

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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Reflecting on the Youth Pilgrimage

by Katherine Steinsträ



What is it about Camp Nazareth that calls you back every year? For me, it is the mystery of time. At Camp Nazareth time stops, and you feel like you have spent your whole life there when in actuality it has only been a half a day. There are no worries, and it always feels like home even when you have only taken one step out of the car. So every time I hear of an event being held there, I jump at the opportunity to attend.

This year I attended the Diocesan Youth Sojourn on the Friday and Saturday before the Sunday Pilgrimage.

On Friday afternoon all pilgrims arrive and attend vespers. Although our pilgrimage lasts from Friday until Sunday, Saturday is the main time we take our spiritual journey. This year was a little easier on our backs than last year, but it was just as spiritually enriching. After breakfast we got on a bus and headed to the Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City.

It was a delightful journey, but after an hour we were more than happy to get off the bus. That first step out was one of the most amazing parts of the whole weekend. The monastery's beauty took your breath away. We had just traveled on highways and through cities, but none of that seemed to matter here. We felt as though we were a million miles away from anywhere, even though we knew we were not.

Once we were there the nuns had a jam-packed day prepared, so we split into groups. Mine was sent to the outdoor chapel where we asked the nuns a few questions and got to know them a little better. They asked us a few questions too, and learned that we all wanted to know one thing: what did they do here? They told us of how they were called to the monastic life, and about their lives on a daily basis. We were

not all that shocked to find out that their lives are much like ours, but with a little more prayer. They wake up, pray, eat breakfast, have alone time, eat lunch, pray, eat dinner, and then sleep, all while doing individual prayers throughout the day. My friends and I were all fascinated by their dedication, but they just saw it as what they were supposed to do. For them this was the natural way to live their life, and would not have it any other way.

Afterward, we were allowed to walk around the garden, whose aroma was absolutely heavenly. The bright colors and variety of flowers were, personally, one of best parts of the journey. Then we made our way to the gift shop where you could even purchase small stuffed nuns to remember the journey by! Then, they took us to the chapel where we could ask some more questions. It was a small room but was filled with relics of the saints and the whole room was covered in icons, which was lovely to see.

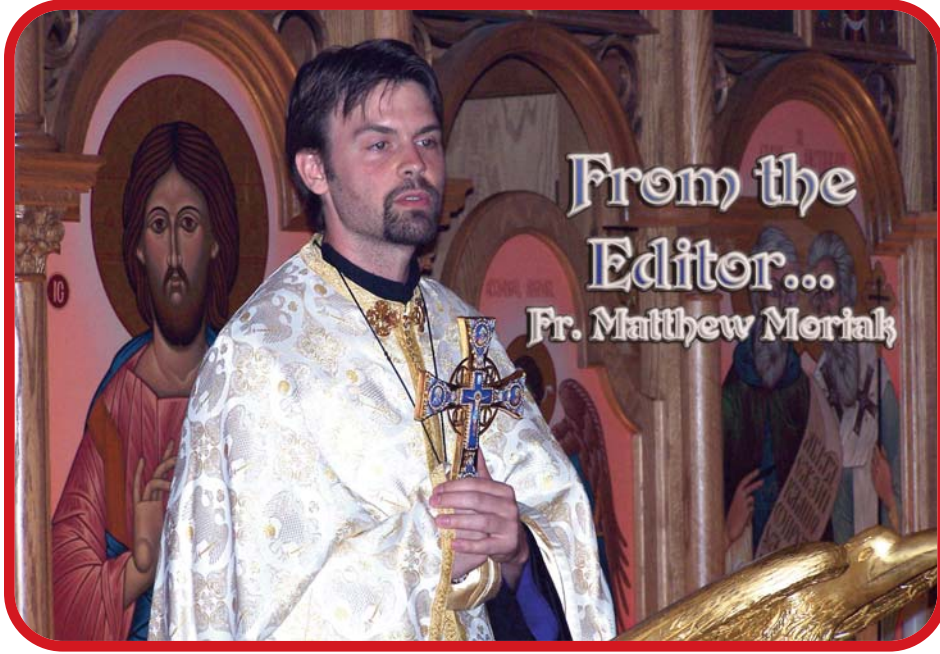
Next, we made our way back outside for a presentation on the Orthodox Christian Fellowship, or the OCF. It is a ministry for college students on their respective campuses. Since I myself am a college student, knowledge of this group will be very helpful for my college experience. It is a great way to connect with people that have the same

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Youth Pilgrims are shown at Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, PA.

DAYLIGHT PULL-OUT SECTION



Don't Hold That Grudge

As we draw to the end of 2008, a year dedicated to the life and teachings of St. Paul, it is a good idea to remind ourselves of St. Paul's miraculous calling to be a follower of Christ. We all know how St. Paul, then known as Saul, was persecuting the Orthodox Church and was on his way to the city of Damascus when he encountered Christ. Saul lost his eyesight for a time, and upon being baptized, he began preaching Christ, risen from the dead.

When the Apostles heard about what Paul was doing, it was understandable that they were a little concerned and perhaps even skeptical. Wasn't this the same man who was persecuting them? The same man having Christians arrested and thrown in jail? The same man who held the cloaks of those who were stoning the first martyr, St. Stephen?

The Apostles accepted Paul however. If Christ could forgive him for what he had done, then why shouldn't they? That's an important lesson for all of us. Too many times, we get angry with someone, and we hold a grudge. No matter what, we can't seem to get past what they said, or what they did. The problem with that is that we don't know if they have already been forgiven by God for what they have done. They may have been genuinely repentant, and received forgiveness, yet we are still holding on to an old hurt. At that point, we aren't hurting them by being angry. If anything, all that anger we have inside is only hurting us.

If there is someone you are angry with or holding a grudge against, forgive them. Pray for them. Light a candle for them Sunday in church. We are called to be imitators of Christ. If we want to be forgiven by Him for our own sins, then we absolutely must be willing to forgive others as well.



With the recent devastation from Hurricane Ike in Texas and Louisiana, International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) offered opportunities for people to help. One of the easiest ways was to put together personal hygiene packets, which included items such as bars of soap, and hand towels, or emergency clean-up buckets, which included such items as work gloves and cleaning supplies. Many of our Diocesan youth were able to help in these efforts. These pictures are of youth from Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Rockaway, New Jersey and Holy Ghost Church in Manville, NJ as they worked on this worthwhile project. For more information, go to www.iocc.org

If your parish has any photos they would like to share, please e-mail them to daylight@acrod.org

-Youth Pilgrimage, cont'd from page 1

views as you, and very comforting to know that they are there for you.

It was so wonderful to hear about the lives of these women and all they have accomplished, especially the founder of the monastery, Mother Alexandra. They told us of her royal beginnings as Princess Ileana of Romania and the humble beginnings of the monastery in the United States. Since the day we visited was the anniversary of her repose, we were able to serve a panachida with them.

Reluctantly, after the service was over, we all stepped back on the bus and left that beautiful monastery. When we arrived back at camp we were changed for the better. We had time to contemplate what had happened and what could happen in our futures. The journey was not only physical but spiritual and brought us closer to God.

I love going to the Pilgrimages whenever I get a chance, because it is a way to reevaluate what is important for you as a Christian and gives you the chance to be with fellow Orthodox Christians. Without the time spent doing that it is very easy for me to get lost in the world. I will be back next year to take some time out of my life to spend with my friends, and I hope I will see all of you there too.

To find out more information please visit www.orthodoxwiki.org and search for Monastery of the Transfiguration or Orthodox Christian Fellowship.



The youth were invited to ring the monastery bell.



Did You Know?

When the priest turns and gives a blessing in Church, his fingers form the letters "IC XC." In Greek, the letters "IC" stand for Jesus and the letters "XC" stand for Christ.

IT'S NOT TURKEY

It's togetherness, not turkey, that makes Thanksgiving a special holiday. Try these together-time traditions.

Thanks for the Memories - Think of people you're thankful for... the older neighbor who has tools to lend or the librarian who can find just the right book. Make thank-you cards for those people who have touched your lives.

Double the Pleasure - Have your children help make pumpkin pies. Double the recipe and donate one of the pies to your local soup kitchen, or share it with a shut-in in your parish/neighborhood.

Let the Games Begin - What can you do while the turkey's roasting? Get out the games. Each Thanksgiving, begin a tradition of buying a new game that appeals to all ages.

Healthy Habits - Make an after-dinner walk part of your family's tradition. Warn guests to bring walking shoes and winter coats.

Give Thanks - Attend your parish's or community Thanksgiving service before you carve the bird!

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HOSPITALITY OF ABRAHAM



over the top of it (red representing His divinity, and blue His humanity which He “put on”). In the icon of the Hospitality, the center angel is also wearing red with blue over the top of it.

Before you read any further, open a Bible and read in the book of Genesis 18:1-15. This story is commonly known as the Hospitality of Abraham. In this story, three angels appear to Abraham and Sarah. They treat their three visitors with great reverence, and prepare a meal for them. You have probably seen an icon of these three angels seated at the table, but you may not have known that this icon is a “type” of the Holy Trinity!

A type is a figure or a representation. The guests are described simply as three men, but when Abraham talks to them, they respond as one (“they said”). The Lord appeared to Abraham, but when he looks to see who is there, he sees three men. Three men speaking as one; the one God in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At other times, only one of the angels speaks to Abraham and he is referred to as “Lord.”

In the icon, it is most often felt that the angel in the center of the icon is the one referred to as Lord: Jesus Christ. In iconography, it is traditional for Christ to be depicted wearing a red undergarment, with a blue garment



Reflecting on St. Paul

The year 2008 was dedicated to the life and teachings of St. Paul. Throughout the year, our youth learned about the life of this great Saint. As part of the Metropolitan Orestes Scholarship application put out by the ACRY, our youth were asked to answer the following question: “If St. Paul was writing to the Churches of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, what would he say?” Printed are parts of some of the great responses that were received.

“St. Paul’s writings would inform us about salvation and what our actions entail for us in the modern age. What we see on TV and how we interact with people daily may not always be best for us. God does not want us to emulate the bad behavior which is prevalent in today’s society despite the fact it conforms to popular opinion. St. Paul would tell us to focus on the Church and in God’s righteousness.”

“St. Paul would tell us that it is never too late to find the “right” path. He went from the greatest persecutor to the greatest teacher.”

“St. Paul would advise us not to get caught up in the American culture. Today, people are too materialistic, thinking the more you own the happier you’ll be. St. Paul would state that you don’t find happiness in material things, but that you need to turn to the Church to find inner peace.”

“St. Paul would urge us to settle our disputes with each other in the manner in which he suggested to the early Christians: to avoid gossip; idle talk and hurtful statements.”

Quadruplets Attend Camp Nazareth for the First Time!

The summer of 2008 at Camp Nazareth was a very successful one. Well over 300 of our Diocesan youth attended one or more of the three Diocesan camping sessions. Many of them attended for the first time. Amongst the first timers were the Fitzgerald “quads” from Sts. Peter and Paul parish in Rockaway, NJ: Alexa, Zachary, Lauren and Nicole.

The quads mom, Barb, had attended Camp herself when she was in high school and was certain her children would enjoy it, but the family planned a visit a year ahead of time, to help prepare them. “I knew it was a beautiful place with lots of things to do, whether they were religious, sports, arts and crafts, or just hanging out and I wasn’t disappointed in our visit. The church was absolutely beautiful set in among the trees.”

As for the children themselves, they were immediately impressed with what they saw at the Camp. “It was very big,” said Alexa. “The pool was very big and cool.” Zachary added that it was a “very nice place” and Nicole noticed that “everything was clean and the food was good.” Perhaps Lauren summed it up best for all of them when she said: “All of it’s good!”

There were many different things they enjoyed about the Camp program, including sports, the game room and singing. The campfire was a favorite as well. Alexa said it was “really cool” and Zachary said it was the best. Lauren and Nicole said their favorite part was making friends and Nicole added that she enjoyed “learning about God.”

Speaking of learning about God, all four of them came home having learned something new about their faith. The children learned about the

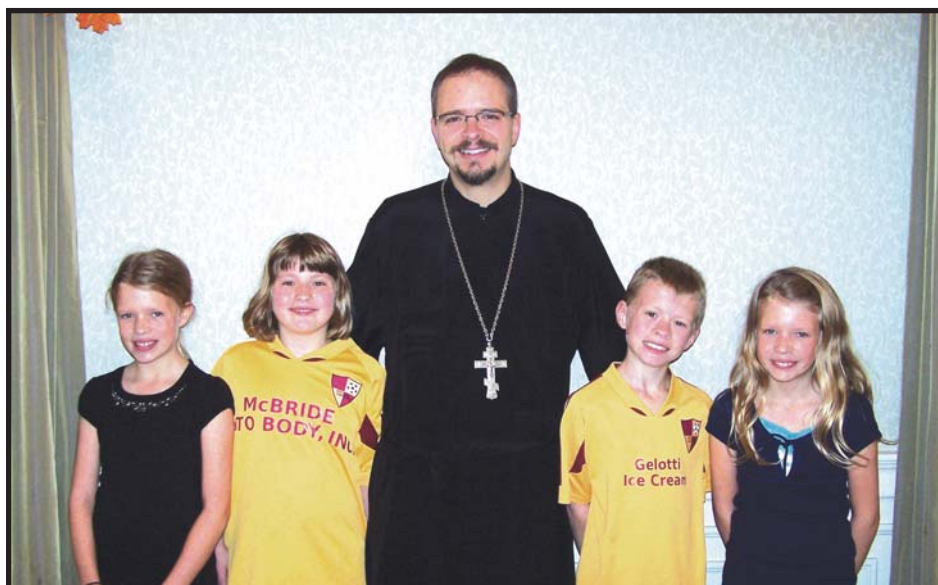
life of St. Paul. Zachary learned that this great Saint’s name used to be Saul. Nicole mentioned learning about the “big cross that they put in the woods.” That cross had been carried and planted by our own Diocesan youth at the summer pilgrimage in August, 2007. Every summer program has a theme. This year’s them, according to Lauren, was 2nd Corinthians 12:9. Alexa explained how they learned this quote: “Fr. Ellis said, ‘2nd Corinthians’. We would say, ‘12:9’. He said, ‘For my grace is sufficient for you’ and we said ‘for my strength is made perfect in weakness.’”

After a week of great fun, all four of them were sad to have to leave the Camp and the new friends they had made. Even months later, they still miss the Camp and their friends. The Camp truly creates lasting memories for our youth. “My favorite memory” says Alexa, “was seeing all the priests I hadn’t seen in a long time and seeing them serve at the altar in the Church and outside.” Zachary especially remembers the game room. “I loved playing games...with my cousin Josef and going to the snack stand with

him.” Nicole’s favorite memories included the campfire and singing around it as well as swimming at night. Lauren couldn’t pick just one memory. “I have a lot of favorite memories.”

Even though it’s sad to leave camp, Barb says all four of them are already looking forward to next summer. “Alexa got off of the bus and asked if she could go for two weeks next summer...they all want to go back next summer.” She also notices the difference the Camp has made in their lives spiritually. “Lauren, Alexa and Nicole have been following along in the Divine Liturgy books more and singing more hymns during Church services.” Zachary already serves as an Altar boy.

Barb would recommend the Camp Nazareth experience to any and all of our Diocesan youth and encourages other parents to send their children. “Trust that your children will have fun and enjoy themselves. They will meet so many other Orthodox children and this is a wonderful thing. It’s the same great place that I went (to) and I will be sending them back next again.”

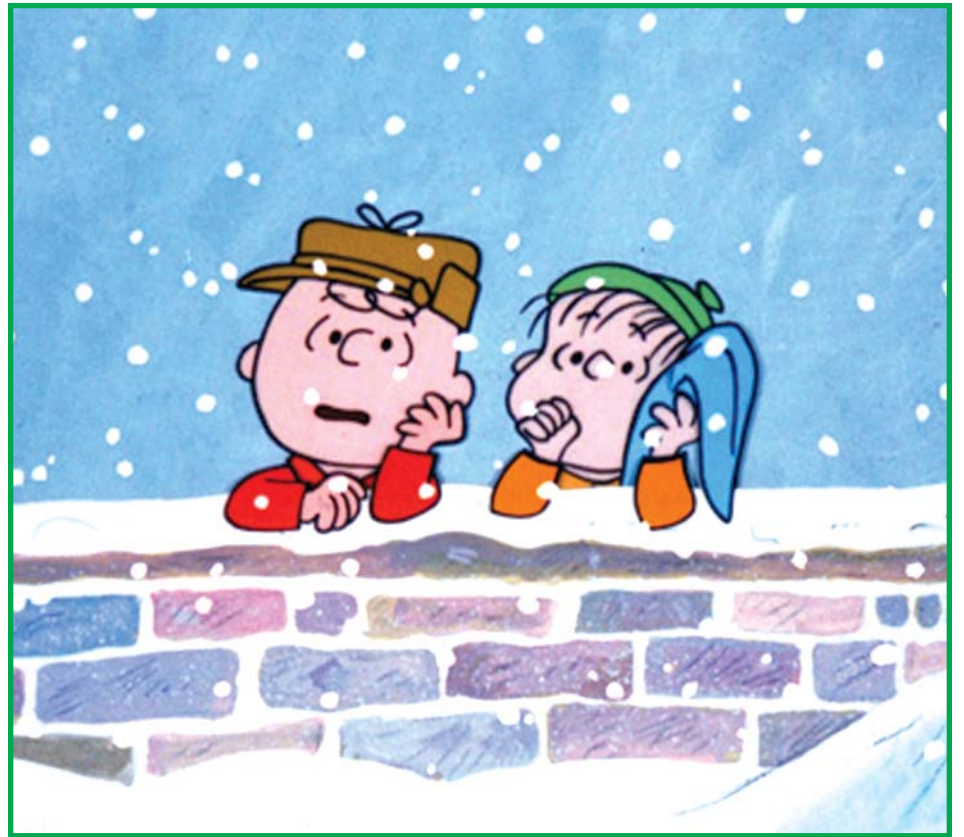


Pictured with their Pastor, Fr. Michael Chendorain, are the Fitzgerald quads: Lauren, Alexa, Zachary and Nicole.

The following essay was written and used for a college application by current Miss Jr. ACRY Emily Matelan from St. Michael Church in Rankin, PA.

Growing up, going to church was never an important part of my family life. My family has always gone to a small Carpatho-Russian Orthodox church about forty minutes from our house, so it was difficult for us to go every week. Occasionally, my grandmother would take my brother and me to special services, but as I got older, I became more interested in God and I wanted to attend church more frequently. My grandmother signed my brother and me up for Sunday school at the Orthodox Church, and I made my First Holy Communion on my fourteenth birthday. After that, I became more interested in meeting other people with the same beliefs as me, so I went to an Orthodox Church camp. While there, I met a group of people who were in an organization called the American Carpatho Russian Youth, or ACRY. The goal of the ACRY is to spread the Orthodox faith and raise money for the churches. Unfortunately, because there were not enough people in my church eligible for the group we were unable to establish our own chapter. Each year, a convention is held over Labor Day weekend for every chapter of the ACRY to come together and discuss what is going to happen over the following year. I had a chance to attend the convention in 2006 and learned that I could join a chapter-at-large. I attended the convention again the next year and was elected Auditor of the Junior ACRY. The opportunity allowed me to attend many ACRY events and make new friends. In early 2008, my church finally had enough people interested in joining. My church had never had a chapter before, so there was a lot of paperwork that needed to be filled out. I did all the work of starting the chapter by myself, and in February 2008, my church had its own Junior ACRY chapter. I was elected to be president of the chapter and got the chapter off to a great start. In the first few months, my chapter raised over 300 dollars for our church. At the 2008 convention, I was elected Miss Junior ACRY 2008 for my work on creating the new chapter and my leadership skills in the church. I was very humbled for being recognized for doing something in which I believe and something I truly love. This experience has taught me how to be a strong leader while maintaining a Christian lifestyle and working with people for the good of the community.

What I learned from Linus



Like most children, when the leaves began to change colors and the weather began to get a little colder, a feeling of anticipation came right along with it. Christmas would be coming soon. Christmas meant a lot of things, as I'm sure it does to children today. It meant a break from school. It meant great food, candy and cookies. It meant spending time with family. It meant decorations and, of course, it meant presents.

My sister and I used to always look forward to the various Christmas cartoons that would be on TV every year. From 'Twas the Night Before Christmas and The Grinch Who Stole Christmas to Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, we simply couldn't get enough.

As I look back, perhaps the one cartoon that stands out most of all is the Peanuts Christmas Special. I loved Charlie Brown and all the other characters (Snoopy was my absolute favorite). We would always laugh at the way they danced and how Lucy would always pull the football away from poor Charlie as he tried to kick it. We always felt bad when he tried to bring home that little, run down Christmas tree and all the other kids made fun of him. It was at that point that Charlie asked if anyone could tell him the true meaning of Christmas.

That's when Charlie's best friend, Linus, with his trusty blue blanket at his side, took center stage. Linus would tell Charlie Brown the meaning of Christmas and he would do so by quoting the Gospel of St. Luke:

"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!'" (Luke 2:8-14).

Today, the words "Happy Holidays" often replace "Merry Christmas" for fear of offending someone. When you consider that, it's amazing that a cartoon quoting Scripture still airs every year. Every year, Linus explains to Charlie Brown and all of their friends that the true meaning of Christmas isn't found in the biggest tree, or the fanciest decorations, or the best food, or the coolest new presents. It's found in a much simpler place. It's found in a manger. It's found by simple and humble shepherds.

As we go through the Nativity Fast and approach the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we can never lose sight of the true meaning of this Feast.

We will all have a lot of preparation to do. We will all decorate our trees and our homes. We will prepare for the big meal and brave the long lines at the malls. The most important preparation we have, though, is to prepare to welcome Christ into the manger of our souls.

Take some time each day to pray, to reflect on the love God has for us that He would send us His Son. Imitate His example by finding ways to help those less fortunate during the cold winter months. Participate in the services your church offers for this glorious Feast.

And when you see that The Peanuts Christmas is going to air, take the time to check it out, and listen closely to Linus.



REALBREAK
OCF Orthodox Christian Fellowship

Real Break 2009 Filling Up Fast!

Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF)'s Real Break program is an alternative to the traditional spring break and offers the opportunity for college students to use that time to experience the reality of Christian life. Trips are available to such places as Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Jerusalem, Romania, Guatemala, El Salvador and Greece. For information, check out: <http://ocf.net/programs/506.html>

Here's some quotes from people who went on trips last year:

"[Real Break] has opened my eyes to the struggles I have never had to experience in order to worship God."

"I will forever remember what I was blessed with this past week. I have been truly blessed by God. My life will be changed forever. Thank God. Thanks OCF. Thank you all my donors."

"[Real Break] has made me want to travel and get involved with other areas that need help and has motivated me to learn another language."

"Words cannot explain what I saw and experienced."

"[Real Break] has renewed my faith."

"I now understand that the Church is everywhere and is a living, breathing thing."

"God-willing I'll value my time more. I've come to love and get to know so many people in just one week. How many more can I touch with the rest of my lifetime? I've also come to understand that I have the opportunity to work myself out of bad situations. I should appreciate that because not everyone has that opportunity."