

THE LADDER ^{of} Divine Ascent

Volume 9, Issue 12

The Newsletter of St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church

August 2008

Encouraging News from the 2008 Diocese of South Assembly

Our Diocese of the South (DOS), since its creation in 1978 by the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), has grown from fewer than fifteen parishes and missions to nearly seventy. Our own Carolinas Deanery was created in 2003 when the existing Southeastern Deanery was split into three deaneries (Appalachian, Atlanta, and Carolinas) following similar growth.

The diocese is financially supported by a tithe (10%) from the receipts of each of its member parishes, missions, and mission stations, including St. John of the Ladder. These tithes to the diocese have increased by 75% during the last two years alone and have enabled the recent establishment of missions in Greensboro, NC (Holy Cross Orthodox Church) and Wilmington, NC (St Basil the Great Orthodox Church) for example, where until now there were no Orthodox churches with services in English (rather than in Greek). At the 2007 assembly it was formally decided that a minimum of 25% of diocesan funds would go directly back into mission development in the form of planting grants and other assistance, so we look for this growth to continue. Moreover, at this summer's assembly several proposals were approved that will enable the diocese to assist in local parish development, particularly those parishes that are beginning building programs.

At Archbishop Dmitri's request for help in serving now so many congregations at his age of 84, the Diocesan Council on June 25th unanimously nominated the priest-monk recommended by him, Fr. Jonah (Paffhausen), to be made auxiliary bishop; and the nomination was assented to by the full Diocesan Assembly during its plenary session on June 26th.

Fr. Jonah, following his undergraduate education at the University of California at Santa Cruz, earned a Master of Divinity in 1985 from St. Vladimir's Seminary and then a Master of Theology & Dogmatics. Subsequently he has undertaken doctoral work at Fordham University in New York and at the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley; and he has become well known as a writer & speaker, addressing just last month the 80th-anniversary international conference of the Anglican & Orthodox Fellowship of St. Alban & St. Sergius.

His vocational interest began when he moved to Russia as a young man to work with a missionary publishing venture and, while there, spent time at the renowned Transfiguration Monastery at Valaam on Lake Ladoga near St. Petersburg. After returning to California, Fr. Jonah worked to establish Orthodox mission parishes in Merced, Sonora, Chico, and Eureka. (Remember that it was from Valaam that the monk St. Herman and his companions had journeyed 7,300 miles across Russia & Siberia over 293 days to establish in 1794 in Russian Alaska the first Orthodox missions in America, which became the missionary diocese that grew ultimately into our Orthodox Church in America.)

In 1996 under the blessing Bp Tikhon of the Diocese of the West and with the guidance of the abbot of the same Valaam monastery, Fr. Jonah established, at Point Reyes just north of San Francisco, the Monastery of St. John of San Francisco. (This St. John, born in Russia in 1896, was Archbishop of Shanghai first, and then of San Francisco until his death in 1966, after which he has been known also as St. John the Wonderworker.)

In its twelve years now under Abbot Jonah's leadership, the new monastery has grown from two monks to seventeen. In the summer of 2006 it purchased its present property, on 42 acres of forest on the slope of Mt. Lassen in the Cascade Range of north-central California (an area which has experienced so many devastating forest fires in the recent weeks).

Pending his formal election by the Synod of Bishops of the OCA later this summer or early fall, Abbot Jonah will be moving to Dallas where he will serve as chancellor of the diocese, and then be consecrated as Archbishop DMITRI's auxiliary sometime in late fall or early winter. Once Abbot Jonah gets situated in Dallas he hopes to commence a schedule of visits to the deaneries and churches throughout our diocese.

An Orthodox bishop is expected to represent and resemble our Lord's Apostles, in his roles ranging from shepherd to

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A Word from the Desert

Virtuous living is to faith what food is to the body. And just as the body cannot live without food, so faith cannot exist without good works; for without works faith is dead.

St. Macarios of Corinth

St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church
 ~~~ Schedule of Services ~~~  
 August 2008

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                                            | Monday    | Tuesday                                                                                                                      | Wednesday                                                                                                                               | Thursday                                                                        | Friday                                                                                                               | Saturday                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Coming in September</b><br>7 <sup>th</sup> --- Church School Begins<br>8 <sup>th</sup> --- Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos<br>14 <sup>th</sup> --- Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross |           |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                 | <b>01</b><br><i>Beginning of the Dormition Fast</i>                                                                  | <b>02</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br>Baptism of Philip Nikolov Miletkov<br>4:15 pm<br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers 6:00 pm            |
| <b>03</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost<br><br>'Ask the Priest' (Russian)<br>Divine Liturgy 9:30 am                                                                                      | <b>04</b> | <b>05</b><br>Forefeast of Transfiguration<br>Confessions 5:00 pm<br>Vigil 6:00 pm                                            | <b>06</b> <i>fish, wine &amp; oil</i><br>Divine Liturgy 7:00 am<br>Transfiguration of the Lord<br>Blessing of Fruit<br>No Daily Vespers | <b>07</b>                                                                       | <b>08</b>                                                                                                            | <b>09</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br>SS Mary & Martha Liturgy 9:00 am<br>Ven Herman of Alaska<br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers 6:00 pm |
| <b>10</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost<br><i>Charity Brunch</i><br><br>Divine Liturgy 9:30 am                                                                                           | <b>11</b> | <b>12</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>13</b> <i>fish, wine &amp; oil</i><br>Leavetaking of Transfiguration<br>St Tikhon of Zadonsk<br><br>No Daily Vespers                 | <b>14</b><br>Forefeast of the Dormition<br>Confessions 5:00 pm<br>Vigil 6:00 pm | <b>15</b> <i>fish, wine &amp; oil</i><br>Divine Liturgy 7:00 am<br>Dormition of the Theotokos<br>Blessing of Flowers | <b>16</b><br><br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers 6:00 pm                                                                               |
| <b>17</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost<br><br>'Ask the Priest' (English)<br>Divine Liturgy 9:30 am                                                                                      | <b>18</b> | <b>19</b><br>Parish Council Meeting 5:30 pm                                                                                  | <b>20</b><br>Adult Class<br>The Epistle to the Romans 7:00 pm<br>Daily Vespers 6:00 pm                                                  | <b>21</b><br>Leavetaking of the Dormition                                       | <b>22</b>                                                                                                            | <b>23</b><br><br>Choir Rehearsal 5:15<br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers 6:00 pm                                                       |
| <b>24/31</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> /11 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost<br><br>Divine Liturgy 9:30 am                                                                                              | <b>25</b> | <b>Blessing of George and Judith Middleton's Marriage</b><br>~~~immediately after Divine Liturgy on the 24 <sup>th</sup> ~~~ | <b>27</b><br>Adult Class<br>The Epistle to the Romans 7:00 pm<br>Daily Vespers 6:00 pm                                                  | <b>28</b><br>OCF at Clemson University 7:00 pm                                  | <b>29</b> <i>strict fast</i><br>Divine Liturgy 7:00 am<br>Beheading of John the Baptist                              | <b>30</b><br><br>Choir Rehearsal 5:15<br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers 6:00 pm                                                       |

Fellowship and Coffee Hour: Sundays immediately following Divine Liturgy

Church School: Sundays following Divine Liturgy (resumes in Sept 7<sup>th</sup>)

Confessions on Saturdays following Vespers (as noted above) and before evening services during the Dormition Fast

Choir Rehearsals on Saturdays before Vespers. Inquirer's Class begins in September.

*A Word from the Desert*

It was said of Abba John the Persian that when some evildoers came to him, he took a basin and wanted to wash their feet. But they were filled with confusion, and began to do penance.

~~~ from the Sayings of the Desert Fathers

teacher to evangelist to defender of the faith. Since being invited to lead a retreat at our cathedral in April, as well as for other recent visits, Abbot Jonah has received acclaim throughout the diocese as exhibiting these qualities to an ideal comparable to that of our beloved Archbishop Dmitri.



For more comprehensive reports, news and pictures concerning the 2008 Assembly, be sure to look at the recent posts on the Diocesan Website:

http://www.dosoca.org/latest_news.html

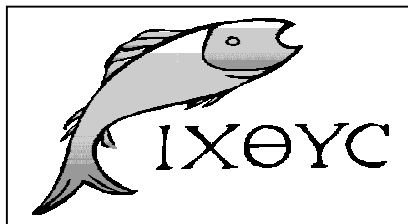
If you would like to get a flavor of Abbot Jonah's writing, look at the following paper, 'Primacy and Ecclesiology' (or listen to it), which was given at the Fellowship St Sergius and St Alban meeting hosted at St Vladimir's Seminary or go to the St John of San Francisco Monastery website:

<http://www.dosoca.org/files/08%20Assembly/Primacypaper.pdf>

http://ancientfaith.com/specials/svs_jan2008/

<http://www.monasteryofstjohn.org/>

(article written and compiled from various sources)



The Dormition Fast

The Dormition Fast, one of the Church's four seasons of fasting, begins as always on August 1st and so runs for the fourteen days preceding August 15th, the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos (the Falling Asleep of 'God-Birthgiver').

The fasting principles for this season are the same as for Lent (and thus somewhat stricter than the rule for Nativity and for the Apostles' Fast in June). Thus besides restricting the number of meals, we generally abstain from meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, oil, and wine; but on Saturdays & Sundays, oil & wine are allowed.

On Aug. 6th, the Feast of the Transfiguration, both finfish & shellfish are allowed as well as oil & wine; and in the Orthodox Church in America, this relaxation is provided likewise on Aug. 9th and Aug. 13th for the Feast Days respectively of St. Herman of Alaska and of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk.

Especially for anyone not yet well experienced in it, the fasting discipline should be undertaken always in consultation with one's spiritual father, for several reasons, including those of ensuring a proper measure of prayer, compassion, & dependence on God, and of avoiding pride or irritability.



2008 Financial Update

| | Income | Expenses |
|------------------------|----------|----------|
| YTD (thru June) | \$82,618 | \$76,478 |
| June | \$23,381 | \$11,797 |
| Charity YTD | \$6,607 | \$7,932 |

Adult Class: St Paul's Epistle to the Romans: A Pastoral Commentary

Beginning August 20th, we will begin an indepth study of St Paul's Epistle to the Romans using Abp DMITRI's recently published commentary. Written with the average lay reader in mind, this pastoral commentary on the Epistle to the Romans offers readers a clear explanation of the Apostle Paul's influential and controversial letter. Quotations from church fathers and parallel expressions from Scripture create a methodology consistent with Orthodox tradition. By also using hymns and texts from the Orthodox liturgical services, the author supplies deeper and broader contexts for familiar biblical verses. Appropriate for personal and group biblical study and for spiritual guidance and edification, this volume also serves as a useful aid to pastors in teaching and preparation of homilies. If you are interested in participating in this class and would like to purchase Abp DMITRI's book, please sign the list that in the bookstore area.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ **ALMS SUNDAY**

August 10th is our Alms Sunday and Charity Brunch. Please remember to bring foodstuffs and personal items . Baskets are in the vestibule as you enter the church. These items are donated to United Ministries. Thanks to all who continue to give so generously to our outreach efforts.

■ **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

On August 2nd, at 4:15 pm, we will celebrate the baptism of Philip Miletkov. All are invited and encouraged to attend. Also, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on August 24th, we will celebrate the blessing of the marriage of George and Judith Middleton.

■ **UPCOMING ---CHURCH SCHOOL, INQUIRER'S CLASS, ETC**

- * A Sign-up sheet is available in the kitchen/parish hall for those who would like to offer flowers for any of the 'Feast of Summer' --- Transfiguration, Dormition, et. al.
- * Adult Discussion Groups ('Ask the Priest') continue in August. See calendar for the dates.
- * Inquirer's Classes will begin in September. See September's Newsletter for details.
- * Church School will begin on September 7th at 9 am (immediately preceding Divine Liturgy). Church school will be offered in 4 'classes': preschool, elementary, middle school, and high school. See Mat Barbara for more details.

**A Reminder ... and a Hearty 'Thank You!'
August Fellowship and Coffee Hour**

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| August 03 rd | Team 6 |
| August 10 th | Charity Brunch (Team 3) |
| August 17 th | Team 7 |
| August 24 th | Team 8 |
| August 31 st | Team 1 |

Celebrating Anniversaries and Birthdays in August
Stefka Eddins (2nd), Mary Sucin (3rd), Alex & Judy (4th), Julian Griffin, James Hudson, & Haley Carroll (6th), Jerry Gilmer (12th), Kara Wamboldt (13th), Toma Sucin (14th), Lauren Carroll (16th), Bill and Margie (18th), Fr Gregory and Mat Catherine (22nd), Lawrence Carroll (25th), Mat Rachael (27th), Teresa & Ryan Carroll (28th), Viorel Nicolae and Elena Conty (30th)

From the Feast of the Transfiguration

Today as He shines on Mount Tabor, Christ reveals to His disciples as He promised the image and dim reflection of divine brightness, and filled with divine and light-bearing splendor, they cry out for joy: Let us sing to our God, for He has been glorified!

(from the Canon of the Feast)



Orthodox Church in America

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www.stjohnoftheladder.org

Rev Fr Marcus C Burch, Rector
Rev Fr Nikolay Miletkov, Assistant

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Schedule of Services

Vespers Wednesday, 6:00 pm
Great Vespers, Saturday, 6:00 pm
Divine Liturgy, Sunday, 9:30 am

**Let your prayer be completely simple.
For both the Publican and the Prodigal Son
were reconciled to God by a single phrase.**

~~~ St John of the Ladder, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 28. ~~~



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**AUGUST 2008**