

St. John Chrysostom, feast, today, 11/13

# St. Innocent Orthodox Church

✙ **Founded in 1967** ✙ **Moscow Patriarchal Parishes** ✙

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**PASTOR:** Rt. Rev. Mitered Archbishop ROMAN STAR † Cell: 313-319-0590

Dean, Central States Deanery, Patriarchal Parishes

**NOVEMBER 13, 2016** **ASSISTANT PRIEST:** Rev. DANEIL SHIRAK † 313-295-3073

**EPISTLE:** Galatians 2:16– 20 (#203)

**DEACON:** Rev. Dn. Michael Comerford

**GOSPEL:** Luke 10:25 – 37 (#53) & John 10:9-16

**DEACON:** Rev. Dn. Dr. Joshua Genig

**TONE:** 4

**ATTACHED:** Sister Ioanna

**CHOIR DIRECTOR:** Elizabeth Star Hatfield

**READERS:** Robert Joseph Latsko & George Hanoian

## ✙ 21<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST ✙

† 9:15AM — HOURS, AKATHIST and/or CANON & CONFESSIONS †

† 10am — DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM †

**COMMEMORATED TODAY:** St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (407). Martyr Manetha of Cæsarea in Palestine (307-308). Monk Martyr Damascene of the Lavra (Mt. Athos—1681). Monk Martyr Damian of the Lavra (Mt. Athos).

**FOR THE REPOSE OF:** Estelle & Joseph Star; Anna & John Witkowski; Michael Sr. & Margaret Rusko; Mary, Andrew, Daniel, Michael & Lottie Yakuber; Ross & Margaret Falsetti; Helen, John & Carole Andrayko; Peter & Theresa Harvilla; Betty Martell; Frances & Todd Smoly; Peter Glover; Irene Adams; Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua deVyver, David Horka; Michael Rusko; Anna Lichagina, Yelena & Zinaida Korniyevskaya; Joseph Nossal; Michelle Tucker; Todd Comerford, John Manier, Jr.

**MEMORY** Steven Hanchar (*newly departed, 22 October*), St. Elias, Battle Creek

**ETERNAL!** Nina Isagholian, whose anniversary of her repose is Today, Sunday, 13 November

Michael Yakuber, whose anniversary of his repose is Friday, 18 November

**FOR THE HEALTH OF:** Archimandrite Seraphim; Priest Daneil, Matushka Debra & Corrina Shirak; Deacon Michael, Matushka Mary Ellen & Julius Comerford; Matushka Mary Donahue; Subdeacon Joshua (*for Ordination as Deacon next Saturday*) & Abigail Genig; Reader Robert Latsko, Reader George & Betty Hanoian, Rose Nossal, Mary Glover, Nancy Cupp, Vasiliki Stamoulis, Gerald Martell, Azbehat, Donald Yakuber, Carl deVyver, Jo Anne Nicholas, Joan Rusko, Daria, Joseph Nossal, Ed Manier, Pat Harbut (*recovering from auto accident*).

**ALSO FOR:** Fr. Deacon Joshua Genig, for his Ordination to the Diaconate, yesterday, Saturday, 12 November

The St. Innocent of Alaska Monastic Community, that celebrates its 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, on Tuesday, 15 November

Protodeacon Fr. Daniel Sudol, who celebrates the Anniversary of his Ordination as Deacon, on Wednesday, 16 November

**\* MAY GOD GRANT THEM MANY YEARS! \***

### **SCHEDULE FOR THE COMING WEEK** (*Nativity fast, 11/15 – 12/24*)

Tuesday	11/15		NATIVITY FAST BEGINS ( <i>abstain from meat, fish, eggs &amp; dairy, alcohol; fish &amp; wine allowed on Sat. &amp; Sun.</i> )
Saturday	11/19	4pm	GREAT VESPERS
Sunday	11/20		<b>23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</b>
		9:15am	HOURS, AKATHIST &/or CANON; CONFESSIONS
		10am	DIVINE LITURGY; followed by Coffee Hour
		6pm	GREAT VESPERS & LITIYA for the Feast of the ENTRANCE of the THEOTOKOS into the TEMPLE
Monday	11/21	10am	DIVINE LITURGY for the Feast of the ENTRANCE of the THEOTOKOS into the TEMPLE

### **PROSPHORA FOR TODAY IS OFFERED BY: Sister Ioanna**

**In Memory Eternal of:** Parents: Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua deVyver; Robert David Horka; Fr. Photius (11/1); Nina (11/13); all departed family & friends. **For the Health of:** Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose Marie; all parishioners for the Bishop's Visitation, 11/12; for Fr. Dn. Joshua for his Ordination, 11/12; for the parish's Patronal Feast, 11/26; & all family & friends. And **in Thanksgiving for:** the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of being made a monastic (11/11/01); Anniversary of the establishment of the St. Innocent Monastic Community (11/15/03); & all the Lord's countless blessings, especially on Thanksgiving Day,

**✙ CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST! ✙ HE IS NOW & ALWAYS SHALL BE! ✙**

## **CANDLES FOR LAST SUNDAY, 6 NOVEMBER**

### **YEARLY CHURCH VIGIL LAMPS:**

*Royal Doors Lamp:* In Memory of Husband, Joseph; Son, Kenneth; parents, Michael & Margaret Rusko, & John & Martha Nossal, *by Rose Nossal*

*Altar Candelabra:* In Memory of Parents, Nicholas and Susan Yakuber, *by son, Donald Yakuber*

*Altar Candles (2):* In Memory of Irene Adams, *by Goddaughter, Rose Ann Everhardt*

*Iconostasis Lamps:* In Memory of Parents, Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua; Robert David H; & Health of brother, Carl, *by Sister Ioanna*

*Candles on the Solea:* In Memory of Peter & Theresa Harvilla, Norman & Monica Holst, & Ricky Ellis, *by Jason & Debra Truskowski*

*Table of Oblation Lamp:* In Memory of Parents, Helen & John Andrayko, Sr. & sister, Carole Andrayko, *by John Andrayko, Jr.*

*Reliquary-Icon Lamps: Sts. Innocent, Tikhon & Herman:* Health of Joseph/Sue; Robert/Diane; Pat/John; Joseph B., Jared, Jay; Rachelle/Aaron, Gabriel; Tricia, Lindsey; & In Memory of sisters, Anna, Margaret, Theresa & Irene; & brothers, John, Edwin & Michael *by Rose Nossal*

*Reliquary-Icon Lamps: Sts. Elizabeth & Raphael:* Health of the Genig and the Just Families, *by Subdeacon Joshua & Abigail Genig*

*Reliquary-Icon Lamps: St. Seraphim & St. Alexis:* In Memory of Ross & Margaret Falsetti, *by daughters, Rose Ann Everhardt & Margie Martell*

*Reliquary-Icon Lamps: St. Hilarion & Sts. Alexandra & Martha* **(AVAILABLE)**

*Reliquary-Icon Lamps: St. Nestor & St. Gerontius* **(AVAILABLE)**

### **IN MEMORY OF (MEMORY ETERNAL!)**

Joseph & Estelle Star, *by son Father Roman and family*

Paul & Alexandra Yupco, Basil & Ellen Starinshak, *by grandson, Father Roman and family*

John & Anna Witkowski, *by daughter, Matushka Rose Marie and family*

Samuel & Mary Kupec, *by granddaughter, Matushka Rose Marie and family* + + + Lev Chernukhin, *by Marianna Wess*

Parents, Helen & John Andrayko, and sister, Carole Andrayko, *by John Andrayko* + + + My husband, Michael Rusko, *by Joan Rusko*

My husband, Joe; my sisters, Margaret & Ross Falsetti, Anna & Mike Elascat, Theresa & Pete Harvilla, Irene, & brothers, Michael, John & Edwin Rusko; niece, Rose Mary & Dean Hough; Joe's brothers, Raymond & Walter Nossal, & sisters, Theresa, Florence & Helen Nossal, *by Rose Nossal* + + + Pete & Theresa Harvilla, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay Truskowski* + + + Jaimie Truskowski, *by daughter Kay T.*

Parents, Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua; David H; Nina I; Marion P; Fr. Photius; Mo. Benedicta; Archm. Roman; Steve Hanchar, *by Sr Ioanna Child Lana, Shirley, Betty, Marsha, Paul, by Becky Jurczynszyn*

### **FOR THE HEALTH OF: (MANY YEARS!)**

Elizabeth & Lawrence, Caitlin & Zachary, *by parents & grandparents, Father Roman & Matushka Rose Marie*

Gregory & Tamiko Star, *by parents, Father Roman & Matushka Rose Marie*

Children, Grandchildren & Great-grandchildren; Monk Fr. Sdn. Tikhon (Dade); *by Rose Nossal*

Father Roman & Matushka & family; Sister Ioanna; John Andrayko; Nancy; Mary G; Jo Anne N; Grandson Joey (*in the Navy Reserves*) & all people in the Armed Forces; & all St. Innocent Church parishioners, *by Rose Nossal* + + + Family & Friends, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay* Brother, Greg & Donna; nephew, Gregory & Liz; & nephew, Alex, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay* + + + Ed Manier, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay* Archimandrites Nafanail, Gregory & Seraphim; Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose Marie; Fr. Lawrence & fam; Fr. Laurence & fam; Fr. Daneil & fam;

Fr. Dcn. Michael & fam; Fr. Dcn. Joshua, Abigail & children; Mat. Mary D; Carl; Monk Fr. Tikhon; Sdn Andrew; Rdr Robert; Robert M; David Samuel/Sky & Avi; JoAnne/Nick; Athanasius; John A; Ed/Tiffany & fam; Kim & fam; Vasiliki; Rose; Emil/Rozana; Billy/Fonda, *by Sr Ioanna* John Andrayko (May God watch over him), *by Rose Nossal* + + + Rose Nossal, *by John Andrayko* + + + Sdn. Joshua Genig, *by Genig Family* Jason, Marianna, Amilia, Liliana & Andrew Wess + + + Galina & Oleg Chernukhin, *by Marianna Wess* + + + Leia, Mike, Reece & Wyatt; Bob & Joan; Toni & Richard Bussen; Pete, Krista, Jacob, Clair, Matt & Paul; Damon, Levi, Briana, *by Becky Jurczynszyn*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**(1) CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY ORDAINED FATHER DEACON JOSH.** It has been a long wait for him, but finally our Subdeacon Josh has been ordained as a Deacon, when our Bishop John celebrated the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy here yesterday. Fr. Deacon Josh has 7 years of experience as a Lutheran minister, so preaching and pastoral work are natural for him. He graduated from seminary and completed a Ph.D., teaches seminary and college, and so he is a good teacher also. We are so happy for him and his family. Now we have to get used to calling him "Father Joshua" or "Father Deacon Joshua," and not just "Josh." (Smile!) **CONGRATULATIONS!!!** And **MANY YEARS!!!**

**(2) MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED WITH OUR BISHOP'S VISIT YESTERDAY:** those who cleaned & beautified the grounds and the interior of our temple & hall; who prepared the food, set up & served the dinner & cleaned up afterward; who baked the bishop's bread; who sang, organized & contributed in any way. You helped to make a lovely day & your hard work is much appreciated.

**(3) OUR ANNUAL FALL BLANKET DRIVE CONTINUES.** Every year we collect blankets and donate them to the homeless and poor. We now are giving them to the Redford Interfaith Relief (RIR). **Thank you to everyone who has already donated money** for the blankets. As a result, we have been able to purchase 100 blankets, and deliver them to RIR. The need is so great, that they are given out as fast as we can deliver them. We want to buy at least another 50 blankets at \$6 each at Walmart. **PLEASE HELP**, as much as you can. See Mary Ann Harvilla.

### **(4) UP-COMING SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL EVENTS:**

**Today, Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup>,** Visitation of Bishop John to **St. Michael's, Redford**, Hierarchal Divine Liturgy for Patronal Feast Day, 11/8

**Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>,** major Feastday, Entrance of Theotokos into the Temple: **VESPERS**, 6pm, Sun. 11/20; **LITURGY**, 10am, Mon. 11/21

**Wednesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>,** 7pm, MOLEBEN FOR THANKSGIVING, at St. George Romanian cathedral, Southfield **Thurs**

**November 24<sup>th</sup>,** 10am, DIVINE LITURGY for **THANKSGIVING DAY**

**Friday-Saturday, Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>,** **St. John Chrysostom, Grand Rapids**, Vigil, Divine Liturgy & banquet; celebration of **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

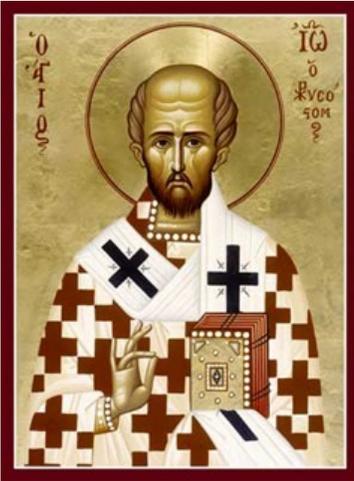
**Saturday, Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>,** **St. Nicholas is Santa Claus**, 11-2:30, St. George Greek Church, Bloomfield Hills; Live reindeer, live St. Nicholas, **FREE**

**Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>,** **6pm, Inter-Orthodox Nativity Concert**, St. Lazarus Serbian Church, Van Dyke, south of 8 Mile, Detroit

**5) WEEKLY "ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX STUDY GROUP,"** most Wednesday Evenings, 6:30-7:30 at St. Innocent Church hall.

## **ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

*Feastday, November 13<sup>th</sup> (today) & January 27<sup>th</sup>*

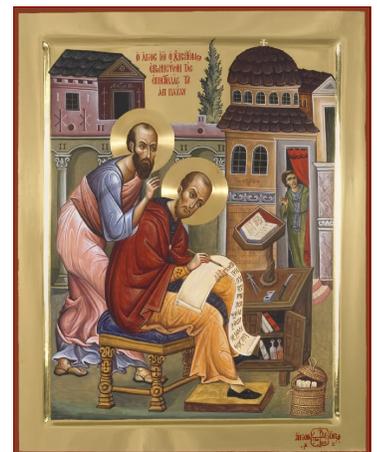


This greatest and most beloved of all Christian orators was born in Antioch the Great in the year 344 or 347; his pious parents were called Secundus and Anthusa. After his mother was widowed at the age of twenty, she devoted herself to bringing up John and his elder sister in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. John received his literary training under Anthragathius the philosopher, and Libanius the sophist, who was the greatest Greek scholar and rhetorician of his day. Libanius was a pagan, and when asked before his death whom he wished to have for his successor, he said, "John, had not the Christians stolen him from us." With such a training, and with such gifts as he had by nature, John had before him a brilliant career as a rhetorician. But through the good example of his godly mother Anthusa and of the holy Bishop Meletius of Antioch (see Feb. 12), by whom he was ordained reader about the year 370, he chose instead to dedicate himself to God. From the years 374 to 381 he lived the monastic life in the hermitages that were near Antioch. His extreme asceticism undermined his health, compelling him to return to Antioch, where Saint Meletius ordained him deacon about the year 381. Saint Meletius was called to Constantinople later that year to preside over the Second Ecumenical Council, during which he fell asleep in the Lord. In 386 Bishop

Flavian ordained John presbyter of the Church of Antioch. Upon his elevation to the priesthood his career as a public preacher began, and his exceptional oratorical gifts were made manifest through his many sermons and commentaries. They are distinguished by their eloquence and the remarkable ease with which rich imagery and scriptural allusions are multiplied; by their depth of insight into the meaning of Scripture and the workings of God's providence; and, not least of all, by their earnestness and moral force, which issue from the heart of a blameless and guileless man who lived first what he preached to others. Because of his fame, he was chosen to succeed Saint Nectarius as Patriarch of Constantinople. He was taken away by stealth, to avoid the opposition of the people, and consecrated Patriarch of Constantinople on February 28, 398, by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who was to prove his mortal enemy.

At that time the Emperor of the East was Arcadius, who had had Saint Arsenius the Great as his tutor (see May 8); Arcadius was a man of weak character, and much under the influence of his wife Eudoxia. The zealous and upright Chrysostom's unsparring censures of the lax morals in the imperial city stung the vain Eudoxia; through Theophilus' plottings and her collaboration, Saint John was banished to Pontus in 403. The people were in an uproar, and the following night an earthquake shook the city; this so frightened the Empress Eudoxia that she begged Arcadius to call Chrysostom back. While his return was triumphant, his reconciliation with the Empress did not last long. When she had a silver statue of herself erected in the forum before the Church of the Holy Wisdom (Saint Sophia) in September of 403, and had it dedicated with much unseemly revelry, Saint John thundered against her, and she could not forgive him. In June of 404 he was exiled to Cucusus, on the borders of Cilicia and Armenia. From here he exchanged letters with Pope Innocent of Rome, who sent bishops and priests to Constantinople requesting that a council be held. Saint John's enemies, dreading his return, prevailed upon the Emperor to see an insult in this, and had John taken to a more remote place of banishment called Pityus near the Caucasus. The journey was filled with bitter sufferings for the aged bishop, both because of the harshness of the elements and the cruelty of one of his 310 guards. He did not reach Pityus, but gave up his soul to the Lord near Comana in Pontus, at the chapel of the Martyr Basiliscus (see May 22), who had appeared to him shortly before, foretelling the day of his death, which came to pass on September 14, 407. His last words were "Glory be to God for all things." His holy relics were brought from Comana to Constantinople thirty-one years later by the Emperor Theodosius the Younger and Saint Pulcheria his sister, the children of Arcadius and Eudoxia, with fervent supplications that the sin of their parents against him be forgiven; this return of his holy relics is celebrated on January 27.

Saint John was surnamed Chrysostom ("Golden-mouth") because of his eloquence. He made exhaustive commentaries on the divine Scriptures and was the author of more works than any other Church Father, leaving us complete commentaries on the Book of Genesis, the Gospels of Saints Matthew and John, the Acts, and all the Epistles of Saint Paul. [The icon to the right shows St. John being inspired by St. Paul while writing commentaries on his Epistles.] His extant works are 1,447 sermons and 240 epistles. Twenty-two teachers of the Church have written homilies of praise in his honor. Besides his feasts today and on January 27, he is celebrated as one of the Three Hierarchs on January 30, together with Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory the Theologian. Source: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)



## **ST. FULVIANUS-MATTHEW, PRINCE & BISHOP OF ETHIOPIA**

*Feastday: November 16<sup>th</sup>*

The account of the life of St. Fulvianus (Fulvian)-Matthew is included with that of the life of the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew, who is also commemorated on November 16<sup>th</sup>, and whose name the converted pagan Prince of Ethiopia received at his Baptism.

After the Holy Apostle Matthew brought the Gospel of Christ to Syria, Media, Persia and Parthia, he went to Africa. Here he finished his evangelization for the Lord in Ethiopia, where he was martyred. Initially, St. Matthew converted some of the pagan idol-worshippers to faith in Christ and founded Christ's Holy Church in Ethiopia, building a temple in the city of Mirmena, and establishing there as bishop his assistant, Platon.

After this, when the Holy Apostle was fervently entreating God for the conversion of the Ethiopians, the Lord Himself appeared to him in the form of a youth. He gave him a staff, and commanded him to plant it at the doors of the church. The Lord said that a tree would grow from this staff and it would bear fruit, and from its roots would flow a stream of water. When the Ethiopians would wash themselves in the water and eat the fruit, they would lose their wild ways and become gentle and good.

When the Holy Apostle carried the staff towards the church, he was met by the wife and son of the ruler of the land, Prince Fulvian (or Fulvianus), who were afflicted by unclean spirits. In the Name of Christ the Holy Apostle healed them. This miracle converted a number of the pagans to the Lord. But the Prince of Ethiopia did not want his subjects to become Christians and cease worshipping the pagan gods. He accused the apostle of sorcery and gave orders to execute him.

They hung St. Matthew head down, piled up brushwood and ignited it. When the fire flared up, everyone saw that the fire did not harm St. Matthew. Then Fulvian gave orders to add more wood to the fire, and frenzied with boldness, he commanded that twelve idols be set up around the fire. But the flames melted the idols and flared up toward Fulvian. The frightened Ethiopian Prince turned to the saint with an entreaty for mercy, and by the prayer of the martyr the flame went out. The body of the Holy Apostle remained unharmed, and he departed to the Lord.

The ruler, Prince Fulvian, deeply repented of his deed, but still he had doubts. By his command, they put the body of St. Matthew into an iron coffin and threw it into the sea. In doing this Fulvian said that if the God of Matthew would preserve the body of the Apostle in the water, as He preserved him in the fire, then this would be sufficient reason to worship Matthew's God as the One True God, and become a Christian.

That night the Apostle Matthew appeared to Bishop Platon in a dream, and commanded him to go with clergy to the shore of the sea and to find his body there. The righteous Fulvian and his retinue went with the bishop to the shore of the sea, where they found St. Matthew's iron coffin that had been carried there by the waves. They brought the coffin with the Apostle's relics to the church built by the Apostle. Then Fulvian begged forgiveness of the Holy Apostle Matthew, after which Bishop Platon baptized him, giving him the name of the Apostle Matthew, in obedience to a command of God.

The new Christian Prince Matthew dedicated his life to converting his people to the True Faith. Soon St. Fulvian-Matthew abdicated his rule and was ordained a priest. Upon the death of Bishop Platon, the Apostle Matthew appeared to him and instructed him to be consecrated as Bishop and to be the head the Ethiopian Church. Having become a bishop, St. Fulvian-Matthew labored at preaching the Word of God to his African people for the rest of his life, continuing the work of his heavenly patron.

*By: Sister Ioanna, St. Innocent Monastic Community*



*St. Fulvianus/Matthew, on narthex wall,  
St. Innocent Church, Redford, MI*

# **THE ORTHODOX SPIRITUAL LIFE IS ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOD-MAN JESUS CHRIST, THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS**

**An interview with Abbot Seraphim (Voepel)**

*September 14, 2010*

*Holy Cross Monastery in West Virginia has become one of the most rapidly growing monastic communities in the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. Media Office correspondents spent a week living amongst the monastics in order to gain a better understanding of the daily life of monks. Reader Peter Lukianov met with the deputy abbot of the monastery, Abbot Seraphim (Voepel), for an interview on the process of joining the monastery and the spiritual impact the monastery has on its pilgrims.*



*- Having spent a week living with the monastics of this sacred community, I cannot help but notice the overwhelming presence of young novices and monastics. It is hard to believe that so many young men choose to join the monastery in a country such as ours, where everything is in abundance and life is very comfortable. Why are so many young men abandoning the secular world and fleeing to the monastery?*

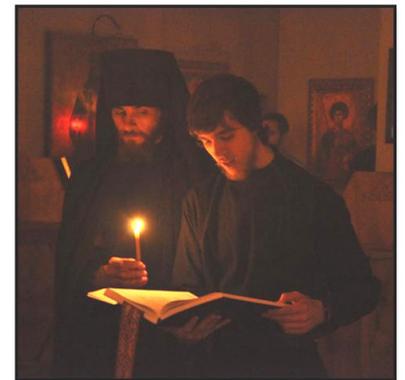
On one hand, what you are saying is true, there are lots of young men joining the monastery, but on the other hand, look at the size of the United States. If this were really a Christian country, we would have hundreds of monasteries.

When I look around at our contemporary society, at the abundance and luxury we live in, I am amazed that anyone can find their way out of all this to the monastic life. Our young people have been raised in a society that has developed the pursuit of pleasure to a degree unheard of in any previous society. I don't think even pagan Rome can hold a candle to some of the things going on in our society today. Just look at the corruption that can freely enter a home through the internet. Look at the use of drugs in our elementary schools and the alarming degree of promiscuity found among high school and college students. Look at the high percentage of broken marriages and the sad effects this has on the children.

Most of our young people really are seeking something higher, something more spiritual, but there is no one to guide them, so they simply follow the crowd. After a while, some of these young men grow tired and weary of all this pursuit of pleasure, and in their hunger for something more deeply satisfying, they turn to God with all their hearts, their broken and darkened hearts. And God, who has placed this desire in their hearts, comes to them like the father with his prodigal son. He runs to them with His arms outstretched, He embraces them and binds up their wounds and consoles them with His grace. Then through repentance He leads them on the path He has chosen for them and this path is often the path of monasticism.

*- As the spiritual father of the community, what do you look for in a monastery applicant? What can get one turned away?*

Most of all, we look for a spirit of sincerity, humility, and repentance. Men enter monastic life because they want to seek God above everything else, but how they have arrived at this place in their spiritual journey varies greatly with each man. Some come from pious homes where they were taught to pray as little children and to attend church services at an early age. Choosing a monastic life for these men almost seems natural. Others come from homes where they were taught nothing about God. They never attended church services and followed a very secular lifestyle. These men sometimes reach a stage where they realize something is wrong, something is missing, and they begin to sincerely search for a truer and deeper meaning and purpose for their life. It is this sincerity and repentance that we look for in a candidate.



*- Can you explain the process that a man must go through to enter Holy Cross Monastery?*

First, he would write an introductory letter telling us about himself, his education, work experience, and especially his spiritual development. Then we would encourage him to come for a visit and live in the monastery for a few days and discuss his possible vocation. If this initial contact goes well, then we would ask his pastor or spiritual father for a letter of recommendation. This would then be followed by a longer visit, perhaps a few weeks or a month. If all this goes well, then we would allow him to come to the monastery as a candidate. After a few months as a candidate, he would be blessed to wear the black cassock for church services and meals. After a few more months, if all goes well, he may write a petition to Bishop George and ask to be made a novice. If the Bishop blesses, then he would be clothed as a novice with the cassock, belt, and skoufa. After this point, he would then wear his monastic clothing at all times.

After three years of novitiate, he could then petition to be made a *rassophore* monk. If his petition is accepted, then the bishop would tonsure him and cloth him in the *rassa* and *klobuk* (cowl). After a period of time (this can vary from a few months to a lifetime), the rassophore monk can petition to make vows as a full monk and be tonsured to the Lesser Schema. If his petition is accepted, then in a beautiful ceremony where he enters the church clothed in a white baptismal robe, he makes his vows before the bishop, is tonsured, given a new name, and clothed in the full garments of a monk: cassock, rassa, paramon, mantia (mantle) and klobuk.

*- What are some of the challenges that newcomers face upon entering the monastery?*

Perhaps the greatest difficulty for a newcomer is the kind of self-sacrificing that comes from living in community. If a man is really seeking God, then the words of Our Savior will challenge him: *"If you want to be my disciple, you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me."* Without this dying to self, this humility, he will not be able to persevere in the monastery.

*- What are some of the major misconceptions people have about Holy Cross Monastery and the monastic life in general?*

Many people think that monks are living saints, angels in the flesh, but this is simply not true. Monks are men who are called by God to be like the angels, in that they seek God and worship Him above all else. The monk must struggle with the help of God to be a man of prayer and a man of faith. The monk is only a man; even though he is called by God to be like the angels, he nevertheless falls down and then he gets back up again. This process of falling down and getting up is the spiritual struggle through which each monk goes in his journey towards union with Christ.



*- One would have to be spiritually blind not to notice that the world around us is rapidly spiraling out of control. Secularism, modernism, and liberalism are eating away at the Christian roots of this great nation and many of us find ourselves feeling hopeless. Turn on any news channel and you will see that there is a sort of hidden persecution of Christians. The Evil one is clever in his attacks on those who confess Christ, and although we rarely see outright violence, a battle is most certainly raging on. We find it increasingly difficult to pray because the troubles of this world weigh greatly on the souls of Orthodox Christians. After spending several days in this holy place, one does not wish to return to the world, because the soul yearns to be with God and it is difficult to maintain a relationship with Christ in the secular world. What advice do you give departing pilgrims upon their return to the world? Is it possible to maintain a monastic spirit while living in the secular world?*

What you are saying appears to be sadly true; the contemporary world has become hostile to true Christian living. We feel this even within the monastery. Sincere modern Christians must seek refuge in prayer, both liturgical and private. There is no substitute for this. If we are not praying every day from our heart, then we will be defeated. Sometimes modern Christians think that the spiritual life is just another self-help program they can try out; this is absolutely untrue. The Orthodox spiritual life is about a relationship with the God-man Jesus Christ, the Creator of all things. The spiritual life is about entering into His presence and with humility and repentance asking His mercy and guidance. Without this, we cannot have the strength or wisdom to resist the powerfully seductive secular world around us.



*- Sometimes as Orthodox Christians, we feel that we are not of this world and that we are not relevant to it. How should we react to the changes that are happening around us, specifically the various and increasingly successful liberal and progressive movements, without losing ourselves and our inner spiritual peace?*

I understand and share in your concern, but the only answer is the one St. Seraphim of Sarov gave: "Acquire the peace of God in your heart and a thousand souls around you will be saved." You as an individual Orthodox Christian cannot change the course of the world, but you can change yourself. It is, in fact, easier to think about changing the world than to try to change ourselves. If we find the world around us increasingly filled with hatred, then we must try to love; if we find the world running after material goods and pleasure, then we must try to live a simpler life; if we find the world has become

preoccupied with carnal things, then we must try to be pure and chaste.

The inner peace that Christ gives us is not the peace of the world. It is not dependent upon proper social conditions or environmental factors. The early Christians would walk into the arena peacefully singing hymns as the lions attacked them. In the lives of the early martyrs, we read over and over again how bystanders and even Roman soldiers were converted by witnessing the firm faith and peaceful resolve of these early martyrs. Source: <http://eadiocese.org/News/2010/09/asv.en.htm>