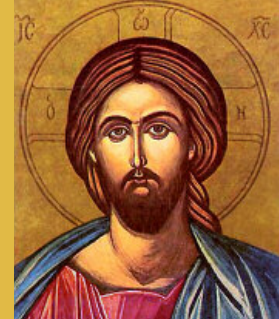


the *Presbyter*



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A Lesson in Essentials

A man's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. (Luke 12:15)

As I write this, the fires that scorched over a million acres and forced the evacuation of well over half a million people in southern CA are slowly being brought under control.

Fires raged here in Irvine, as well as near the parish home I live in. Smoke and ashes filled the air, reducing visibility during the day and at one point, even blotting out the sun. At night I took my youngest daughter fire watching in the hills near our home. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other people stood along roadsides, in parking lots, and lined streets watching the fires with both fascination and apprehension. The fires lit up the night with an eerie light and in some places burned literally red-hot.

Most of the fires in Orange County also bear the mark of human evil, having been set by arsonists. Police and fire investigators have arrested six people and are still looking for clues amid the charred debris.



Fortunately, the church was never in any danger from the fires. But last Tuesday afternoon, I received a phone call from my wife urging me to come home immediately because neighbors had heard that we were to be evacuated. I returned home and began packing things into our mini-van. After almost thirty years of marriage and four children, what do you pack to take with you, knowing that you might lose everything else? What do you think is most valuable? What is essential to you? Icons, photographs, important papers? A Bible, perhaps? A coffee table that your parents gave you before they died? I learned that night that much of what we have is ultimately superfluous and unnecessary. But we were among the fortunate ones. At about 7 PM we received an automated phone call from the city manager informing us that because of changes in the direction of the winds and increased air support, fire fighters – whose efforts have been truly heroic – were beginning to get things somewhat under control and it was now the belief of the Orange County Fire Authority that we were in no immediate danger. Although we breathed a sigh of relief, the questions raised that evening are important for all of us, as Christians and as priests, to ask ourselves – every day.

—Rev. Steven P. Tsichlis - President, APC
Pastor, St. Paul's Church - Irvine, CA



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Between Heaven and Earth:

Pastoral Reflections on the Psychodynamics of the Clergy Family

Our family is a special gift of God in our lives. It is through our family that we struggle for salvation, for personal integration, for well-being.

The apostolic tradition of a married priesthood should be considered an invaluable blessing of God in our lives. A married priesthood displays the consistency between heaven and earth, manifests the cooperation between nature and grace and reinforces the spiritual meaning of marriage. Any underestimation of or contempt for married clergy, as is unfortunately the case sometimes among monastics and even married laity, is a serious divergence from ecclesiastical truth and was condemned synodically quite early in the Church's history.

The clergy couple is the touch-stone of the quality of our pastoral ministry. The clergy couple is a peculiar couple. The two spouses' calling is to live in the world and simultaneously bear witness for what lies beyond this world. They are asked to function in the middle of the ecclesiastical community without losing their privacy. They have to experience spiritual fatherhood without betraying their natural parenthood. They are invited not to allow pastoral confidentiality divide them but instead unite them in love for the flock. They are assigned the task of spiritual leadership while at the same time they find themselves in the middle of their own dilemmas and inner immaturities. They are united in both their conjugal bed and in the Holy Eucharist. How are they to cope with all these acrobatic combinations without losing their balance?

Let us start with a basic assumption: we offer to God what we are. With an arm broken we cannot serve in the Liturgy. Natural gifts serve the spiritual ones because natural gifts precede the spiritual ones. We minister to the Lord and His people through health and integrity; practically, this means that we are first human beings, then husbands, and after that priests. Thus marriage becomes the first matter of priesthood.

I am not sure how many in our Church share this scale of priorities. What I am totally persuaded of, though, is that the quality of our marriage definitely marks and affects the quality of our pastoral ministry. Another analogue is that natural fatherhood may predict spiritual fatherhood, too. (Let us not forget that for celibates their priestly identity reasonably follows from the quality of their own "marriage", namely of their own monastic vocation.)

Another basic assumption is that our capacity to relate tends to run across all our emotional bonds and ties, thus flavoring all our important relationships with the same virtues and defects. No matter if we relate to God, our wife, our children, or our parishioners, we usually repeat the same patterns of attitude and behavior. A lot of examples could be mentioned here: an authoritarian clergyman finds it difficult to be a tender husband; a compulsive, perfectionist pastor may find himself unable to relax when at home; a moralistic and judgmental priest is rather

improbable to radiate the love of God to his family; a possessive spiritual father tends not to respect the freedom of his growing natural children, etc. If we score poorly in pastoral listening, we may have trouble in building an affectionate and loving relationship with our wife because any such relationship requires attentive listening. If in our public life as pastors we pursue self-justification, then we might find it difficult to admit our mistakes in the context of our family. In other words, our basic paths of involvement in the context of our pastoral ministry extend into our relationships with our family, and vice versa.

Next to these two basic psychological presuppositions we need an axiomatic theological principle. After the incarnation of our Lord everything in our Church is theanthropinon, divine and human at the same time. According to the powerful statement of Saint Maximos the Confessor: "The Word of God (Christ) wishes that the mystery of His incarnation be realized in everything and always". After all, if dogmas are not to be lived in our souls and lives what are they good for? I would suggest that we not assume that all heresies have surrendered once and for all, even within the Church. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem warns us that there are many latent heretics even inside the Church. Although most heresies have been historically defeated, they are often still active on an existential level. To denounce them rationally is not a guarantee that the human soul has abandoned them emotionally.

Something that I have noticed is that many of the troubles of our ecclesiastical life stem from a certain loss of that divine-human harmony. Every time we experience, for example, an imbalance between our pastoral work and our family (which admittedly often becomes the main obsession of our wives and children, not to mention some of our parishioners as well), it would be a good idea to frankly and carefully assess our private theology, in order to discern whether it reflects the true Theology of the Church.

How and why may we lose the balance? Let me describe two basic ways of what I call “psychological heresy”:

If the fire of love is not the main motivation in our love for people, how is it possible to love God Who abides in human persons?

Psychological Nestorianism:

Here the clergy couple organizes its life around the basic motivation of financial security. The care for its children’s future may lead to neglect of pastoral mission or to a cold, distant professional ministry. In many such cases, presvyteras may even approve and encourage such an attitude.

In this case, the clergyman gets trapped within his own family which develops a kind of collective egocentricity. He is unable to make the critical step of transcendence, to proceed from natural parental love to the spaciousness of the Body of Christ. If the fire of love is not the main motivation in our love for people, how is it possible to love God Who abides in human persons?

What about the couple’s bond here? I am afraid the best we can expect is a peaceful relationship – yet without inspiration, because love for God is what feeds love between husband and wife. But in these cases the majority of the problems are about their children who easily recognize the hypocrisy of their parents and thus – sooner or later – abandon the Church.

Psychological Monophysitism:

Here we have just the opposite imbalance: a neglect of the family in favor of the Church. The priest tends to pursue the so-thought divine realities of the Church and ignore the human ones of his family. He does not see it as a priority that he should be giving time and energy for personal communication with his wife and children. Instead, he assiduously devotes himself to pastoral activities, thus being physically absent from home and mentally and emotionally absent when he is there. Sometimes his wife imitates him in this imbalance to the degree she gets involved in parish activities.

An unconscious feeling of omnipotence is usually present here: the priest feels invulnerable to fatigue and beyond emotional needs. Probably, he felt so long before he was ordained, by giving first priority to priesthood instead of marriage. There is no need to wonder why: priesthood often provides us with a sense of power whereas being a member of a couple may remind us of our vulnerability and weakness. In pastoral involvement the

priest feels influential; in everyday conjugal closeness his wife becomes influential on him. That is the reason many of us prefer spending our time at the Church rather than at home; the former favors a respectful façade, the latter leads to our disclosure.

Motivation for work-aholism may be guilt.

The fact that we often host grandiose fantasies is a painful reality to discover. But, there is no other option but to stare truth in the face, if the priest is to progress towards self-knowledge, and by doing so, to become a better pastor. Yesterday, in a pastoral context, we dealt with our parishioners as real people; now we have to face the fact that we are real people too. Family seems the best place to grow in awareness of this. The light of intra-familial relationships is too strong to allow us hide.

In addition to feelings of omnipotence, another motivation for work-aholism may be guilt. This is the case of a person with a strict superego that guilt aspires to appease. This superego can be satisfied with nothing less than perfection, so the priest keeps running until he falls down exhausted. Symptoms of exhaustion might be a somatic illness or a burnout or an impressive failure in his pastoral life that forces him to change route. (I can recall the case of a very conscientious priest who spent most of his time working in the parish and his family protested. What his

family did not know was that he had been sexually molested by another priest during his adolescence. He could never forgive himself for this and was unable to find peace in his soul, so his guilt resulted in compulsive work for the Church in the hope of finding forgiveness by God). What is interesting here is that our sermons and pastoral guidance may remain unaffected by our strict superego; nevertheless, in numerous cases, they both may follow this general unconscious distortion, thus expressing a wrong theology.

The temptation of “psychological Monophysitism” usually offends the so-called “good” priest, the conscientious priest, who really cares for the Body of Christ. Besides, it seems that the more vulnerable to this psychological heresy are the relatively capable clergy, who fall into the trap of their own talents and gifts. In other words, they keep adding more and more activities and tasks, encouraged by their real (or fantasized) success. His parishioners’ approval and admiration contribute to this illusion. As if this was not enough, a priest with grandiose fantasies may come to believe that he is indeed as pious as his parishioners think, thus forgetting that he is merely finding himself endowed with the incredible gift described by the verse: *“He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of His people”* (Psalms 113: 7- 8).

If someone is unable to protect his own personal life and normal development, no one else can do it for him. If the priest himself fails to build healthy boundaries between his marriage and family and the Church, what bishop can refuse to take advantage of this willingness to violate those boundaries? To my knowledge, most bishops in Greece do not seem to care for leaving a certain time between marriage and ordination, or for assigning reasonable duties to the priest, or for having a genuine concern about the clergy family. Obviously this is due not to bad intentions but to a lack of empathy, since they do not have similar experiences of family life and the needs of the Church are so many.

The final result of this situation is that the wife starves emotionally, which may manifest itself like any other emotional starvation: through addictions to food, alcohol, television, or one of her children. Actually, the priest himself starves too, but he has invented various substitutes that look more acceptable socially, or more dangerously, even appear more holy. His problem cannot be identified until the time comes that the substitute becomes unacceptable.

What I have just mentioned gives me an opportunity to comment on a difficult topic that is rarely discussed publicly. It is about the emotional risks to which the clergy couple is exposed when the spouses’ relationship is dysfunctional. I have to state beforehand that I would not like to leave any

space for blaming or criticizing someone; no priest and no presbyter are immune to this danger. An emotional affair may threaten even a functional couple, and Saint Paul warns us: *“So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall”* (1 Corinthians 10: 12).

We witness a remarkable increase in the numbers of women who go to the priest for confession

It is more than obvious that the problem of extramarital affairs among clergy is growing nowadays for a number of reasons. First, for several decades, the clergy couple has lived in an open society, and not in a traditional context. Other Christian communities have already experienced a growing rate of clergy divorces, too.

We also witness a remarkable increase in the numbers of women who go to the priest for confession and counseling. As the prevailing mentalities tend towards “liberation” today, the clergyman is exposed to



- a) more intimate hearings;
- b) more radiating femininity;
- c) more disappointments of women with their husbands and thus more inclinations for dependence on the spiritual father;
- d) a perverse nature of sexuality prevalent in the society of spectacle.

For all these reasons the priest nowadays comes much closer to women than in the past and this makes him more vulnerable, unless he possesses a strong spiritual and psychological resilience.

Women, much more than men, gather in the services, cluster around the priest, help in various parish and philanthropic activities, come to confess. Here we have to admit a kind of embarrassment and inconsistency on our part. Sometimes we allow them to control everything and become omnipotent, thus preparing our congregation to react in competition and jealousy. On the other hand, there are moments in which we treat them with contempt and aggressiveness, or even with ungratefulness. The former seems to stem from the fascination and attraction that women exert; the latter might be the other side of the coin, the only “preventive” way we know not to find ourselves entrapped inside their charm.

Our spiritual warfare against our temptations relevant to women should not turn into a war against women. Asceticism is one thing and its motivation is another. Asceticism without love is rejected by our theology and, practically speaking, fails

at its aims. Some spiritual fathers cannot undertake a theological and psychological acceptance of love between the two genders without putting their own chastity into risk. In order to successfully cope with this, some spiritual fathers eventually coin their own private theology. It is obvious that couples may suffer in this climate to the degree that their spiritual fathers try to persuade them to adopt their private theology as if it was the theology of the Church. Spiritual fathers who tend to fear female erotic desire often suppress the desire of the couple for each other and destroy their bond; or the couple decides to abandon the spiritual father in order to save their marriage. This makes for a tragic and unfair dilemma, needless to say.

Some priests tend to form a kind of home monasticism.

Under the aforementioned defensive conditions, clergy eventually become vulnerable to women. Ironically, what happens here is exactly what they wished to avoid. That is why some clergy become anxious in face of an essentially creative female presence; they prefer to cooperate with submissive women, or with women lacking femininity. Where this is impossible they usually assign women to merely execute some menial tasks, in order to avoid a creative unfolding of their personality.

Some priests with undoubtedly good intentions, aiming to protect themselves from these dangers, tend to form a kind of home monasticism. Obviously such a condition does not promote psychological warmth

and connectedness; rather it makes him more aloof (or this was chosen because he was already aloof). Simultaneously it establishes a sort of “angelism”; the priest pretends that he does not care for psychological realities, that he has overcome them. He tends to speak only in “spiritual” terminology and does not understand – or gets distressed with – the vocabulary of interpersonal relationships.

These phenomena become more probable and more intense when the priest had thought of becoming a monk when he was young, even if many years before his marriage. The guilt that he eventually betrayed a “higher” calling leads him to compulsively imitate monastic habits inside the family. (What I find interesting here is that such a priest always prefers to exercise his monastic calling from within the role of a self-ordained abbot, who has decided to lead the other members of the family autocratically and takes their monastic calling and total obedience to him as a given. One wonders what kind of monks such priests would have made, had they done so.)

In my opinion, all of these defensive methods to preserve chastity and asceticism are not effective. The only protective path against risks with women is a combination of watchfulness, prayer, and a healthy and ever-deepening relationship with our wives. It is really a pity if this is the road less traveled.

An essential bond of love and true unity is not an endowment we automatically possess from the beginning of our marriage. It has continuously to be achieved, to endlessly be cultivated. Therefore, the Church has to

acknowledge this reality by helping the clergy couple find their own common path before and after ordination. For such a high aim good intentions are not enough; we need personal time and space. Because nature dislikes gaps, if this work is not done by the couple, other persons will grasp the opportunity to fill the gap.

I could add here that those of us who have yet to experience an emotional attraction toward a woman should not sleep carelessly; sometimes special bonds are formed between the priest and a woman, without any hint of overt eroticism. It may be the case of a very cooperative and confident woman with whom we may have developed a co-dependence. Our presvytera may feel jealous but she does not know why; she has nothing to blame us for. But her unconscious knows well; what is happening in this situation is a so-called unconscious eroticized relationship. Looking for a warning sign of kind of problem, we could think of a priest being happy when that particular woman comes to confess or discovering how quickly the time passes when with her!

There are times that a presvytera feels jealous of the parish. (I yield to the temptation here to remind you that in Greek the Church and the parish are of female gender). The reason might be that her husband communicates to her that the priesthood counts much more than her. I find this a version of priesthood more prevalent in traditional societies, when a presvytera's mission was considered as "giving the fighter a rest". Perhaps this worked in certain eras, but in this post-modern era we have to frankly give priority to our marriage; this is our first job. Otherwise the priest will find it difficult to understand other couples in his pastoral work; and the presvytera

will remain the most honored and most appreciated single mother in our society.

*We face a major problem
in finding young women
who will accept marriage
to a future priest.*

In Greece we face a major problem in finding young women who will accept marriage to a future priest. Women tend to fear that by ordination they will be marginalized both in their husband's lives and in society generally; worse, they feel that the candidate for ordination who desperately seeks a wife does not actually put emphasis on the person but on the role of being a presvytera. And because they reasonably wish to be treated like unique persons, they refuse.

Faithful young people who are candidates for the priesthood are still young people. They belong to their era no less than their peers; they just try not to imitate them in sins. Thus, in developing a perspective on priestly vocations, we have to take this reality under consideration in order to be able to plan. In other words, the youth of today give priority to intimacy and healthy relationships. It seems paradoxical that by doing so they are closer to the spirit of the Service of Matrimony than their grandparents. The latter for some centuries tended to consider having children as the main purpose of marriage; but young people today are concerned about the affectional bond of the couple. Well, in the Service of Matrimony you will find many more prayers about the bond of the couple and much less about the

children to come. Its Byzantine authors seem much more modern than we could imagine.

By saying all this, I hope I made obvious my conviction that the priority given to the couple is a good development of modern times. The Church, having passed through a variety of cultural influences on her mentality, now stands in front of her sources and faces the challenge to rediscover them. One could erroneously consider this shift to be more "secular" and less "pious", and so it could be asked: "Will not the giving of priority to the couple decrease priestly vocations or their productivity as clergymen?" My answer is no. I would predict they will become healthier in the short term and that priestly vocations will increase in number over the long term.

To add a few words about the children in clergy families, I would pose the question: Is anything special required for a priest to be a good father? Some of you may be astonished when you hear that I will again answer no. A priest should qualify for being a good father just as everybody else does. The problem is that sometimes we are unable to respond to the wonderful calling of fatherhood, not because we lack the appropriate abilities, but to the degree we undermine them by a so-called "professional perversion".

What is a professional perversion? Well, this is a chronic "medical" condition, prevalent especially among clergy, policemen, judges, and teachers. The children have their own private pastor but simply lack a father.

Perhaps someone is wondering about the symptoms of this disorder? The symptoms of this disorder are made up of a consistent constellation of behaviors indicating that priestly life has invaded family life and abuses it, behaviors such as coercion, delivering a number of sermons daily to his family, a compulsive urge to assist people uninvited, the habit of preaching what he has never tried to accomplish, an inability to relax and laugh, a moralistic odor in each of his answers, or mere neglect.

As for the aetiology of this disorder:

- a) although sometimes it runs in families, a hereditary factor has not been affirmed;
- b) it is strongly infectious: the prolonged influence of a priest or spiritual father who suffer from professional perversion contaminates other candidates for the priesthood and their families;
- c) a self-immune factor, namely the development of antibodies for inner states and a tendency to reject them as alien while focusing on externals.

The treatment for professional perversion should include prayer, reading, struggle for self-knowledge, moments of intimacy with our wife, the effort to understand each one of our children as the unique persons God has created them to be and to interact with them consistently and lovingly so that we can be grateful to God for them.

Our children are exposed to the priestly aspects of our life while they have the exclusive privilege of knowing us as we really are in everyday life. So comparisons between our high verbal proclamations and our more or less lower practical performance of

the virtues may create confusion or disappointment in their minds. This gap cannot be amended by either pretentious behavior at home or by abandoning the mission of working for the Gospel; that would be a pseudo-dilemma. My proposal is that we should try to live both the joy of natural family life and the blissful foretaste of the Kingdom to come. They not only can coexist, but our mission is to convince people that they can coexist and become mutual prerequisites in the truly sacramental life.

So far we have dealt with diagnoses. What would I recommend as some preventive and therapeutic measures? I will briefly epitomize some:

- 1) That the bishop leaves adequate time for the marriage relationship to adequately develop before ordination. In addition, we need a good relationship between the bishop and the priestly candidate couple, actually an affectionate caring pastoral relationship.
- 2) That the couple, after ordination, protects its privacy by finding time for themselves, both indoors and outdoors. By this I mean that assignments on the priest should be reasonable, depending not only on his age and experience, but on the life-cycle of his family too.
- 3) That all bishops and spiritual fathers, are very, very careful when we meet married candidates who had thought of becoming monks or celibates previously.
- 4) That clergy families cultivate friendship and mutual support with other clergy families.
- 5) That we all stress the importance of the couple in the Church and disseminate a correct theology on marriage. Maybe we could try catechesis with a couple of young catechists.

6) That we keep in mind that the most successful promotion of priesthood among young people is a happy clergy couple that practices and exemplifies a real and living relationship with God. Additionally, that we apply a more daring and inventive pastoral approach to priestly vocations, including an approach to healthy married couples.

7) That we create structures in which clergy families in crisis could find a shelter, relief and renewal.

And as I have spoken out today against perfectionism, let us remember how Saint Maximos the Confessor concludes the preface of his Mystagogy by considering his work rather trivial: "Even the smallest thing we offer according to our ability is acceptable by God who did not reject the coin of the widow. It shares with the gold offerings of the rich the royal sign of the King on it and the wholehearted intention".

Beloved brothers,

Only in Orthodoxy do we live the blessing of combining priesthood and marriage. We have been endowed with an amazing privilege that waits for enactment. In other words, the challenge for the clergy couple is to live in such a way that its psychological truth coincides with its proclaimed theological truth.



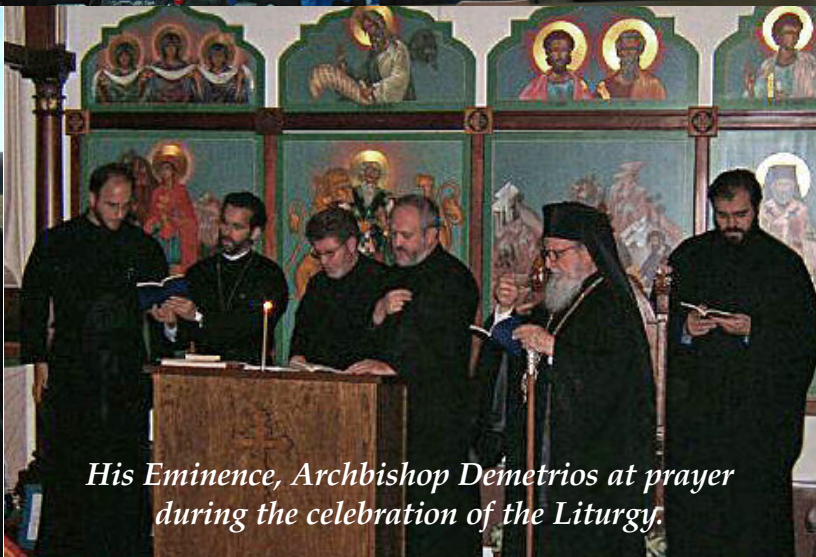
—Rev. Vasileios Thermos, M.D., Ph.D.
A paper given at the National
Clergy Retreat, October 3, 2007



Clergy in attendance at the Antiochian Village Retreat.



Father Demetrios Nicoloudakis leading a Trisagion prayed for the victims of terrorism at the crash site of Flight 93.

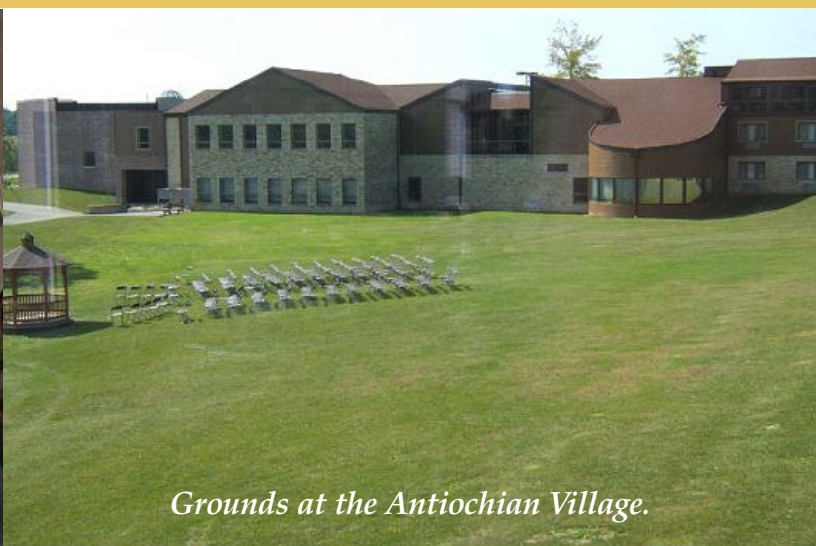


His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios at prayer during the celebration of the Liturgy.

Scenes from the APC National Clergy Retreat at Antiochian Village, October 2-4, 2007



Father Jordan Brown serving at Vespers



Grounds at the Antiochian Village.



Fathers Demetrios Moraitis, Apostolos Georgiamentis and Jordan Brown relaxing.



Fr. Emmanuel Gratsias: Thirty Years of Serving the Church

by Sophia Niarchos

When the Laws of Men Are Not Enough

"It was the early '60s. (I went to seminary in '63.) It was a time of idealism; it was the time of John F. Kennedy; it was a time when young people were being called to do something, to fulfill something in society, to take action, to reach out. We had the attitude of 'we can do it, we will do it,'" Fr. Manny, as his parishioners and those in the surrounding Glen Cove community know him, explains.

But for Fr. Manny, the idealism that emanated from the spirit of the times, while sufficient to inspire him to pursue an education in political science at George Washington University, left him questioning the role of government in people's lives and whether it was the answer to what was lacking in American society.

"Somewhere along the line, I started getting kind of frustrated. I was working for the federal government, going to school at night, but not 100% happy with what I was doing. After spending two or three years seeing what was going on in government, I realized that government a lot of times didn't really care, and you didn't really get things done through government. I remember seeing beggars on the streets of Washington and wondering why. If there's a Welfare Department, why does a guy who's minus a leg have to sit there and beg?

I would say, 'The laws of men aren't going to solve a lot of problems. There's got to be something that's bigger and

stronger.' I started to realize that there had to be a greater principle and greater ideals. At Easter of '63 [at his hometown church of St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral], it started coming to me that it could be God-centered principles, that perhaps God's laws, not man's laws, are the way to change things. If you take that kind of principle and rise above government, you might be able to do something in the world, even though government is trying to do things. I decided I had to do something meaningful in life."

And so, for Fr. Manny, the usual portrait of a priest as a contemplative, prayerful, meditative individual was replaced by his vision of a community activist who seeks to better the overall human condition by deeds as well as prayer and words. Having been a very active and involved Greek American (he was a member and -- during his first year in the seminary -- Supreme President of the Sons of Pericles, AHEPA's (American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association) junior auxiliary. Fr. Manny remembers that "the idea of being around Church and Greek-American life was not strange or different to me.

Fr. Manny focused on history at Hellenic College, the undergraduate school, and he appreciated the intellectualism of Fr. Vaporis, who had two Ph.D.s and two Master's degrees, and taught him Balkan, Russian, and Modern Greek history.

Father Emmanuel Gratsias died this past October 16th following a battle with pancreatic cancer. He served as the pastor of the Church of the Resurrection on Long Island for more than three decades and was a long-time member of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council. The interview below captures some of the man: his faith, his enthusiasm and his desire to do whatever is good, right and true. He is missed.

May his memory be eternal!



Fr. Manny received his Master of Divinity degree in 1970 and then spent a year at the Graduate School at the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland. The program, jointly undertaken with the University of Geneva, awarded a Certificate in Ecumenical Studies. The following year, he worked with the Economic Opportunity Committee (established in conjunction with the War on Poverty) in Cambridge, MA. It was a year of social activism during which he helped organize communities to respond to actions taken that led to housing shortages affecting the poor, the absence of health benefits for factory workers in the region, and other issues impacting on low-income areas.

Emmanuel Gratsias was ordained a deacon on October 1, 1972, by then Bishop Silas (Koskinas) at St. Sophia Cathedral in Washington, DC. Two weeks later, he was ordained a priest at Boston's Annunciation Cathedral. "When I was first told I would be ordained in Boston, I didn't understand why. I had wanted to be ordained in the presence of my family and friends in Washington," Fr. Manny remembers. But it didn't take long for the explanation to make sense.

And so it was that Fr. Manny was ordained by Archbishop Iakovos in the presence of fifteen priests, chancellor of the archdiocese Fr. George Bacopoulos and president of the seminary Fr. Leonidas Contos who presented him, and a cathedral full of his family and the people and dignitaries who had come for Kavadas' memorial.

"The four years I spent at Three Hierarchs Church in Brooklyn, as an assistant pastor," he says, "were the best thing that happened to me. Fr. Angelo Gavalas treated me with respect and let me do things on my own."

Fr. Manny believes the most important thing he learned as a priest was to be tolerant of other people, their differences, their opinions, their weaknesses.

"I used to get upset at things, and Fr. Angelo would calm me down explaining that the reason people felt as they did was because of their own personal experience. 'Here's where they're coming from,' Fr. Angelo would explain. "Although we had learned this at seminary, then it was academic. At Three Hierarchs, it was real life."

"I also learned to listen and that there are a lot of things that other people know better than I do and can do better than I can," he reflects.

After four years of work at Three Hierarchs, a new position was made available to Fr. Manny, to be the first priest of a newly formed church on the North Shore of Long Island in Glen Cove, N.Y. From an established thousand-family church in Brooklyn, he moved into a situation where a small group of people wanted to build their own local parish.

"What I had thought of as priorities before, social action and education, became secondary to the importance of creating a parish and making it grow. In a sense, it's been the priority for the last twenty-six years of this parish. I still talk of this parish as a "new" parish. There's a big difference than being an established parish. At Three Hierarchs, I didn't have to worry about finding new members - there were one thousand families. I had to worry about such things as what to teach the Scouts on a given night."

After four years, the archdiocese wanted to place Fr. Manny in his own parish.

"Bishop Silas kept saying he had a large parish for me," he remembers. "But people on the North Shore of Long Island had heard I was leaving Brooklyn and were calling me to come to be the pastor of the parish they were trying to form. The challenge interested me and I told the bishop. He kept repeating the part about a big parish, but I figured if you are going to start a parish, do it when you're young." Finally he said O.K. "and I started meeting with the organizing committee. Presvytera Alexandra was pregnant with John, and we were both anxious about whether this was a good move for a family especially since there were concerns on the committee as to the ability to compensate a full-time priest. But there was enough confidence expressed, we sensed the dedication and enthusiasm, and told the committee and the bishop that we would take the chance with them."

With a small core group of Orthodox Christians, in 1976 Fr. Manny became pastor of the Greek Orthodox Church of the North Shore (named Resurrection in 1980), which had its home in the borrowed space of Glen Cove's Methodist Church, before moving to the former St. Hyacinth Catholic Church.

"It took aggressive reaching out and welcoming people to the community to begin to build the parish," Fr. Manny remembers. "In the early years, I would look in the phone book for Greek names, phoning people to let them know we were here. I would even knock on the doors of new arrivals to the area."

Today Fr. Manny reflects on the change in demographics of the community.

"In the 80's, no one was moving in," he says. "Today, we have many young couples and children."

So many, in fact, that it has become incumbent upon the community to plan the building of a new Byzantine-styled Orthodox church with more classrooms, meeting space, and, reflecting Fr. Manny's emphasis on the importance of learning, even a library.

Glen Cove Community "is a dynamic group of individuals and although, as usual, it is a few people who do a lot of the work, they approach the work more maturely and professionally than from what I hear happens in other parishes."

In addition to his life as a parish priest, Fr. Manny believes strongly in the importance of being involved in projects related to the faith that go beyond the local sphere to the diocesan and archdiocesan spheres as well as extending to other Orthodox faiths and even non-Orthodox faiths.

At the call of the archdiocese, he has served on the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches in Christ, the Board of Trustees of Church World Service, and a member of the New York/New Jersey Orthodox/Roman Catholic Dialogue. Currently, he is a member of the North American Orthodox/Roman Catholic Consultation (Dialogue) and has been with this body since 1986. He is also a member of the Joint Commission of Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches, which, among other activities, conducts an annual prayer service for the UN General Assembly, its employees and the public.

Under the banner of Orthodoxy, Fr. Manny sits on the Ecumenical Commission of the Standing Council of Orthodox Bishops in America, which has representation from every Orthodox Church; he is president of the Archdiocesan District Clergy Syndesmos and a member of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council and has served on the Archdiocesan Council. He has also been appointed as a delegate to the Council of Hellenes Abroad (*ΣΑΕ: Συμβουλιον Αποδιμον Ελληνων*).

"I think ecumenically," he says proudly. "I was trained to. Christians especially need to talk about their differences, understand them, and search for more unity."

He has earned a reputation for speaking out on important issues facing the Church, a reputation for which he is not ashamed. "When something has to be said, I stand up and say it," he notes, adding that the tradition of speaking out is rooted in Orthodoxy's history.

"Orthodoxy has a history of going into the public square that goes back to such leaders as St. Basil. He and other Church Fathers challenged the establishment, the government, and the upper classes to respond to the needs of the disadvantaged and took action themselves. We shouldn't hesitate to speak out."

He expresses his disappointment that we are not the socially involved Church we should be, noting that the Greek Orthodox Church doesn't advocate on justice, human and civil rights, children's health, eldercare, abortion, prescription drugs, and

other health care issues. He points out that representatives of other religions testify regularly before Congress on these important issues.

In the Church of the Resurrection community, the greatest example of that work is Fr. Manny's leadership as president of the Board of Directors of the North Shore Sheltering Program, a position he has held for the last two years. The program began six years ago following the wintertime deaths of two homeless people in the Glen Cove area and has served dozens of men in an area where few believed a homeless situation existed. Many Resurrection parishioners, including GOYA youth, have volunteered their time to help the homeless through this program.

Thirty years after Fr. Manny left government work to join the priesthood, it is obvious that the activism and idealism that led him there is alive and well and working miracles at Glen Cove's Greek Orthodox Church of the Resurrection.



Unsolicited Lessons in Crisis Ministry

It was Wednesday of the first week of Great Lent in 2001 and my day was already stressful at St. Mary's in Minneapolis. By noon I learned that a lawyer in the parish threatened to sue me over a dispute involving a Greek immigrant man who posed as a chanter. For months, I had been working with others to find a way for him to stay in the U.S. legally. Now, in view of mistakes made on all sides, including mine, the matter had boiled over.

So when my secretary notified me that an unidentified man wanted to speak with me on the phone, I was quite preoccupied. In a foreign accent, he indicated that something terrible had happened and that he needed to see an Orthodox priest right away. Confession, I thought. We agreed to meet later in the afternoon in the nave of the church. I wondered if he would actually show.

From the outset the encounter seemed spooky. He was dressed in a black, leather jacket, and had a sharp chin and cold eyes. I wondered if he had a firearm or knife tucked away somewhere. He identified himself as "Peter," adding that he was Russian Orthodox. The pre-school child with him was his daughter, Katya. I wanted to believe him. He said that his life was over, that he needed to go to a monastery in Greece, and that his daughter needed help. When I inquired about his wife, Peter replied that she was unavailable. I asked him what happened. He refused to answer, saying only that the devil was very real, an admission that somehow seemed out of character. At first I allowed myself to be drawn in to his

request. Fortunately, I had enough sense to pull back: "I'll look into this and get back to you. How can I contact you?" "You can't," he replied. "I'll call back in a few days." "Alright," I answered.

I can't remember much about what happened at church after this – the Liturgy, lenten meal and fellowship. However, I distinctly remember driving home in the dark and fearing for my life, wondering: Have I been with a Mafioso? Where would this go? Was I being followed? Sometimes a rear view mirror can be a curse. I called the parish council president (himself a lawyer) to ask advice. He encouraged me to contact a criminal attorney and gave me the name of one who happened to be Orthodox.

The next day I was on the phone and was granted an appointment immediately. Michael was a senior partner in a prominent firm that practiced both criminal and civil law. I explained my circumstances. He went right to work, guiding me through the possibilities and encouraging me to be responsible before the law in case something criminal had occurred. After about an hour I left, feeling clarity in thinking but still most uneasy.

Back in my office I resumed daily tasks. After several days Peter contacted me. I told him I would not be able to find him a monastic refuge. Instead I urged him to go to the police and tell everything. I even recommended an attorney (the very same one who counseled me). I promised that no matter what happened, I

would pastorally see him through it. He did not press me, listened without interrupting, thanked me and hung up. I honestly expected never to hear from him again, imagining that he would submerge into the vast globe.

I was wrong.

About a week later, while I continued to ponder and pray with troubled spirit, I heard the chilling news report: Peter turned himself in to the police and admitted to killing his wife, Svetlana. He claimed that he became enraged when she admitted having an adulterous affair. But that wasn't all. The next day he dismembered her body with a power saw, drove with their daughter to Missouri and dumped the parts into a lake, retaining the head in the trunk of his car. Though horrified, I was relieved that he chose not to flee. Would this be an opening for the Gospel? I hoped with all my heart. Anyone who did this was in desperate need not of running away, but of staying put and receiving the God who runs after prodigal children who stray far from home.

The news reports about their stormy, young married life were revealing: months of arguing and fighting, Peter's jealousy of another man, and his nearly suffocating dominance over Svetlana. And there I was, unassuming Orthodox pastor, drawn in by divine providence, my innocent consent, and well meaning intention to help someone in need.

Little did I know that my education was only beginning.

When I caught up with Peter in his holding cell during the trial, his countenance was eerie: cold, calm, collected, even determined to defend himself against a 1st degree charge of premeditated murder. There was nothing resembling remorse. Peter had already been studying criminal law in Minnesota. I urged prayer, Scripture, confession. He agreed, but only to a point. I was able to have a Bible sent to him, along with an icon and prayer book. Peter accepted these, but seemed interested only in reading the book of Revelation, which he quickly dismissed.

I attended the trial, observing Peter's detached demeanor and Michael's spirited representation. It concluded with a conviction of intentional 2nd degree murder. The judge sentenced Peter to 30 years in prison, an upward departure in view of the gruesome dismemberment. With good behavior, he could be released in 24 years, but would then be deported immediately to Russia. Peter had lost his right to live freely again in the U.S.

After he was transferred to a maximum-security prison about an hour away, I continued to visit regularly over the course of months that stretched into years. Why did I stick it out with someone who did not seem to be interested in saving his own soul? It took me some time to accept his agnosticism. Even though Peter was not really open to Christ, I came to appreciate his directness, intellect, and gratitude. Even though he had committed unspeakable horror, he was still a human being in need of salvation and love. He may have been the exact opposite of the more respectable people I normally minister to, but he also seemed to have a quality that I rarely met, even through it was camouflaged at first: sincerity. Of course, I had also made a promise. Even though my ministry

had not gone as anticipated (and fantasized!), I came to realize that, while Peter was closed to God, he still was an extremely wounded, weak brother whom Christ had died for.

Along the way, a fellow Orthodox priest also took an interest in Peter. Fr. John Magram was abbot and pastor of the Resurrection of Christ Skete and parish (Russian Synod Abroad) who spoke fluent Russian. Shared culture and language gave him access to Peter in ways that I could never replicate. Likewise, Fr. John was grateful for my continued concern. On a few occasions we went together. Mostly, though, we visited him separately.

As time went on, I got to know Peter better: his family background, upbringing in Russia, academic achievement, scholarship to study in the U.S., marriage to Svetlana, two Master's degrees, professional work, and family life in the Minneapolis area. Peter was anything but a typical prisoner. He read assiduously, including, at one point, Nobel laureate literature in Spanish. He learned U.S. criminal law, became a keen critic of the prison system, and remained intent on appealing his sentence (though I never thought he had a chance). He wanted nothing more than to return to his native Russia.

Svetlana's parents, of course, turned against him completely and took immediate custody of Katya after his conviction, and vowed that Peter would never see her again. Despite that, he never wavered in his responsibility for Katya's education and development.

Peter was, at least in part, the product of a tragic, distorted civilization in which human life is cheap, people are murdered over a cigarette, and criminal activity is less severely punished. Nevertheless, both Fr. John and I hoped that his *kairos* for

receiving Christ's love and forgiveness would come before his own life ended.

This pastoral story has no happy ending. Several years ago, Peter was moved to another prison in the same general area. As my prison ministry diversified, I experienced nearly insurmountable difficulties gaining access to Peter (and others). It took well over one long, frustrating year for me to cut through the changed visitation rules. Finally I was able to see him again.

Then last summer, I relocated to the New York area. Visits are no longer possible, but letters are and Peter is an excellent letter writer. We have not corresponded for some months now, but I continue to remember him and his tragic family in prayer. And I never give up hope in our crucified and risen Lord (himself imprisoned for a capital crime) who can still work miracles even in the darkest and most demonic areas of life. All it takes is for the heart to open.



—Rev. Harry Pappas
was the pastor of St. Mary's Church
in Minneapolis, MN for 11 years.

He currently teaches pastoral
theology at St. Vladimir's Seminary
and assists at the Holy Trinity
Church in New Rochelle, NY.

the Priesthood

Contemporary and Classic Excerpts

The Role of the Priesthood

* * *

What joy to be a priest! Priesthood is the only profession in which men show you the most earnest side of their nature, in which you also live "in earnest" all the time.

* * *

Before priesthood, there was so much I had to be silent about, holding myself back. Priesthood, for me, means the possibility of speaking with a full voice.

* * *

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

* * *

Every sermon, every lesson, has meaning and value only when it is the result of personal spiritual experience and knowledge. Every sermon pronounced only with our lips is dead and false and those who listen always unmistakably feel it.

* * *

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

* * *

How shall we comfort those who weep? By weeping with them!

* * *

A conceited man is hopelessly blind and solitary; in the world and in other human beings he sees nothing but himself.

* * *

The indifference of believers is something far more dreadful than the fact that unbelievers exist.

* * *

Every priest must be well informed about nervous and psychic diseases – this is absolutely necessary in pastoral practice. A common case: the penitent who comes to confession and the priest who acts as a confessor both mistake a purely psychological phenomenon for a religious experience; or else the priest fails to recognize the hysterical undercurrent beneath certain expressions, and only makes the situation worse. And often the opposite also happens: a painful condition of the soul, weighed down by sin, entangled and confused by unresolved conflicts, is mistaken for nervous disease. We know of cases where one single confession was sufficient to wipe out deep-rooted nervous diseases which no medical treatment could cure.

* * *

Constantly, each day, each hour, God is sending us people, circumstances, tasks, which should mark the beginning of our renewal; yet we pay them no attention, and thus continually we resist God's will for us. Indeed, how can God help us? Only by sending us in our daily life certain people, and certain coincidences of circumstance. If we accepted every hour of our life as the hour of God's will for us, as the decisive, most important, unique hour of our life -- what sources of joy, love, strength, as yet hidden from us, would spring from the depths of our soul! Let us then be serious in our attitude towards each person we meet in our life, towards every opportunity of performing a good deed; be sure that you will then fulfill God's will for you in these very circumstances, on that very day, in that very hour.

* * *

There are no casual encounters: either God sends us those we need; or, even without our knowledge, we ourselves are sent to others by His will.

* * *

The more a man gives up his heart to God, to his vocation and to others, forgetful of himself and that which belongs to him, the more light-hearted he will feel, until he attains peace, quiet, joy - the attributes of a simple and humble soul.

* * *

"I have a deep faith" is a platitude on the lips of all conceited, limited people who are weak in faith. The Apostles, although they saw Christ with their own eyes and touched Him, still prayed "Increase our faith." The Gospels state with precision the marks of profound faith: "And these signs shall follow those who believe: In my Name they shall cast out demons...they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17). "Nothing shall be impossible to you" (Matthew 17:20). "And all things, whatsoever you ask for in prayer, believing, you shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). Does this sound like us? We who are so cold, powerless, spiritually weak?



—Father Alexander Elchaninov (1881-1934)
from the book, *The Diary of a Russian Priest*

A REPORT TO THE HOLY EPARCHIAL SYNOD OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

The soul of a priest ought to blaze like a light illuminating the world.

—St. John Chrysostom

The Archdiocesan Presbyters Council has, since the CLC in Nashville, undertaken a number of new initiatives in order to strengthen and encourage the mission and brotherhood of the priests of the Archdiocese at both the national and local levels.

First, setting our own house in order, we have revised and updated the by-laws of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council to conform more fully to the Regulations of the Archdiocese, eliminating all outdated terminology. We have passed our first budget and undertaken new fundraising initiatives to support the programs we are putting in place. We have updated our website and begun producing *The Presbyterian* on a quarterly basis, sending it to the clergy of the Archdiocese via the Archdiocese clergy e-mail list and other e-mail venues.

Second, we have established and awarded the first APC Holy Cross Scholarship of \$3,000 to a GOA senior seminarian in consultation with Father Nicholas Triantafilou, the president of HC/HC. The 2007 scholarship was given to Anthony Cook, who was ordained as a deacon and then priest this past summer, and now serves the Church of the Assumption in St. Clair Shores, MI.

Third, we are developing programs focused on strengthening clergy marriages and continuing education for ministry. In order to assist our clergy in nurturing their marriages we hosted the National Clergy Retreat at Antiochian Village last week. Father Vasilios Thermos M.D., Ph.D. – a priest and

psychiatrist from Greece – addressed the 110 priests who attended on topics that included the psychological and spiritual aspects of the priests' family and the need for self-knowledge and maturity in pastoral relationships. Father Michael Kontogiorgis, the assistant chancellor of the

Archdiocese, made a presentation on pastoral dilemmas and personal integrity during which he explained many facets of the Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Archdiocese. And His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios gave an excellent presentation on Christian discipleship as the foundation for all authentic ministry and an impromptu but truly wonderful talk on liturgical theology and practice.

We are in the process of beginning the second phase of our National Clergy Continuing Education program for the presbyters of the Archdiocese, to be instituted over the next two years, (2007–2009), focused on the continuing development of our preaching/communications skills. In our religiously pluralistic society, it is vitally necessary for us to communicate the Gospel with clarity and conviction in all of our preaching and teaching. We have received a small grant from Leadership 100 to cover the expenses of this program and both Father Nicholas Triantafilou and Father Thomas Fitzgerald have agreed to host the first such event on the campus of HC/HC. A second site, further west, will be determined in order to better enable the clergy of the Metropolises of Denver and San Francisco to participate.

Fourth, in conjunction with the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres we have, so far in 2007, distributed over \$16,000 to 6 clergy families in various kinds of crises and financial need from the APC/NSP benevolent fund.

Fifth, we have – in conjunction with Father Christopher Metropulos of the OCN and Father Jim Kordaris of the Department of Outreach and Evangelization – produced a series of ads/psas to provide ministry tools for our clergy nationwide to reach out to both those who were raised in the Church but may now only be participating minimally, as well as those who were not raised in the Church but are seeking the Truth of the Orthodox faith in the confused and confusing religious milieu of America.

The Archdiocesan Presbyters Council seeks to serve Christ and His Church by building up Her clergy, finding new ways to continue developing the spiritual insights, skills and practices necessary to do ministry to the glory of His Name in 21st century America.

Respectfully submitted,

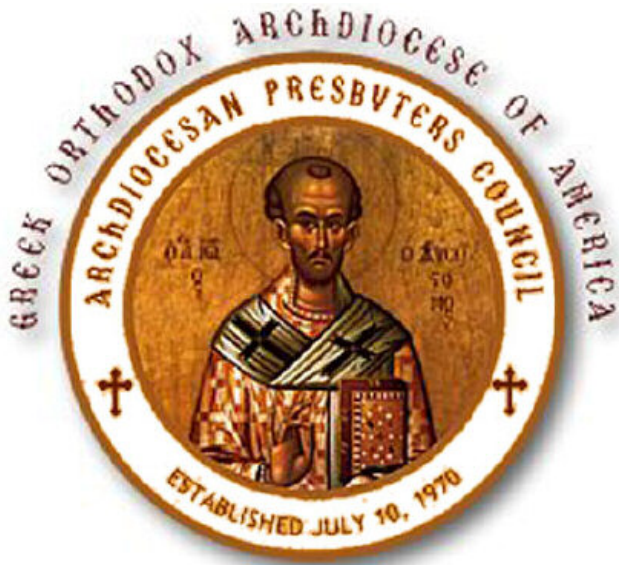
—Rev. Steven Tsichlis
President, Archdiocesan Presbyters Council

On behalf of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council, Fathers Steven Tsichlis, Bill Christ, Chris Metropulos and Jim Moulketis met with the Holy Eparchial Synod of Bishops on Wednesday, October 10th and presented this report.

The Presbyter

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