

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

Volume 6

June 26, 2011

Number 3

Reflecting on the 1st College Retreat

by Michael Stan

I remember my first day of college like it was yesterday. I told myself that I'd be okay, even though inside I was having a never-ending series of panic attacks due to my own insecurities. Everyone said college was the time to discover who I was. It was a time where I could try new things and if I messed up, it'd be okay because I could just start over again with something new. I liked the thought of trying new things without having to worry whether it was right or wrong. I liked the thought of being able to experiment with things that appealed to me, but quite frankly, I didn't know where to start. Was I supposed to crack open some books? Maybe I was supposed to experience the college life and hit up a party at the local fraternity house. Better yet, maybe I was supposed to go to the recreation center so I wouldn't gain the freshman fifteen. While I wish I would've chosen the latter, at the time I really had no interest in any of that.

Even now, two years later, I'm still not sure where to start. In need of an answer, I began pursuing the definition of college in the most reliable source I know: the internet. I found that different sources offered different definitions. For example, www.merriam-webster.com defined college as "An institution offering instruction usually in a professional, vocational or technical field," while www.urbandictionary.com defined college as "A magical place where it is rumored that learning takes



College students attending the first college conference at Camp Nazareth show they are strong enough to overcome the world! (Michael Stan, middle row, 2nd from right).

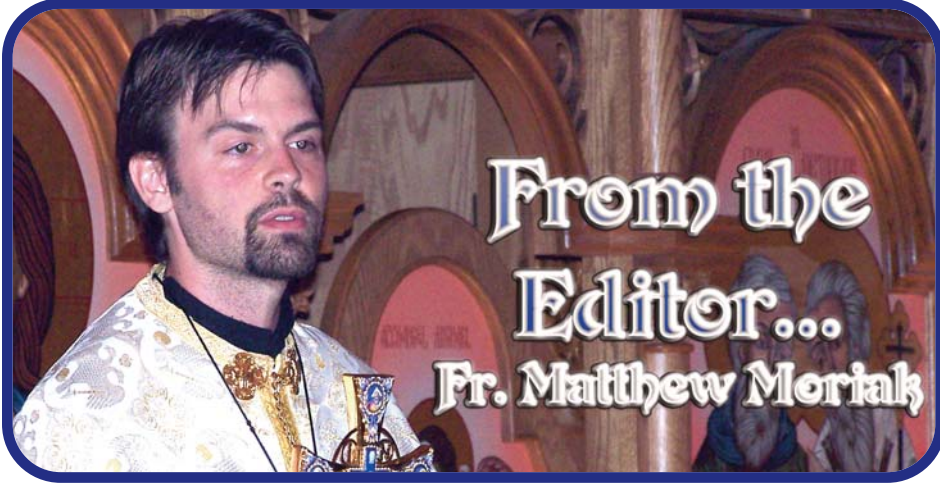
place, although to those who enter, it is often described differently afterward, as a beautiful land in which beer flows in amber currents next to a golden pasture, where virgins lie naked with gentle smiles upon their calm, inviting faces; but more precisely, a Shangri-La rite of passage into adulthood which involves rampant consumption of alcoholic beverages, flagrant and promiscuous sexual behavior, and a general and fundamental disregard for any form of responsibility by its inhabitants". After reading both definitions, it became very clear to me why college students get so lost and confused. The world defines college in two ways – as a

scholastic tool and as a distraction, but what about faith? This is just one example of the constant struggle between the views of the world and of the Church for young adults.

In all honesty, I must admit that there have been many times when I have allowed college to be a distraction. I'm not talking about going out drinking or being promiscuous. I'm talking about the times when I have allowed college to become a spiritual distraction. There have been times when I have been so wrapped up in my class work and hanging out with friends, that before I've known it, I have been completely engulfed in a "Godless" world. Prayer had become nearly obsolete, reading my Bible had become boring, and going to church...well, I had simply become too lazy to go. I have had strug-

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DAYLIGHT PULL-OUT SECTION



“Watch Your Mouth!”

Many of our Diocesan churches hold a monthly Moleben to St. Nectarios. This service is also served every summer at Camp Nazareth and is very popular with the campers. During the service, there is a reading from the Epistle of St. James. We hear St. James talk about the danger of taking oaths when he writes, “But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’ and your ‘no,’ ‘no’ lest you fall into judgment” (James 5:12). This echoes the words of our Lord as recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew (5:34-37).

One aspect of this verse I wish to focus on is the idea of swearing. We are so casual in the way we speak. It’s ironic that we live in such a “politically correct” world where every little thing a person says has to be scrutinized so as not to offend, and yet look at the things you CAN say on television that you couldn’t 30, 20, or even 10 years ago. It’s ironic that people lose jobs over things that pass through their lips, yet have you ever heard of someone being fired for taking the Lord’s name in vain? Is that not offensive to anyone who calls themselves a Christian? The Orthodox Study Bible, in a footnote referring to the aforementioned passage, says that “Jesus speaks against casual use of God’s name...” (OSB, p. 17). As Orthodox Christians, we should be on extra guard against this. How often do we use the expression, “Oh my God!”? When we use this expression, is it in prayer? Is it in praise of the awesomeness of the Lord? Or is it in a moment of shock, or amazement, where we really aren’t even thinking about God? As if using God’s name in shock or amazement weren’t enough, I don’t need to mention the ways God and Jesus Christ are used as expressions of anger. If someone repeatedly used overtly filthy language in front of us, or was racially insensitive, or told inappropriate jokes for the company they were in, we would probably eventually say something to them. Would we do the same if they repeatedly took the Lord’s name in vain? Or do we ignore it to avoid conflict? Interesting things to think about.

Urgent!

CNF is defined as that *condition which persists in children, typically ages 7-18, that is caused by proximity to the Summer Camping Season at Camp Nazareth*. Symptoms include a generalized excitement, a repeated singing of “Wavin’ Flag”, repeated use of the phrase “remember when” followed by a fond memory of Camp, a lot of Facebook chatter about Camp, and a longing for Camp friends and the Camp environs. There is no known cure for CNF but it is rumored that a week at Camp will help alleviate some of the symptoms of CNF. In some severe cases of CNF, 2 or even 3 weeks at Camp may be required. CNF is *highly contagious*. It is even possible to contract CNF through Facebook. If you contract CNF, it is recommended you send in your Camp Application as soon as possible, so that treatment may begin for you before it’s “too late”. Please be sure to mark on your medical form that you suffer from CNF. If left untreated CNF has been known to cause those afflicted with it to cry, burst out in uncontrollable laughter, and even to spontaneously change their hair color. If you or a loved one suffer from CNF, please know that help is only a month away.

We are not sure who first contracted CNF. What we do know is that it began just after 1977. It began as isolated outbreaks, but soon reached epidemic proportions. The ACROD was called in to stop the pandemic, but could do nothing by the time it was notified. CNF had “infected” almost all our Diocesan parishes and had spread beyond the boundaries of the Diocese. Funding to support the ACROD’s efforts in CNF research is primarily given by DDD members as well as the National ACRY and its local chapters across the Diocese. The Camp is grateful for such support and asks you to continue to support its efforts against CNF by continuing to send our Diocesan children to Camp and by ongoing monetary aid. Together we can combat the symptoms of CNF.

-College Retreat, cont’d from page 1

gles with other desires as well, but I thank God He gave me the strength to overcome temptation. I say this openly and with faith because I know there are many people who undergo the same struggles.

When I became aware of my spiritual weakness, I began brainstorming for a way that I could become proactive and change my life. This is where I came up with the idea of having a college retreat at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA. The retreat would be open to anyone of college age and be a chance to escape to camp and rejuvenate whatever it was they had lost. Finding a verse that could serve as the theme for the retreat was more difficult than I had imagined. Luckily, one day while logged into Facebook (who would’ve guessed), I saw what would soon become the 2011 college retreat theme: John 16:33. This verse states, “*In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*”. In one perfectly simple verse, I had found the theme for a college age retreat.

The weekend long college retreat was nothing like I had anticipated – It was far better. I had high expectations, but God certainly blessed the weekend to bear more fruit than I could have ever imagined. The weekend was jam-packed with incredible speakers, brilliant discussion groups, and amazing people.

The retreat ran from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon. We began with introductions and a few quirky icebreakers, which invoked constant laughter, joking and encouragement right from the start. Next, there was an open discussion where each camper filled out a questionnaire in order to give the speakers an insight as to the ideology of the group present. The answers were reviewed and used to help each speaker present their material in the best and most beneficial way for the group. I believe that these questionnaires were part of what made the retreat so personal and valuable.

The keynote speaker of the event, Father Jonathan Cholcher, spoke primarily about the overall theme/topic of the weekend, “Overcome the World”. A few interesting things he discussed were:

- 1). The world has made God appear absent.
- 2). The world is not evil, but has fallen into darkness. It is redeemed/restored in Jesus Christ.
- 3). The soul dwells in the body but is not of the body, as we dwell in the world but are not of the world. (Basically how we as Christians live in the world but should not be of the world).

Our second speaker was Father Nicholas and Presvytera Anne Karissa Halkias who spoke about marriage and family life. Their presentation was extremely creative, serious, humorous, and most importantly, real. The couple compared marriage to making a movie. In a movie there are actors and directors. In a marriage the husband and wife are the actor and actress and God had to be the director. They were extremely creative and innovative in how they described the marriage and family life. I feel as though they gave the group a lot to think about and consider about marriage and what it entails.

Our third speaker was Father Joel Gillam who spoke about inter-personal relationships. This topic was very interesting for it discussed our love for each other and how different types of love (Eros-a romance type love; Philos-love based on friendship; Agape-unconditional love) affect interaction toward each other.

Each day consisted of morning and evening prayers, as well as a Compline service on Friday night and vespers on Saturday. The most unique aspect of the retreat was the ethnic diversity amongst the attendees. The Greek, Antiochian, Russian, Romanian, Carpatho-Russian and OCA Orthodox jurisdictions were all well represented. Each service was done in a different style of singing, from plain-chant to byzantine style singing. This allowed everyone to share his or her traditional way of worship/singing with everyone else.

The weekend was the exact spiritual rejuvenation I needed. Confessions were available all weekend and the clergy were constantly available for talks and discussions outside of their presentation times. The church was always open so we could go in and pray or sing whenever we wanted. One of my fondest memories of the weekend is when two of the other attendees asked if I wanted to stay in the church and sing some hymns. I was rather caught off guard, but nonetheless, excited. I ran out of the church and yelled for my brother to come back and sing with us. We sat in the church for quite a while just singing different hymns. I’ve never done that before and I have to admit that it was an amazing experience. It’s going to be something I do more often.

There were other times for song as well. During the campfire, one of the attendees, Jonny, played his guitar and we sat around the fire jamming to some classic tunes and rocking out like nobody’s business. We sang, we danced, and we enjoyed some perfectly cooked, delicious marshmallows.

The college retreat was emotionally and spiritually moving in so many ways. The best aspect of the retreat is that each person seemed to be on a different level of Orthodox Christian spirituality. The retreat curriculum was purpose-

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You Are What You Eat:

Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ

“You are what you eat” is an old saying. Its meaning, of course, is that if we eat things that are bad for us, it will make us feel bad and ultimately contribute to us being unhealthy. If we eat things that are good for us, we will feel good and be more healthy.

How would we apply this saying to what we eat at the movies? Every time I go to the movies, I tell myself, “I don’t need popcorn.” I mean, going to the movies is expensive enough without adding in the ridiculous price of snacks and drinks. Then I walk into the theater and I smell that smell—the movie theater popcorn smell—and it’s all over. Next thing you know, I’m getting the large, because it’s “the best value.” Half way through the movie, I’m just eating it because it’s there. I could eat the

whole tub and still be hungry. More likely than not, I’ll leave when the movie is over thinking to myself, “I wish I hadn’t eaten that.” So, it’s expensive *and* unhealthy.

What we eat—whether it’s popcorn or candy—isn’t the highlight of our movie going experience. However, when we come to church Sunday morning, the apex of the Liturgy is when the priest invites us to come forward “in the fear of God, with faith and with love” to receive the precious Body and Blood of Christ. What we eat in church is not only the highlight of that particular Liturgy, but in truth, the highlight of our entire week! This food that we receive costs us nothing, won’t leave us feeling sick afterwards, and we can (and should) partake of it as often as possible.

As Christians, we are called to be Christ-like. We are called to imitate our Lord and the way He lived His earthly life to the best of our ability. What better way to help us be Christ-like than to literally have Christ within us? That truly gives new meaning to the phrase “you are what you eat.”

When we receive Holy Communion, the priest says it is given to us for the “remission of our sins and for life everlasting.” It’s just like the popular Communion hymn tells us: “Receive the Body of Christ. Taste the fountain of immortality.” We can eat junk food that makes us sick, or we can eat healthy foods that may even help us live a longer life. But only the Body and Blood of Christ is food for eternal life.

-College Retreat, cont'd from page 2

fully planned to reach out to an extremely diverse group of individuals and I think that’s why it worked so well. In addition, everybody who attended had something unique to bring to the table, whether it was a sense of humor, intellect, musical talent, singing, cooking, adventure, questioning...etc.

It has only been a few weeks since the retreat and I’m already getting impatient waiting for next year. I simply cannot explain how motivating and appropriate the retreat was for me personally. Learning how to “Overcome the World” is much easier said than done. However, the weekend gave me something that I seemed to have given up on: *Hope*. Hope in being able to overcome the temptations of the world and not being materialistic or worried about social status. Hope in a better tomorrow and hope that we can be icons of Christ in the world.

We need to stop letting the world convince us that times have changed, and take a stand as Orthodox Christians. We need to stop letting our faith be reduced to nothing more than a label, and begin making it a way of life. The Christian life is by no means a walk in the park. I, like many other people, struggle with it every day of my life, but making even the smallest changes like wearing our crosses proudly or saying “Christ is Born” instead of “Happy Holidays” can make a difference. The bigger things take time and effort, and we’ll never attain the complete righteousness. But you know what? This is where we start. This is the beginning of how we as Orthodox Christians can overcome the World – through Christ.

Introducing Stewardship to Children-Part III

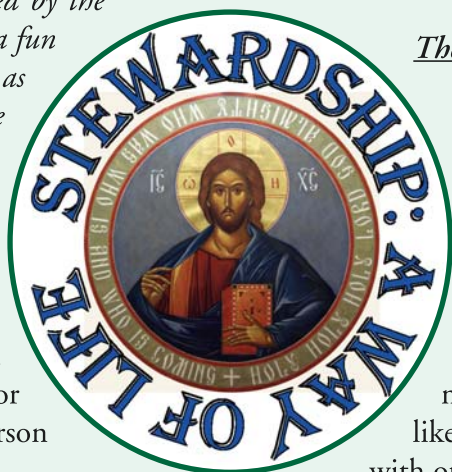
We continue our look at material that has been prepared by the Diocesan Stewardship Committee. This issue, we present a fun and educational exercise that can be used in the home or as part of a Sunday school lesson. This material can also be found online at: <http://www.acrod.org/ministries/development/stewardship>

“Stewardship Popcorn” Exercise

A group of family and friends are gathered around a table. A popcorn popper, salt, butter, and a container for the popped corn are placed on a table. Give to each person one kernel of unpopped popcorn to hold.

Remind them that it is hard, small, insignificant and unappetizing by itself. Discuss what is within the shell (the white, fluffy, popped corn) and how to get the insides out (heat). Then gather the kernels, enough necessary to make a full batch of popcorn. Prepare to drop the kernels into the popper. Before proceeding, explain the symbols.

The CORN=US We are potentially beautiful, with the just the right talents, when we “go-it” with God. We are hard and unappetizing without Him.



The POPPER=CHURCH Into which Jesus invites us all.

The HEAT=GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT Who brings out of us the person we should be and the talents we need. Together, with other kernels, we become God’s sweet smelling community.

The SALT and BUTTER=SACRAMENTS The Sacraments make us more flavorful and appealing, more Christ-like. They give us the strength to continue sharing ourselves with others.

Then let the popping begin. Notice how some of the kernels, like people, respond more quickly and that, when they are filled with the heat (the Holy Spirit), all dance around, even over-flowing the popper (Church).

When the corn is popped, eat it.

The lesson is not over. Some of the kernels do not pop. They were in the same heat for the same length of time. That is like the people who come to Church but don’t let it make any difference in their everyday lives or those who don’t come to Church at all.

Windows into Heaven:

FEAST OF SAINTS

PETER AND PAUL



While it is not one of the 12 major feasts of the Church, the feast day of Sts. Peter and Paul (June 29th, New Calendar; July 12th, Old) is still an important feast. It is so important, that it is preceded by one of the four major fasting periods of the Church year.

Sts. Peter and Paul share a feast because they were both so important to the growth of the early Church. However, they came to be great Saints by very different paths. St. Peter was a simple fisherman, who was one of the first called by Christ. As one of His 12 disciples, he was with Him during the entire time of His three-year ministry and, along with James and John, witnessed some very important events, such as the Transfiguration. Following Christ's Ascension, on the Feast of Pentecost, St. Peter gave what can be considered the first Christian sermon, and 3000 people immediately joined the Church!

St. Paul, on the other hand, was not a follower of Christ during His earthly ministry. Unlike St. Peter, St. Paul was a highly educated man, and as the Church was first being established, he persecuted Christians, and saw to it that many of them were arrested! However, once he became a Christian, he became the early Church's greatest missionary, spreading the Gospel to lands far and wide.

Both of these great Saints experienced the power of repentance and forgiveness. St. Paul, for his persecutions of the Church, and St. Peter for his denying Christ three times before the crucifixion. We learn from this that no matter what we do, if we are truly sorry, God will forgive us.

There are different icons of St. Peter and Paul. We often see them hugging each other, which shows us the love that we are to have for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. The icon in this issue of *Daylight* shows them holding an image of the Church. This is done to remind us of the important role that they played in the growth of the Orthodox Church.

Youth Choir Formed in Monongahela

By Sarah Hetzler, Irene Pehanich and SNYC members



MONONGAHELA, PA--The Orthodox Church has beautiful services and processions, all of which are complete with heavenly singing. But, have you ever noticed how the children aren't participating in the services as much as they should be? We noticed this problem at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Monongahela, so the adults and children decided to start the St. Nicholas Orthodox Church Youth Choir (SNYC).

The members of the group are: Kaitlyn Caramela, Rachel Hetzler, Sarah Hetzler, Irene Pehanich, Ashley Slembo, Mary Jane Smoley and Lauren Temoshenka. The age range in SNYC now is from ages 5-15. Right now, the group consists of all girls and hopes to add more children and even have some boys. The group meets every other Sunday after Liturgy, and is directed by Pani Kathy Pehanich.

Fr. Ed Pehanich is the priest at St. Nicholas. He thinks it is important for children to be a part of the Liturgy. "I think the group sings beautifully, although they could sing louder, gain more confidence, and not be afraid to sing out. It is important to have a youth singing group like SNYC so children can praise God and not just sit there the whole service. The Divine Liturgy isn't something to be watched; everyone should be celebrating the Liturgy along with the priest. We are teaching our children to participate in the services, and I think that is very important."

Also, there are other adults that made SNYC possible, like Pani Kathy. She says she enjoys directing the group and also thinks it is a good experience for the children. "I like seeing the children involved in the Church services. I hope that someday I will see the girls grow up to be chanters or choir directors themselves! Right now, we are working on a Communion hymn, and I would like to see the children learn to chant the Creed. I try to choose songs that have a simple melody and are easy to learn. I also try to choose songs that give the girls the most opportunity to participate, such as chanting."

One of the other adults that made SNYC possible is Mrs. Mary Jane Smoley. Some of her favorite things about the singing group are: "They practice often and in the anticipation of a holiday we practice. Also, Pani gives us more than enough time to practice the songs and doesn't just throw the music at us and expect us to know it. I also think it's brought us together as individuals and made us closer as people. Some songs I would like to sing would have to be songs in anticipation of Easter or songs in harmony to give us a challenge. I also think we could improve the singing group by having more people."

Kaitlyn Caramela (age 14) says, "Singing in church is so much fun! My favorite song is 'Blessed be the Name'. It is fun to sing with all my friends in church. I also like the comments people give us like, 'Oh, you girls sound like angels!'"

One of the other members, Sarah Hetzler (11), adds, "I love to sing because I have a musical background. Also, I play the piano so sometimes I make up songs. My favorite song would have to be a song called 'What shall I render to the Lord'. It is a very pretty song with a catchy tune. I think it is important to have a youth singing group because it gives children a chance to stand out and sing to praise the Lord with everyone else. I am a chanter so I am recognized for chanting most of the songs."

Another member, Rachel Hetzler (8), likes to help her sister, "I always sing along to songs that my sister knows. Also, I think it's great to have a youth singing group. People can always hear us sing and praise God with them."

Irene Pehanich (12) also chants with Sarah. She enjoys chanting with Sarah every other Sunday during Liturgy. She also sings harmony with Pani Kathy. "Sometimes singing harmony is challenging."

Ashley Slembo (8) and Lauren Temoshenka (9) also like to sing with us. They are very wonderful singers, according to Sarah. "They are very sweet girls and I love it when they are here." Ashley also has a little sister named Victoria. One day she may participate in SNYC.

In conclusion, SNYC has very talented singers and a wonderful chorus director. We all hope that one day all children can praise God with the Church.