



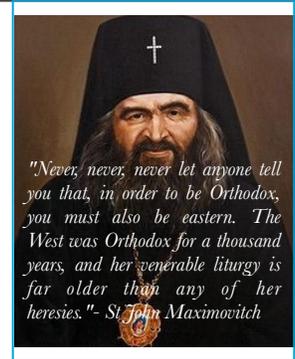
THE ADVENT WREATH & PROPHECY



THE 2015 WESTERN-RITE CONFERENCE



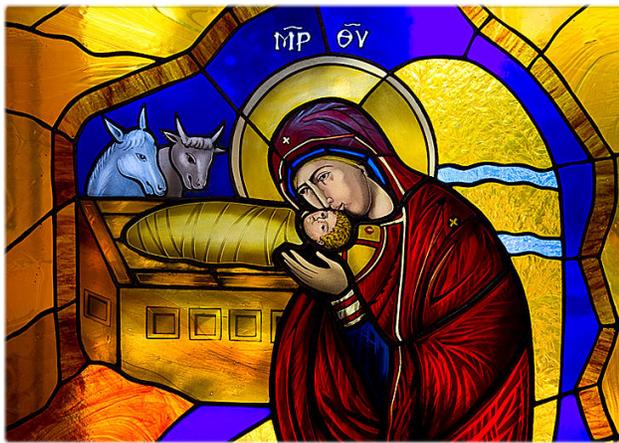
WELCOME TO MOTHER CECELIA IN NEW ORLEANS



THE WONDERWORKER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCOR WESTERN RITE COMMUNITIES

THE GREATEST CHRISTMAS GIFT OF ALL...



By Father Mark Rowe, Dean of the ROCOR Western Rite Communities

God allowed the nature of humanity into the Godhead in the Person of Jesus Christ. In theology we refer to this as the hypostatic union. This hypostatic union of Christ as One Divine Person with two distinct and separate natures (God and man) set the plan in motion for the redemption of the world and would make the promise of the Kingdom of Heaven a reality.

We know that back in the Garden of Eden we were given a glimpse of the true relationship God wants with us. Scripture tells us that Adam and Eve walked with God in

paradise. Through selfishness and sin, man was sent out from Eden, and yet God had willed from the beginning of time that we should walk with Him in paradise. God's gift of free will for His children and its subsequent results would require reconciliation. He could have done it by fiat or He could have done it anyway He wanted- after all, He is God. Because of His love for mankind, He chose the Incarnation as the means by which His children would learn how to be reconciled to Him.

As familiar as Christians are with the Good News found in John 3:16, many forget the verse that follows, which I believe is equally crucial in our understanding of the Incarnation: *"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."* (John 3:17) God's plan for us was that Christ would come to us and show us how to be reconciled to the Father. The early Church Fathers understood this part of God's plan.

As Saint Paul writes to the Church in Rome, *"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."* (Romans 5:18-19)

St. Gregory of Nazianzus said; *"That which was not assumed, could not be redeemed."*

St. Athanasius in his work, "On the Incarnation" wrote :"*...through this Union of the Immortal Son of God with our human nature all men were clothed with incorruption in the promise of the resurrection.*"

The idea is that if we are to be saved, every facet of our existence has to be united with God so that God can overcome the sin that permeates our entire existence. This is the goal of theosis. This is what God does in the Incarnation: the eternal Son takes our entire human existence upon Himself, and, through living a life of perfect obedience to the Father, even to the point of seemingly total abandonment by the Father by frail human account, reconciles humanity to God.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. " (John 3:17)

Now we look back at ourselves after reading this discourse. Even as I write this article, I can tell you my soul has come alive and I am not the same person that sat down to write. This is what the Good News of the Holy Gospel and the life and teachings of Christ were meant to do. We as Orthodox Christians should be awed and inspired at the Nativity season. I challenge you this Advent and Nativity season to dust off this precious gift we have been given and admire all too often from afar. I charge you to not only recognize but embrace the gift of Jesus Christ in your life and share this precious gift with someone you love. There is plenty of time to set your sights for this spiritual milestone.



Father Mark Rowe
Dean of the ROCOR Western-Rite
Communities

Set aside the 'busy-ness' of everyday life and embrace Christ. Reset your holiday focus. Put Christ first. Seek out those in need. Be the hands and feet of Christ in your corner of the world. Step outside of your own comfort zone and share this gift with someone who needs it. The needy are all around you, if you but take the time to look.

As children of God and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, may we all take the time to reflect on the greatest Christmas gift ever given – Our Savior Jesus Christ.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

Fellowship & Instruction... Hallmarks of a Successful Conference



Announcements

~MONTHLY ASSESSMENTS TO BEGIN JAN 1, 2016~

The dues are payable and due **Jan 1, 2016**, and on the first of the month each month thereafter. Regular reports will be forthcoming.

\$40 per month is assessed for each parish member of the clergy from Subdeacon to Priest. This covers:

- 1) Tithe to the Synod
- 2) Conference fees to the 2017 ROCOR WR Conference
- 3) Dean's expenses
- 4) Funds to be sent for benevolent clergy needs
- 5) Scholarship/grant toward tuition costs for Holy Trinity Seminary courses to qualified and selected applicants.

Checks may be sent to the following address:

ROCOR Western Rite Communities

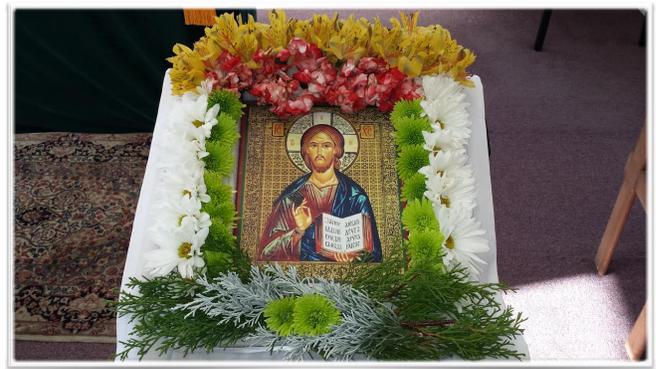
c/o Matushka Pat Kinghorn
PO Box 40038
Providence, RI 02940

Specific donations for travel expenses, etc. for the Dean are needed and may be sent to the following address:

ROCOR WR Communities

c/o Fr Mark Rowe
5625 Granada Dr # 267
Sarasota , FL 34231

- ▶ Fr. David and Matushka Pat Kinghorn are trying to get the monthly Commemoration lists in order. It is a good thing for us to pray for one another, especially on special days in a person's life (name day, birthday, tonsure, marriage, ordination, parish feast day, repose). If you have not already sent in your information (this includes clergy wives) please send an email to Fr. David (stcuthbertorthodoxchurch@gmail.com) or Matushka Pat (MatushkaPat@gmail.com).
- Birthday (month, day - no one needs to know what year)
- Nameday (saint and feast day)
- Tonsure (month, day, year)
- Ordination (month, day, year)
- parish feast day and patron saint



- ▶ Plans for the regional WR retreats/meetings are in the works. Also being discussed is the formation of a family camp for the ROCOR WR Communities. Please contact Fr Mark @ fr.markrowe@gmail.com if interested.
- ▶ St Stephen's, Waterville, Maine has moved to a new location and has been blessed to change their Parish Name/ Patron. They will now be known as 'Holy Archangels Orthodox Church'. Let us pray that they continue to grow both in grace and in numbers at their new location.

A Report on the 2015 ROCOR Western Rite Conference

by **Father Victor Novak**



My wife and I attended the 2015 Western Rite Clergy Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) last week.

The Conference opened on Monday, September 28, and concluded on Thursday, October 1, at the Mount Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappinger Falls, New York. It was the largest Western Rite Clergy Conference held thus far. There was tremendous enthusiasm and energy, as well as complete unity as everyone there agreed in Faith and morals, and on the mission of the Church.



Fr. Victor Novak

In addition to ROCOR Western Rite clergy, we had some Antiochian Western Rite clergy in attendance, as well as visiting clergy — mostly Anglican - who have an interest in Western Orthodoxy. I was surprised by how many Benedictine monks there were in attendance from various Western Rite Orthodox monastic communities, including the abbot of one monastery and the prior of another. I was excited to learn that one of the monasteries consists of 600 acres in the mountains of rural Colorado.



Metropolitan Hilarion

Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch (primate) of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and Ruling Bishop of the Western Rite Communities was with us for the entire Conference. Metropolitan Jonah, who is well known to Anglicans for his talks at the 2009 and 2012 provincial synods of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) was scheduled to be with us, but had to cancel at the last minute because of a family medical situation.

The Conference opened on Monday afternoon with welcoming addresses from Metropolitan Hilarion and from the Dean of the Western Rite Communities, Fr. Mark Rowe. Fr. Mark is a former Anglican Canon and has served the Western Rite tirelessly as Dean. He seems to be almost constantly on the road visiting clergy and churches, and attending Western Rite ordinations — of which there are many. He is learned, personable, pastoral, committed to the growth of the Western Rite and the restoration of the Western Church, and has proven to be an effective organizer, consensus builder and leader.

After the opening addresses we gathered in the chapel for Vespers. After Vespers we had dinner together in the refectory. Dinner was followed by Compline (the Night Office). After Compline, confessions were heard. Four priests were assigned to hear confessions and were stationed in the four corners of the chapel. Having been shriven, we were ready for the Conference to really begin on Tuesday morning. After Compline there was a social hour in the refectory with wine and various cheeses. It was all very English, with port wine and gourmet cheese and crackers. The social hour — really hours as it went on as long as people wished to remain — was so popular that one was held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings as well.

Having always experienced non-Orthodox synods and conferences held in hotels with plush rooms, soft beds, and the intrusion of the world through television, clock radios and wifi, this Conference was refreshing. The rooms — really cells — were small and quite Spartan: two twin beds, hard, thin mattresses, and no television, radio or wifi. Each room did have a private bathroom though, and that was appreciated.

Morning began very early with Matins scheduled to be prayed in our rooms, followed by Holy Mass in the chapel at 6:15 AM. On Tuesday morning all of the Orthodox clergy concelebrated a Solemn Votive Mass of the Holy Ghost in red vestments. The Mass was sung and the Propers chanted according to the ancient Gregorian chant tones.

After Mass we had breakfast in the refectory and then got to work. This was not at all like a convention. The emphasis was on the spiritual, and on learning. Beginning Tuesday morning, daily Matins was scheduled to be prayed in our rooms, followed by Holy Mass in the chapel at 6:15 AM. Sext was prayed in the chapel at noon, with Vespers at 4:15 PM, and Compline at 7:00 PM. All of the Offices were chanted, and all of the Masses were solemn celebrations in the presence of a greater prelate at the throne.

Over the course of the four days we had many helpful presentations. At 9:00 AM on Tuesday morning, Fr. David Straut, an Eastern Rite priest spoke to us about jail ministry in a presentation called, Orthodox Ministry to the



His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion at Compline

Incarcerated. After a break, Fr. Christophe Lepourte spoke to us about his counseling ministry. With an education in counseling and decades of experience in individual, marriage and family counseling, Fr. Christophe is a resource that priests can use when it is time to refer people to a professional counselor. Although he is based in Virginia, Fr. Christophe's ministry can help people nationwide through Skype.

The next presentation was by Fr. Ephraim Willmarth, an administrator at Holy Trinity Seminary. Holy Trinity Seminary is a residential seminary, but it also offers distance learning programs in Liturgical Music, and Theological Studies. These distance learning programs are excellent for late vocations, for those already involved in ministry and for active laypeople who want to deepen their understanding of the Faith and become more effective in advancing the Work of the Church. The Certificate in Theological Studies consists of sixteen classes taken over a period of two years. There is online access through Populi, and costs are very modest at around \$150.00 per class.



Matthew Joyner of Elijah's Mantle

The presentation by Holy Trinity Seminary was followed by one from a student at St. Tikhon Seminary. He is a former Anglican layman who was involved in six Anglican (ACNA) church-plants before entering the Orthodox Church and enrolling at St. Tikhon's. He heads up an important ministry called Elijah's Mantle that passes on used vestments and church supplies — both Eastern and Western Rite - free of charge to needy clergy, new church-plants and struggling missions. We also learned that there is growing interest in the Western Rite at St. Tikhon Seminary, and that six to eight students have requested monthly Western Rite services at the seminary. Arrangements have been made for a nearby ROCOR Western Rite priest to celebrate Vespers and then Holy Mass the next morning according to the Western Rite on a monthly basis.

On Tuesday afternoon a private ROCOR Western Rite Clergy meeting was held with Metropolitan Hilarion and Dean Mark Rowe. There was no voting. Everything was done by consensus, and consensus was easy to achieve because we all believed the same thing and were on the same page. It was decided that in odd years we will have a national Western Rite Clergy Conference at Mount Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappinger Falls, New York, with the next national Conference scheduled for 2017. The Antiochian Western Rite Vicariate holds their national meeting every two years in even years. By alternating the ROCOR and Antiochian national Clergy Conferences more Antiochian Western Rite clergy will be able to attend ROCOR Conferences and more ROCOR Western Rite clergy will be able to attend Antiochian Conferences.

In even years, beginning next year in 2016, there will be four regional ROCOR Western Rite Clergy Conferences: East, South, Midwest and West. We were asked by Metropolitan Hilarion through his Dean, Fr. Mark Rowe, to host the 2016 Midwest Regional Clergy Conference at Holy Cross parish in Omaha, and I immediately and enthusiastically agreed. Metropolitan Hilarion told me that, God willing, he will be there, so we will be blessed to have his Eminence at Holy Cross parish again in 2016.

During the private ROCOR Western Rite Clergy meeting, non-Orthodox clergymen and other attenders participated in an Open Meeting with Seekers of Western Rite Orthodoxy.

After the Western Rite clergy meeting I delivered my presentation titled, Step By Step Church Planting. Everyone attending received a copy of the book, A Guide to Western Rite Orthodox Church Planting, a copy of our Liturgy booklet, four of our self-published tracts, and a brochure on Website design and development.

Father Aidan Chanting



On Wednesday we had Holy Mass at 6:15 AM as usual, along with Sext, Vespers and Compline at their appropriate times. The first presentation began at 9:00 AM. It was on Iconography and focused on ancient Western Iconography in the Celtic and Romanesque traditions. The speaker was Fr. Silouan, a skilled Iconographer and a Hieromonk at Holy Cross Monastery Setauket, New York. The presentation was both enlightening and helpful. We have a wonderful Western Iconographic tradition that was lost with the coming of the Renaissance and needs to be recovered and restored.

The next presentation was by Fr. Benedict Simpson, and was called Engaging Today's Youth With an Ancient Faith. Fr. Benedict is an engaging and informative speaker. After lunch Deacon Nicholas Griswold spoke on The Historic Diaconate. This excellent presentation was on what is sometimes called the permanent diaconate and covered the life and ministry of deacons.



Father Benedict of Ascension Monastery

On Thursday morning at 6:15 AM, Dom James, Abbot of Christminster Benedictine Monastery, celebrated a Requiem Mass for the deceased Western Rite clergy. It was such a blessing to be at the Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist for three consecutive days and to receive Holy Communion daily!



Dom James of Christminster

There were two more presentations on Thursday. Hieromonk Ezekiel, a Western Rite Orthodox priest-monk — that is what Hieromonk means — gave a very helpful and moving talk titled, An Orthodox Approach to Death and Dying. This presentation was invaluable.

The final presentation, called Planning For Successful Mission Growth, was delivered by Fr. Anthony Bryant, a Western rite priest and the rector of St. Katherine's Orthodox Church in South Carolina.

Holy Trinity Seminary Bookstore had a large book table set up and I came home with sixteen books. Thankfully, for every two purchased the buyer received one free. At our rectory books are like friends, and Matushka and I have already begun visiting with them.

One of the highlights of the Conference was the time we had to socialize with one another. I saw old friends, met people that I have corresponded with or talked to by telephone, met many co-laborers in our Lord's vineyard, and made new friends.

We were able to spend a lot of time with Fr. Joseph Gleason, rector of Christ the King parish in Omaha, Illinois. Fr. Joseph was the founder, editor and publisher of the only orthodox Anglican theological journal in North America: The North American Anglican, and I was a writer for it. His parish entered the Western Rite of the Antiochian Orthodox Church about a year before Holy Cross was received into Orthodoxy. It was great to be able to spend time with him.

Fr. Joseph Mai and I had become friends over the telephone, and it was wonderful to finally meet him in person. Fr. Joseph is Vietnamese and he pastors a large Vietnamese parish in San Diego that came into the Orthodox Church from the Anglican Church in America (ACA). Fr. Joseph gave me a copy of their Liturgy booklet. It has the Liturgy of St. Tikhon in Vietnamese on one side and English on the other. His parish, Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church, conducts its Services in Vietnamese. The Orthodox Church is Catholic (Universal), and although we belong to the Russian Orthodox Church we have both Eastern and Western Rites, the Roman, English and French (Gallican) Uses of the Western Rite, and Services are held in North America in English, French, Spanish, Vietnamese and Church Slavonic.

A high point of the Conference for me was to meet up with an old Anglican confrere that I had not seen in at least fifteen years. He and his assistant pastor and their congregation are all being received into the Western Rite of the Orthodox Church. We were also able to spend time with another Anglican priest and his wife who are beginning the process of being received. Father and I had corresponded by email, but it was great to meet him in person, and it was a blessing to hear him announce that they had taken the first step at the Conference.

The Clergy wives also had two outings together. Cheri enjoyed her time with the ladies very much. During their time together they made plans to stay in close touch between Conferences through the Internet. It is sometimes charged by skeptics that the Western Rite is only there to transition Western converts to the Eastern Rite, but there is no basis for such a charge. In fact, there was one parish represented at the Conference that actually made the change from being Eastern Rite to Western Rite.

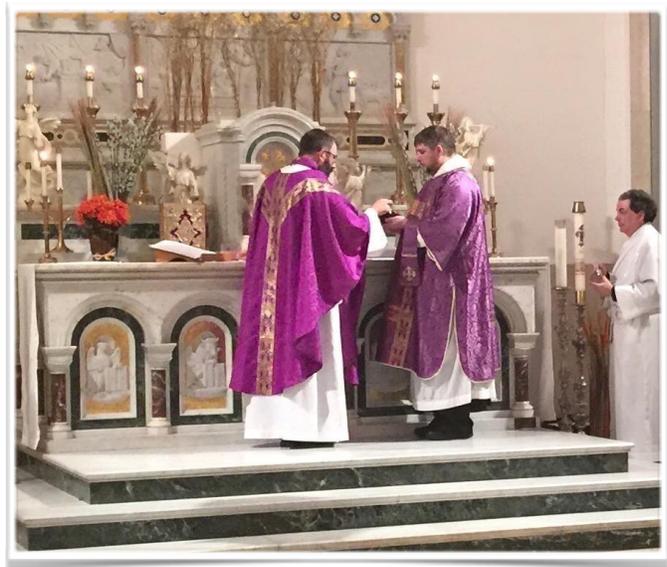
The Western Rite Clergy Conference was a time of spiritual refreshment and renewal, and Cheri and I were really sad to see it end. We are looking forward to the Midwest Regional Western Rite Clergy Conference at Holy Cross parish in the summer of 2016. The Conference will be open to ROCOR and Antiochian Orthodox Western Rite clergy and their wives, as well as to other clergy who are interested in Western Orthodoxy and who would like to come and experience it.

The Orthodox Church is growing rapidly in numbers in America and throughout the world with some 300 million members worldwide. The percentage of growth of Orthodox Christianity in America was higher than any other major classification of Christianity mentioned by the Encyclopedia Britannica in 1995. According to a formal study by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central America in 2010, membership in the Orthodox Church in the United States grew in the 75 years between 1936 and 2010 by 131%. For a shorter window of time, during the decade of 2000 to 2010, the total number of Orthodox communities in the United States grew by 15%. The 2008 US Religious Landscape Survey showed that 23% of all Orthodox Christians in America today are converts.

In recent years Anglicans made up the second largest group of converts to Orthodoxy, and today they are the largest group. About one out of four Orthodox Christians in America are converts, along with 30% of all clergy and 41% of all seminarians. In the city where I pastor there are nine Orthodox priests and six parishes. Of the nine priests, six are converts, and five of the six are former Anglicans. Of the six parishes, two are Western Rite and both have full time rectors.

The Orthodox Church is experiencing explosive growth all around the world. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian Orthodox Church has opened more than 26,000 churches; that is more than three churches a day, each and every day, for a quarter of a century, and there is no slowdown in sight. In addition, since 1991, the Russian Orthodox Church has established more than 800 new monastic communities.

The Russian Orthodox Church has gone from a marginalized and persecuted body of believers with only around 7,000 open churches in 1988, when it celebrated the Millennium of the Baptism of Russia, to a resurgent Church with more



Father Thomas Cook of the UK Celebrating the Mass

than 160,000,000 members world-wide in 2007, of whom 55,000,000 are outside of Russia. All this in about a quarter of a century. This is a miracle, and can only be the work of God.

As Western Rite Orthodox congregations and monastic communities we have preserved the fulness of our Western cultural, liturgical and spiritual heritage and patrimony in full sacramental communion and visible unity with the 300 million-member Orthodox Church. This is the fulfillment of the Vision Glorious of the Oxford Movement and an answer to our Lord's High Priestly Prayer for unity among His disciples.

*(*Editor's Note: edited for space)*

blessings,

Fr. Victor+

Tonsuring & Establishment of St. Mary the Virgin Skete in Dayton, Tennessee



Metropolitan Hilarion & Fr. David Colburn

Tonsuring and Establishment of St Mary the Virgin Skete, Dayton, TN

Arch-pastoral Visit of His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, to St. Mary the Virgin Church & Skete, Dayton, TN

Over the weekend, our beloved arch-pastor in God, His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, made His first ever arch-pastoral visit to St. Mary the Virgin, Our Lady of Walsingham, W-R Church, in Dayton, Tennessee. On Sunday afternoon, November 9/22, the feast day of blessed St. Nectarius of Aegina and of the Wonder-working Ikon of the Mother of God, "She who Is Quick-to-Hear," His Eminence, blessed and established our abode as St. Mary the Virgin Orthodox Skete (Monastery), and Priest-monk David (Colburn) was tonsured a stavrophore monk with the new patronal name of St. David of Wales.

With the blessing of His Eminence, Priest-monk David tonsured Carol Klipa Bacha as a rasophore nun on Saturday, November 8/21. And on November 9/22, His Eminence tonsured Sister Carol as a stavrophore nun with the new name of the holy New-nun-martyr Elizabeth (Romanov). Mother Elizabeth was also blessed to found a monastery-in-formation: The New Tikhvin Mother of God Orthodox E-R Skete (Monastery), in Palm Coast, Florida. After the tonsures, His Eminence presented portions of the precious relics of the holy New-nun-martyr Elizabeth (Romanov) to both new monasteries and a festive meal prepared by Father Deacon Richard Daugherty was shared with our dear friends and guests. Beseeching God's divine mercy and the intercession of the all-holy Theotokos, unworthy though we be, we ask to be remembered in your holy prayers.



The Orthodox Hermitage of St. John the Divine

The Orthodox Hermitage of St John the Divine, founded in 1998 in Syracuse, New York, is a Benedictine house following the eremitic traditions of St Romuald of Ravenna. The primary work of the Hermitage is *Prayer and Repentance in Holy Silence*; not only for the hermits themselves but also on behalf of the faithful Orthodox and all Mankind out of the same sense of Divine Love the Apostle John taught us in his Gospel and Pastoral Letters and demonstrated for us by St Silouan the Athonite. The most powerful weapon the Romualdian hermit has is Faith, Prayer, Repentance, Asceticism and Solitude. Additionally, the protos and founder, Father Symeon of



Syracuse, offers pastoral counseling, spiritual guidance, and existential life coaching to those who ask. While in the world he received education and training in Family Mediation (1993) and Orthodox Pastoral Counseling & Care (1998). Father Symeon has been a stavrophore-monk since 1999 and was received into ROCOR at the Hermitage by His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion on the Feast of Our Lady's Entrance



ROCOR Western Orthodox Community
 under the omophor of His Eminence Metropolitan HILARION

This ROCOR Western Orthodox Community Facebook Group has been created for the private use of Clergy, Clerics, Monastics & Oblates and Laity for announcements, communication and community appeals and virtual fellowship within the WOC of ROCOR.

into the Temple in 2014.

The initial location of the Hermitage in Central New York State known as “Camaldoli Monastic House” started in a rented flat of a two-family house. In their present poverty, it is their hope that they may be endowed with land and buildings appropriate for their Orthodox eremitic life. It would then permit them to expand and increase vocations in the Northeastern region with prayer and an atmosphere of otherworldliness. The Hermitage’s motto, *“With One Mind, One Heart, One Life-in-Christ, we pray, weep and repent for all Mankind!”*

Meet Mother Cecelia!

Let's please welcome Mother Cecelia to our Western Rite Community. Mother was accepted as a monastic by Metropolitan Hilarion on Nov. 5, 2015. She will be attached to the Orthodox Hermitage of the Mother of God, "Joy of all Joys" in Bush, La. Under the spiritual care of Hieromonk Ezekiel (Vieages).

Mother is a life long resident of New Orleans where she was an elementary school teacher.

It is a great blessing to be able to add to our monastic presence in the WR.





Advent Resources



History and Blessing of the Advent Wreath

Prophecies for Advent 1 and 2

Prophecies for Advent 3 and 4

**The prophecies can be read before the lighting of the candle, or as an OT lesson before the epistle.*

THE ADVENT WREATH



One of the most beautiful traditions of Advent is the lighting of The Advent Wreath; the purpose of which is to deepen your understanding of Christmas as the Church prepares you once again to go in heart and mind unto Bethlehem to see the loving-kindness of our God. As time passes from Advent Sunday to the Vigil of Christmas, the wreath grows in the brightness of illumination - symbolic of the coming of Christ who is the light of the world. The prophecies that are read with the lighting of the Advent Wreath help you to relate to the people of the Old Testament who waited in anticipation for the coming day of the Lord, as the mystery of the Incarnation was unfolded before them by the

Lord's prophets through the centuries who prepared the way for His Coming.

Only as you understand the message of the Old Testament, do you come to appreciate the fact of the Incarnation of Christ: that the Second Person of the Godhead humbled Himself to take our nature upon Himself in every way - sin being the only exception. Christ became man in order that He might offer Himself upon Calvary's Cross before His Father in heaven for the sins of the world.

The use of evergreens symbolizes the life that is everlasting by faith in Christ. The bending of the branch so that the ends touch further symbolize that life in Christ is without end because Christ Himself is from everlasting; the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

The candles are symbolic of the coming into the world of God's Son. The first candle, The Prophecy Candle, announces the period of waiting upon God for the fulfillment of His promise. The second candle is The Bethlehem Candle and is symbolic of the preparations being made to cradle the Christ Child. The third candle is The Shepherd Candle and typifies the act of worshipping Christ. The fourth candle is The Angel's Candle and encourages the forth-telling of the Good News to the world.

The Advent Wreath comes to us from pagan sources and has been adapted by the Church to proclaim that the people who walk in darkness have had a great light shine upon them. Advent sets the mood of waiting in the dark. Since Christ was born on the day when the light of the sun begins once again to gain ascendancy over the darkness, the use of The Advent Wreath is an appropriate custom with which to proclaim this truth.

THE BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

V. Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

R. Who hath made heaven and earth.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us Pray.

O LORD Jesus Christ, who art the true light that lightest every man that cometh into the world +bless, we pray thee, this wreath and its candles which we shall light in preparation for thy coming; and so enkindle our hearts with the fire of thy love that we may receive thee with joy and gladness, and evermore stand fast in the faith. Who livest and reignest, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

(Advent 1) Jeremiah 31:31-34

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

(Advent 2) Isaiah 40:1-8

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

(Advent 3) Malachi 3:1-6

BEHOLD, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiners fire, and like fullers soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts. For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

(Advent 4) Malachi 4:1-6

FOR, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day

that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.



Holy Family Benedictine Oblate Chapter in Tullytown, PA.



On Saturday, Nov. 7th, 10 parishioners were received into the Order of S. Benedict, Holy Family Chapter, affiliated with Christ the Savior Monastery (Christminster), Niagara Falls, NY, under Abbot James. The Chapter will meet the first Saturday of each month for Liturgy, teaching, prayer and a business meeting. Fr. Bernard, OSB, serves as Spiritual Director, Susanna Lavdas as Moderator, and Michael Lavdas as Spiritual Formation Director.

The Prayer Corner

Brethren, of your Christian charity, please pray for:

- Abbot Martin (Hohlfeld) , a sometime member of the WR Communities in Riverview, Florida. Abbot Martin has been diagnosed with Stage 4 lung and brain cancer and has precious few months left. is email address is abbotmartinosb@yahoo.com
- Catechumen Michael Vance and his family from St Brendans, Panama City, Fl. Michael has quadruple bypass surgery recently and some other health issues. It has been a very difficult time for him and his family. His email is padraig75@gmail.com
- Continued growth in grace and numbers for the ROCOR WR Communities.
- Our Metropolitan, our Dean , and all ROCOR WR Communities clergy, monastics and faithful.
- Our WR monastics and monastic houses- that they may continue to uphold our mission with their holy prayers, and that the Lord would add to their numbers.

- Parishes and clergy making application and in the catechumenate for reception into the ROCOR WR Communities.



The Nativity Epistle of 1962

By St. John, Archbishop of Shanghai



"Thou, Who art the God of peace and the Father of compassions, didst send unto us the Angel of Thy great Counsel, granting us peace."

The Angel-Messenger of the pre-eternal Counsel of the Holy Trinity comes to the earth. This is not an ordinary messenger; it is the Only-begotten Son of God Himself. He brings peace to men. "Peace be unto you," he said more than once to His disciples. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," He says to the apostles at the Mystical Supper, "not as the world giveth, give I unto you." And appearing after His Resurrection, again He says: "Peace be unto you." "For he is our peace," the holy Apostle Paul says concerning Him: "He came to the earth to reconcile man unto God by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. And having come, He preached peace to those afar off and to those near, because through Him we both have access unto the Father."

The wall that separated heaven and earth is destroyed; the sword that barred the way to the tree of life disappears. Unto man that had sinned comes his Creator, calling him into His embrace! By the mouths of the apostles, the Holy Spirit cries out: "In Christ, be ye

reconciled to God." You that had sinned came not to God, but the Son of God, before Whom you sinned, came to you! He calls everyone to Himself; He gives forgiveness to everyone who merely thirsts for this. For without the desire of man himself, without at least his little effort, God's peace cannot settle in him. The Lord forces no one to come to Him, but calls everyone: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Come all ye who are heavy laden with sins, who are exhausted from your labors and who do not find rest! You shall find that inner peace, which you will find nothing on earth more desirable than. The soul will feel unearthly peace and joy.

The Magi who worshipped the Babe experienced that joy; the shepherds, finding Him lying in a manger, also felt it. But neither peace nor joy touched the heart of Herod and those who wanted to destroy the Babe. For evil desire and malice are incompatible with inner peace. And whoever does not have inner peace, also sows strife and malice about.

The Church now calls us to meet Christ Who comes from heaven. What can we do in order to meet Him like the Magi, and not like Herod? "Ye that desire life, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking guile. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." It tends to be hard to do this; we are weak when it comes to everything good. But the Son of God even came for this: in order to strengthen us. Not for naught was He born in Bethlehem, which signifies "house of bread." He feeds us with heavenly food, His flesh. "God, the Lord and Creator of all, as a babe in the flesh, is worshipped in a poor manger, crying out: eat My body and through faith be made steadfast." These words of the divine Babe are directed to us. Let us hearken to His call! Let us follow the Magi; let us hasten with the shepherds! Our churches are now that cave of Bethlehem. Not illusory, but in reality does He, Who is now being born in His most pure flesh, rest in them. Let us worship Him; let us offer as a gift our thoughts and desires; let us confess our sins, and let us taste of His immaculate Body and Blood. Whoever did not do this earlier, let him at least accomplish it now, when the star of Bethlehem is already shining! Our minds will be enlightened and the heart will hear:

"Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will among men!"



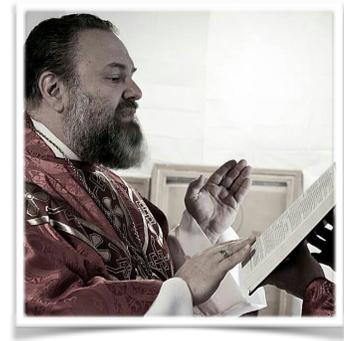
A Note from the Editor...

I hope that you and yours are experiencing the joy and spiritual renewal of this Advent season! I wanted to take just a few lines to encourage you all to share your ministry with us by sending your stories, pictures and news about what's going on in your parishes and the blessings that you have received throughout the ecclesiastical year! This newsletter is a labor of love and a commitment to all of the ROCOR Western Rite Communities to spread the news of the Western Rite Communities' labors and efforts in spreading the Gospel of our Lord God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Many of you have experienced challenging times in the past and have made it through to today, sustained by the grace of God. God be praised! For He has sustained us with His customary grace for mankind and has brought us through to this time and place where the vineyards that you all have planted are beginning to bear good fruit. Now is the time to tell of all the wondrous works of the Lord and for what He is achieving where you find yourselves planted.

So don't hesitate to send those pictures, news and stories to the editor at thewonderworker@columnist.com. God bless you all and keep you!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Benedict Simpson +



Father Benedict