

FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE DIRECTOR



I. *In the Spring, Dr Vrame shared the following:*

"April 2, 2012 is **World Autism Awareness Day**.

How does your parish include children with autism? And, how does your parish minister to children and their families, and adults with various disabilities. Read this statement from SCOBA in 2009.

<http://www.scoba.us/articles/disability-communion.html>."

Note from PMO: *The last few sentences summarize the attitude we need. "The key in relating to people with disabilities is always communion and openness, not mere compassion or pity. The only rules are sincere love and genuine respect. We are called to look at the person and to remember that the disability is only a part of the whole person. Thus, the first and most valuable gift that any community can offer a person with disability is recognition, rather than rejection. Our mission is, in humble cooperation with the Holy Spirit, to render the Church as a whole body, a human reflection of Trinitarian communion, an earthly image of the heavenly kingdom."*

Also, refer to [a] "**Student Disabilities**," Spring 2011 Newsletter (Vol. XVII, No. 2), page and "**How to Recognize Kids with Learning Disabilities**," Children's Ministry eNewsletter

<http://www.childrensministry.com/articles/how-to-recognize-kids-with-learning-disabilities?p=2>

II. *This Summer he sent this note:*

Picked up a brochure at the Clergy Laity Congress in Phoenix about the **Pathways Awareness Foundation and Inclusion in worship**. Check out their resources for Orthodox. They can be found at this Resources page

http://www.inclusioninworship.org/open_awareness_day_eastern.php



Pathways Awareness Foundation

www.inclusioninworship.org

Note from PMO: When I checked out the website, I found this thoughtful and beneficial message. I've visited Church School classes where teachers did not know what to do with special needs students and found it troubling. The article "**Student Disabilities**" (see above) was included with the idea it would get us thinking and reading about these students. As I read it, I realized **all our students** need to be treated this way. I bolded key phrases. See if you agree.

Beatitudes of Acceptance

-author unknown-

- Blessed are you who take time to **listen to speech that may be slow**, for you help me to know that if I persevere, I can be understood.
- Blessed are you who **walk kindly by my side**, for in your friendship I feel good to be myself.
- Blessed are you who **never bid me to hurry up**, and, more blessed, you who **do not snatch a task from my hands and do it for me**, for often I need time rather than help.
- Blessed are you who **stand beside me as I enter new and untried ventures**, for I may surprise myself and you.
- Blessed are you who **ask for my help and realize my gifts and abilities**, for you help me to believe in myself.
- Blessed are you who **help me with the graciousness of Christ**, because I sometimes need help for which I cannot ask.
- Blessed are you who, in all ways, **assure me that what makes me an individual is** not my particular difference, but **my God-given strengths and virtues** which nothing can confine.
- Rejoice and be glad, for you **affirm my value as a gifted person** and your understanding and love have **opened the doors of love for me**.

http://www.inclusioninworship.org/open_educators01.php

There were just too many articles to include this time, so the following article can be found at <http://oca.org/resource-handbook/familylife>. Matushka Wendy Cwiklinski wrote "**Church & the Child with Invisible Disabilities**" based on her own experience as the parent of five children, four of whom have been diagnosed with mood disorders and /or autism. The article appeared in the **RESOURCE HANDBOOK** published by the Orthodox Church in America.

According to Matushka Wendy, *Unlike a child with cerebral palsy or Down syndrome, children with these physical challenges are not always visible. More and more children, for one reason or another, are being diagnosed with brain disorders such as ADHD, autism, depression, or bipolar disorder. These disorders are "visible" through the symptoms, usually manifested in the child's behavior. It is easy to stand by and think (or say), "If only that parent would get better control of their kid"; "All that child needs is a good spanking"; or "What a bratty kid!"*

The following is a list of what the term "hidden disability" may encompass:

- ✘ Autism
- ✘ Brain injury
- ✘ Developmental delay
- ✘ Visual impairment
- ✘ Emotional disability
- ✘ Other health impairments e.g. *osteogenesis imperfecta*, otherwise known as fragile bone disease, carpal tunnel syndrome
- ✘ Deaf and hard of hearing
- ✘ Mild mental retardation
- ✘ Speech/language impairment

III. In August Dr Vrame wrote, "Here's an idea I received not too long ago for what to do with "snack time" in Sunday Church school. It reminds me of the "time honored" custom of clergy, monastics, chanters (and more than a few acolytes), eating leftover Antidoron at the end of a Divine Liturgy. Adults might also dip the bread into a bit of wine as well!

"While I'm not sure if this will create issues for those with gluten, wheat, or other allergies, I still think this one is worth sharing. What is especially noteworthy was how the parish used snack planning and making and turned it into a community building activity."

"**Holy Bread (Prosforo) and Sunday School – A Snack Idea**" is included in this Newsletter



The True Meaning of the Song "*The 12 Days of Christmas*"

Christmas is a season of the Christian Year that lasts for 12 days, from December 25 through January 6, the Day of Theophany. On January 6, the Eastern Orthodox Church celebrates the Revelation of the Trinity and the Church of the West (Roman Catholic) recalls the Journey of the Magi.

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not allowed to practice their faith openly. During that era, someone wrote "*The Twelve Days of Christmas*" as a type of secret catechism that could be sung in public without the risk of persecution. The song has two levels of interpretation: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Roman Catholic Church. Each element in the carol is a code word for a religious reality, one that we Orthodox Christians can relate to today as well.

1. The **(One) partridge** in a pear tree is **Jesus Christ**.
2. The **Two turtledoves** are the **Old and New Testaments**.
3. The **Three French hens** stand for **Faith, Hope and Love**.
4. The **Four calling birds** are the **4 Gospels**.
5. The **Five gold rings** recall the **Torah (Law)**, the **first 5 Books of the Old Testament**.
6. The **Six geese-a-laying** stand for the **6 Days of Creation**.
7. The **Seven swans-a-swimming** represent the **Sevenfold Gifts of the Spirit**.
8. The **Eight maids-a-milking** are the **8 Beatitudes**.
9. The **Nine ladies** dancing are the **9 Fruits of the Spirit** (Gal. 5).
10. The **Ten lords-a-leaping** are the **10 Commandments**.
11. The **Eleven pipers** piping stand for the **11 Faithful Disciples**.
12. The **Twelve drummers** drumming symbolize the **12 Points of Belief in the Nicene/Apostles Creed**.