief
shepherd of this Archdiocese,
I provide for the well-being of those
who have direct contact with the
Faithful. This is why the beautiful
staff you gave me as a gift for my
enthronement has meant such a great
deal to me, and why, as I lean upon it, I
remember, not only my responsibility
to the flock God has given me, but
also my responsibility to you who help
me to shepherd that flock.

I thank you for your gift, and for your
prayers and good wishes for my new
Archiepiscopal ministry. May God
continue to bless you all.

With paternal blessings,

Spyridon
Archbishop of the
Greek Orthodox
Archdiocese of America



President's Letter

November 19, 1996

Dear beloved brother in Christ,

We pray this issue of the *Presbyter* finds you and your family in good health and spirits as we enter the period of advent. The last several months have been extremely busy and eventful for our archdiocese. You will see from this historic issue, which has an address from His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew and His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon, that the APC is active, alive and well.

The enthronement ceremonies for His Eminence were electrifying. In this writer's opinion one of the most moving events was the embrace between two spiritual giants, their Eminences Archbishops Iakovos and Spyridon, on the solea of the Archdiocesan Cathedral which served to seal the official transition of authority in a peaceful and respectful way, witnessed and applauded loudly by thousands of faithful that glorious day.

On behalf of all the brothers let me thank those of you who responded to our appeal for a gift for His Eminence. If you have not sent your donation of \$15.00 yet, you may do so by sending it to Rev. Michael Patrikos by December 15th of this year (send to: St. Haralambos, 251 25th St., Canton, OH 44709). You will see His Eminence's great joy in receiving the archiepiscopal staff from his personal letter to us in this issue.

On November 18 we held our first official briefing with His Eminence. It was a very productive meeting where His Eminence reiterated his commitment to the church in America under the guidance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and to the faithful priests who serve with him. After almost two hours of open dialogue His Eminence asked us to study certain issues facing the church and report back to him soon. All the brother representatives present were extremely moved by the encounter with our new spiritual father and look forward to working with him and the beloved synod of bishops.

In addition let me announce to you His Eminence has given approval for a nation-wide retreat for the hierarchs and the clergy of our Archdiocese. This historic gathering of all the clergy and hierarchs is to be held May 6-9, 1997 at Our Lady of the Snows Retreat Center in Belleville, Illinois. Please mark your calendars from now so you can be with us for this spiritual encounter. Details will be forthcoming and remember, the expenses of this retreat should be provided to you by your parish according to the UPR. A letter to this effect will be sent shortly. Don't miss this opportunity to strengthen yourself spiritually. It is my understanding all the priests who attended our last retreat were extremely pleased with the results.

That is all for now my dear brothers. Please stay well and may our Lord bless you and your families with abundance.

Your brother in Christ,
Rev. Christopher T. Metropulos



Joint Presbyteres & APC Benevolent Fund

In view of the purpose of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council, hereinafter "APC", and the National Sisterhood of Presbyteres, hereinafter "NSP", which is to promote the spirit of Christian love among the clergy families and to develop a genuine interest in one another's well being, we hereby establish a Benevolent Fund to offer assistance to a Priest, Presbyter and/or their dependent children of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Funding

1. The monies used to establish this benevolent fund will come from existing benevolent funds of the APC and the NSP.
2. Additional voluntary contributions will be graciously accepted.
3. A coordinated fund-raising campaign will be implemented to maintain the fund.

Fund Management

Four people will administer the fund, hereafter known as "administrators". This four person group comprised of the Presidents of the APC and NSP as well as two additional members from each group will manage the Benevolent fund. From this group a coordinator and treasurer will be elected. The coordinator will process all requests to the Benevolent Fund confidentially and will present these requests to the administrators for their approval. The administrators empower the treasurer to:

1. Record all donations and issue receipts.
2. Deposit all monies.
3. Co-sign all Benevolent Fund checks with the coordinator.
4. Render an accounting of the fund to each supporting group annually by case numbers.

This fund is to be operated under the sole management, control and discretion of the APC and the NSP. No accounting is to be rendered to any other group, agency, organization or individual. This fund is to be distinguished from any other Benevolent Fund or similar fund or program and operates entirely independently of any other such fund or program.

Division of Funds:

50% of all collected monies shall be deposited in permanent reserve. Only the interest generated from this fund shall be dispersed. The principal shall remain intact.

45% of all collected monies shall be deposited in a checking account, administered by the treasurer and shall be used for immediate requests for assistance.

Up to 5% of all collected monies from the checking account may be used for administrative costs to maintain the fund.

Disbursement of Funds:

The treasurer, at the discretion of the coordinator in consultation with the other two administrators, shall be empowered to disburse up to the maximum sum of \$2000 per case, in a timely manner. Requests for assistance may be made verbally. Written request are not required.

Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of either the APC or the NSP the remaining Benevolent Fund shall become the sole property of the surviving organization, In the event of the dissolution of both organizations the Benevolent Fund will be placed in trust for up to five years, at which time, the monies will be disbursed to a worthy charity (or) or group(s) voted by the administrators.

Amendments:

Any changes to be made to the Benevolent Fund must be approved by the National Boards of the APC and NSP.

33rd Clergy-Laity Congress
New York - July 4,1996

Amendments to the UPR

1. To "Definition of Terms", page 5, add the following after the words "Synod of Bishops":

"Archdiocesan Presbyters' Council - Representative Body of the Clergy of Archdiocese under the auspices of the Archbishop and the Synod of Bishops."

"Diocesan Clergy Syndesmos- The representative body of the clergy of the Diocese under the auspices of the Diocesan Bishop."
2. To Chapter I, Special Regulations, add two new Articles as follows:

Article V: Archdiocesan Presbyters' Council

Section 1: The purpose of the APC is to serve the needs of the Archdiocese and to enhance and promote the mission of the Priests, their diakonia, spiritual growth and development.

Section 2: The APC shall be comprised of two Priests from each Diocese elected by their respective Diocesan Clergy Syndesmos at each Archdiocesan Clergy-Laity Congress for a term of two years expiring at the end of the following Clergy-Laity Congress.

Section 3: The APC shall be convened at least twice each year by the Archbishop or the Council president with the consent of a majority of the other officers and with the knowledge of the Archbishop and the Synod of Bishops.

Article VI: Diocesan Clergy Syndesmos

Section 1: The purpose of the Diocesan Clergy Syndesmos Is serve the needs of the Diocese and to enhance and promote the mission of the Priests, their diakonia, spiritual growth and development.

Section 2: The Diocesan Clergy Syndesmos shall be comprised of all the clergy of the Diocese.

Section 3: The Diocesan Clergy Syndesmos shall be convened at least twice a year by the Bishop or by the Syndesmos president with the consent of a majority of the other officers and the knowledge of the Bishop."

3. In Chapter II, Uniform Parish Regulations, Part One, Article III, Section 7, delete the words "Council of Presbyters" and insert the words "Archdiocesan Presbyters' Council."

Presented and approved at the 1996 Clergy-Laity Congress in New York



CONTEMPORARY AND CLASSIC EXCERPTS

The compulsive minister: a diagnosis

Our society is not a community radiant with the love of Christ, but a dangerous network of domination and manipulation in which we can easily get entangled and lose our soul. The basic question is whether we ministers of Jesus Christ have not already been so deeply molded by the seductive powers of our dark world that we have become blind to our own and other people's fatal state. Just look for a moment at our daily routine. In general, we are very busy people. We have many meetings to attend, many visits to make, many services to lead. Our calendars are filled with appointments, our days and weeks are filled with engagements, and our years filled with plans and projects. There is seldom a period in which we do not know what to do and we move through life in such a distracted way that we do not ever take the time and rest to wonder if any of the things we think, say or do are worth thinking, saying or doing. We simply go along with the many "musts" and "oughts" that have been handed on to us. People must be motivated to come to Church, youth must be entertained, money must be raised and, above all, everyone must be happy. Moreover, we ought to be on good terms with the Church and civil authorities; we ought to be liked or at least respected by a fair majority of our parishioners; we ought to move up in the ranks according to schedule; and we ought to have enough vacation and salary to live a comfortable life. Thus we are busy people just like all other busy people, rewarded with the rewards which are rewarded to busy people.

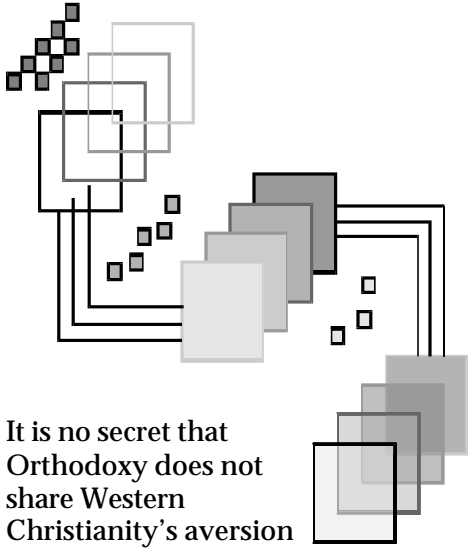
All this is simply to suggest how horrendously secular our ministerial lives tend to be. Why is this so? The answer is quite simple. Our identity, our sense of self, is at stake. Secularity is a way of being dependent on the responses of our milieu. The secular or false self is the self which is fabricated by social compulsions. "Compulsive" is indeed the best adjective for the false self. It points to the need for ongoing and increasing affirmation. Who am I? Whether I am a pianist, a businessman or a minister, what matters is how I am perceived by my world. If being busy is a good thing, then I must be busy. If having money is a sign of real freedom, then I must claim my money. If knowing many people proves my importance, I will have to make the necessary contacts. The compulsion manifests itself in the lurking fear of failing and the steady urge to prevent this by gathering more work, more money, more friends.

These very compulsions are the basis of the two main enemies of the spiritual life: anger and greed. These are the sour fruits of our worldly dependencies. When my sense of self depends on what others say of me, anger is a quite natural reaction to a critical word. And when my sense of self depends on what I can acquire, greed flares up when my desires are frustrated. Thus greed and anger are the brother and sister of a false self fabricated by the social compulsions of an unredeemed world.

Anger in particular seems close to a professional vice in the contemporary ministry. Pastors are angry at their leaders for not leading and their followers for not following. They are angry at those who do not come to Church for not coming and angry at those who come for not coming with enthusiasm. They are angry at their families, who make them feel guilty and angry at themselves for not being who they want to be. This is not an open, blatant, roaring anger but an anger hidden behind the smooth word, the smiling face and the polite handshake. It is a frozen anger, an anger which settles into a biting resentment and slowly paralyses a generous heart. If there is anything that makes the ministry look grim and dull, it is this dark, insidious anger in the servants of Christ.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen (1935-1996)
from his book,
The Way of the Heart

The Church in the Information Age



It is no secret that Orthodoxy does not share Western Christianity's aversion to science and technology, and has smoothly transited each successive era of discovery. Discoveries such as evolution, astronomy, medical advances and paleontology, that caused tidal waves of controversy elsewhere, were barely speed bumps in the Orthodox world. But the shoe may be on the other foot when it comes to computers and the information age. The West is quickly embracing such technologies, while the Orthodox lag uncomfortably behind.

All change causes stress, and computers with their 'learning curves', exacting nature, unique vocabulary and 'artificial intelligence' can be quite threatening in a traditional environment such as ours. Resistance to any new technology is certain. The 'technology' of books was considered a threat to the oral transmission of literature, and accurately so. Who would consider memorizing the Iliad and Odyssey today? And yet the transition to books did wonders to expand the human knowledge pool and sciences to a new level. Many consider computers the next medium to advance the pool to an unprecedented level.

A New Way of Doing Things

The concept goes like this: with millions of volumes of literary titles contained in our libraries, human knowledge has amassed to the point where no individual can adequately tap it as resource. At present, to do a study on a focused subject, say the Dead Sea scrolls, might require ten years to collect, compile and study all material deemed relevant, update that information, then write, annotate and publish your findings. Of course, for a more exhaustive study (as is the case in this field), thirty years may be closer to reality. Keep in mind that such an endeavor is considered 'specialized', another norm in today's methodology.

Now imagine the near future, where you open a notepad device that's more like your TV than a computer. You will request it to scan all the books in all the libraries in the world where significant and up to the minute study has been done regarding the scrolls. (While you're at it, you might okay the purchase order for more office supplies, return a few calls off a list of messages, and order an instruction video to be downloaded for viewing by the youth group). Once the information is received, you then specify how it is to be screened, prioritized, sorted and stored for future reference.

how will we prepare the Church for change?

Significant issues can then be extracted and assembled. The whole process being more akin to managing a vast research team working at light speed, rather than dedicating your career to one endeavor.

The Road Ahead

It is hoped such technology would bring back more broad-minded thinkers, the likes of Aristotle or da Vinci, rather than the narrow thinking brought about by today's specialization. (It is interesting to note here, that the ministry is considered one of the few remaining 'unspecialized' fields, necessitating immersion in almost all facets of human endeavor.)

Should we sit quietly while others use technology to steal the lion's share of mass appeal?

Such sweeping changes would come about in much the same way as occurred after the inventions of the printing press, automobile and telephone. As millions acquired and used these time-saving devices, the social landscape altered dramatically. The use of vast, easy to access, sources of information and networking will slowly weave its way into the fabric of our everyday life.

The question to be raised here is how will we prepare the Church for such change, and how can we set a course that brings the fruition of such change safely into Orthodoxy? As in the past, there seems to be no real theological issue here—no threat by what such technological change represents. Rather, our challenge is one of assimilation and smooth transition. Can we, with our conservative and traditional ways, ride this wave of change in a way that strengthens our Church and poises it in a advantageous position as it enters the third millennium? Knowledge is power, and if the digital revolution is going to be as big as the agricultural and industrial revolutions, shouldn't we intelligently harness that power for the good use of the Holy Spirit? Should we sit quietly while others use technology to steal the lion's share of public sentiment by creating mass appeal for less noble purposes? We are called to witness and spread the Gospel, and must use all avenues available to make that message known.

The Challenge Today

Technologies are available today to manage our time, resources, and information in useful and efficient ways. We can not only track our schedules, our parish membership, finances and statistics, our scriptural, historical and religious literature, but compactly store them, recall and polish them, instantly search and make them available to others. We all know how easy it is to file something valuable, and how difficult it is to retrieve it as time passes. We are also well acquainted with how our present communications pale in comparison with the mass-media. Digital information and communications have made such efforts faster, more refined, more personal, and most notably, less expensive. Networking is strengthening business and government. Imagine what it could do for Orthodoxy, one of the largest and most truly unified faiths on the planet.

Many of our priests are already using computers as tools to increase their productivity and make the 'paper chase' of administrating the office less time consuming. Some are going a step further and using their talents to integrate such technologies into Orthodox ministries. Two priests in the forefront of this technology have consented to be interviewed for 'the Presbyter'.

Fr. Spencer Kezios, the proistamenos of St. Nicholas in Northridge, California for over thirty years, began using computers in the Church twenty-five years ago, trailblazing their use and acceptance long before their current popularity. Described by people he grew up with in Chicago as a prodigy, he taught himself how to program computers, being the first to write and use software in the Church.

Fr. John Touloumes of Holy Trinity in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania has begun an enterprise well known to many as 'TheoLogic Systems', providing software specific to the unique needs of Orthodox ministry. He is paving the way to provide some very new and exciting resources for ministry and study, such as the 'FaithWorx' library of patristic writings and early Church documents, 'IconoGraphics' Orthodox clip art collection, and 'Deacon' parish management system for tracking stewardship.

Interview with a Pioneer: Fr. Spencer Kezios

When did you first start using computers for Church work?

"We started using computers about 25 years ago. At the time, there was very little software for anybody, let alone Churches. We had to write our own programs. Our first computer was a Hewlett Packard. It had a 32 character LED display for a screen. There were, of course, no hard disks so we had to stack a series of floppy discs in order to store information and the amount of memory was extremely limited."

What did your early use of computers net for your ministry in terms of work and efficiency?

"What caught my interest was the potential of saving time as well as efficiency. Preparing and typing a sermon, a letter, or a bulletin became less time consuming. Whereas before computers, we had to type, correct, and then retype the entire document hoping that it would not have to be corrected again; with computers these simple, yet very necessary and time-consuming tasks, became less onerous. We were getting more work done with the same number of people, and a better quality of work.

One of the things it allowed us to do was improve our accounting methods and our pledging, so we had an opportunity to use it for something that both the parish council and parish could relate to immediately. Detailed reports of contributions increased the stewardship program. More than anything, however, it gave the clergy better use of their time, assisted in organizing our programs better, permitted an outreach which before had been almost impossible and enabled us to better serve the spiritual needs of our flock. And of course, that successively led to improvements. I think we are now in our fifth generation of computer systems".

Did you find resistance in the Church to using computers?

"Fortunately, I had a group of young people who were getting interested in computers and were enlightened and interested enough to see what the future held on the horizon. There were a few people, I'm sure, who said, "Father got himself a toy", but then as they began to see what it could do for the parish, that changed quickly. The impact was tremendous and it affected everything from keeping attendance for our Sunday School children and sending out cards saying, 'we missed you' to home and hospital visitations... There is so much we take for granted today that twenty-five years ago was revolutionary.

Look at it as a growing and a developing process

Sometimes, I have to stop and remind myself how difficult things were before we had computers".

As computers become easier to operate, would you endorse the use of computers for 'computer illiterate' ministers?

"The Church and the clergy must become involved with computers, because if they don't, it will be like someone who does not know how to drive an automobile or use any of the many conveniences at home and in the workplace. This is no longer something that's on the cutting edge of a new horizon of technology; this is a very valuable tool. Internet and E-mail and all of these other things that have come about will affect our ministry.



I saw the potential of, not only cost savings, but time savings

We must, therefore, avail ourselves of these opportunities. Our goal as priests is to bring the message of the Good News to the world, and when the whole world is online, unless we are part of it, then our message isn't going to get there. In the process we also save a tremendous amount of time, and if you're saving time, you can devote yourself to better preparation, improvement, education and study".

What changes have computers had on the Church and how do you think it should affect us?

"We now have the ability to communicate immediately with each other on any issue. What does the Church say? What does our Archdiocese say? What does the Patriarchate say? So as a way of keeping current, as a way of having information at our fingertips, as a way of communicating with each other quickly, it has tremendous impact. Web sites for the Church are a very valuable thing. If we were to check with the Archdiocese on how many times the Access program is tapped or other web sites on the Internet for information on the Church, I think we would be amazed. Some of us that are older may not fully understand how important this is, but young people do; their natural curiosity draws them like a magnet, and they are our future."

Some argue that age affects involvement with computers. What set you apart to rouse your interest?

"I don't think it's a fair comparison; rather it is a lack of familiarity or feeling comfortable. Those of us that are older can remember how difficult it was for some people to learn to drive, some of the older people were a bit reluctant, so this is a natural thing that's going to happen. But I don't think anyone can deny what the benefits are. Now it may fall to the younger people to take advantage of all of the technological advances, and how to tap into them and how to improve them, but I think that those who are older can also see benefits both for them and for others and with the proper orientation and encouragement will learn and adapt, it's not all that difficult."

How would you argue against the concept that a traditional Church like ours should avoid such technologies?

"Perhaps there are some who feel that to get involved with technology is to take away from spirituality, that if we're not in a constant prayerful-looking state we are not doing the Lord's work. That, to me, is tantamount to telling Gutenberg that he should never have invented the printing press. I'm sure there were people who thought the printing press was the work of the devil, but how can you deny that the Bible, in printed form, brought God's message to millions? I suppose there are those who feel more comfortable in quoting the past but the history of our Church has been one of boldly facing challenges, not one that hid in the deceptive comfort of what was. The great missionary activity of the Orthodox Church throughout the ages is a living testament to the fact that we always met the challenges of the present. As with many things computers are a medium that can be used for good or evil".

What message would you give to the priests who would take on developing in computers?

"I think what we need is more input from the priest and the parish about what the needs are that will make our ministry more effective. The research for reference materials, or to use a more obvious example the use of a concordance, something we use often has been made so easy. Remember the amount of time it took to check each reference and then find each chapter and verse? Now, with the computer, you type in one word and not only will it give you the biblical references, it will display the text on the screen for you in a nanosecond. That, to me, is the most obvious benefit to a priest. We priests know the needs; all we have to do is pass them on to the people who write the software programs."

What advice would you give to the priests who have not yet learned to use computers?

"Give yourself the opportunity to get some instruction. You really don't need a lot; get your feet wet and you will find that the water is fine. Learning to use a computer is a growing and a developing process; it's a building blocks process. When you observe someone that has gained that experience and knowledge, it looks like an impossibility. If, however, you want to do word processing and you start with something simple like the arrow key, which moves the cursor up and down, or over to the letter you want to correct, you then begin to feel comfortable. Then eventually what happens is you discover there are next steps to learn and then you are there. There is nothing that should threaten any of us. There are millions of average, ordinary people throughout the world using computers. The fact that we are priests doesn't mean we are not capable. The longest journey according to Confucius starts with the first step. Take the first step and then you begin to say, "Hey, this isn't so intimidating after all, it's not beyond my comprehension." I think that's what everybody has to get over. There's nothing mysterious about it, try it, you have nothing to lose, and everything to gain".

Interview with a Young Visionary: Fr. John Touloumes

What do you envision as the purpose of TheoLogic Software?

"In the ministry, in the homes of our faithful, there are needs for resources for their computer systems. The Church has many treasures which we have not been able to develop to the point of making them available to everyone, such as artwork, Byzantine music and various other resources.

The effort from the beginning was founded on prayer

Because our Diocese and Archdiocese do not have the ability to produce those things, especially on a commercial level, somebody has to do it. One of my inspirations is Fr. Coniaris with his Light & Life work. Thank God that he had the vision to say, 'I see this need, and as an extension of my ministry, I feel this is where the Lord has called me to work'. I felt this same way with TheoLogic Systems. Even though it's computer work, and sometimes people will say, "What does that have to do with the Church?" The very fact is that I'm using the materials and resources of the Church to put them on...today's medium, computer graphics, multimedia and software, to make this wealth of the Church available in a useful manner".

"The entire effort from the very beginning was founded on prayer, handed over to the Lord, saying, 'If you want this to happen, make it happen, make it successful with products and make it commercially successful as well', because everyone knows that clergymen are a small group that cannot afford to fund this kind of project. This is something even the Archdiocese is not able to fund, so how is it going to happen on a private-venture level unless the success is there to generate further development? To this day, it is a matter of daily prayer, recommitment and reconfirmation in asking for guidance, and this is why I continue to express it as an extension of my ministry".

Do you see the digital invasion infringing on the 'traditional' ways of Orthodoxy?

"Only to the degree that books and tapes have done, only as a resource. People joke about the day that a priest will have on the chanter's stand a computer screen with the hymns of the day. That's not something that I see as a desirable option; but, if you are able to spend less of your time as a priest doing the day-to-day management of the parish in terms of mundane book work, and able to spend more in the ministry, then it's provided a valuable resource. If you, as a chanter, are able to sit down and compile your various hymns and services ahead of time, so that your people have more information to use and more things in their hand; more booklets in their hands to use during the services, then it's been...valuable. If, on the other hand, it becomes an issue that people see the computer being the decision maker then that has been a complete aberration of what it is for".

How do you foresee the computer in Church work and ministry?

"Christ said, 'Go out and preach to all nations', and one of the ways that we can...use technology to fulfill that command is through worldwide communications via computers. We have an Internet site at www.theologic.com that...has become a resource center for information on Orthodoxy. We have a section called Orthodox WorldLinks which provides (access to) many Orthodox Internet sites around the world. It also provides an online publication called Orthodox Family Life, with free access to information regarding religious education and children's ministry. We also have hymns and writings of the Fathers translated by St. Gregory Palamas Monastery, in Hayesville, Ohio.

You have access to everything from online readings of the day, to Byzantine music, to pictures of monasteries, to icons. So it's become a form of outreach via the electronic media".

"Our web site gets hundreds of 'hits' a day, thousands of 'hits' a week. This has been a real joy for us to be able to spread...news, and as people get on, they go tell their neighbors, and then that neighbor signs up for the Internet or the parish next door signs up for it and it begins to spread. So it's somewhat of an infectious, in a positive way, growth pattern".

How do you envision the Church benefiting from Internet presence?

"I will liken that kind of development to the efforts of GOTELECOM, which, as far as I'm concerned, is one of the jewels of the Archdiocese. Many people don't understand the need or the value, or understand spending our resources on developing those products, but every other Church has it, and for good reason. This is where the attention of our faithful is. Why should we take the most valuable treasures, teachings, theology and liturgies and keep them under wraps, when they can be revealed without altering them and without compromising them?"

How can our Archdiocese further its 'computer literacy'?

"Definitely the ministry is in the forefront of this, and the computer works as an enhancer rather than a replacer. Efforts such as the ACCESS program, (at the) last Clergy-Laity, put forth a presentation which really 'wowed' many. They suddenly saw Orthodoxy on screen and began to realize what could be done. Every parish has somebody that...uses computers, (and) can step in and help with desktop publishing, or accessing E-mail...and if they can do that, they begin to bridge that gap of fear, and they can start to bring the parish ministry in that direction".

“Our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, and the OCA recently came online via the Internet, (as well as) the Serbian Archdiocese. When an announcement comes out from the Patriarchate, or from the Archdiocese, why should we read about it in the Greek press? Why should we read about it anywhere but from an official communiqué from the Archdiocese? And why should the Archdiocese have to spend ‘X’ amount of dollars on overnight mail to every parish when via a mass E-mail they can have the information on everybody’s desk by the next morning? This is simply a matter of economics, and simply a matter of sensible use of resources. It can be done”.

What do you suggest to the rest of us to expand the amount of Orthodox information available to use electronically?

“Probably the most appropriate way to put that is, use your gifts as God calls you to do so. Again, I look at people like Fr. Coniaris and other publishers. There are still thousands of volumes that haven’t been translated that are tremendous pearls, and still aren’t available to you and me to use with our parishioners without having to go to the extent of translating them ourselves or getting a translator. To force anybody into that kind of a profession, or undertaking, who isn’t naturally gifted or doesn’t have a God-given talent in that area would be an injustice”.

“I would like to thank my brothers, the presbyters, for providing their support and encouragement. Their excitement engenders further excitement on our behalf and our ability to continue working on. I would also encourage any of them who feel called to develop their talents in these particular areas to do so with prayer and dedication and never allow anyone to box their ministry into a preconceived notion that limits the work of Christ. If they’ve been given gifts, woe to those who tell them they should hide them under a bushel”.



Archbishop Spyridon at the keyboard

Conclusion: Doing Our Part

Changes have come and gone, and the Church and its mission remain the same: spreading the message of Christ and sharing the gifts of the Holy Spirit among His followers.

Driving did not make ministry easier, it gave us access to more people

We have integrated the use of modern travel, communications and other technologies into our ministries with relative ease, and digital technologies should pose no major obstacles either, over time. Ministry remains always the same: praying and giving our hearts and efforts to the needs of the Church. Driving a car did not make ministry easier, it gave us more ground to cover and access to more people to serve. Digital technology will do the same in different ways. If it frees us from the burden of paperwork and management, that alone will enhance our ministry by allowing us to be more available, to both our work and families. By having instant information available, we should be more thorough and more personal with our flock. Networking brings the hope of unifying our Pan-Orthodox resources and scholastic efforts.

We have much work to do in assimilating these new abilities, and should assist those in lead roles as they are called by the Spirit to use their gifts for the benefit of the Church. Good attitudes, support and knowledge regarding these changes will make the transition easier. Focus on Christian ministry, not methodologies should be our continued trademark. The rest is in the hands of the good Lord, who will show us the way.

—Rev. Chris A. Margaritis
Pastor, St. George
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



A Review of 'Serve the Lord with Gladness'

by Archimandrite Lev Gillet (SVS Press, 1990)

Serve the Lord with Gladness is, in reality, a collection of two books: Our Life in the Liturgy and Be My Priest, both written by the late Archimandrite Lev Gillet (1893-1980), an Orthodox priest who lived for many years at St. Basil's House in London, where he served as the chaplain of the Anglican/Orthodox Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. Father Gillet has authored numerous books—Orthodox Spirituality, The Year of Grace of the Lord, The Jesus Prayer, Jesus: A Dialogue with the Savior, In Thy Presence—under the pseudonym "A Monk of the Eastern Church."

The two books which make up Serve the Lord with Gladness are each broken up into small chapters, generally no longer than 2 or 3 pages in length—though the chapters of Be My Priest tend to average a few pages more. This arrangement of short chapters makes the book very enjoyable, as one can read and focus on just one chapter at a sitting. This is important, because each chapter is rich in content and should be read slowly and prayerfully. This book should be read again and again over the course of one's life because each time it is read, something new speaks to the reader.

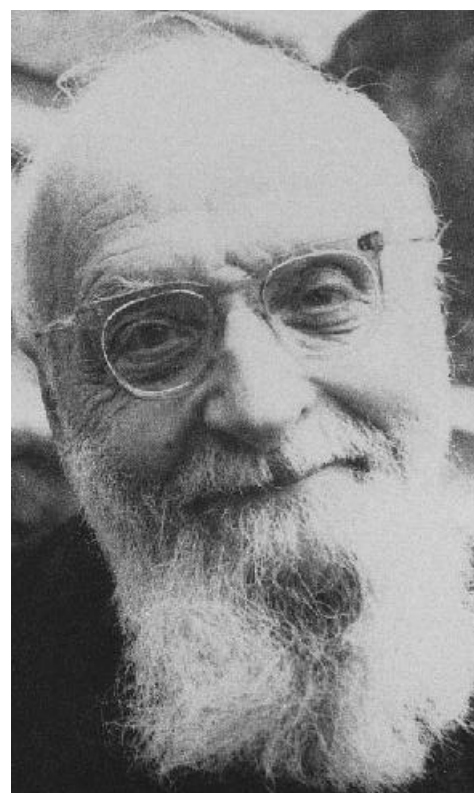
One can be a priest according to the mind and heart of God only by becoming one with Jesus

The first book, Our Life in the Liturgy, is a compilation of personal reflections on the Divine Liturgy, arranged into 22 chapters or meditations. Father Gillet systematically goes through the text of the Liturgy in chronological order, commenting on various themes to be found there. His reflections, first and foremost, pertain to the "inner" meaning of the Liturgy, leading one into the depths contained therein. To give a

basic understanding of what Our Life in the Liturgy is all about, a brief overview of 2 selected chapters—chapters 1 and 21—will be offered.

The priest should seek neither prestige nor authority

Father Gillet begins his first chapter, "In Peace", by meditating on the initial petitions in the great litany, all focused on the word "peace." He writes that the first petition of the Liturgy—"In peace, let us pray to the Lord"—is a call to enter a state of inner peace and tranquillity, where our minds and hearts are free from all confusion, temptation and worldly cares. This peace comes "from above" as the second petition of the litany tells us and is not merely a state of mind or a psychological condition produced by our own efforts. Rather, this peace is above all else a gift from God and we must open our hearts and minds to receive it. This divine peace and the salvation of our souls are intimately related, for this peace is a sign of the work of the Savior within us. The third petition of the litany, "For peace in the whole world, the stability of the holy churches of God and for the unity of all," instructs us that the peace we seek goes far beyond our personal situation and is in fact for the entire cosmos—not only for human beings but for every creature: animals, plants and all of nature. This chapter concludes with a very profound and moving thought: "Every temple of the Lord is a house of the divine Presence and a house of prayer. Every temple is also a house of peace. May the soul of all those who enter this holy temple to take part in the assembly of God become itself a house of peace."



Archimandrite Lev Gillet (1893-1980)

The 21st chapter, "The Lord's Supper", is a powerful meditation on the receiving of holy communion. What is needed at the moment of communion "is the eyes of faith and love to see the Lord Jesus come to us, as He did with His disciples, presenting us with His holy gifts, through which He offers us Himself." Father Gillet asks: "Do we behold Him as He comes to us? Do we see Him hold out the bread and wine that have become Himself? Do we hear the secret, personal word which He will perhaps speak to us in this moment, which hold and direct our very life?"

While the first book was written for both clergy and laity alike, the second book—Be My Priest—is primarily for those who minister as servants in the holy priesthood. The book is divided into six chapters: "There is only one Priest, The Call, The Washing of the Feet, The Priest and the Word of God, The Priest at the Altar and The Priest and His Lord." These titles give a good indication of the spiritual food that awaits the reader, although the title of the book itself—Be My Priest—says everything. The meditations offered in these 6 chapters are clearly not intended to be lofty

theological abstractions. What there is, however, is Spirit. Christ said that all those who worship God must worship Him “in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). This book is about spirit: the kind of spirit that a priest must have to really be the Lord’s priest. If we seek this Spirit, then all aspects of the priestly ministry will flow therefrom in proper order and orientation.

A priest is nothing without the priesthood of Jesus Christ. He is a priest only to the degree that he is united to the person and work of the Savior

In the first chapter, Father Gillet writes: “A priest is nothing without the priesthood of Jesus Christ. He is a priest only to the degree that he is united to the person and work of the Savior. The starting point, therefore, of all reflection on the priesthood should be this: one can be a priest according to the mind and heart of God only by becoming one with Jesus, the one and only true priest.” As priests, we must understand that this oneness is necessary for us to properly carry out not our ministry, but the Lord’s ministry. Upon examination, many of us realize that, tragically, we have not achieved this intimate oneness because of our sinfulness. In the third chapter, “The Washing of the Feet”, Father Gillet explores the attitude of humility and service necessary for serving Jesus as His priest. In fact, “without this precondition, [a priest’s] ministry will bear no fruit.” How is this attitude to be developed? “The priest should seek neither prestige nor authority...to whomever requests his help or to whomever such help is due, even if it is not requested, the priest should be able to reply: ‘I live for you. I belong to you because I belong to Jesus Christ. You who need me in this moment, you are—in the very instant you speak to me—the soul more important to me than any other.’ “ What must the priest do when he is

confronted by human suffering? “The priest has done nothing until he himself has shared the burden borne by the other person...until he himself has truly entered into the suffering of his brother and until his compassion actually costs him something and directs him towards a specific sacrifice.”

The priest, according to Father Gillet in chapter 4, “The Priest and the Word of God,” must be nourished by the Holy Scriptures and the Scriptures must be the foundation of his life. “For the priest—as for his congregation—not a day should go by in which some divine word of Scripture does not enter the heart, much like the manna which each day nourished the Israelites in the wilderness.” Oftentimes, as priests, we seem to be at a loss for words when trying to give spiritual direction to those who come to us. In order to avoid this insertion of our “selves” into the sacrament of confession, Father Gillet writes: “As much as possible, the priest will avoid speaking with his own words, but will rely upon the words of the Scriptures.” The priest should choose “according to the given situation the most appropriate Scriptural expressions. The penitent should leave each time with some word from the Holy Scripture that speaks directly to his present need.”

For the priest - not a day should go by in which some divine word of Scripture does not enter the heart

The sacrifice of Christ is the focal point of all Christian worship and the essence of the priesthood is the act of sacrifice. In chapter 5, “The Priest at the Altar”, Father Gillet points out that, at the Liturgy, priest and people offer together our sacrificed Lord. However, at another level, priest and people must offer themselves with Christ and in Christ. At the end of the Liturgy, the particles on the diskos or paten—representing the faithful, both

living and dead—are poured into the chalice. He writes: “This act signifies that we are all spiritually plunged into the blood of Christ. We become, through the Liturgy, participants in His passion, death and resurrection. Every Eucharist is a death to oneself—for the priest and all the participants in the Liturgy. Therefore, when we leave the Church after the service, we should be different than we were when we entered. Unfortunately, most Christians have no idea what participation in the Liturgy demands of them!”

In the final chapter, “The Priest and His Lord”, Father Gillet discusses the “secret reality”—the hidden relationship between the priest and his Lord—which is at the heart and core of the priestly ministry. The priest must live a holy and saintly life. He must fix “his attention and his will upon one single object: Jesus Christ.” It does not matter whether a priest is celibate or married. “The best priest is the one for whom the Eucharistic Liturgy begins in another way out in the streets when he leaves the Church. The life of the priest” must “faithfully reflect the mystery which he has celebrated at the altar.” In the end, “the priest should envision his own person as the bread that the hands of Jesus will break and distribute.”

—Rev. Photios Dumont
pastor, Church of the Resurrection
Castro Valley, CA

‘The Presbyter’

Editor: Rev. Steven P. Tsichlis
Assumption Church
1804 13th Avenue • Seattle, WA 98122
(206) 323-8557 (206) 323-8558 fax
Co-Editor: Rev. Chris Margaritis
St. George Church
2101 NW 145th St. • OKC, OK 73134
(405) 751-1885 (405) 751-1889 fax
email: vulcan@oklahoma.net

The Presbyter

2101 N.W. 145th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73134-6202
(405) 751-1885 fax 751-1889

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