

SOBORNOST

**St. Thomas the Apostle
Orthodox Church**

(301) 638-5035 Church

**4419 Leonardtown Road
Waldorf, MD 20601**

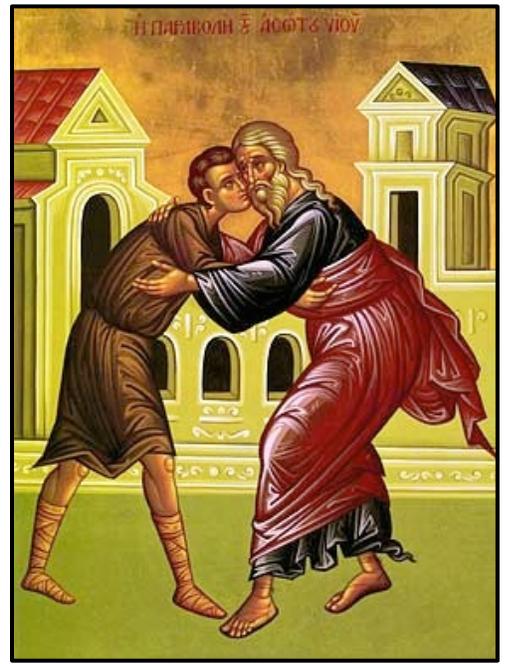
Rev. Father Joseph Edgington, Pastor

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE



SERVICES

Sundays Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM, Divine Liturgy 10 AM

February 12, 2012 – Sunday of the Prodigal Son

The name for this Sunday is taken from the parable of our Lord Jesus Christ found in Luke 15:11-32. The parable is the story of a man and his two sons. The youngest of the sons asks his father to give him his inheritance. The father does this, and soon after the son leaves and journeys to a distant country (vv. 11-13).

After the younger son arrives, he squanders all of his possessions with "prodigal" living. Within a short period of time, he wastes everything. A severe famine comes, but he has nothing and falls into great need (vv. 13-14).

He is able to find work feeding swine, but this does not improve his situation. The Scriptures say, "He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, but no one gave him anything" (vv. 15-16).

The parable says that in the midst of his dire conditions, he came to himself. He realized that his father's hired servants have enough to eat and food to spare, while he perishes with hunger. He says, "I will arise and go to my father and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants'" (vv. 17-19). He arose and returned to his father. But as he approached, his father saw him at a great distance. The father had compassion on his son, ran to meet him, embraced him, and kissed him. The son admitted his sinfulness and his unworthiness to be called a son, but in his joy at the return of his son, the father called his servants to bring the best robe, a ring for his son's finger, and sandals for his feet. He also called for the fatted calf to be killed for a feast. He exclaimed, "For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (vv. 20-24).

While they were feasting and celebrating the return of the prodigal son, the older son comes and inquires about what is happening. He is told that his brother had returned and that his father has received him with a feast. The older brother becomes angry and will not go in to the feast. The father comes out and pleads with him, but the older son answers by saying he has been faithful to his father for many years and yet the father never gave him the opportunity for such feasting. He expresses his anger and jealousy over his brother who was received in such a manner after he squandered his inheritance (vv. 25-30).

The father responds by telling his oldest son, "You are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found" (vv. 31-32).

The parable of the Prodigal Son forms an exact icon of repentance at its different stages. Sin is exile, enslavement to strangers, hunger. Repentance is the return from exile to our true home; it is to receive back our inheritance and freedom in the Father's house. But repentance implies action: "I will rise up and go..." (v. 18). To repent is not just to feel dissatisfied, but to make a decision and to act upon it.

In the words of our Lord, we also learn of three things through this parable: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The reading of this parable follows the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own sinful condition, we might come to our senses and return to God through repentance. For those who have fallen into great despair over their sins thinking that there is no forgiveness, this parable offers hope. The Heavenly Father is patiently and lovingly waiting for our return. There is no sin that can overcome His love for us.

Finally, this parable offers us insight into the world in which we live. It is a world where the activities of people are disconnected and not ordered toward the fulfillment of God's divine

purpose for life. It is a world of incoherent pursuits, of illusory strivings, of craving for foods and drinks that do not satisfy, a world where nothing ultimately makes sense, and a world engulfed in untruth, deceit and sin. It is the exact opposite of the world as created by God and potentially recreated by his Son and Spirit. There is no cure for the evils of our age unless we return to God. The world in which we live is not a normal world, but a wasteland. This is why in the Slavic tradition of the Orthodox Church the reading of Psalm 137 is added to the Matins service for this and the following two Sundays. This nostalgic lament of the Hebrew exiles states: "By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered Zion. On the willows we hung our harps, for how could we sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Psalm 137).

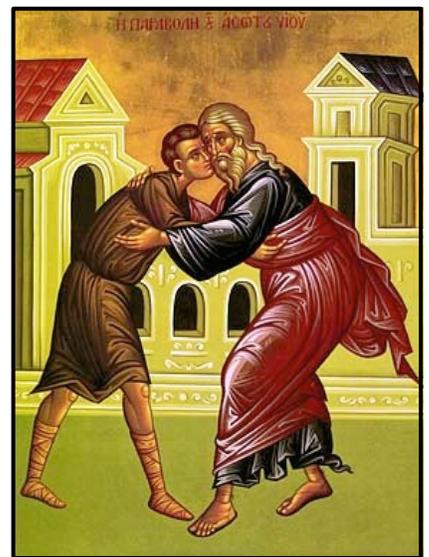
Here we can see the challenge of life in this world and the alienation from God that can happen when sin reigns in our lives. As a result of sin in our lives, we lose the joy of communion with God, we defile and lose our spiritual beauty, and we find ourselves far away from our real home, our real life. In true repentance, we realize this, and we express a deep desire to return, to recover what has been lost. On this day the Church reminds us of what we have abandoned and lost, and beckons us to find the desire and power to return. Our Heavenly Father is waiting and ready to receive us with His loving forgiveness and His saving embrace.

The icon of the Sunday of the Prodigal Son shows the prodigal being received by his father upon his return. We are presented with an image of a warm and loving embrace, the son showing his need for his father, an attitude that represents repentance, love, and hope for renewal and restoration. The father is shown full of compassion for his son, having born the burden of his sin and suffering, but now filled with joy that he has returned.

For the week that follows the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, fasting is observed on Wednesday and Friday. This is the last week that meat is allowed on non-fasting days. The next Sunday is the Sunday of the Last Judgment, also known as Meatfare Sunday. It is the last day that meat can be eaten prior to the fast of Great Lent.

Today's Epistle Reading – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20

Brethren, "all things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" -- and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body and in your spirit which belong to God.



Today's Gospel Reading – Saint Luke 15:11-32

The Lord said this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

On the Divine Liturgy

[The Divine Liturgy is the heart of the worship experience of the Orthodox Church. The 14th century writer, Nicholas Cabasilas, calls this "The Greatest of all the Mysteries." He writes in The Life in Christ, "Earthly nourishment pertains to the former life, while the heavenly table feeds the new man with its own proper food. Therefore, when they come to an earthly end, the one life goes back to the earth from whence it came forth, while the other goes to Christ from whom it was taken." In this and in forthcoming issues, we'll explore this "Greatest of all the Mysteries." We'll begin with the structure of the service, and then, hopefully, progress to a deeper understanding and appreciation of this 'work of the people our Lord commands us to do, "in remembrance" of Him. Ed.]

The Divine Liturgy is the primary worship service of the Church. The most commonly celebrated forms of the Divine Liturgy are the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Liturgy of St. Basil, and the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. The Divine Liturgy is a Eucharistic service. It contains two parts: the Liturgy of the Catechumens, sometimes called the Liturgy of the Word, at which the Scriptures are proclaimed and expounded, and the Liturgy of the Faithful, sometimes called the Liturgy of the Eucharist, in which the gifts of bread and wine are offered and consecrated. The Church teaches that the gifts truly become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, but it has never dogmatized a particular formula for describing this transformation. The Prothesis (or Proskomedia), the service of preparing the holy gifts, can be considered a third part which precedes the Liturgy proper.

Prothesis (Proskomedia, or Office of Preparation) Before the Divine Liturgy begins, the priest and a deacon, if one is serving, begin by preparing the gifts of bread and wine for use in the service. This preparation is itself a considerable service. More than simply setting aside the bread and wine, a robust ritual has developed with elaborate symbolism. Though the main outline is similar for most Orthodox churches, there may be some differences based on which typicon (rules for the Church services) a jurisdiction uses.

Five loaves of bread are used, reminiscent of the five loaves in the wilderness, from which the masses were fed. (A larger, single loaf may also be used, as is typical for parishes of our diocese.) During the Prothesis, the priest cuts out a square called the Lamb from the main loaf of bread (prospora). This will be consecrated during the Liturgy of the Faithful to become the holy body of Christ. He also removes small particles and places them on the diskos (or paten) in commemoration of the Theotokos, various saints, and the living and departed faithful. The remainder of the bread is blessed and distributed to parishioners and visitors after the service; this bread is called **antidoron** (or literally, "in place of the gifts.")

During the Prothesis, the priest also blesses wine and water, which are poured into the chalice. Warm water will be added to the chalice after the **Epiclesis**. The gifts are censed at the end of the Prothesis. The conclusion of the Prothesis leads directly into the beginning of the Divine Liturgy.

The Liturgy of the Catechumens Rites of Entrance After a more or less quiet exchange between the priest and deacon, if one is serving, the Divine Liturgy begins with the memorable exclamation from the priest, "**Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.**" The assembled faithful respond, "**Amen.**"

The deacon (or priest, if no deacon is serving) continues with the **Great Litany**, so called because it is longer than most litanies and its petitions touch on the needs of the world: peace and salvation, the Church, her bishops, her faithful, captives and their health and salvation, deliverance from anger and need. It is concluded, as with most litanies, by calling to the remembrance of the faithful the witness of the Theotokos and the saints. In light of that powerful witness, the faithful are charged to commend their lives to Our Lord Jesus Christ. A closing prayer is exclaimed by the priest.

There follow **three antiphons** which vary by day and jurisdiction. The first two antiphons are followed by a shorter litany and a prayer. The third is followed by the **Little Entrance**, at which is sung, "**O Come, let us adore and fall down before Christ. O Son of God... save us who sing to You: Alleluia!**"

Troparia and **kontakia** prescribed for the day, season, and temple follow next. Having fully entered the church liturgically and gathered together around the Word, the gathered body chants the **Trisagion**.

Rites of Proclamation The proclamation of Scripture is announced with the **prokeimenon**, a psalm or canticle refrain sung in responsorial fashion. Then, a reader proclaims the **Apostolic Reading** from an epistle or from the Acts of the Apostles. This reading is usually chanted, but a spoken reading may be allowed out of economy for local situations. (In some traditions, the reader starts the chant in a very low voice, and steps up to end of the reading with a high voice. This is a reminder of how the Early Church rose up from the

catacombs.) A **triple alleluia** is sung, also with verses as at the prokeimenon. This alleluia announces the **Gospel Reading**. Following the alleluia, there is a short exchange between the priest and the people, after which he or a deacon chants the Gospel. Following the Gospel, the priest will often give a **homily**, a short or medium-length excursus on the Scripture, the season, or the present festival or commemoration, roughly equivalent to the Protestant sermon. The homily may also be given after the communion or even after the dismissal.

The service continues with the **Litany of Fervent Supplication**, which is marked by an insistent triple repetition of "Lord, have mercy." On certain days this litany is followed by the **Litany for the Departed**.

The Liturgy of the Catechumens concludes with a litany praying for the continued growth of the catechumens in faith, leading up to the day of their baptism. Though many churches do not have catechumens in attendance, the litany remains in the liturgy and serves as a constant reminder of the Great Commission, the foundation of the Church as mission to the world.

PARISH NEWS



Matthew Orzechowski Received into the Holy Orthodox Church

On Wednesday morning, February 8th, the servant of God, Matthew Orzechowski was received into Holy Orthodoxy through the Sacraments of Chrismation and Communion. After worshipping here at St. Thomas for several months, Matt felt called to come into the fullness of the Faith, and began several weeks of instruction in the history, beliefs and practices of the Church. A 2nd Lt in the Marine Corps, Matt will be leaving us for his new duty station in Okinawa this week.

Top Row: Under the watchful eye of his sponsor, Dana Dewey, Matthew recites the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and affirms that he accepts the teachings of the Ecumenical Councils and the Traditions of the Church; Father Joseph Anoints Matthew with the Holy Chrism; "The servant of God Matthew partakes of the precious, most holy and most pure body and blood..."

Bottom Row: Dana presents Matt with a gold Cross; Matt participates in the Thanksgiving Prayers; Dana, Father Joseph and the newly-illuminated servant of God Matthew! Many Years!!



Do Something REAL This Spring Break!



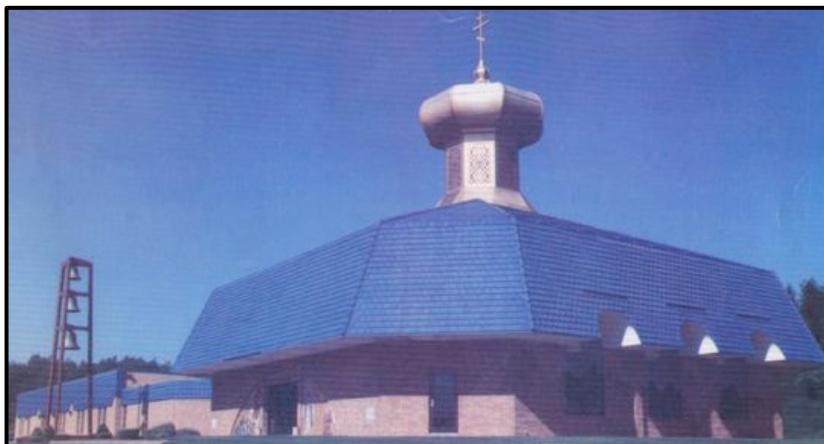
The Real Break program provides alternatives to the "traditional" Spring Break for college students. It provides students with the most authentic experience possible, and is modeled as a full Christian lifestyle, which includes fellowship, prayer within community, witness and service. Each Spring, over 100 students attend various trips, both domestic and international, to give of themselves to those less fortunate and to do something "real" for themselves and for God. OCF Real Break has been running since 2000 with over one thousand students participating in these life-changing opportunities. Past and current trips include: Mexico, Guatemala, Jerusalem, Constantinople, Raphael House, St. Basil Academy, Greece, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Romania, Buenos Aires, Alaska, and more. (For more on Real Break, visit www.ocf.net)

In Your Prayers – Please Remember...

Please remember in your prayers: His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Archbishop DEMETRIOS, Fr. Joseph & Family, Fr. John Baranik, Pani Yvonne Lysack, Christina Alexandru, Andrew Anderson, Mary Lou Angus, Matthew Baker & Family, Riley Bodenhorn, Millie Borys, Cecilia Bosch, the Boswell family, Sean Buckingham, Christos Charuhas, Arthur Chumak, Matthew Costis, Tina Crull, Kari & Mary Diane David, Rev. Joe Dobson, Donald Faulkner, Amelia Flade, Robbie Graves, Michael Hall, Father Chuck Harding, Gregory Harmening, Heather Himler, Nancy Hinderliter, Cameron Houk, the Howl Family, Kelly Jennings & Family, Ron Justice, Michael Kapeluck, Faith Kirby, Nam Koory and Family, Phyllis & Christos Kopan, Alex Makowelski, Jim Maston, Anna Marie Matula & Family, Michael McKenzie, Janet McKinley, Anna Meinhold, Daniela and Michael Milne, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry Osborne, infant Westin Perry & Parents, Kaylee Pilkerton, Katie Piazza, Kelly Plowchin and Family, Mary Reed, Anne Rosario, Jennifer Ross, the Samson Family, Cynthia Sawyer, Rose Shaffer, Stephen & Marian Sheptak, Maria Shostko, Marilyn Single, George Smilo, John Smilo, Jeanne Springer, Michael Stainbrook, Linda Stevenson, Bryan Tucker, Lydia Vita, Leslie Wilkinson, Lori & Eric Wood, the Wright Family, Ann, Elizabeth, Elizabeth, Michaela, Natalia, Nicole, Tracy, Xenia, the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, Fr. Martin's Society and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of any prayer list changes.)

Holy Myrrh-Streaming Icons of St. George in Taylor, PA

[The following is adapted from an article written by Father Mark Leasure for his parish bulletin, the St. George's Informer of January 7th. St. Thomas parishioners Dn. Steve and Nancy Hall, Luke Cooper, and inquirer Stephen Sproul joined a group of parishioners from Holy Resurrection parish in Potomac, MD and Nativity of Our Lord parish in Manassas, VA to visit and venerate the holy icons.



As Fr. Mark carried one of the Icons around to show those present and narrate the events of the last four months, myrrh dripped off the corner of the icon at varying rates for the faithful to catch in their outstretched hands. Contributed by Luke Cooper.]

On Wednesday, October 12, 2011, St. George's Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of Taylor, PA, was blessed with the visitation of the Holy Myrrh-Streaming Hawaiian Iveron Icon of the Mother of God. The Holy Icon arrived

shortly after 1 p.m. and was enthroned on the tetrapod for veneration. Hymns to the Virgin were sung throughout the afternoon as faithful came to be anointed and witness this great blessing. A Moleben to the Theotokos was celebrated at 4 p.m. Following the Moleben, Reader Nectarios, guardian of the Icon, presented Protopresbyter Mark Leasure with an 8x10 replica of the Iveron Icon as a remembrance of Her visit to St. George's. This icon was anointed with myrrh and touched to the original miraculous Hawaiian Icon. It was left on the tetrapod for veneration.

The following morning, Thursday, October 13, when Fr. Mark entered the church, he immediately noticed a sweet fragrance. He assumed that it was the lingering aroma that had accompanied the miraculous icon the day before. When he went to venerate the icon on the tetrapod, the one

Nectarios presented the previous day, he found that the fragrance was very strong and seemed to be coming from the icon itself. Upon examination he noticed an expanding area of "perspiration" forming around the spot where the icon had been anointed. He thought it was likely just a residual effect from the initial anointing and went about his business.

Later while working in the rectory office, Fr. Mark was thinking



about Nectarios' account of how he discovered the myrrh streaming from his icon. It had been left on the top of a bookshelf, collecting dust and forgotten. Fr. Mark felt a twinge of guilt at having allowed the same thing to happen to several icons he had collected over the years. One in particular, the Kardiotissa Theotokos (Tender Heart), had been given to him by Fr. Lawrence Barriger on behalf of the Deanery when he was elevated to Protopresbyter by His Eminence, +Metropolitan Nicholas. It was made by the nuns at Holy Protection Monastery in White Haven, PA. Fr. Mark decided to bring this icon to the church for veneration, as the next

day, Friday, October 14, was the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God (Old Calendar).

When Fr. Mark placed the icon on the analogion, he noticed that even more "perspiration" had formed on the replica of the Iveron Icon. He proceeded to anoint the Kardiotissa Icon with the fragrant, oil-like substance. By the time Pani Beverly and his children Kyra and Adam got home from school, both of the icons were fragrant and forming areas of moisture.

When Fr. Mark came to the church Friday morning for the Feast Day Divine Liturgy, the fragrance was extremely intense. Both icons were sweet-smelling and exuding small droplets of moisture that appeared like sweat. Faithful began arriving for the Liturgy while he was doing the Proskomedia, and they immediately observed what was happening. Over the following days the moisture gradually increased on the icons and began to stream. They were left fully exposed for veneration. The surfaces quickly became smudged from kissing and wiping, obviously in need of cleaning. Fr. Mark wiped them down with cotton and placed them in shadow boxes for protection. Within 24 hours they were both streaming again. He has since wiped them down several times with the same result. At Theophany, the icons were streaming so heavily that the myrrh was running off in sheets.

No one, including Fr. Mark, knew what to do or say about what they were witnessing; he waited an entire month before contacting Diocesan Chancellor Fr. Frank Miloro. At one point, concerned that the streaming might be a false sign, Fr. Mark even performed an exorcism over the icons. He relates that as he started the exorcism, a large puddle of myrrh welled up from the Virgin's eye and rolled down the Icon.

Multitudes of people from all denominations have witnessed the icons actively streaming, including His Eminence, Archbishop Antony of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Archimandrite Athanasy, guardian of the Myrrh Streaming Icon of St. Anne, the nuns from Holy Protection Monastery in White Haven, the monks from Saint Nectarios Monastery in Roscoe, NY, the monks from Saint Tikhon's Monastery, and numerous Orthodox clergy and faithful.

Presently, nearly 4 months after this all started, they remain completely saturated, front and back, and continue to stream heavily. The myrrh even appears and streams from the glass covering the icons, as well as from the wood cases in which they are contained. The flowery fragrance that they exude has at times been so intense that it has been evident to passersby in *cars passing by the church*. A number of healings have already been attributed to the icons. A man with a bone-deep infected cut on his hand was faced with surgery to remove the infection. After the cut was anointed with myrrh, it completely healed overnight. A girl was hospitalized with pneumonia and pleurisy. One of her lungs had partially collapsed and was filled with fluid, and the doctors were preparing to perform an operation needed to drain her lung. The day after her side was anointed with myrrh, she went home healed. People who required oxygen for breathing problems have left the church no longer needing oxygen, even if they had not venerated the icons.

For reasons known only to God (*"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever. . . ." Deuteronomy 29:29*), St. George's has been chosen and sanctified as the place where grace has been revealed and the presence of the Holy Mother of God has been made manifest through these icons. At every Moleben service, Fr. Mark is struck by the words of Elizabeth as she greets the Virgin Mary: *"But why is this granted to*

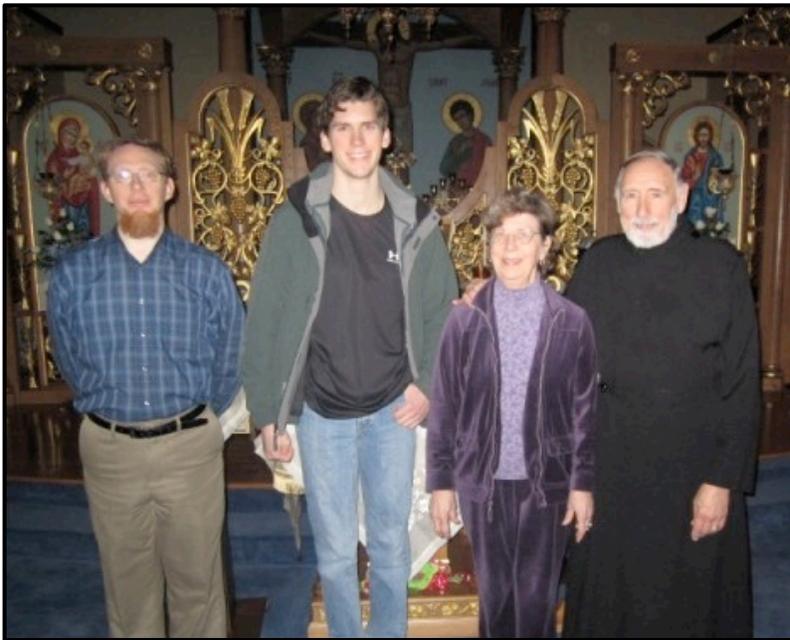
me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43). "Why here? Why us?" He asks. He wishes he had an answer. Possibly for the same reason God chose the small, obscure village of Bethlehem to be born according to the flesh; for the same reason He chose a simple peasant girl to be His Mother. As Saint Paul explains, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

No one knows how long the icons will continue to stream. What Fr. Mark knows is that his parish, as a community, as the Orthodox Church, has been greatly blessed. For as long as the icons continue to stream myrrh, he will thank God for the blessing, rightly honor the Holy Virgin, and struggle to live a life worthy of the calling we have received (Ephesians 4:1). And as we approach the season of Great Lent, we know that our God loves us with an everlasting love: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16).

What has happened at St. George's has not been advertised. The Icons will *not* be subject to media scrutiny or spectacle. They will *not* be seen in the newspapers, on TV or the internet. The Mother of God is *not* a celebrity to be haunted by paparazzi. She is the *Panagia*, the Most-Holy. Fr. Mark will do everything possible to guard, protect and preserve this great blessing in all of its sanctity and

mystery. This is a holy gift, a holy place, and nothing will ever interfere with that. He will not permit video or photography of the icons.

People have and will continue to come and offer Her due veneration, to pray and ask the blessings and help of the Theotokos. Fr. Mark welcomes all of them. Everyone is welcome and invited to "come and see." As St. George's has done since the icons began to stream, the Moleben to the Theotokos will continue to be celebrated every Wednesday evening at 6:00 p.m. until the Second Coming of Christ. From an initial "crowd" of 10 people or so the first week, attendance has continued to grow to over 300 at present (more than the church will hold). Fr. Mark stresses that he cannot explain what is happening. All he can say is "come and see." *"The humble shall see this and be glad; And you who seek God, your hearts shall live."* (Psalm 69:32).



As we continue this sacred journey together, may the words of the Virgin Mary be on our lips and in our hearts: *Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."* (Luke 1:38).