

Daylight

A Ministry of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the U.S.A.

“...now you are
light in the Lord.
Walk as children
of light...”
(Ephesians 5:8)

D.A.Y.
Diocesan Apostolate for Youth

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Number 4

REFLECTIONS ON JUNIOR A.C.R.Y. MISSION TRIP

Editor's Note: This past June, several current and former Jr. ACRY members traveled to St. John the Compassionate Mission in Toronto. The Jr. ACRY has been supporting the mission over the last couple of years, and this gave some of our youth a chance to see firsthand what the mission is all about. While there, they kept journals of their experiences. Here are some highlights!

-Alex Breno

DAY TWO-JUNE 8TH

Today was awe-inspiring. I was touched deeply by the way the volunteers served the meals: instead of the people coming up to get their food, the food was brought, right to the tables in individual courses, as each person finished the last course.

-Tim Paproski

For me though, the best part of the day was “Bridges” which is a weekly meeting held to help bridge the gap between the Mission & the streets. There were people who spoke that absolutely awed and inspired me with their stories of how employment at the Mission saved them from drug fueled deaths... I've come to realize just how personal and intimate the atmosphere of St. John the Compassionate is.

-Rachel Pribish

Then Father Roberto gave a talk on “who is Orthodox mission?” where we the Church become the image and likeness of Christ for the community.

-Paul Zdinak

Also, coming to the mission we could see that it was real and concrete. This was not just something that we donated money to anymore--it was a real place and we were surrounded by love, the love that the community has for Saint John's and the love that it extends out to the community.

-Katherine Steinstra

DAY ONE-JUNE 7TH

We were greeted warmly and we were brought inside so that we could see the place for the first time. As you walk through the main corridors the wall in front of you is blossoming with color beautiful icon paintings.

-Paul Zdinak

While at dinner, the Sub Deacon told us about the fresco of the Feeding of the 5,000 that is above the entrance to the main area of the Mission. Instead of it being a depiction of the actual biblical scene, those being fed were people who work at or are “regulars” at the Mission. It was a good tie-in to the good work that is done at the Mission.

-Rachel Pribish

One thing that stuck with me that day was that Sub Deacon Edmund said that the mission was a community. It wasn't just a church or people it was made up of both the people with the church which makes the community.

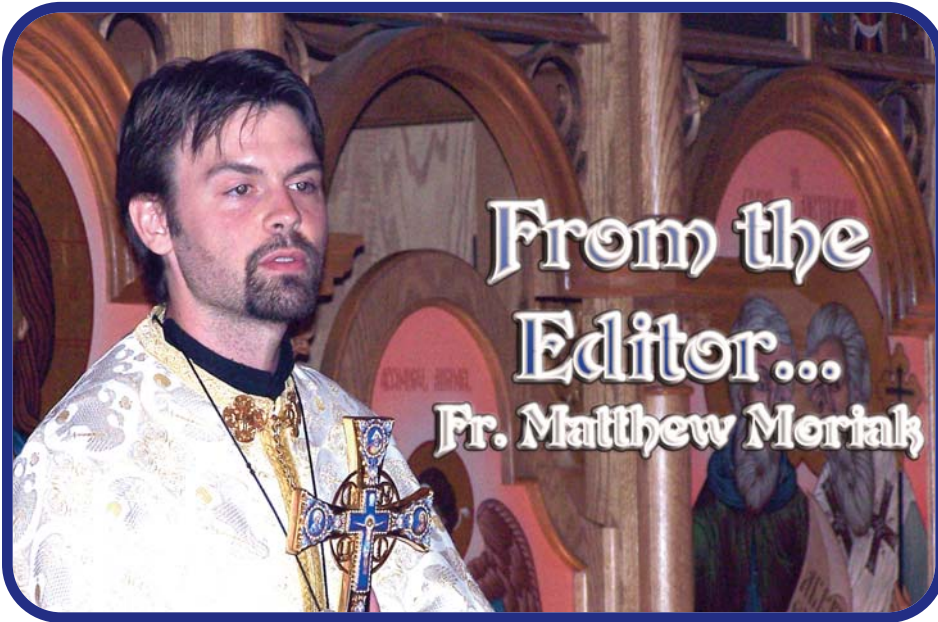
-Angela Sudick

When we were done we left for the house. It was way beyond what I expected. I thought it was going to be a run down old house, but it wasn't. It was a cozy, warm house.



DAYLIGHT PULL-OUT SECTION

-cont'd on page 6



"COME AND SEE"

I've been blessed to have had the opportunity to attend our Diocesan camp, Camp Nazareth in three very different capacities over the years. First, as a camper, second as a member of the Camp Nazareth staff, and most recently, as a priest, serving as one of the chaplains. Each of these experiences has been completely different and offered a unique perspective of life at Camp Nazareth. One thing was a constant however. No matter what capacity I have attended our camp, I have been able to truly see God work within our youth.

When Bartholomew was skeptical of Jesus in the Gospel of John, Philip said just three words to him: "Come and see" (John 1:46). When our young people return home from Camp, they are full of stories and things to share, and we listen. Sometimes, listening isn't enough. Sometimes we have to see for ourselves. A brother priest of mine once remarked how wonderful it would be if the parents of the children who attend Camp could spend a week there themselves, free of the distractions of the world.

Our Camp is a truly miraculous place. Lives are transformed. How else can you explain that in spite of rising college costs, the Camp continues to attract the cream of the Diocesan crop to work on its staff, when they could easily find better paying jobs at home? How else can you explain that despite a society where youth are bombarded by technology, they willingly leave it all behind, not just for one week, but increasingly for two and even three weeks at a time?

I was speaking recently with a parent whose children's camping years are now behind them. She still sees the impact it has had on her own children and the children attending today. "I am overwhelmed with joy" she told me "that camp reaches into the hearts of our youth and helps them find God and their own personal peace."

As attendance numbers continue to rise, and the Holy Spirit continues to guide the camp, we have to focus our attention on those who have yet to see. Many of our Diocesan youth have not experienced a week at Camp. Many of our Diocesan faithful have not visited for Family Day, the Diocesan Pilgrimage, or even to stop in to see our outstanding summer camp program in action. To all of those, or even to those who have been but not seen in some time, we invite you: COME AND SEE!

ATTENTION FAMILIES

The Diocesan Apostolate for Youth is currently working on a new project. This project will be an at-home "guide book" designed to give families ideas on ways to keep their faith active in the home. The booklet will place a strong emphasis on keeping the major feasts of the Church despite hectic work and school schedules. It will also focus on the customs and traditions of our Carpatho-Russian Diocese. That's where we need your help. If there is something you did as a family growing up, or that you do now with your own family, that enhances the spiritual life of your family, let us know what it is. If it makes it into the booklet, it may serve inspire other families to try something they've never done before. It could pertain to family prayer time or scripture reading, or really anything that places an emphasis on your faith outside of Sunday morning Divine Liturgy. Please send any ideas, comments or questions to Fr. Matthew Moriak at: daylight@acrod.org or FrMatthewLL@hotmail.com Thank you!

-Mission Trip, cont'd from page 1

DAY THREE (JULY 9TH) AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

I loved all the people there - getting to know all these other people and what happened to them. Many of them had been addicted to drugs or alcohol. The stories from the mission give everyone something to strive for. To always look for a way of making yourself better.

-Katherine Steinstra

This trip was so much fun. I got to meet so many new people and got to experience new conditions. I really enjoyed myself this week and I am so grateful that I got the chance to go up there!

-Angela Sudick

This place is beautiful beyond my imagination. Now I'm writing in my journal, thinking about how much I have grown from this, how much I'm going to miss this place, how much I've learned from these people, and most importantly how spoiled I am. Some of these people come here for the only food they might get for the day and at home I get food whenever I want. Most of these people really do have faith because they have less than we do and they still live each day to Christ.

-Alex Breno

I would encourage other people to go and do the same, because it is a wonderful feeling to be there helping other people, and it also is a great time for personal reflection, because when you see and help people in need, it makes you appreciate how lucky you are to have all that you do.

-Tim Paproski

For more information on St. John the Compassionate Mission, visit our Diocesan website: www.acrod.org



Juniors are shown painting the exterior of St. John the Compassionate Mission.

Camp Nazareth

by Tiffany Canjura-St. Nicholas Church, New York City



There are no words for Camp Nazareth. It is just so exciting! Every year you form new friendships. For a week you eat, play, learn, sleep, and pray with them. Camp Nazareth is full of joy from singing happy tunes at the campfire to creating skits together. There, the fun never ends. You are always moving around. Like from playing sports such as water polo or volleyball, or swimming, and playing basketball at free time. Camp Nazareth is not a five star hotel with room service, but better! It is a fun little week away from parents having a lot of fun and eating as much candy as you want. One week there is irresistible. Next year you will definitely want to come back. What finally tops everything off is the DANCE! After you spend one more night of fun dancing and singing along you will cry your eyes out saying good-bye to your friends, counselors, staff, and most importantly camp. At Camp Nazareth you enjoy yourself to the fullest and when the next year approaches YOU CAN'T WAIT TO FINALLY GO BACK AND DO EVERYTHING ALL OVER AGAIN!



“Lord Have Mercy”

“Lord have mercy.” This simple, three word prayer is said more often than anything else during the course of the Divine Liturgy. It is said nearly 30 times. That doesn’t even take into account any special petitions that are added during the Triple Litany after the Gospel. Take those into account, and you may hear the words “Lord have mercy” close to 40 times!

Perhaps you’ve heard someone say, or even had the thought yourself, “why do we say this so many times? It’s repetitive!” It can seem repetitive, and to some people unnecessary if we don’t understand the great meaning behind it.

Think about your favorite movie. You can watch it over and over again. You probably feel like it never gets old. How many times have you sat around with your friends and quoted lines from your favorite comedies? No matter how many times you say those lines, they make you laugh each time. They have meaning to you. If we understand the power of the words, “Lord have mercy”, they will never get old.

When we say our evening prayers, we pray for our families and friends and ask for things that are important to us. We probably pray for the same people and things each and every night. It’s no different in the Liturgy. We say Lord

have mercy because we are asking for very important things from God. We are asking for peace within ourselves and for the world. We are asking that He protect our churches, the faithful, our Patriarch and Bishop, our government, country and armed forces. We are asking for good weather, protection for those who travel and that we will be delivered from bad things. The only way these things can be granted to us is if God has mercy on us. This is because we are sinners. It is the mercy of God that gives us the forgiveness of our sins. No matter how many mistakes we make, God still forgives us. He still shows us mercy.

Every time we sin, we need to ask for God’s mercy. That is why the Jesus Prayer, which is really just an extended version of “Lord have mercy” is so powerful. When we pray, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner” we are admitting that we sin, we are recognizing that Christ is truly God and we are begging for his mercy. That is what we are doing every time we sing “Lord have mercy” during the Divine Liturgy. It’s such a simple prayer that we can take for granted, but asking God to have mercy on us is a very powerful request. When we think about it that way, saying “Lord have mercy” 30-40 times every Sunday probably isn’t enough!

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Enter the Arena!

THE ARENA
A GATHERING PLACE FOR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN YOUTH

ACROD.org Home Ministries Youth The Arena

As most of you are already aware, our new Diocesan website launched in mid August. www.acrod.org. It is certainly a huge upgrade and provides a lot of exciting and educational material for our Diocese. Most important for you, the youth, is the section called The Arena. www.acrod.org/ministries/youth/arena

This page on the website is for you, the youth of the Diocese. On it, you will find links to youth related ministries, such as the Jr. ACRY and Camp Nazareth, daily scripture readings and lives of the saints, photo galleries of

youth related events and news. Best of all, you have your own voice. Sections such as “The Witness Stand” allow our youth to witness to the faith. Videos about life in the arena allow our young people to share their experiences about living their faith with each other. Check out what’s already there, and be on the lookout for information on how you can get involved. Please offer your feedback as well. Let us know what you would like to see, because it is YOUR page.

Windows Into Heaven

The Icon of the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross



Of the 12 major Feasts of the Church, the Elevation of the Cross is the only one that does not pertain to a specific event in the life of Christ or the Theotokos. This Feast commemorates the finding of the true Cross of Christ by St. Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine. This feast was just recently celebrated on September 14th (if your church is on the New Calendar) or September 27th (if your church is on the Old Calendar).

In the year 326, Constantine sent his mother, Helen, to Jerusalem to visit holy sites and to hopefully find the Cross of Christ. With the help of the oral tradition of the faithful, St. Helen was able to locate the cross, as well as the two crosses the thieves were crucified on. Some traditions hold that basil leaves were growing on the spot where the cross was found. Some churches will use basil leaves in addition to flowers, to surround the Cross during the celebration of this Feast.

St. Helen was unable to determine which of the three crosses was the one Christ had been crucified on. However, a dying woman was healed when she touched one of the crosses, and the Patriarch at the time, Macarius, determined that it was this cross upon which Christ had been crucified. Patriarch Macarius elevated the cross before the faithful and they responded by saying, "Lord have mercy." During Great Vespers on the eve of the feast, the priest will raise and lower the Cross while the faithful repeatedly sing "Lord have mercy."

In the icon of the feast, we can see Patriarch Macarius in the center elevating the cross. We also see deacons holding candles and on the right side of the icon, St. Helen, also venerating the Cross.

This feast is not just a remembrance of the historical event of the finding of the Cross. It allows us to focus on the sacrifice Christ made for us on the Cross outside of the season of Great Lent, while also reminding us how this instrument of death was used to conquer death, and to bring us the opportunity for salvation and eternal life!

Reflection on my Journey to Orthodoxy

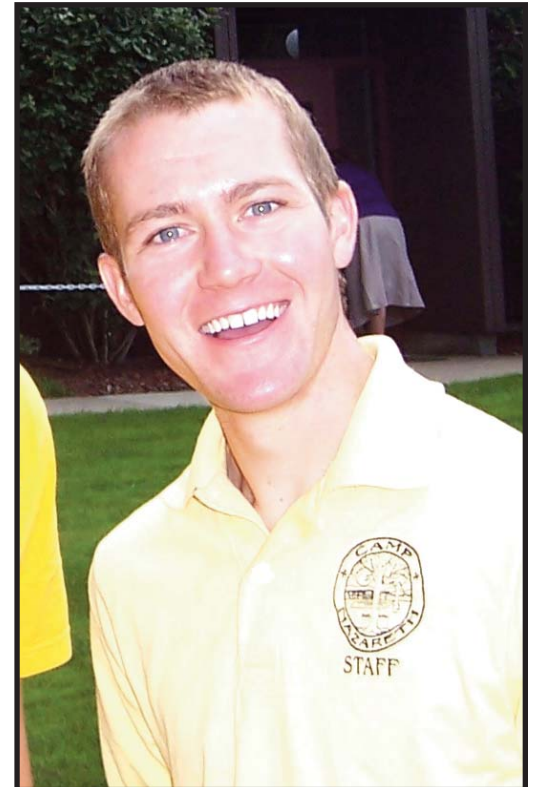
by Nicholas Lee Lannert

I first became consciously aware and interested in the Orthodox Church during my junior year at Purdue University through Church History elective courses. I took the course expecting to find the roots of my Evangelical Protestant beliefs and doctrines (i.e. *sola scriptura*) in the first centuries of the Church, but found quite the opposite. I discovered not only biblically, but also historically that the 1st and 2nd century Church's beliefs included Christ's real Body and Blood presence in the Eucharist, leadership in the Church passed on through the laying on of hands starting with the apostles, that there was one Church; not multiple denominations with doctrinal differences (even "non-essentials"), and finally, that there was an oral tradition of doctrine that was passed on within the churches along with the written scriptures (2 Thessalonians 2:15). As I have happily discovered since my Chrismation, my conversion story is nothing new; but it was certainly new to me.

It was over a year after encountering these historical documents academically before I would step foot in my first Orthodox Church. History came alive for me during my first Sunday Liturgy. God had prepared my mind and my heart for what I was about to experience. I could hear the echoes of Athanasius defeating Arianism in the hymnology; I could smell the Jewish roots of worship and see it fill the room, and I could see the image of St. John the Baptist still directing my gaze to the Lamb of God as he had done while here on Earth. There was no projector, no stage, no guitar solos, and no frivolous introductions. The Christians were there to worship God together, and it was understood by all.

My year long catechumenate was a time of tremendous trial for me. I had lots of questions and needed answers fast because my entire network of friends through college were almost all involved with me in Protestant campus ministry. They wanted to know what I now believed. On top of that, I was the only one in my family that had even heard of Eastern Orthodoxy. It's a good thing I like to read because I had at least 3 books on my "to-read" list from then on. Three invaluable resources came to my aid: Ancient Faith Radio website and podcasts, OCF (Orthodox Christian Fellowship), and my parish priest. If you are not familiar with Ancient Faith Radio (www.ancientfaith.com) and its resources I would strongly encourage you to take a few moments to check it out. It's undoubtedly one of the best resources that we as American Orthodox faithful have at our fingertips for free. The Orthodox Christian Fellowship chapter at Purdue was another important factor in my conversion. As a Christian heavily involved with campus ministry throughout my college career, it was vital for me to create friendships and bonds with others on campus who shared my beliefs and dedication to serving and worshipping God consistently. Finally, being able to speak with our parish priest who was a Lutheran convert to the Orthodox faith himself gave me a point of contact and understanding when my questions and trials arose.

January of this year, I completed my catechumenate and was accepted into the Orthodox faith. I've already had the opportunity to serve in many aspects of Orthodox ministry including Real Break, Camp Nazareth summer camp, and teaching parish Sunday school. As almost all Protestant converts to Orthodoxy agree, I am deeply thankful for my Protestant experience and background. It taught me to radically love God and follow and trust His guidance in all matters. It taught me to take the words of Holy Scripture seriously and faithfully. His Word led me to the Church of the apostles, the Church of the martyrs, the Orthodox Church.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to have an article and/or photos of a parish or individual youth activity printed, or are interested in writing something for Daylight, please contact Fr. Matthew Moriak at: daylight@acrod.org or FrMatthewLL@hotmail.com or by calling him at: (908)725-3385. Thanks and looking forward to hearing from you!