

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh

Vol. VII, No. 2, Spring 2001

Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div., Director

---

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR EACH GRADE

The 40-page document that I wrote about in the Fall Newsletter was distributed at the Diocesan Clergy-Laity Assembly in October. Since then the Akron and Columbus Church School Staffs have been asked to (1) check off what is taught this year, and (2) what topics need to be added and when they should be added, reviewed, or expanded. I am working on a list of resources for the topics to be presented in Grades 7 & 8 and Grades 9-12. I will forward a copy of the document either by mail or email to anyone interested. Your input would be greatly appreciated.

Annunciation/Akron's Curriculum Committee is working on a "Critical Skills Checklist" and a "Parents' Packet" for each grade level. Developing materials that encourage and assist parental involvement in the task would be beneficial.

Although the **Archdiocese High School Curriculum Committee** has been formed and will be meeting in the near future, classroom teachers need suggestions now. I have included the Goals & Objectives for Grades 7-12 (8 pages) completed by Dr. Nicholas Gerassimakis and myself.

**LESSONS ONLINE:** If anyone has completed lessons on any of the listed topics and would be interested in offering the lesson plans, I have included a **lesson plan template** to standardize our efforts. These could be placed on my website for all to use and passed on to the Archdiocese Curriculum. Pages 10-12 of the 2000 **YELLOW PAGES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** [Fall Packet & online] lists materials that can be used in the lesson plans. Whatever work we do now will be valuable in the short term.

## INTERIM CURRICULA FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL

Carole Bulelza, Director of Christian Education for the Antiochian Archdiocese and Acting Curriculum Department Chairperson for the OCEC offered a suggested curriculum for the Middle School and High School classes last fall. It makes good use of existing materials. As you plan for the 2001-2001 school year, consider these options. See enclosed materials.

## REGIONAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WORKSHOPS: Interested in hosting a Regional

Workshop in the Fall? Please contact me directly at 330-733-5391 or [pmonest@neo.rr.com](mailto:pmonest@neo.rr.com).



## ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

### *Regional Festival Dates, Sites & Chairmen:*

**Western:** Annunciation, Akron, March 31, Contact: Elizabeth Bartz-Chames, (330) 836-3664

**Central:** St. Nicholas, Pittsburgh March 31, Stacy Dickos, (412) 367-0925

**Eastern:** Annunciation, Lancaster, April 28, Tina Karpouzis/Steve Marinos, (717) 394-1735

**Diocesan Festival:** May 12, Fr. Kosta Petrogeorge, (724) 684-5411

**Archdiocese Festival** - June 8-10, St. Nicholas Church, Oaklawn, IL

If you have further questions please call the Diocese Youth Office at (412) 621-8543.

## NEW WEBSITES

The Prologue of Ochrid, lives of the saints - <http://pomog.org/resources/ochrid/shtml> This is an excellent way of providing our teachers with information for the saint of the day.

Supplemental Weekly Orthodox Lessons for Church Schools (Preschool through Pre-teen/adult) - developed by Eve Tibbs, DRE for the San Francisco Diocese - <http://www.orthodoxonline.com> Also available on CD-ROM for \$10.00. Lessons are at two levels, with the younger level ready for coloring. [A sample page is included.](#) Contact Eve Tibbs at: PMB#179-18032 C Lemon Drive, Yorba Linda, CA 92886 / [info@orthodoxonline.com](mailto:info@orthodoxonline.com).

Vicki Pappas, Chairman of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, passed along this multi-media English Byzantine music site <http://www.church-music.co.uk/EOChant.htm> put together by David Melling who resides in England.

Where can we find information on Tattooing & Body Piercing? Check out the "Virtual Hospital" at <http://www.vh.org/Patients/IHB/Derm/Tattoo>

### RESOURCES FOR TEENS

At the request of the "ZOE for Life!" organization, I have compiled *Resources for Sexual Abstinence: Marriage & Sexual Education* and included it in this packet.

Johanna Manley has donated a copy of her newest book *PEARLS FROM THE PROLOGUE* to the Diocese Display. Johanna has categorized the meditation portions from the 4-volume Prologue of Ochrid written by the late Bishop Nikolai Velimiorovich in one volume. I can see using this book to bring the Bishop Nikolai's understanding to the discussions in our Teen Classes and as an excellent source for spiritual mediation for the catechist.

*THE CROSS AND THE QUILL* - an online publication written by Orthodox teens for Orthodox teens - is designed for use with parish high school students, and is available for downloading the first week of each month from the web at <http://www.antiochian.org/>

Each issue will contain columns such as, "Ask Sayedna," where His Grace, Bishop BASIL will answer questions posed by teens, movie and music reviews and articles on a wide array of topics. The purpose of this publication is to stimulate thoughts on how to live an Orthodox life in today's society and to examine any moral questions of teenagers. Every issue of *The Cross and the Quill* is available online to download. Adobe Acrobat Reader (download it free from the Adobe Web Site) is needed to properly view each issue.

The first three issues are being written by the students of St. John Chrysostom Parish, York, Pennsylvania. Different parishes within the Antiochian Archdiocese will be taking turns writing and editing every three months. The Department of Youth Ministry edits all copy. You may also request it to be mailed by phoning the Christian Education Department of the Antiochian Archdiocese at (717) 747-5221.

### PREPARING FOR CONFESSION

Included in this packet is the article "The Sacrament of Penance & the Younger Child" by Dr. Constance Tarasar. Although written for use with younger children, it is adaptable for students of various ages. Parishes desiring to include a formal preparation for confession within the Church School program will find the information and lesson guidelines very useful.

### CHILDREN'S BOOKS

*A SACRED HISTORY FOR CHILDREN* translated from Russian by Tatiana Marr, published by St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1180 Orthodox Way, Liberty, TN 37095-4366, [www.kronstadt.org](http://www.kronstadt.org), 615-536-5239.

Cost: \$25.00 plus SH. Hardbound. 160 pages. Over 50 illustrations. 21 Old & 26 New Testament stories.; ends with Pentecost. A copy was donated to the Diocese Display. This is a beautiful book and would make a great addition to the Parish library, or gift to our students in middle grades.

**St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology** (10519 E. Stockton Blvd., Suite 170, Elk Grove, CA 95624; (916) 686-6230 [Phone]; (916) 686-6232 [FAX]; online at <http://www.saaot.edu>) has produced 7 booklets written by Fr. Jack Sparks and has donated a set to the Diocese Display. Booklets are \$5.00 each. SH: \$1.00 for the first booklet and \$0.25 for each additional booklet up to 10.

- *WHERE IS MY CROSS THAT I MAY FOLLOW HIM?* Our Lord said, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." How can we do this? What does it mean to take up our cross? Where is the cross we must take up to be found? This booklet is the story (fictional) of three people, born on the same day in the same city, who spent their lives trying to find the answer. For older children.
- *THE TWO KINGS: A CAUTIONARY TALE* Story of two kings: a father and a son. One sees the great prosperity of his country and uses the riches thereof to ease the burdens on all, providing a life of comfort for all people in the kingdom. The other sees a country gone soft, its wealth fast disappearing, and institutes a program of strict discipline. What is the outcome for the two, for the country? Fictional (of course) account.
- *IS THERE TRULY A KING?* A man does not believe in "the king," but all creation seems against him as he searches far and wide for a quiet place where the shouts of everyone in praise of "the king" do not ring in his ears. Alas! There does not seem to be such a place. What can he do? What will happen? How will the matter be resolved?
- *CONVERSATIONS ON THE SACRAMENTS: WHAT DOES THE WORD 'SACRAMENT' MEAN?* Ten-year-old Elizabeth comes to her pastor's study to ask about the sacraments. "I don't even know what the word means," she says. And, she wonders about what happens in baptism -- and in the Eucharist. After their first talk, she watches a baptism carefully, pays attention in the eucharistic liturgy -- and comes back! *CONVERSATIONS ON THE SACRAMENTS: ARE THERE TRULY JUST SEVEN?* Once more 10-year-old Elizabeth comes to the pastor's study, this time with her 11-year-old friend David in tow for conversations with him have raised even more questions on the sacraments. Fearlessly they come, for they are children and know no such thing.

- **CONVERSATIONS ON THE SACRAMENTS: PRAYER TO FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT.** Ten year old Elizabeth and her 11 year old friend David have encountered a couple of other students at school (David says, "I think they're Muslims or something.") who say we worship three gods because we pray to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Once again they go to Fr. Mark.
- **CONVERSATIONS ON THE SACRAMENTS: WHY CAN'T MY FRIEND RECEIVE COMMUNION?** Ten year old Elizabeth brought her friend Jeanine to the Sunday Liturgy. At the end her friend asked, "Why can't I receive communion? I'm a Christian!" Elizabeth could only think to say, "Well, you can't." But she wanted to better explain, so she went to see Fr. Mark.

### HERE'S A GREAT IDEA!

Holy Trinity/Pittsburgh now has "The St. Spyridon Children's Library," overseen by Mary Magdalene Walsh. Book recommendations are included in the weekly and monthly bulletins. Head Mouse Keeper Mary Magdalene visits the classrooms each week with Spero the Church Mouse at her side to act out and tell stories. Students who checked out books or videos the Sunday before Thanksgiving received a Thanksgiving doorknob prayer. In honor of Spero's nameday, the student in each class who had checked out the most books and videos from the Library received a 12" plush toy. They all received Christmas cards from Spero, too. Reading books with a spiritual message is a wonderful way to reinforce our Orthodox Faith. Both St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom spoke/wrote about the importance of reading books that offer examples of virtuous people and reinforce our Christian teachings.

### ADULT STUDIES

**PRAXIS Magazine** – Vol. 2 (Holy Tradition), Issues 3 (Theology) was recently mailed out. The subscription is \$15.00 per year. Be sure that each teacher receives a copy for his or her ongoing education!

**PEARLS FROM THE PROLOGUE** by Johanna Manley. (See review in Teen Resources.)

**ISOS: INTERNET SCHOOL OF ORTHODOX STUDIES** 2001 Winter Semester: The Liturgical Year as Curriculum. Tuesday evenings (7:30 - 8:30 p.m.)  
INSTRUCTOR: Rev. Dr. Frank Marangos, Director,

**SYLLABUS:** These will be archived for future use.

**January 23:** Introduction: A brief introduction to the three major liturgical cycles of Orthodox Worship. Special emphasis will be given to the catechetical emphasis of each cycle.

January 30: The Great Feast Days: Part I: An examination of the catechetical content of the Feasts Days related to the Theotokos.

**February 6:** The Great Feast Days: Part II: An examination of the catechetical content of the Feast Days related to Jesus Christ.

**February 13:** The Feast of the Holy Nativity of Christ: An examination of the catechetical content of the hymns and prayers of the Royal Hours, Vespers and Orthros of the Holy Nativity of Christ.

**February 27:** The Feast of Holy Epiphany: An examination of the catechetical content of the hymns and prayers of the Royal Hours, Vespers and Orthros of the Holy Epiphany.

**March 6:** The Great Lenten Season: An examination of the catechetical content of the hymns and prayers of the Holy Triodion.

**March 13:** The Great and Holy Week: An examination of the catechetical content of the hymns and prayers of the liturgical services held during Holy Week.

**March 20:** The Great Feast of Pascha: An examination of the catechetical content of the hymns and prayers of the Holy Resurrection of Christ.

**March 27:** The Pentecostarion: An examination of the catechetical content of the hymns and prayers of the Pentecostarion.

**April 3:** The Holy Transfiguration of Christ: An examination of the catechetical content of the hymns and prayers of the Holy Transfiguration.

### Text Books

Experience the Mystery by Regan, D.

The Year of Grace of the Lord by a Monk of Orthodox Church (1980), Crestwood, NY: SVS Press.

Suggested Readings are listed on the website <http://religioused.goarch.org>.

For More Information:

Department of Religious Education

50 Goddard Avenue / Brookline, MA 022445-7415

(617) 850-1218

### REMINDERS OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

*Available from my website*

<http://home.neo.rr.com/pmonest> Check the READY TO PRINT PROJECTS or the Packet in which it was first distributed.

**GETTING READY FOR HOLY WEEK & PASCHA: A Guide for Families** [Spring 1996 packet] updated.

**PASCHA EGGS: The Resurrection Story for Orthodox Christian Children** activity/project [Spring 1997]

**OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA LENTEN BOARD GAME** [Spring 2000 Packet] includes the board,

directions, and 80 questions related to the Paschal Lenten season.

**THE GREEK NATIONAL ANTHEM** in Greek, Phonetics, and English translation [Spring 2000]

*Available from the OCEC* [800-464-2744]

**MY LENTEN JOURNEY**, an interactive poster for kids (large full-color poster plus 40 colorful stickers and a "How-to Guide for Creative Projects") is designed to help children kindergarten through grade 5 understand how they can participate in Great Lent. \$6.00 plus 10% SH

**LENTEN LOTTO**, a matching game set for use in class or as a home activity. It teaches the liturgical services of Great Lent and Holy Week with basic Biblical and historical events. \$3.00 plus 10% SH

**LENTEN WORKBOOK**, a 16-page workbook filled with illustrations, text, puzzles and activities for home or class use. It explains the themes, services and practices of Great Lent and Holy Week. \$2.75 plus 10% SH

*Available from the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians*

**A HOLY FRIDAY RETREAT** [1992] If you have already used this retreat, use the same format and choose other topics [ex: Passover, 3-bar cross, sponge & spear, nails, rooster, crown of thorns, gall/vinegar, myrrhbearers, Sacrament of Holy Unction, Sacrament of Confession, Bridegroom Service, palms, 30 pieces of silver, bread & wine, linen cloth, the sealing of the tomb, the empty tomb, eggs/red eggs]. *A Resource Handbook for Great Lent & Pascha* [out of print], published by the Diocese Religious Education Committee in 1989, contains descriptions for most of these. If your parish does not have a copy, contact me for copies of these pages. I also have copies of the Retreat guidebook for \$10.

*Available from the DRE for VCS*

**"LIVING IN AN ORTHODOX WORLD" VCS PROGRAM** by Dn. Michael Shanbour focuses on centering one's life on the liturgical and personal prayer of the Church. Six of the eight songs from his sing-a-long CD/Audio Cassette by the same name are integrated into the lessons. The program includes the lesson plans, sheet music, cassette, nametags, & certificate. Cost: \$49.95 plus SH. Additional tapes and CD's can be purchased for \$10 and \$15.95, respectively.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

**ARCHDIOCESE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** has been set for Thursday, June 28 through Saturday, June 30 at

Hellenic College/Holy Cross Brookline, MA. **Theme: Theology, Doctrine & Teachings of the Church.** Mark your calendars now! The DRE will be mailing information soon.

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY MAGAZINE LIVE 2001 WORKSHOP** schedule is available online at <http://www.grouppublishing.com> or 800-774-3838. In our Diocese workshops will be offered in Canton [Friday, March 23], Cleveland [Saturday, April 7], Columbus [Thursday, March 22 & Saturday, April 7], Pittsburgh [Saturday, March 24], Charleston, WV [Thursday, April 5]. Cost: \$29 for the 1<sup>st</sup> person, \$19 for additional attendees from the same church. 8:30 AM-Noon. Topics: [1] "Spanning the Cultural Divide" and [2] "Captivating Bible Stories" for teachers and "Volunteer Training that Works" for Leaders. I've found these workshops to very uplifting and filled with good ideas to take back to the classroom.

#### **ORTHODOX PEACE FELLOWSHIP [OPF] CONFERENCE**

Living as we do in the most heavily-armed society the world has ever known, and probably the society with the most locks per door, the theme of the upcoming is timely: "Following Christ in a Violent World -- the Orthodox Path of Peacemaking."

**Where:** Malone Collage in Canton, Ohio

**When:** Thursday, June 21 - Sunday, June 24, 2001.

**Speakers:** Jim Forest (author of "The Ladder of the Beatitudes" and "Praying With Icons") and Frederica Matthews-Green (author of "At the Corner of East and Now," "Facing East" and "Real Choices").

**Rooms:** \$18.00 a night

**Food:** Dinner Thursday at the college will be \$5.25 plus tax. Breakfast Friday will be \$3.00 plus tax. Lunch \$4.20 plus tax. On Friday night and Saturday, catered or nearby restaurant.

Registration for the OPF Conference is \$50.00 before May 1 and \$75 after May 1. Contact John Brady PO Box 655/ Barton, OH 43905 phone: 740-695-1459 / [jmbrady@stratuswave.net](mailto:jmbrady@stratuswave.net)

#### ENCLOSURES

- ❖ *7<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Goals & Objectives (8 pages)*
- ❖ *Middle & High School Interim Curricula (2 pgs)*
- ❖ *Guide for "What's Love Got to Do with It?" (4pgs)*
- ❖ *Guide for "Getting Along with Parents" text (2pgs)*
- ❖ *Lesson Template for High School Class (1pg)*
- ❖ *Orthodox Online sample page (1 pg)*
- ❖ *Resources for Sexual Abstinence: Marriage & Sexual Education (2pgs)*
- ❖ *The Sacrament of Penance & the Younger Child(6pgs)*

Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div. Director of Religious Education, Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh 2507 Nedra Ave., Akron, OH 44305-3929 330-733-5391 / <a href="mailto:pmonest@neo.rr.com">pmonest@neo.rr.com</a> <a href="http://home.neo.rr.com/pmonest">http://home.neo.rr.com/pmonest</a>
---