

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh

Spring 2000

Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div., Director

Please make copies of pp. 1-6 for all staff members!
--

Although we are celebrating a New Year, we begin it with a sad note, the death of **Dr. John Boojamra**. His name is familiar to most of us involved with Christian Education in the Orthodox Church. I met him nearly thirty years ago (1971) at my first OCF (Orthodox Christian Fellowship) National Conference at Holy Cross Seminary. Over the years we kept each other informed of what our respective archdioceses were doing and shared ideas. For those who do not recognize his name, I offer the obituary that appeared in *The Hellenic Chronicle*. May his memory be eternal!

Dr. John Boojamra, executive secretary of the SCOBA Orthodox Christian Education Commission, author, Adjunct Professor and Director of the Religious Education Program at St. Vladimir's Seminary, and Director of Religious Education of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, died suddenly Thursday morning, November 11 at his home in Demarest, New Jersey. He was 57.

He was a founder of the OCEC, as well as the original Orthodox Peace Fellowship. He held degrees from Brooklyn College, St. Vladimir's Seminary, and Fordham University, where he also taught. Dr. Boojamra was the author of many books and curriculum materials for OCEC and was a nationally recognized Orthodox Christian, theologian, scholar and educator. His legacy to OCEC was a recent grant from the Farah Foundation for the publication of the *OCEC Teaching Pictures*, which are dedicated to his memory. (See Review below.)

He was a good friend and mentor to many in the Orthodox Church. Dr. Boojamra is survived by his son Constantine Boojamra, Ph.D. of San Francisco and his daughter, Nicole Boojamra of Demarest. He was predeceased by his wife, Stellie Ann Anagnos Boojamra. Funeral services were held at St. Mary Church in Brooklyn, NY.

FALL 1999 PACKET UPDATE

I hope you tried out some of the ideas in the Fall Packet. Super Bowl Sunday on January 30 was a great time to participate in the "**SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY**" food-and-fund-raiser for charity, preferably for IOCC.. Make sure you report the amount of your collection to the national headquarters of the project, plus let me know, too.

PROJECT MEXICO brochures were also included in the Fall Packet. Since then the staff has developed a quality Church School curriculum that involves three Sundays of lessons and a fund-raiser. Students from Kindergarten through Sixth grade (and higher) will learn about missions, works of service, almsgiving, Project Mexico (building homes for the poor of Tijuana) and St. Innocent Orthodox Orphanage. Each lesson is divided into age-appropriate lessons and activities. For the fund-raiser, your Sunday school will build its own Project Mexico house out of paper! Complete instructions are included. This is a very easy program to put into practice!!! For more information, please contact Christina Bournelis at Project Mexico, PO Box 120028 Chula Vista, CA 91912-3128; 619-216-4974; email at cbournelis@hotmail.com or check out <http://www.projectmexico.org>. (FYI: Parishes that previously supported Project Mexico should have received the packet in the fall to be used as a Nativity Lenten Project, but it can be used any time of year.) There is no charge for the materials, but donations are always welcome

WORKSHOPS IN REVIEW

THE 1999-2000 SCHOOL YEAR began for me with seven workshops, four within our Diocese. Saturday, August 20, SS. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Youngstown, OH
Saturday, September 18, St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Charleston, WV
Saturday, October 9, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Akron, OH

Saturday, October 16, the Orthodox Churches of the greater Hamilton, Ontario area
Saturday, October 23, St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church, N.Royalton, OH
Saturday, October 30, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, York, PA
Saturday, November 20, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Pittsburgh, PA

This year's workshops focused on three areas: "What Makes a Great Lesson," "Resources for Jr. & Sr. High Classes," and "Incorporating Holy Tradition in the Classroom." The last presentation included a lesson on icons using transparencies. There were 161 participants from 50 parishes (Greek and non-Greek). I thank all the clergy, church school directors and teachers that took the time from their busy schedules to attend and especially the host parishes of Annunciation/ Akron, St. Paul/N.Royalton, Annunciation/York and Holy Trinity/Pittsburgh for offering their facilities.

Diocesan Parishes that attended and the number of participants included: Akron (10), Canton Holy Trinity (2), Cleveland Annunciation (2) and SS Constantine & Helen (1), Columbus (1), Mansfield (1), N.Royalton (6), Steubenville (2), Youngstown St. John (3), Aliquippa (3), Ambridge (6), Bethlehem (8), Camp Hill (4), E.Pittsburgh (3), Erie (2), Monesson (6), Oakmont (2), Pittsburgh Holy Cross (3), Holy Trinity (14), and St. Nicholas (2), Reading SS Constantine & Helen (2) and St. Matthew (2), York (5), Charleston (2), Weirton (4)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

DIOCESAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONFERENCE

September 15 & 16, 2000
St. Nicholas Cathedral, Pittsburgh

Presenter: Fr. Frank Marangos

Everyone that I spoke with who heard Fr. Frank at the May 1999 Conference at Holy Cross (Pittsburgh) and at the Diocesan Clergy-Laity in October 1999 wanted him back again, and soon! You won't want to miss him. Make plans to bring as many staff members as possible. More details will be sent under separate cover closer to the date. If a parish is interested in hosting a Regional Workshop, I will be available after September. "Guideline for Hosting a Workshop/Conference" is included for your future use.

TEACHERS, ARE YOU ON TRACK?

"Are You on Track?" is a self-quiz to assist you in your ministry. Take a few minutes either at home or at a staff meeting to complete then score the quiz. Directors, you may find the answers for some of your teachers' concerns in the enclosed article "Recruiting Church School Teachers." It makes several good points about the way we could support our current staff members, as well as suggestions for obtaining new teachers.

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL 2000



Diocesan Chairman is
Fr. Michael Kallaur
of Holy Cross/Pittsburgh.

Dates of Remember:

March/April: Parish festivals

Western Region: May 6 at Annunciation, Cleveland. Contact Fr. Anthony Demetri (216-861-0116)

Central Region: TBA. Contact Fr. Steven Denas (412-824-9188)

Eastern Region: April 15, Holy Trinity, Camp Hill. Contact Tina Karpouzis (717-396-9856)

May 13: Diocesan Festival at the Diocese Center

June 2-4: Archdiocese Festival, Dayton, FL

Topics and Topic Tips are found in the **1999-2000 Annual Resource Companion (ARC)** published by the Department of Religious Education. This year's theme is "Holy Tradition." Cost: \$5.00.

Presbytera Margaret Orfanakos and Fr. Frank Marangos have revised the Oratorical Festival Booklet and procedures. A gratis copy will be sent by the Department of Religious Education to each Parish Oratorical Festival Chairman sometime in February.

NEW RESOURCES

The second issue of **PRAXIS Magazine** has been delayed. Each church school teacher of the Greek Archdiocese will received a copy at his/her home *only* if your parish's complete 1999-2000 staff roster has been mailed to **DOXA Chairman Paul Seiben** as requested by the DRE this past fall.

"YELLOW PAGES" UPDATE

Please make the following changes in your copy of the "Yellow Pages."

Oakwood Publications has changed to **Festal Creations** and is no longer handling books. All books previously published by Oakwood Publications are now available from St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 575 Scarsdale Rd., Crestwood, NY 10707, 800-204-2665.

Synaxis Press books (formerly carried by Oakwood Publications) are now available from Orthodox Books.Com, PO Box 1, Felton, CA 95018, 800-494-6575, www.orthodoxbooks.com and Light & Life.

Festal Creations -- 3827 Bluff St. Torrance, CA 90505-6359, 800-747-9245, festalc@juno.com. -- continues creating inexpensive traditional Christian gift items such as enamel icon pins, crosses (pins and pendants), wall crosses.

Little Falcons now has an email address: littlefalcons@owc.net

WEB SITE NEWS

Have you checked out my web site lately? <http://home.neo.rr.com/pmonest> contains not only the "Yellow Pages," but also Christmas programs, Resource Recommendations, Past *Illuminator* articles, Reflections Questions for Adult Education books, the latest "Newsletter" and "Packet" enclosures, and more. I try to update it monthly.



FOR THE COMPUTER

SAVVY - THE ROYAL ROAD (CD-ROM, Mac/Windows operating systems compatible) is now available from the DRE for \$39.95 plus SH. "The Royal Road," which centers on the Triodion period, includes 36 Lenten hymns in Greek and English, 8 hymns, 32 gospel, epistle and other readings, 12 video clips, 75 Lenten recipes, 85 Quiz Questions, dozens of articles, patristic quotations and more as it takes us from the 'Publican and the Pharisee' to Pascha! I had the opportunity to preview and offer suggestions on the near final edition in November 1999. After forty hours of tracing each link and checking for spelling or textual errors, I was ready for Pascha!

I see it as another tool that can be used to teach the Faith to those having access to computers, whether at home or in the church school class. With the continued need for adult education, **The Royal Road** is an especially valuable tool with our computer savvy teens and young adults.

IN THE HEART OF HILDANDER (CD-ROM) Microsoft Windows 3.1, Windows 95 or later, 486 processor or higher; 8MB of free disk space; a double-speed CD-ROM drive, a mouse, a windows-compatible sound card to listen to the samples of Serbian church music.)

A friend recommended that I check out this CD-ROM. It's more than I expected, I'm new at the CD-ROM stuff. The Main Menu has five sections: [1] Introduction which offers a tour of the peninsula, an historical summary of Mt. Athos and the Hilander Monastery, how the computer model was created and more; [2] Byzantine Wall Paintings from Palaeologian Art to parts of the church, to clothing details for various types of figures, [3] Scientific Research from Jesus' ministry, to the Heavenly Liturgy and more, [4] External Architecture and Sections, [5] Christianity in Pictures either the Nicene Creed or via the Gospel, and [6] Search for and view frescoes by walk through, cycles, lists or cross-section, which allows you to point to any icon and have it enlarged and identified! There are over 5000 images and 950 wall paintings to see. This is a crash course in iconography for one's class or the individual. Price: \$32 from www.DigitalByzantium.com.

VIDEOS of the Religious Education workshops presented at the 1998 Archdiocesan Clergy-Laity, plus the presentations from the 1999 Summer Religious Education Institute are available from the DRE. Each video is 60 minutes in length and sells for \$15. These would be an excellent means of ongoing Teacher Education and Certification. (See page 6 of this Newsletter.)

TEACHING PICTURES

The OCEC has released the long-awaited **Teaching Pics** in memory of Dr. John Boojamra. The boxed set of 80 pictures in four colors covers (1) Sacraments, (2) the Divine Liturgy, (3) Feasts, and (4) Great Lent. (See separate listing.) Each picture has a complete lesson plan on its reverse side and can be used with any curriculum. Small Church Schools may wish to use these topics as

units of studies. The "Great Lent" section will be especially useful this Lenten season. According to the press release the *Teaching Pictures* will be followed up with a CD-ROM. Cost is \$35, plus \$5 SH. OCEC PO Box 1051 Syracuse, NY 13201-1051; 800-464-2744. (I've placed mine in plastic windows and a three-ring notebook for easy handling.

ORGANIZING & TEACHING IN A CHURCH SCHOOL: Guide for Priests and Teacher

by Fr. Thomas Kazich (editor of *LITTLE FALCONS* children's magazine and DRE for the Serbian Orthodox New Gracanica Metropolitanate, Diocese of America and Canada) is a 52 page booklet written for the Serbian Orthodox parishes of America. I believe that it offers useful information, especially for new teachers. The book is divided into six sections: Thinking about education, Organizing a class, Enriching the program, Remembering the Great Feasts, and Understanding the Child. Cost is \$10 each; orders for 5 or more \$5.00 each and can be ordered from Little Falcons, PO Box 371, Grayslake, IL 60030, 817-223-1300.

SHARING CORNER

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULA

While traveling this fall I learned what two of the High School Classes of our Diocese are using for a curriculum. Holy Trinity, Pittsburgh is studying **THE INCARNATE GOD: The Feasts of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, Volumes I & II**. Annunciation, York is studying **THE WAY OF THE PILGRIM AND THE PILGRIM CONTINUES HIS WAY**. Enclosed are the respective syllabi for your consideration. Teachers Presbytera Becky Touloumes and James Tautkas have been asked to submit a critique for the Fall 2000 Packet.

MARCH 25 CELEBRATION: I came across sheet music for the Greek National Anthem in Greek, Phonetics, and with an English translation. The lyrics are actually a lengthy poem by D. Solomou. A copy was sent to Maria Stamoolis of our Diocese's Greek Education Committee who gave it a "thumbs up." This would be of help to the non-Greek-speaking/reading individuals at this year's Greek Independence Celebration.

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA LENTEN BOARD GAME

includes the board, directions, and 80 questions related to the Paschal Lenten season. (I suggest that the board be enlarged up to 140% to fill an 11"x17" sheet of paper.) I have found games to be a great way to review with my high schoolers. From experience I have learned to never assume that everyone knows the storyline of all the Major Feasts of the Church. I hope your students enjoy it. Send me any additional questions you develop and they will be included in the Spring 2001 Packet.

A CRIB FOR PREGNANCY CARE

was one of my favorite projects as a church school director. Not only is it an excellent way to emphasize our Church's pro-life position, but it also gives us a tangible way of doing so. The entire parish can be involved. "Pregnancy Care" is a local pregnancy support organization here in Akron supported predominately by Roman Catholic and Protestant churches and their parishioners. Many times there is a 6-month waiting period for a crib! Each time this has been done, we had a crib filled with new and gently used items. A sample flyer is included to give you more ideas and information. I've done this both during the Nativity Lenten season and around St. Valentine's Day.

How do you go about this?

1. Check out the agencies in your area. Be sure to determine who will transport all the stuff when the project ends.
2. Discuss the project with your parish priest, then with the church school staff. Get his blessing and that of the Parish Council, if necessary. Make sure everyone that needs to be is informed.
3. Determine the weeks that items are to be brought.
4. Write an article for the monthly and/or weekly bulletin to inform the parish community of what you are doing and what they can do to help.
5. If you do not have a crib, invite a parishioner to donate a new or gently used baby crib (be sure it meets current federal guidelines if it is used), or ask for cash donations to purchase one.

6. Prepare a handout for the students that is discussed in class before it is taken home.
7. Make posters to place in key locations, especially one near the crib or collection site (if you are collecting funds for the crib).
8. To insure a variety of items, post a check-off list of the suggested items. Then families and individuals can sign up to bring specific items. Duplicates are always welcome, of course.
9. Ask the parish priest to announce the project from the pulpit.
10. Set out the crib in the designated locale along with a box for cash donations that can be used to purchase additional items or to buy the crib.

DIANA'S PASCHA (EASTER) STORY

COOKIES was sent to me by Fr. Nabil Hanna last March. It's one way to review the lesson that they won't forget. It would also make a great Parent-Child activity. (1) Consider sending the recipe home before Pascha, and asking the students to bring in a batch of cookies the Sunday after Pascha. Or (2) bring in all the ingredients to make a batch in the classroom. Read all the scripture lessons as you do it. Then share cookies that you prepared at home and send the recipe home for the students to make with their parents.

BULLETIN BOARD IDEAS

Thanks to the Internet I have compiled the Paschal Greeting – Christ is Risen! – in 34 languages. Included in this packet are the directions for a bulletin board using a world map and all these different languages to bring home the point that Christ is risen for all people and for all time. Hope you like it.

"THE ORTHODOX IDEA OF CREATION"

by Dr. John Boojamra is based on his readings of the Church Fathers and the liturgical life of the Church. Although it was written with the OCEC curriculum in mind, the ideas and information go beyond those specific textbooks. All our teachers will benefit from reading it.

DAD'S DAY

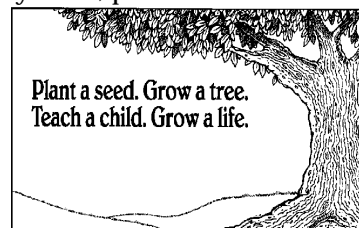
I was pleased to see all the excitement in the 3rd & 4th grade class when I visited St. Paul's Church in N. Royalton on October 24. It was "Dad's Day"! The students had been studying the church interior for several weeks. The date had been set.

Invitations had gone out and now the Dads were invited to class for a special project. Each student-dad team was to bring a shirt box in which they would construct a birds'-eye-view model of the church interior. To encourage greater creativity, the teachers provided a layout on paper, but no model.

Teachers provided extra boxes (for those who forgot), glue, paper icons, pretzel sticks (they make good pews), pipe cleaners, ribbons, scissors, colored paper, etc. Students were invited to bring art supplies from home as well. The room was filled with 50 bodies all huddled around their boxes as dads and students worked to get their models done. They were displayed at the fellowship hour. If Dad was unable to come, another adult was more than welcome to substitute. This class also does "Moms' Day," and "Godparents' Day," each with their own project.

REQUEST FOR MATERIALS

- What is your **high school class** doing this year? Until the Archdiocese DRE develops a new curriculum for the high school aged students, , we need to offer our students classes that will prepare them for dealing with their lives now and for the future. Ellen Tatalias offered us the program she developed for the 12th Grade Class (St. Nicholas, Bethlehem). This was included in the Spring 1999 Packet. Don't forget the OCEC's "Celebrations: Feasts and Holy Days," and the "Focus on You" series. If your students have not been exposed to some or all of these, they are missing out!
- Does anyone have guidelines for a PTO?
- Bulletin Boards are an excellent means to teach not only our students, but also our parishioners. If you've designed one that you really liked, please share it with us all.



VIDEOS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION INSTITUTE, Summer 1999: *Understanding Holy Tradition.*

[\$15.00 each. Set of 22, \$295]

1. Sacred Tradition: A Treasure Trove for Religious Educators, Fr. Anthony Coniaris
2. The Philokalia: The Bible of Orthodox Tradition, Fr. Anthony Coniaris
3. What Our Hymns Can Teach Us, Dr. Vicki Pappas
4. Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, Pres. Eugenia Constantinou
5. The Gospels: A Crash Course, Pres. Eugenia Constantinou*/
6. Making Ethical Decisions: An Orthodox Perspective, Dr. Aristotle Papanikolaou
7. Orthodoxy, Culture, and Secularism, Dr. Aristotle Papanikolaou
8. Icons: What Do They Teach Us?, Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div.
9. Hymns: Ancient Tools to Teach the Faith, Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div.
10. Orthodox Understanding of Holy Tradition in the Old Testament, Rev. Dr. Peter Chamberas
11. Seeing is Believing: Exploring Icons, Dr. Tony Vrame
12. Becoming Doers of the Word, Dr. Tony Vrame
13. The Role of Science in Orthodox Tradition, Rev. Dr. Demetrios Demopoulos
14. Cloning and Orthodox Anthropology, Rev. Dr. Demetrios Demopoulos
15. Approaching the Millennium, Rev. Dr. Brendan Pelphrey
16. Asceticism for Modern Americans, , Rev. Dr. Brendan Pelphrey
17. Sin and Repentance, Rev. Michael Varvarelis
18. Confession and Forgiveness, , Rev. Michael Varvarelis
19. Networking the Oratorical Festival, Pres. Margaret Orfanakos
20. Renaming Orthodoxy in a Secular Culture: The Orthodox Tradition of Counter-Culture Resistance, Frank Schaeffer
21. Holy Tradition and the Interfaith Challenge, Rev. Dr. Charles Joanides
22. In Defense of Absolutes: Orthodox Catechetics in a Postmodern World, Rev. Dr. Frank Marangos

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION INSTITUTE, Summer 1998, Archdiocese Clergy-Laity: *The Liturgical Life of the Orthodox Church*

[\$15.00 each. Set of 19, \$250]

1. Serving as Stewards of the Environment, Rev. Christopher Bender
2. Understanding the Liturgy, Rev. Constantine Botsis
3. The Orthodox Self, Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis
4. The Message of Orthodoxy, Rev. Paul Costopoulos
5. Applying Our Faith to Modern Dilemmas, Rev. Dr. Demetrios Demopoulos
6. Understanding the Sacrament of Marriage, Rev. Dr. George Economou
7. The Interfaith Marriage Challenge in Our Archdiocese, Rev. Dr. Charles Joanides
8. Understanding Holy Tradition, Rev. James Bogdan
9. Examination of the Marriage Life Cycle, Rev. Dr. Nicholas Krommydas
10. Parish Administration for Christ-Centered Communities, Rev. Stephen Kyriacou
11. Shaping Communities of Faith Through Religious Education, Rev. Dr. Frank Marangos
12. Orthodox Witness Through the Internet, Theo Nicolakis
13. Ministering to the Youth, Rev. Anastasios Bourantas
14. Understanding the Triodion, Bishop Nicholas of Detroit
15. Ministering to the Elderly, Rev. Dr. Nicholas Pilavas
16. What is the Church?, Rev. Constantine Sitaras
17. Understanding the Pentecostarion, Rev. Stephen Tsichlis
18. Renewing the Local Parish, Part I, Rev. Jon Magoulas
19. Renewing the Local Parish, Part II, Rev. Peter Salmas

