

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 4

November 22, 2009

Number 5

REFLECTIONS OF A FIRST-YEAR SEMINARIAN

For this issue of Daylight, we asked a few questions of Jon Bannon, a first year seminarian at Christ the Savior Seminary. Jon is from St. John the Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Jon was more than happy to share his experience with our readers.

Daylight: Share any thoughts on your seminary experience thus far. Is it what you expected? What do you like best about it?

Upon entering seminary, I had no idea what an average day would have in store. I brought with me only one expectation: the answer to the question and pull I felt in my heart: Is the priesthood God's plan for my life? Attending Divine Liturgies multiple times during the week, learning how to sing the plain chant, finding icons adorning every wall, a private chapel, having theological discussions, and spending time with His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas create a truly Orthodox environment that is helping me find the answer. I feel a sense of peace that I did not find while student teaching art in my final semester of college. I have loved art all my life, but within the past 5 years, I have felt a pull in the heart to attend Christ the Saviour Seminary more strongly than teaching at this point.

Daylight: How have attending Diocesan events such as Camp Nazareth and the Altar Boys retreats played a part in your vocation?

Having been a camper and an employee of Camp Nazareth and having attended altar boy retreats in Johnstown both have been very helpful if not the reason for the vocation I may have to the priesthood. Between living amongst a spiritually confused and immoral

world and then in communion with God and one another at Camp, I began my journey. During the 2004 Encounter, I remember hearing one priest say, “In the priesthood you will experience things you can't in any other “profession” for example: baptizing someone.” Hearing this and other sermons about life goals throughout the years, I thought more about my current plans of being an artist that paints and draws for a living. I thought to myself, “Anyone can experience drawing and painting and making a buck from it, but who can baptize but a priest and how amazing that must be;” and “How much more important is my soul and it's salvation and the salvation of those around us.” Judging my heart and the state of the world, I feel com-

fortable saying the world needs more priests right now than art teachers.

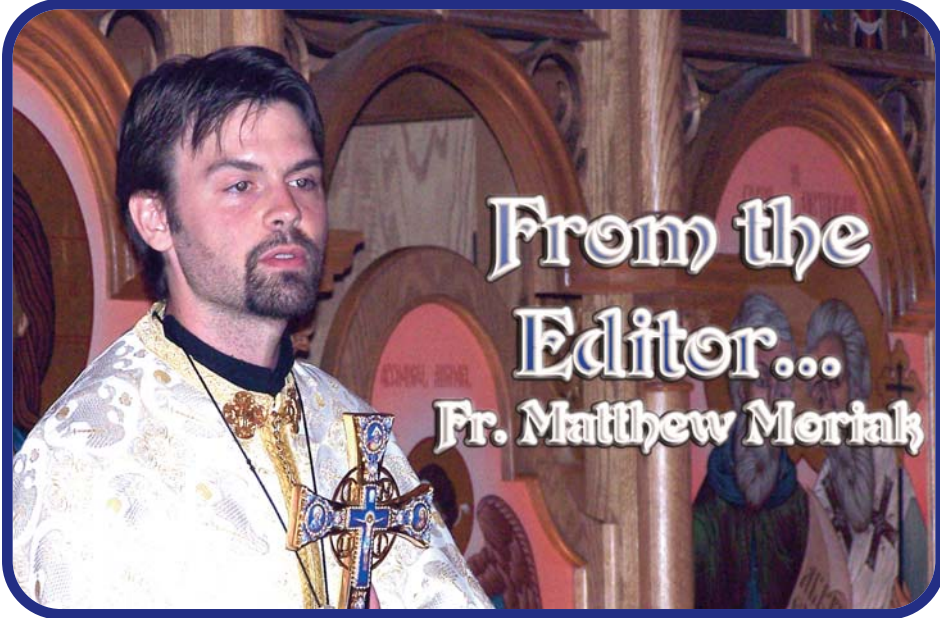
Daylight: As you look to the future, what are your thoughts on the time you have remaining in seminary?

As I look to the future with 2 and ½ years of seminary left, I look forward to learning more about our faith and to truly discover if this is the call God has for me. I also anticipate learning how to make Jesus' message relevant in today's society.

The one thing I love most out of everything we do at Christ the Saviour Seminary is delving into theological discussions. I find myself enlightened constantly with information about our faith that I had not known. Every discussion seems to unveil to me how true this Church of Christ is and how brightly it shines through the fog of unbelief of the past and amongst the brokenness of modern Christianity. The past 8 weeks have been nothing less than a blessing.



DAYLIGHT PULL-OUT SECTION



“BE SAFE!”

There's a restaurant my wife and I attend fairly regularly and we often end up with the same waiter. He always ends the night by saying the same two things: “Enjoy the rest of your evening” and “be safe.”

Be safe. Of course, we all try our best to be safe. Unfortunately, there are some times when our safety is out of our hands. We can be the most careful driver around and still get in an accident. That's why our parents always warned us, “It's not you I'm worried about, it's everyone else on the road.”

Because our safety isn't always in our hands, it is even more important that we take advantage of the situations where our safety is up to us. One of those places is the internet--specifically, our own facebook pages.

I opened up a facebook account primarily to make it easier to contact young people in the Diocese about writing articles for Daylight. Since then, it has allowed me to touch base and rekindle friendships with people I haven't talked to since college, high school and in some instances, even grade school! Despite that, we all have to realize just how unsafe it can be on sites such as these. People lose job opportunities because a simple Google search brings up pictures they would have never wanted their potential employer to see. It isn't enough to say, “only my friends can see this.” What about if your friend posts a picture of you and then all of their friends can see it?

I write these things because everything happens so fast in cyber space. It is important to stop, take a moment, and really think about what you are doing first.

Most of you likely list in your profile that you are an Orthodox Christian. It's important to realize the responsibility you have when you are proclaiming that. As Orthodox Christians, we are called to strive to live the Gospel, not just on Sunday mornings, but ALL THE TIME. Think long and hard about the things you write on your facebook page, the language you use, and the photos you post. Are you representing what a young Orthodox Christian should be? Whether you like it or not, people will piece together who they think you are based on these things collectively. In essence, in our internet driven society, what people see on your facebook page literally becomes who you are. Therefore, YOU are in control of what people perceive you to be.

Be responsible with what you post. Be safe.

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!



Spotlight on “The Arena”

In the last issue of Daylight, we told you about the section of the new Diocesan website that is specifically designed for you, the youth. It is called The Arena. It can be found at: www.acrod.org/ministries/youth/arena

In this issue, we want to focus on a specific part of The Arena, called “The Witness Stand Blog.” It is very easy to find on the left side of the Arena front page.

The purpose of the Witness Stand is to allow you the opportunity to share the struggles you've had witnessing to your faith in your own life. Right now, there are two articles from past issues of the Daylight that you can read and comment on. Perhaps you've faced a similar situation as the young people in these articles.

If you register, you'll be able to comment on these and other future articles or topics and will even have the opportunity to submit topics and reflections for topic.

The first step is to register, so go to the Witness Stand Blog and sign up today!

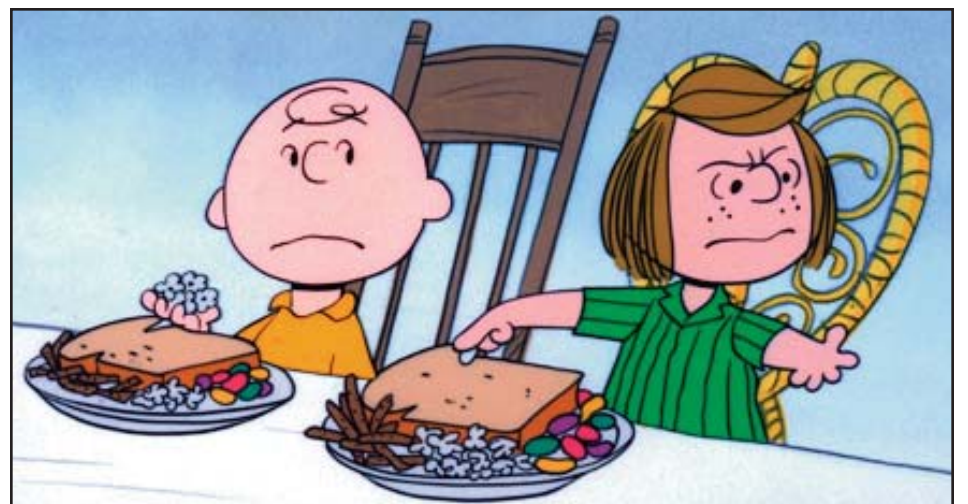
GIVING THANKS

Have you ever seen the old classic Charlie Brown Thanksgiving special? Poor Charlie decides to host Thanksgiving dinner for all of his friends. All he has to offer, however, is toast, popcorn and other assorted non-traditional Thanksgiving fare. His friends, especially Peppermint Patty, are beyond upset that there is no turkey, or stuffing or pumpkin pie. By the end though, what they all realize is that it isn't the food that mattered as much as the fact that they were all together, and they could be thankful for that.

Now, you might be wondering why I would be writing about Thanksgiving. By the time you are reading this, Thanksgiving will have been past us at least a week. Like Charlie Brown and his friends, we can get caught up in some of the things we most often think of when the holiday approaches: the food, football, the food, no school, the food (well, you get the picture). With all of these other distractions, we may forget to actually take the time to be thankful for the blessings we have in our lives.

Putting Thanksgiving day aside, the other reason I am writing about a holiday that is already over is because for us as Orthodox Christians, shouldn't we be thankful on more than just one day out of the year? Shouldn't we be thankful to God for the blessings we've received every day of our life? There's a powerful anonymous quote that reads: “If the good God makes every day a day of giving, should we not make every day a day of thanks?” How true that is. God never stops giving to us each and every day of our lives. So we should never stop being thankful to Him either.

Every morning or every evening when we pray, we should stop and think about the blessings we have: our family, our friends, our health, our Church. The world is so focused on the negative, that it is up to us to try and focus on the positive. You don't need Turkey or football to reflect on your blessings and offer up thanks to God.





The Hero Makes His Entrance

In every movie, there is usually a moment where the “hero” makes his entrance. It’s the first time that the main character appears on screen, and you usually can tell right away that the story will revolve around this person. I put the word “hero” in quotes, because many times, the main character is the hero almost by default. We tend to think of heroes as being good and virtuous, but too often, the heroes in movies are deeply flawed, and straddle the line between good and bad. They often fall well short of having clear ethical and moral guidelines. Hollywood refers to this character as the “anti-hero.” We root for this character not because he or she is good in and of themselves, but because everyone else is really, really bad. What is unfortunate about this is that we, the viewer, are left not having a character that we can strive to be like. We are left without having a character that we can look up to as a model of goodness and purity.

In the Divine Liturgy, the Hero makes not one but two entrances. The first entrance, called the Little Entrance, happens when the priest, led by the altar servers carrying their candles, comes through the Deacon’s door into the center of the Church holding the book of the Gospels. The Hero in this case, of course, is Jesus Christ—the 2nd person of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnate Word of God. His story is found within those four books that make up the Gospel—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Unlike the anti-hero found in the

movies, when we view Jesus as our Hero, we have a Hero that we don’t have to second-guess. He is the Hero we can and should strive to be like. He is loving, forgiving, kind and cares for all. With Christ, there is a clear distinction between good and evil; between the truth and what is false; between light and darkness. Christ is Good. He is Truth. He is the Light of the World.

Contained within that Holy Gospel, we hear the ultimate story of good triumphing over evil. Through Christ’s Passion, death and Resurrection, the power of death is destroyed. We have the path set before us for our own eternal Salvation. All we have to do is look to our Hero, Jesus Christ, and follow His example.

DID YOU KNOW?: The Divine Liturgy developed over a long period of time. In the early Church, the Gospel was often kept in a separate place from the Church itself. At the time of the little entrance, the Gospel would be brought into the Church. It was at this time that the Bishop of the local Church also made his entrance. This is why the Gospel is still brought into the center of the Church for the little entrance. In fact, if you’ve ever seen His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas celebrate a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, you will notice the he is in the center of the Church at the beginning of the Liturgy, and does not enter the sanctuary until the Little Entrance. This also reflects the Liturgy of the early Church.

Life in the Arena

Another part of The Arena webpage are the video reflections. We were able to film young people discussing the challenges they face in their daily lives as Orthodox Christians. Below you can read two transcripts of videos that were made this past summer at Camp Nazareth. Go to www.acrod.org/ministries/youth/arena. When you get there click on “Life in the Arena” at the top and then click on “video reflections” to see these and other videos like it.

In the Arena with Amy Harbilas



Hi, I’m Amy Harbilas and I attend Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. I am currently a struggling Orthodox Christian and as I attend college in the Bible Belt down south, there are about four people on my college campus who are Orthodox Christians. We have a very small OCF (Orthodox Christian Fellowship). We meet every once in awhile. But the main thing that helps me in my struggle is attending Church on Sunday. Going to Church isn’t just going to the building, but it’s going and participating with the entire

group—the priest, all the parishioners, and going brings me closer to Christ, but it also brings me closer to my Orthodox support system, which may not be down south with me at school, but it will always be with me when I’m in prayer in Church.

In the Arena with Katie Greenhill



Hi, I’m Katie Greenhill, and I attend St. John the Baptist in Bridgeport, Connecticut. When I think about my life in the arena, I think about a time when I was in college...it’s a funny story. I lost my keys, but I had this key chain with an Orthodox cross on it, and that’s really the only reason I was upset that I lost my keys: not because I wasn’t able to get home that day, but because the cross was on there. I remember I was complaining to my friends about how I lost this cross and this girl came up to me and she said, “That’s not going to save you.” I looked at her and I said, “that’s not true.” I think that the reason I’m so secure in my faith is because I’ve had the opportunity to come to Camp Nazareth for a better part of my life. When things like that happen, it upsets me only because I wonder how somebody could have the nerve to say that, but I almost like being challenged, because it only affirms my faith in God. I just encourage you guys to come to Camp Nazareth and be a part of this because that has made me who I am today.

Windows into Heaven

THE ICON OF THE FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE



The Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple is celebrated on November 21st on the New Calendar and December 4th on the Old Calendar.

This Feast commemorates a very significant event in the life of the Mother of God. Her parents, Joachim and Anna, had been unable to have children. They both prayed and promised that if God would bless them with a child, they would dedicate the child to God. In keeping with their promise, the tradition of the Church tells us that Joachim and Anna brought Mary to the Temple when she was only three years old! From that time on, she would live in the Temple. This prepared her for the holy life she would lead. She remained in the Temple until the time that she was betrothed to Joseph. This feast shows Mary's dedication to God, and her readiness for her future role as the Mother of God.

There is a lot to see in the Icon of this Feast. On the left, we see the High Priest Zacharias, receiving Mary into the Temple. Zacharias of course, is the father of St. John the Baptist. Mary is shown as a small child. Her arms are outstretched, showing her willingness to enter the Temple. Behind her, of course, are her parents, Joachim and Anna.

To the far right, we see a group of young maidens holding candles. They served as Mary's escort into the Temple. There is a beautiful lesson for our own lives that we can see in this. Imagine Mary, only three years old, climbing the steps of the Temple, all by herself. She was leaving her parents behind. She followed the light from the maiden's candles, and never looked back. We can see the light from those candles representing Christ, the Light of the World. Once we choose to follow Him, we can never look back. So long as we follow that light, we will reach our destination in His heavenly kingdom.

In some icons of this feast, there is a separate section in the upper left corner. This shows Mary being attended to by an angel. She is in the holy of holies, where only the high priest was permitted to go. These two things again, speak to Mary's holiness.

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!

How to Form a Pilgrimage

Forming a Pilgrimage is both simple and rewarding. Each time we visit a Church or Monastery we open up the opportunity to experience growth and the strengthening of our Orthodox faith. During visits to monasteries, it is not too uncommon for relics of saints to be brought out for veneration or to have the opportunity to meet fellow pilgrims. These events open doors to us, which in turn, enliven and enrich our lives. Orthodox Christian communities in the United States are wonderfully diverse in their origins and customs and we owe it to ourselves to seize every opportunity, or better yet, to create opportunities to visit these places so that we can explore our faith through these journeys.

These Pilgrimages are a chance to leave the world behind, if even for a few hours, and to delve a little deeper into our faith. In Eastern Europe, it is not uncommon to find teens and young adults making such journeys during the summer months, sometimes traveling for weeks, exploring, learning and living life! Now it is our turn to experience the joys our brothers and sisters in Christ have experienced. You can form a Pilgrimage to a Monastery or Church near you!

First things first! Do a little information gathering. You can search for monasteries near your town using the internet and sites like www.orthodoxyinamerica.org.

Once you have selected a site, it is time to discuss your plans with your parish priest and seek his guidance. Here is a brief planning guide to help make your first Pilgrimage a success.

- *Research potential sites, look for web-sites or make a visit yourself.
- *Seek your Pastor's guidance and ask him to bless your endeavor.
- *Contact the Monastery or Church you are planning to visit, set a date and time for your visit, and plan to attend a service during your visit.
- *Promote your event. A small group of 10 to 20 seems to work best and is manageable for most monasteries.
- *Keep everyone informed. Modest dress is mandatory when visiting a monastic community. Women are to wear dresses or skirts of a length that covers at least to the knee, pants are generally not permitted and arms and heads should be covered. Men are to wear long pants, and their arms should be covered as well. Members of the clergy should wear a Cassock and Riasa. If the community you are visiting has other requirements, be sure to inform your pilgrims. Finally, make contact with everyone planning on making the pilgrimage the week before the event.

*Cell phones should be left behind, or at least in the car (remember, you are taking a break from your daily routine!)

*On the day of the pilgrimage, depart early so that you arrive on time.

Remember to offer a monetary gift to those you are visiting and above all, relax, pray and enjoy the day.

*When you return to you Church, don't keep you experience a secret, share your journey and encourage others to come along on your next Pilgrimage.

Throughout the United States, there are monastic communities both large and small, historically significant churches and Orthodox sites all open and welcoming to pilgrims. Now is the time to begin planning your own Pilgrimage. If you need assistance in organizing your event, you can find help on our Diocesan web site's Arena page by submitting a post to the Witness Stand Blog.



Members of St. George's Church in Taylor, PA are shown during a recent pilgrimage to Holy Protection Greek Orthodox Monastery in White Haven, PA.