

# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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**BULLETIN OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2010**



## THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>**

**SUNDAY OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>**

7:00p.m. Great Vespers w/ Litiya

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>**

**NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS**

*One of the Twelve Great Feasts*

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>**

5:00p.m. Bible Study  
6:00p.m. Great Vespers

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>**

**SUNDAY BEFORE THE CROSS**

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour  
Council Meeting

### The Heart of a Christian

*What is a heart full of love? It is a heart that burns with love for all creation, for humans and even for demons, for all creatures...*

St. Isaac the Syrian (7<sup>th</sup> century)

### READER SCHEDULE

**Sunday, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Kathy Parrish

**Sunday, Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Constantine Mitsopoulos



### Welcome to Our Visitors

We warmly welcome all those who are visiting from near and far. Please consider staying for a bite to eat at our coffee hour following the service. But even if you have to run, we thank you for worshipping with us today, and we wish you a blessed remainder of your visit to Delmarva!

### The Nativity of the Theotokos – September 8<sup>th</sup>

This week, we celebrate the Birth of the Theotokos. Tuesday at 7:00pm there will be Vespers with Litya and Wednesday, the Liturgy at 9:00am.



### The Parish Council – September 12<sup>th</sup>

will meet following the coffee hour. All invited.



### Exaltation of the Holy Cross – September 14<sup>th</sup>

This feast commemorates the finding of the True Cross of Christ by St. Helen, the mother of St. Constantine the Great. On this day, Fr. Daniel Hubiak was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. We wish him and Mat. Dunia, many blessed years! Fr. Daniel and Mat. Dunia also celebrate their anniversary of marriage on September 16<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to send a card, their address is: 16 Wharf Court, Ocean Pines, MD 21811.

### Parish Picnic – Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup>

Everyone is invited for the annual parish picnic; this year being held at Constantine's condo on the beach. Save the date!

### Reading Group – Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup>

"The Orthodox Church and the Environmental Movement" by Dr. Elizabeth Theokritoff, an Orthodox theologian and writer from England. The paper was originally written for the Syndesmos Orthodox Youth and Ecology Seminar, in Neamt, Romania, April 1994.



### The Bookstore

Be sure to take a look at the new inventory – bibles, icons, books, prayer ropes, etc.. Many thanks to the donor of the new inventory!

### From Our Fundraising Committee

We are still accepting recipes for our cookbook. They can be given to Jodi or Alice, or put in the recipe box on the table. Also, we are accepting donations for our fall yard/Bake sale to be held hopefully, in October. Questions? Please see Alice Peters.

## THE NATIVITY OF THE VIRGIN MARY

*Celebrated on September 8<sup>th</sup>*

The Holy Virgin Mary was born of aged parents, Joachim and Anna. Her father was of the lineage of David, and her mother of the lineage of Aaron. Thus, she was of royal birth by her father, and of priestly birth by her mother. In this, she foreshadowed Him Who would be born of her as King and High Priest. Her parents were quite old and had no children. Because of this they were ashamed before men and humble before God. In their humility they prayed to God with tears, to bring them joy in their old age by giving them a child, as He had once given joy to the aged Abraham and his wife Sarah by giving them Isaac. The Almighty and All-seeing God rewarded them with a joy that surpassed all their expectations and all their most beautiful dreams. For He gave them not just a daughter, but the Mother of God. He illumined them not only with temporal joy, but with eternal joy as well. God gave them just one daughter, and she would later give them just one grandson-but what a daughter and what a Grandson! Mary, Full of grace, Blessed among women, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Altar of the Living God, the Table of the Heavenly Bread, the Ark of God's Holiness, the Tree of the Sweetest Fruit, the Glory of the race of man, the Praise of womanhood, the Fount of virginity and purity-this was the daughter given by God to Joachim and Anna. She was born in Nazareth, and at the age of three, was taken to the Temple in Jerusalem. In her young womanhood she returned again to Nazareth, and shortly thereafter heard the Annunciation of the Holy Archangel Gabriel concerning the birth of the Son of God, the Savior of the world, from her most-pure virgin body.

### Troparion – tone 4

Your Nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe! The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from you, O Theotokos! By annulling the curse, He bestowed a blessing. By destroying death, He has granted us eternal life.

### Kontakion – tone 4

By your Nativity, O Most-Pure Virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our Life.

## SEPTEMBER CONGRATULATIONS!

### Anniversaries:

9/16 Fr. Daniel & Mat. Dunia  
9/26 Gerald & Camelia Milite

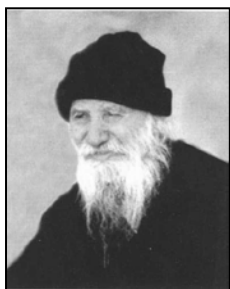
### Birthdays:

9/5 Kathy Parrish  
9/6 Jane Koshutko  
9/9 Olga Nesterenko  
9/29 Kenny Marchick  
Don Young

### Namesdays:

9/9 *St. Anna*  
Anna Evanusa  
9/17 *St. Nadezhda*  
Nada McFarland  
9/26 *St. John the Theologian*  
Bruce John Eckerd

*Question? Please see Fr. John.*



### DON'T BLACKMAIL GOD!

Elder Porphyrios (+1991)

We shouldn't blackmail God with our prayers. We shouldn't ask God to release us from something, from an illness, for example, or to solve our problems, but we should ask for strength and support from Him to bear what we have to bear. Just as He knocks discreetly at the door of our soul, so we should ask discreetly for what we desire, and if the Lord does not respond, we should cease to ask. When God does not give us something that we ask for insistently, then He has His reasons. God, too, has

His "secrets." Since we believe in His good providence, since we believe that He knows everything about our lives, and that He always desires what is good, why should we not trust Him?

Let us pray naturally and gently, without forcing ourself and without passion. We know that past, present and future are all known, "open and laid bare" before God. As St. Paul says, "Before Him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to His eyes." We should not insist; such persistence does harm instead of good. We shouldn't continue relentlessly in order to acquire what we want; rather, we should leave things to the will of God. Because the more we pursue something, the more it runs away from us. So what is required is patience, faith and composure. And if we forget it, the Lord never forgets; and if it is for our good, He will give us what we need, when we need it.

## ECOLOGICAL ASCETICISM: A CULTURAL REVOLUTION

*By Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon*

### **Calls for a new concept of quality of life**

The ecological problem is, at root, a spiritual issue. Many people dealing with it tend to overlook its spiritual aspects. And yet both historically and from the practical point of view it is impossible to address it without reference to religion and ethics. The American historian Lynn White was right to attribute the causes of the problem to Christian theology, particularly of the Western Church, which exploited the verses of Genesis containing God's order to the first human beings to 'dominate the earth' in order to encourage them, as Descartes bluntly put it, to be 'masters and possessors of nature'. This attitude drew further support and inspiration from a theology that stressed the superiority of humans because of their 'rationality', which it regarded as 'God's image' in Man. Such a rationalistic approach detached human beings from the rest of creation and encouraged them to look down with contempt on whatever is not rational, not human.

Along with this, an understanding arose of the human person as a thinking individual whose happiness and prosperity acquired the status of the highest good in ethics. Sin became limited to whatever contradicts or prevents these. A Christian could, therefore, destroy nature with a clear and good conscience, as long as this contributed to the fulfillment of human happiness. Now, human beings are beginning to realize that such an attitude towards nature actually threatens human happiness, even human existence itself. In doing so, they are not departing from the principle of promoting human happiness. Indeed, they are deeply and almost exclusively motivated by it. The ecological crisis is thus still viewed and approached from the angle of human self-interest and not from those of love for the rest of God's creation or of a feeling of responsibility for the survival and welfare of whatever is not human on our planet.

This complicates matters, for it is difficult to arrive at a common mind on the sacrifices that ought to be demanded of us in order to face the ecological

problem in our consumerist society. Politicians find it extremely difficult to establish a scale of values that would satisfy humanity's self-interests. If, for example, a government decides to close down a certain factory on account of its pollution, unemployment will almost inevitably emerge as the main problem in the area, replacing damage to the environment. Even the most competent politicians or technocrats will find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to cope with such a situation as long as peoples' motivation remains governed by self-interest. So motivation plays a decisive role in how the ecological problem is faced, and it is clear that

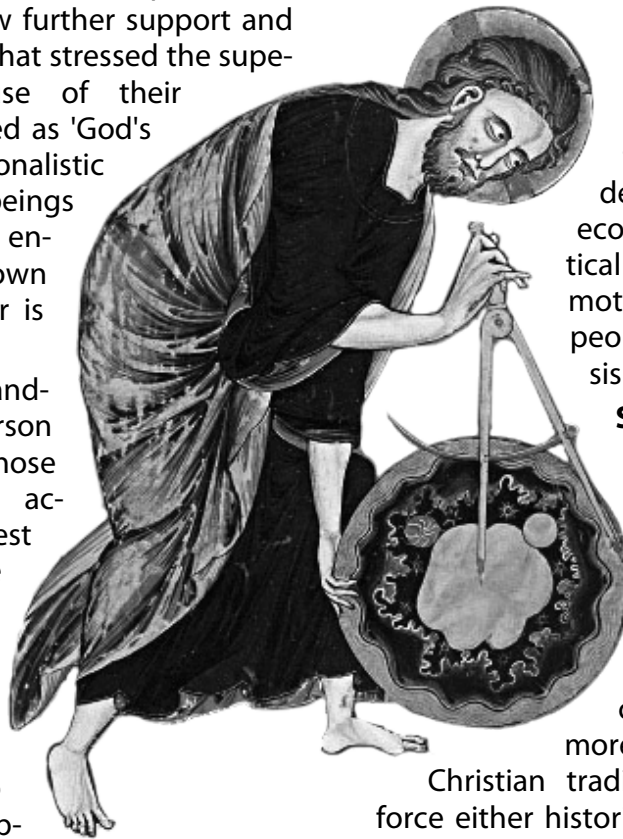
human self-interest must give way to other motives, or be strongly conditioned by them. This gives the spiritual and religious dimension decisive importance for the ecological issue, from the practical point of view. What kind of motivation can religion offer people facing the ecological crisis? Here are some suggestions:

### **Stressing and promoting the idea of the sacredness of creation**

in all its aspects, spiritual as well as material. This may be easier in cultures and societies where oriental religions are predominant, but could prove to be much more difficult where the Judeo-

Christian tradition is the main religious force either historically or actually. The fear of paganism and a strong tradition of rationalism will make it difficult to promote the idea of the sacredness of nature - or even of sacredness in general - in Western culture.

In the Orthodox Church - behind whose tradition lie long battles against ancient Greco-Roman paganism - a spirituality involving a deep respect for nature is strongly conditioned by the view that nature acquires sacredness only in and through the human person. This gives humanity decisive importance and responsibility. A human is the Priest of creation as he or she freely turns it into a vehicle of communion with God and fellow human beings. This means that material creation is not treated as a means of obtaining pleasure and happiness for



the individual, but as a sacred gift from God which is meant to foster and promote communion with God and with others. Such a 'liturgical' use of nature by human beings leads to forms of culture which are deeply respectful of the material world while keeping the human person at the centre.

**A drastic revision of the concept of sin.** Sin has been normally understood, by Christian ethics at least, in anthropological and sociological terms alone, because nature came to be understood as a 'servant' of humanity's self-interest and happiness. Sin became only what caused harm to oneself or to other human beings. Obviously, damage to nature does not fall within this category of 'sin'.

This changes if nature ceases to be the slave of human interests and becomes an indispensable link of communion between human beings and with God. Since humans cannot operate as agents of relationship and communion without nature (our bodies are both indispensable to our identity and inconceivable without the rest of creation), any harm inflicted upon nature would render it incapable of performing its function as a vehicle of communion between us and with God. Sin against nature, therefore, is serious not only because it involves disrespect towards a divine gift, but also - and mainly - because it renders the human being incapable of fulfilling its relational nature. Human individualism goes hand-in-hand with sin against nature: the ecological crisis bears eloquent witness to that.

**A spirit of asceticism.** Asceticism has been associated in our minds with a devaluation of matter for the sake of 'higher' and more 'spiritual' things. This implies a Platonic view of matter and the body, which is not compatible with the Judeo-Christian tradition where the material world is an indispensable part of the human identity itself. True, a Platonic influence can be easily observed in the history of Christian tradition, and perhaps in other religions too. But this does not concern us here. Such types of asceticism, involving as they do a devaluation or contempt of the material world, aggravate instead of solving the ecological crisis. An 'ecological asceticism' - if we may coin such a term - always begins with deep respect for the material creation, including the human body, and builds upon the view that we are not masters and possessors of this creation, but are called to turn it into a vehicle of communion, always taking into account and respecting its possibilities as well as its limitations.

This last point is of paramount importance. Human beings must realize that natural resources are not

unlimited. Creation as a whole is finite and so are the resources that nature can provide for our needs. The consumerist philosophy of life, which prevails in our time, seems to ignore this truth. We encourage growth and consumption by making 'necessary' things which previous generations could easily live without. We need to reconsider our concept of quality of life. Quality does not need quantity in order to exist. A restriction in our use of natural resources can lead to a life that is happier than the endless competition of spending and acquiring more and more. Qualitative growth must replace the prevailing conception of economic development which is dominated by quantitative statistics. Asceticism must cease to be a notion referring to a class of religious eccentrics and become synonymous with qualitative - instead of quantitative - progress in human societies.

All this would inevitably involve major shifts of emphasis and basic revisions and redefinitions in political, economic and scientific and social institutions of all kinds. It would probably amount to no less than a cultural revolution. Such a reorientation of our culture would require the involvement and cooperation of all the factors responsible for forming it. It could not be simply a matter of technocratic planning; it would require a change in people's deeper convictions and motivations, since no human being can sacrifice anything without a reason or motive.

Such reasons and motives can be characterized by either fear or love. Religions have employed both of these. The ecological crisis we are facing seems to suggest fear - the fear of the destruction of our planet - as the prevailing motive for a change of direction. We must insist, however, on more positive motives. Love of God's creation and our fellow human beings would lead us naturally to restrict the consumption of natural resources and share them more justly with other people. This can be done through education from the primary to the higher level, but perhaps nothing can be more effective for such a purpose than religion and the spirituality that stems from it. Every effort must be made to involve the religious communities in the environmental challenges of our time. The ecological problem is to a great extent a spiritual one.

*Metropolitan John of Pergamon is a senior bishop of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and is Co-Chairman of the Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue. He is Professor of Theology at the University of Thessaloniki and Visiting Professor of Theology at King's College, London, United Kingdom.*