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ARTICLES

Saint Brendan & The
Newfoundland Coast

A Search for Wholeness:
*An Orthodox Response
to Organ Donation &
Retrieval - Part Two:
Evidence from the Saints*

Canada's Tower of
Babel: *The Language of
Exclusion*

A Taxing Proposition:
Some Reflections on the
Taxation of Churches

Madness on Campus

POETRY

*A Prodigal,
Impassioned,
Pilgrim Soul*

FEATURES

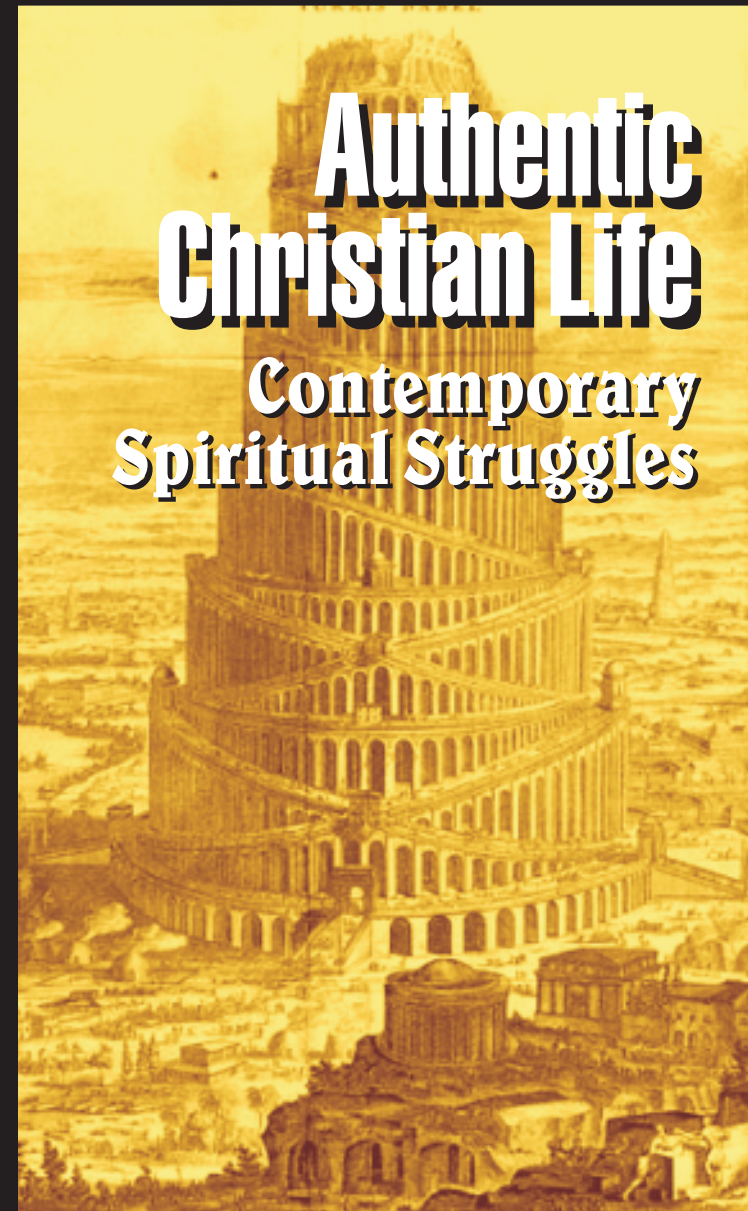
The Church Kitchen

Northern Nomenclature

Questions from Readers

Authentic Christian Life

Contemporary Spiritual Struggles



CONTENTS

- 2 FROM THE EDITOR:
The Struggle of the Spiritual Life
- 3 LETTERS
- 4 SAINT BRENDAN & THE NEWFOUNDLAND COAST
- 8 A SEARCH FOR WHOLENESS:
*An Orthodox Response to Organ Donation & Retrieval
Part Two: Evidence from the Saints*
- 16 CANADA'S TOWER OF BABEL:
The Language of Exclusion
- 20 A TAXING PROPOSITION
Some Reflections on the Taxation of Church Properties
- 24 MADNESS ON CAMPUS
- 26 POETRY
- 27 THE CHURCH KITCHEN
- 28 NORTHERN NOMENCLATURE
- 30 Q & A: QUESTIONS FROM READERS

ORTHODOX CANADA is dedicated to sharing a traditional vision of Orthodox Christianity with Canadians. The opinions expressed in these articles are those of the author(s), and do not necessarily reflect those of the Archdiocese of Canada (OCA). Uncredited articles are the work of the editorial board.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Struggle of the Spiritual Life

During Great Lent, the reality of the struggle of the Christian life often comes into sharp focus, as the distortions of our daily lives are set in contrast against the lives of Christ's holy ones. From the view of the contemporary world, such lives of holiness often seem a world away - almost unbelievable, and certainly unreachable for those striving to live "normal" lives. Orthodox Christians face the same temptation: to think and believe that lives of holiness are impossible, or that such lives require following a path that is so far from everyday life, that one must become something strange in order to undertake a life of true holiness.

Those whom the Orthodox Church remembers during Great Lent - saints like Saint Gregory Palamas, Saint John of the Ladder, and Saint Mary of Egypt - provide us with a radically different picture. Each of these holy figures presents the Christian life as real possibility, accessible to all those who are willing to undertake the struggle to live it. Furthermore, they reinforce for each of us that a true and authentic Orthodox Christian path must begin with the simple details of everyday life - the place in which we live, the job we do, the taxes we pay, the school in which we learn.

Contemporary life provides us unending distractions from living out a faithful life in each small moment: such distractions are a constant risk to each of us, as we try to make sense out of the social, cultural, ethical, moral, and spiritual confusion that reigns in our day and age.

As we move through Great Lent, it is our prayer that these articles will provide a personal spiritual challenge to each of us, to dig deeper into our own life, and to redouble our efforts to fight against the distractions that keep us from knowing the life of Christ's saints and holy ones: a life that is the ultimate goal of the spiritual life of each one of us.

Father Geoffrey Korz+
Managing Editor



LETTERS



Blood Transfusions and the Orthodox Church

I read Matushka Linda Korz' article about organ donation - very edifying! I'll wait till I read the second part as well before I comment. I was thinking much about organ donation since I've known at least two people who needed it, and always wondered what is the Church's stance on the issue. I suppose, in principle, like any ethically acceptable medical procedure/therapy, we shouldn't reject it, but should not be led astray with it either. However, wouldn't blood transfusion be considered a type of "organ donation" too, considering, by stretch, that blood is in a sense a *liquid* organ? JW's seem to have trouble with it, probably due to the Old Testament passage that warns men to make sure that the cattle they slay should bleed out completely, since the animal's "spirit"/"life" is in the blood. But again, as discussed, this spirit is not the same as the Eternal Soul that human's possess from God...

- Zoran Radisic, Toronto, Ontario

Author's response:

The answer to your question is important. Yes, blood is considered an organ, however, my article deals with single whole organs that are not replaceable. I have purposefully not discussed

blood donation. As far as I am aware, the Orthodox Church is not against blood donations. In regard to whole organs, the issue may become clearer in the next issue (i.e. this issue). Stay tuned.

- Matushka Linda Korz, MD

Appreciation for website

This is written to express my appreciation for benefits readily gained by reading your Orthodox Canada website. While I am not in the Orthodox community, I do so enjoy the fruit of your labour. Thank you, and thank our God. By the way, I am seeking a book called 'Becoming Orthodox' by a Vineyard pastoral team in San Jose. I've spoken with (a local Orthodox priest), but am still searching. I've been amazed to perceive the difference between the reputation of Orthodoxy and the content, in part well described through your journal's writing.

- Joseph (via the Internet)

Encouraging Words from South of the Border

After reading Orthodox Canada (St. Nicolas 2007), I have a problem. I cannot decide which article I like best (and influenced me the most), because all the articles are excellent--way above average!

Your work is inspiring and so incredibly helpful to those of us separated somewhat from true traditional Orthodox friends. I am sending it on to many others. Thank you. Persevere, if not for your own sake, at least, then for ours.

Presvytera Catherine Heers,
South Carolina

(Photo above left courtesy of National Archives of Canada)



SAINT BRENDAN & THE NEWFOUNDLAND COAST

The following excerpt from chapters XXI - XXIII of the travels of Saint Brendan the Voyager (c.486 A.D.- c.575 A.D.) details several encounters of the saint and his companions. While some have dismissed the account of Saint Brendan's transatlantic journey as a fanciful myth, several modern journeys using ancient sailing vessels and following the traditional route attributed to Saint Brendan (from the North Sea, past Iceland and Greenland, to northern Newfoundland) have proved successful. A number of modern experts now suggest - in keeping with Holy Tradition - that the voyages are historically factual, and represent one of the earliest Christian arrivals in Canadian waters. Newfoundlanders and others will recognize the gigantic icebergs described in the account, the monstrous whales and other fish; the human settlements could be either native camps, or (more likely) small Viking settlements.

They went to the island of Saint Alibe, to celebrate the Christmas festival, and afterwards taking leave of the abbot, with mutual blessings, they sailed about the ocean for a long time, taking rest only at Easter and Christmas on the islands before mentioned.

On a certain occasion, when Saint Brendan was celebrating the festival of Saint Peter, in the boat, they found the sea so clear that they could plainly see what was at the bottom. They, therefore, saw beneath them various monsters of the deep, and so clear was the water, that it seemed as if they could touch with their hands its greatest depths; and the fishes

were visible in great shoals, like flocks of sheep in the pastures, swimming around, heads to tails. The brethren entreated the man of God to say Mass in a low voice, lest those monsters of the deep, hearing the strange voice, may be stirred up to attack them; but the saint said: 'I wonder much at your folly. Why do you dread those monsters? Is not the largest of them all already devoured? While seated, and often chanting upon its back, have you not chopped wood, and kindled it there, and even cooked some of its flesh? Why, therefore, should you fear those? For our God is the Lord Jesus; Christ, who can bring to nought all living things.' Having thus spoken, he proceeded to sing the Mass in a louder voice, as the brethren were still gazing at the large fishes; and these, when they heard the voice of the man of God, rose up from the depths, and swam around the boat in such numbers, that the brethren could see nothing but the swimming fishes, which, however, came not close to the boat, but swam around at some distance, until the Mass was ended, when they swam away from them in divers directions, out of the view of the brethren. For eight days, even with a favourable wind, and all sails set, they were scarcely able to pass out of this pellucid sea.

One day, on which three Masses had been said, they saw a column in the sea, which seemed not far off, yet they could not reach it for three days. When they drew near it Saint Brendan looked towards its summit, but could not see it, because of its great height, which seemed to pierce the skies. It was covered over with rare canopy, the material of which they knew not; but it had the colour of silver and was hard as marble, while the column itself was of the clearest crystal

Saint Brendan ordered the brethren to take in their oars, and to lower the sails and mast, and directed some of them to hold onto the fringes of the canopy, which extended about a mile from the column, and about the same depth into the sea. When this had been done, Saint Brendan said: 'Run in the boat now through an opening, that we may get a closer view of the wonderful works of God'. And when they had passed through the opening, and looked around them, the sea seemed transparent like glass, so that they could plainly see everything beneath them, even the base of the column, and the skirts of the canopy lying on the ground, for the sun shone as brightly within as without.

Saint Brendan measured an opening between four pavilions, which he found to be four cubits on every side. When they had sailed along for all day by one side of the column, they could always feel the shade as well as the heat of the sun, beyond the ninth hour; and after thus sailing about

the column for four days, they found the measurement of each side to be four hundred cubits. On the fourth day, they discovered on the south side, a chalice of the same material as the canopy and a patella like that of the column, which Saint Brendan at once took up, saying: the Lord Jesus Christ has displayed to us this great marvel, and has given to us two gifts therefrom, in testimony of the fact to others the holy father then directed the brethren to perform the divine office, and afterwards, to take refreshment; for they had taken none since they came in sight of the column. Next day they rowed towards the north, and having passed out through an opening, they set up the mast, and unfurled the sails again, while some of them held on by the fringes, or skirts of the canopy, until all was right in the boat. When they had set sail, a favourable wind came on in the rear, so that they had on occasion to use the oars, out only to hold the ropes and the tiller. And thus for eight days were they borne along towards the north,

When those days had passed, they came within view of an island, which was very rugged and rocky, covered over with slag, without trees or herbage, but full of smiths' forges. Saint Brendan said to the brethren: 'I am much distressed about this island; I have no wish to enter it or even to approach it – yet the wind is driving us directly towards it, as if it were the aim of our course.'

When they had passed on further, about a stone's cast, they heard the noise of bellows blowing like thunder, and the beating of sledges on the anvils and iron. Then Saint Brendan armed himself all over his body with the sign of the Cross, saying: 'O Lord Jesus Christ, deliver us from this malign island.' Soon after one of the inhabitants came forth to do some work; he was all hairy and hideous, begrimed with fire and smoke. When he saw the servants of Christ near the island, he withdrew into his forge, crying aloud: 'Woe! Woe! Woe!'

Saint Brendan again armed himself with the sign of the Cross, and said to the brethren: 'Put on more sail, and ply your oars more briskly, that we may get away from this island.' Hearing this, the savage man, above mentioned, rushed clown to the shore, bearing in his hand a tongs with a burning mass of the slag, of great size and intense heat, which he flung at once after the servants of Christ; but it did them no hurt, for they were protected by the sign of the Cross. It passed them at a furlong's distance, and where it fell into the sea, it fumed up like a heap of burning coals, and a great smoke arose as if from a fiery furnace. When they had passed on about a mile beyond the spot where this



burning mass had fallen, all the dwellers on the island crowded down to the shore, bearing, each of them, a large mass of burning slag, which they flung, everyone in turn, after the servants of God; and then they returned to their forges, which they blew up into mighty flames, so that the whole island seemed one globe of fire, and the sea on every side boiled up and foamed, like a caldron set on a fire well supplied with fuel. All the day the brethren, even when they were no longer within view of the island, heard a loud wailing from the inhabitants thereof, and a noisome stench was perceptible at a great distance. Then Saint Brendan sought to animate the courage of the brethren, saying: ‘Soldiers of Christ, be strong in faith unfeigned and in the armour of the Spirit, for we are now on the confines of hell; watch, therefore, and act manfully.’

Taken from *The Voyage of Saint Brendan the Abbot*, Edition by Archbishop P. F. Moran, Translated by Denis O'Donoghue. D. O'Donoghue / Brendanianna Publishers, 1893.

*Image of Saint Brendan the Navigator (page 4) by James C. Christensen.



A SEARCH FOR WHOLENESS

An Orthodox Response to Organ Donation and Retrieval

PART 2: EVIDENCE FROM THE SAINTS

Holy Tradition reminds us again and again that redemption was God’s plan from the beginning. The Scriptures tell us, “God created man for incorruption and made him to be an image of His own eternity.” (Wisdom 2:24) Through the holy relics of the saints, the world is given dramatic illustrations of this original state. In the Old Testament it is written: “As they came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men, and they cast the man into the sepulcher of Elisha, and when the man let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.”(4 Kings 13:21) In the ancient west, the relics of saints like Edward the Martyr (reposed 979), remained incorrupt from decomposition for centuries, even though they were unembalmed in keeping with the standard Christian practice in most times and places up to the last century, and manifested miraculous

examples of God's grace. The body of this Holy King of England, from the beginning of his untimely and treacherous death, was known to give sight to the blind, and heal the lame.⁵

Modern examples of the sanctified bodies of incorrupt saints are numerous. Saint Alexander of Svir (reposed 1533), whose relics survived the Soviet era, can still be venerated, incorrupt, at the monastery of Svir in the Transfiguration church in Russia.⁶ The incorrupt relics of Saint John Maximovich of San Francisco (1966) can still be visited in the local cathedral in that city. Pilgrims flock to the relics of the Serbian Saint Basil (reposed 1631) in the monastery at Ostrog, and are witnesses to similar outpourings of grace. Numerous other examples could be given. (It is important to point out that for Orthodox Christians, mere incorruption of the bodily remains of an individual may be accepted as a Divine sign, but does not vouchsafe the sanctity of the person; nor implies that all Saints must be incorrupt.)⁷ It is the ongoing revelation from the Holy Spirit of miraculous signs such as myrrh streaming from bones and other remains, and healings, attributed to the intercessory prayers of the saint that indicate favour in the sight of God. In the case of all the aforementioned saints, healing and other miracles have occurred and continue to occur.

What does this mean, as far as the sanctity of the body is concerned? In *The Soul After Death* by Father Seraphim Rose, Saint John of Damascus speaks about the connection between the holiness of the soul and the sanctity of the body:

“Now, if the soul had engaged alone in the contest for virtue, then it would also be crowned alone; and if it alone had indulged in pleasures, then it alone could be justly punished. However, since the soul followed neither virtue nor vice without the body, it will be just for them to receive their recompense together.”⁸

THE ETERNAL VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The Church Fathers see every person as a creature of God, with a unique and eternal nature of soul, with value as an eternal human being not a human doing - a mere collection of actions and experiences, like some atheistic philosophers suggest (For a discussion of this, see also *Letter for Sanctity of Life Sunday*, Metropolitan Herman, Orthodox

Church in America, January 2007, www.oca.org). Christ chastised the Sadducees, reminding them that the soul continues to live after death: “You are mistaken, not knowing Scriptures nor the power of God..God is not the God of the dead but of the living.” (Matthew 22:29-32) After the personal judgment, each soul awaits in Hades or Paradise the Final Judgment at the end of time. The Orthodox Church offers their remembrance in tangible ways such as prayer for the dead individual, particularly in the Memorial Prayer, the observance of Thomas Sunday (the first Sunday after the feast of the Lord's Resurrection), and the observance of Soul Saturdays, dedicated to prayers for the dead.

These are not idle activities to comfort the bereaved: like the Orthodox funeral service, their entire focus is on the preparation of the soul for the day it is reunited with the body, and stands before the judgment of God. The traditional colour for the Orthodox funeral is bright (white), not dark (black), as it is in contemporary non-Orthodox funerals. The colour marks the proclamation of our hope in the resurrection of the body, just as we accept the bodily resurrection of Christ. Anything else would simply not be Christian. The main purpose of the Orthodox funeral is for the welfare of the soul of the dead person, not to address the sentiments of the family. (For example, there is traditionally no eulogy, and the priest faces the open casket bearing the body of the deceased loved one.) Family and friends pay their respects to the departed person by offering a touch or – more traditionally – a last kiss, affirming by this act that the body is forever the person they loved. The effects of non-Orthodox views have permeated so deeply, even among Orthodox, that at many funerals, even Orthodox Christians hesitate to kiss or touch the body of the person they loved, somehow ceasing to believe in the integrity of the whole person.

The comfort of the family comes from their participation and prayerful work on behalf of the soul of their loved one – a sharp contrast to the saccharine sense of paralysis that often afflicts the sterilized modern funeral. As stated by Father Seraphim Rose, “every one of us who desires to manifest his love for the dead and give them real help, can do this best of all through prayer for them, and in particular by commemorating them at the Liturgy....The funeral need not be performed elaborately, but most definitely it should be complete, without abbreviations; think at this time not of yourself and your convenience but of the deceased, with whom you are parting forever.”⁸

WHEN DOES DEATH OCCUR?

Some will argue that the greatest gift one can offer is to give one's life for another. Surely the Church teaches that, doesn't it? The Lord Himself tells us, "*Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" (John 15:13) But does this apply to the state of organ retrieval at the present time? Does the harvesting of organs from one individual at the point of death **as it currently occurs in North American hospitals**, constitute a sacrifice to save life, or a sin that takes a life?

Currently, in Canada and the United States of America there are two legal definitions of death: the traditional definition of death, irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions (cardiac death) *or* cessation of the brain whether as a whole or in part (neurological determination of death, NDD or brain death).⁹ In 1971, the historic *ad hoc* committee of the Harvard Medical School presented its report on the definition of Brain Death and described scientific and medical criteria on which to base the diagnosis. This landmark paper opened the door for legislation to sanction the removal and use of organs for transplantation from patients who did not fit the medical criteria for cardiac death, but were found to have severe irreversible brain injuries leading to a state of prolonged coma. These patients were successfully resuscitated and kept alive by advances in circulatory medicine and mechanical ventilation.

It was expedient that a more liberal and utilitarian definition of death be ethically, morally, and, more importantly legally, accepted. "Brain death has proved to be a most important concept for the progress of organ transplantation.... In parts of the world where brain death was given legal standing and became standard practice, vital organ transplantation increased rapidly."² During the process of brain death donations, the duration of oxygen deprivation (known in medical literature as warm ischemic time) and the extent of loss of viable cells in the body are minimized since the heart continues to perfuse and nourish the tissues while mechanical ventilation sustains breathing (recently, the more descriptive term of heart-beating donation is preferred). In North America and most parts of Europe, organ retrieval from NDD individuals is by far the leading source of all organs for transplantation.¹⁸

Over three decades later, there is still disagreement worldwide regarding the definition of brain death and, unsurprisingly, how to diagnose it. Henry Beecher, chairman of the historic *ad hoc* committee of the Harvard Medical School to examine the definition of Brain Death stated:

"At whatever level we choose to call death, it is an arbitrary decision. Death of the heart? The hair still grows. Death of the brain? The heart may still beat. The need is to choose an irreversible state where the brain no longer functions. It is best to choose a level where, although the brain is dead, usefulness of other organs is still present. This, we have tried to make clear in what we have called the new definition of death(...). Here we arbitrarily accept as death, the destruction of one part of the body; but it is the supreme part, the brain..."⁹

How much of the brain? Current tests only look at selective parts of the brain, whether it be brain stem or higher cognitive function, and thus, by definition, these tests can not confirm the death of the whole brain.

In a recent issue of a leading Canadian medical journal the authors concluded: "the current evidence base for existing NDD (neurologic determination of death) guidelines is inadequate We recommend that after NDD, the patient be declared dead."¹¹ Father John Breck, an Orthodox author on bioethics, clearly outlines the problem in regard to the state of organ donation throughout the world today:

"Using brain-stem criteria to determine death, we are left with the gruesome fact that vital organs can only be harvested from patients who are technically still alive... Human personhood is determined not by medical diagnosis but by divine Providence."¹²

The acceptance of brain death whether legally or morally is not equal or universal among countries. In India, organ transplants are largely limited to live or cadaveric donations due to religious and cultural rejection of NDD. In Japan, heart transplants were not done until 1997 when government legislation finally permit organ donation *after* neurologic or brain death. Despite these realities, and despite the growing challenge within the scientific community to acknowledge that

biological death cannot be proven with certainty in brain death, information given to families and patients about organ procurement continues to falsely represent brain death as physical death.

Furthermore, in some cases, religious and cultural consent to organ retrieval after neurologic death is misrepresented and misleading. John Gillman, pastor and ethicist in California, in his article titled Religious Perspectives on Organ Donation¹⁰ attempts to outline the Christian perspective. The statement that the Greek Orthodox do not oppose organ donation was subsequently reinterpreted by the Trillium Gift of Life Network (an agency created in 2000 by the Government of Ontario, Canada) as the Greek Orthodox Churches support organ donation. (see [www. Giftoflife.on.ca](http://www.Giftoflife.on.ca))

For Orthodox Christians, the supreme part of the body is not the brain (which is an Aristotelian notion; c.f. *De Anima*) but the *heart*. “The heart is not just a physical organ or centre of his psychic life but something indefinable yet capable of being in contact with God, the Source of all being.”¹³ In the Book of the prophet Isaiah, we read, “make the heart of this people fat. Make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed.”(Isaiah 6:10) Later, in another passage, “these people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honour Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Isaiah 29:13) Christ tells us, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:21).

The reality that the noetic heart is located within the physical heart has always been the teaching of the Orthodox Church. St. Gregory Palamas (1296-1359), a champion of the Orthodox understanding of the knowledge of God, writes:

“Since our soul is a single entity possessing many powers, it utilizes as an organ the body that nature lives in conjunction with it. What organs, then, does the power of the soul that we call ‘intellect’ make use of when it is active?... For some locate it in the head, as though in a sort of acropolis; others consider that its vehicle is the centremost part of the heart, that aspect of the heart that intelligence is neither within us as in a container—for it is incorporeal— nor yet outside us, for it is united to us; but it is located in the heart as in its own organ.”¹

St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite (1749-1808) on instruction for stillness in prayer writes:

“You must free the energy (energeia) of your mind, whose organ is the brain, from all the external things of the world, through the guarding of the senses and of the imagination. Then you must bring the energy into the heart, which is the organ of the essence (ousia) of the mind. This return is customarily brought about in the case of beginners—as the Devine Wakeful Fathers teach—by turning the head down and resting the chin on the chest.”²⁰

Secular man, having lost the quietness and gentleness of heart, can not know God. “Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8) As a consequence, he finds incredulous the Truth of self knowledge, the essence of the soul is located within the physical heart. Thus, ignorant of the mystery of life, how can he define the mystery of death and more specifically, how can the definition of death be measured by some grotesque notion of cessation of *some* part of the brain?

It is sad but not surprising that, for the most part, the medical community does not truly understand the nature of death. Acknowledging this limitation, Zameretti *et al.* advocate the substitution of the word (and thus concept of) death with the term **irreversible coma** or more precisely, **irreversible apnoeic coma**, understood not as equivalent to death, but as describing a particular condition in which life support should be legitimately forgone and organs can be retrieved from consenting patients.⁹ Even more pathetic is the disregard, at best, and denial at worst that the human person is a creation of body and soul. So long as the medical community is ignorant of the soul of an individual, the medical definition of death will never be complete. Organ retrieval will remain an act of taking life, since it concentrates only on questions of physiology, ignoring the relationship between the soul and the body. Saint Paul cautions, that “those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.” (Romans 8:5) For Orthodox Christians, death is simply an impermanent separation of body and soul which afflicts mankind until the final judgement.¹⁴ Saint John of Damascus reminds us, that “truly most terrible is the mystery of death,

how the soul is violently parted from the body, from the harmony, and most natural bond of kinship is cut off by the divine will.”⁸

5 Vladimir Moss, *The Saints of Anglo-Saxon England (9th and 10th Centuries) Volume II*. St. Nectarios Press, Washington, 1993.

6 St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, ed. St. Alexander of Svir and his Holy Relics. *The Orthodox Word* 2004; 40 (3-4) 119-145.

7 Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky. *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*. Translated by Father Seraphim Rose, Third Edition. St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, California, 2005.

8 Fr. Seraphim Rose, *The Soul After Death, Forth Edition*. St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Alaska, 2004.

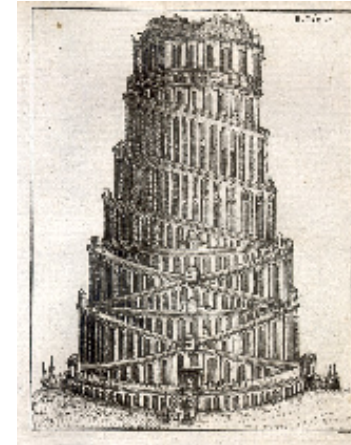
⁹Nereo Zamperetti et. al. *Irreversible apnoeic coma 35 years later: Towards a more rigorous definition of brain death?* *Intensive Care Med* 2004; 30(9):1715-22.

¹⁰John Gillman. *Death and organ procurement: public beliefs and attitudes*. *Kennedy Institute Ethics J* 2004; 14(3):217-34.

¹¹*Brain arrest: the neurological determination of death and organ donor management in Canada*. *CMAJ* 2006; 174(6): Supplemental S1-30.

- Linda Korz is an M.D., specializing in anaesthesiology.

*IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
PART 3: THE SLIPPERY SLOPE*



*CANADA'S
TOWER OF BABEL
The Language of Exclusion*

The Great Divide of language is as old as Canada itself. From the Battle of the Plains of Abraham between French and English speakers, to the Native Schools question, to the advent of Quebec nationalism, to the multiculturalism policy of the 1960s, our country has a history of being a nation of nations - or according to her critics, a contemporary Tower of Babel.

While the solution to such divisions might at first seem simple - a single common language for everyone, presumably English - the realities of the situation are much more complex. Many who have immigrated to Canada, especially older people, often live within an environment where only their native tongue is spoken. Even where local churches provide ESL or FSL classes (which most don't provide, to their detriment), there are those who might live in North America for decades, and simply not have a practical need to speak one of the official languages. One does not need to visit a major urban Chinatown to experience such a cultural bubble among young and old alike: simply try a visit to Quebec City, and try out the tenth grade French you learned

decades ago. If practice makes perfect, Canada's linguistic mix will be with us for a long time, for better or for worse.

Yet within the Church, a false dichotomy has emerged on the question of language. On one side, so-called "ethnic" Orthodox individuals sometimes suggest that the use of their ancestral tongue somehow protects the faith against corruption, ecumenism, or loss of faith, while at the same time agonizing over vanishing church schools and declining youth attendance on Sundays. On the other side, there are those who champion the use of English (but ironically, rarely French) as a sort of magic glue which will hold together Orthodox Christians of different cultural backgrounds. Since English is the language of the popular culture, some argue, in stands to reason that it should be the *lingua franca* of the Church in North America.

The test of time has not proven either of these positions to be true. Immigration continues to fuel a multi-lingual (and often culturally divided) Orthodox Church in Canada and the United States, while at the same time both "ethnic" and English-language parishes have largely failed to hold the generations under forty years of age any better than do our Protestant or Roman Catholic neighbours.

While the current problem is often characterized as one of language, it is much more a problem of a lack of Christian love. Many faithful can no doubt recall cases where a group of clergy who are all able to speak a common language (often English) when they assemble together, who will instead break into language "pockets", speaking primarily the language they *do not* share in common, playing a kind of game of mutual exclusion, a living witness not to Christ, but to another Biblical figure: the Tower of Babel.

The same can be said of countless situations with laity who, taking the examples of their priests, refuse to cross over cultural or linguistic boundaries out of love for each other, preferring the ease of isolation to the inconvenience of Christian love. The question goes both ways. Ours is not simply a problem of a stubborn immigration sticking up for their local heritage language program; it is also a problem of the Canadian-born, who draw back at the use of any unfamiliar language in Church services, or who won't take the time to pick up a few phrases in the language of other Orthodox Christians, with whom they have to deal on a regular bases.

Language guru Charles Berlitz, in his book *Around the World in Eighty Words*, makes a compelling argument that most people can

survive informally in another culture by learning about eighty key words for daily communication. How many clergy or faithful in Canada could honestly speak even a dozen words in the languages of another of the major Orthodox groups in our country - Greek or Serbian, Russian or Romanian, Ukrainian, or many others?

Such a small step is certainly not a solution to the current divisions, but it is a start, a step in the direction of goodwill, harmony, and love within the Church, where too often those who share our faith but not our language do not even know we exists, even when we live next door.

Too often, the Church in Canada can be accurately compared to a contemporary Tower of Babel, made up of isolated communities, each one full of isolated individuals. Orthodox Christians must remember that the existence of languages came into the world as a punishment from God: a punishment for pride, for thinking we human beings could build heaven on earth - without God. This legacy continues to this day on a large scale, with political powers the world over. We can find one frightening example in the architecture of the European Parliament, a building designed to resemble the Tower of Babel - the symbol of human pride, and the punishment of division it called down. Never having learned the lesson of the first Tower, how often we are tempted to go on to build a second, and a third.

Orthodox Christians in Canada are too often afflicted with the same sin: determined to have things our way for our people. The Orthodox Church in this country often presents a very weak witness to the glorious, universal Good News of Jesus Christ, Who died and rose from death to save all mankind. Judging from many, many parishes, a casual visitor might think one had to graduate from a heritage language course to gain admittance into Heaven. This is an uncomfortable reality for many Orthodox Canadians, but sadly, it is true.

How can we triumph over these divisions? How can we tear down the walls of Canada's ethnic divisions within the Orthodox Church? The answer lies not in stamping out language differences - this is a false solution, tried by Rome in the past, and by certain others (including the United States) in our own time. But the answer doesn't lie with some program. We can only undo the sin of Babel - the sin of pride - through its opposite: through humility and love. The strongest and most numerous Orthodox communities must lead the way in reaching out to those outside the Church, both culturally and linguistically. Would it not make sense for the largest "ethnic" Orthodox jurisdictions - say the

Greek and Ukrainian jurisdictions, for example - to make a determined effort to build an organized mission effort to the largest non-Orthodox groups - perhaps French and Chinese Canadians - using their own language, the saints of their lands, and their customs which can be sanctified? Such initiatives certainly make sense, both in terms of relative resources, and in terms of love for others who have not heard about Christ, or who need to be reminded of Him.

We might also train clergy to speak other languages which best fit their local context. We know of one American priest, entering his seventh decade of life, who has begun to study Spanish for the sake of the neighbours in the area in which he lives, and who will soon begin to serve an additional weekly Liturgy in their language, not his own.

We might follow the example of Church in Russia regarding the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon saints, adding French Orthodox saints and others to the cycle of feast days celebrated in the largest churches in ethnically diverse areas – or even universally marking the saints of North America.

We might also start by working together between parishes - and across language lines - to catechize adult converts to the Faith. Many parishes have done away with prayers for catechumens during the Divine Liturgy, simply because they do not believe that they have many converts, yet many marriages within their own community happen with those outside their faith and culture. What better way to bring someone into the Church than to offer catechism among a diverse group of catechumens who share their own Canadian experience? Would this not also witness to converts at marriage that they are not simply the tolerated minority within the Church, but a fundamental part of Her?

We must also beware of the confusion caused when we use the language of Orthodox “insiders” to those outside the Church. While we must never lose our understanding of terms like Theotokos and Pascha, martyrs and theosis, it is essential that we speak in such a way that those outside the Church and who are catechumens may be edified and strengthened in their faith and love for Christ and His Church, not merely confused by unfamiliar phrases.

Most of all, we must cultivate a love for and interest in other people, people who are different in culture and language. Offers of hospitality, ESL classes, clothing and food to immigrants who are in need - charitable works that begin right here, in our own neighbourhoods. Then, as the apostle says, they will know we are Christians by our love - the language of Christ that cuts across culture.



A TAXING PROPOSITION

Some Reflections on the Taxation of Church Properties

Across North America, numerous municipal, provincial, and state governments are examining the concept of applying taxation to the properties and buildings owned by churches and other religious groups. Such a prospect has a number of serious implications for churches. The following article explores some of the rationale behind such a move.

In the province of Ontario, municipal government is financed largely by property taxes. These taxes are levied on property owners by applying a flat rate to the “value” of a property (as assessed for the purposes of the tax). The resulting bill must be paid by the owner. Different rates are applied to different types of property; for example, properties used for business purposes are almost always subject to higher rates. Unlike income taxes, property taxes are levied regardless of ability to pay.

The Assessment Act (Ontario) governs how municipalities set and administer property taxes. Subsection 3(1) of the Act provides that “all real property in Ontario is liable to assessment and taxation”. The subsection, however, proceeds to list numerous exemptions to this general rule. For example, the Act exempts from taxation Crown land, cemeteries, school property, hospital lands, “battle sites” and “land used

as a theatre that contains fewer than 1,000 seats and that, when it is used in the taxation year, is used predominantly to present live performances of drama, comedy, music or dance”. The Act also contains an exemption for “land that is owned by a church or religious organization or leased to it by another church or religious organization and that is ... a place of worship”.

What is a “place of worship”? In the court case of *Holy Theotokos Convent v. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville*, the Holy Orthodox Church in North America appealed from an assessment imposed on about 20 acres of land used by the church for a convent. Five Sisters lived on the property. The property had three buildings on it: a residence for the Sisters, a guest house and a utility building. The first two buildings had chapels in them. The land contained gardens and orchards that the Sisters used to support themselves. Icons were scattered throughout the property at little shrines, and the Sisters routinely venerated them.

The Town did not dispute that the two buildings included places of worship that should be exempt from taxation. The Town, however, maintained that the buildings, or portions of them, and the 20 acres of land should not be exempt. The judge agreed with the Town. Her reasons are worth quoting at length:

*... I am satisfied that the exemption from property taxation afforded under ... the Assessment Act for “places of worship”, does not apply to the worship activities confined solely to the devotional life of members of a religious order whether that includes group or individual worship or prayers for the convent members. The exemption does apply to places of worship inside the convent grounds **open to members of the public for some formal worship service**. For public policy reasons the exemption for a “place of worship” should be strictly construed . I do not find however that the grounds where the icons are placed are places of worship within the meaning of the legislation because there is no evidence that any formal religious services are conducted at these icon sites by the Bishop who I understand is the only person authorized to conduct public religious services at the convent. Even if members of the public frequent the sites where the icons are located on the convent grounds, this is not in my view a place*

*for formal public worship, anymore than the other portions of the property, whether inside or outside the buildings, where no formal public worship is conducted. The distinction between the worship activities of the cloistered members of the religious order as a part of their devotional life and worship by members of the public has been decided by the court and should in my view be maintained. **

In conclusion, only those portions that MPAC concedes are portions of the property used as ‘places of worship’, namely: the chapel, sanctuary and sacristy in the sister’s residence, the chapel and the baptistery in the visitor’s house are exempt under section 3(1) of the Assessment Act, for purposes of property taxation.

For churches, this decision could be a portent. For many years now, the enemies of religion have complained loudly that churches should not be exempt from paying property taxes. Fewer and fewer town-dwellers attend worship services on any given Sunday. Meanwhile, Ontario cities complain constantly that they don’t have enough money to spend or “invest”. City politicians, then, may be starting to pay more attention to the complaints of the anti-religious. Churches would do well to sit up and take notice, and the case of the Convent of the Holy Theotokos shows why.

First, it is evident from the decision that municipalities need not wait for a change in the law to begin attempting to collect more taxes from churches. Based on Holy Theotokos’s narrow reading of the meaning of “place of worship”, it would appear that a church hall, for example, might not qualify for the property tax exemption.

In addition, churches must be prepared for the fact that the definition to be accorded to “worship” will ultimately be determined by secular courts. A judge who hasn’t attended a worship service since childhood may be the one to decide the meaning of the term.

Finally, churches should take note of the judge’s comment in the case of the Convent of the Holy Theotokos that “for public policy reasons the exemption for a ‘place of worship’ should be strictly construed.” What is the warrant for such a comment? Among lawyers, it seems to be generally accepted that the various exemptions accorded religious institutions represent a subsidy granted by the State because religion is thought to be a public good. In this view, the State has a prior right to

tax all income or all property. If an exemption is granted, it is because the State believes that the beneficiary of the exemption is a worthy object of subsidy. Historically, churches were regarded as important moral bulwarks. By granting subsidies to churches in the form of property and income tax exemptions, the State was improving the moral fibre of its citizens.

What a different world we live in today! Among Canada's elites, the view seems to be that religion is a necessary evil that should be confined as much as possible to the "private" sphere. Given this attitude, and given that fewer and fewer Canadians regularly attend "places of worship", is it any wonder that the property tax exemption "should be strictly construed"? More importantly, how much longer can we expect public "subsidies" to continue for churches and church property?

This brief article is not a detailed discussion of how one province's property tax regime applies to churches. Rather, this article merely highlights some disturbing trends in our politics and law for churches and their liability for taxes. Of course, churches themselves should not be too surprised by these trends. Many inner-city church buildings have become little more than community centers where only a tiny remnant worship. Given these external and internal realities, churches will need to think of other, different ways to fulfill their true purposes, which are not only about maintaining bricks and mortar, after all.

* See: *Soeurs de la Visitation d'Ottawa v. City of Ottawa*, [1952] O.R.61 (S.C.O.), *affd.* [1952] O.W.N. 280 (C.A.).

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MADNESS ON CAMPUS

"The devil"

*- Reply of Saint John Maximovitch,
when asked who was to blame for
unexplainable personal attacks*

Within a few weeks of the beginning of 2008, North America was rocked by a string of on-campus shootings, resulting in many deaths, and countless injuries. This is not the first time such tragedies have occurred. Since the shooting rampage at Montreal's École Polytechnique in late 1989, countless campus shootings have taken place in Canada (notably in Brampton, Ottawa, Montreal, and Taber, Alberta) and in the United States.

Numerous theories have been put forward regarding the root of such mind-numbing acts of violence: the social isolation of individual attackers, violence in the media, the availability of handguns, and other social causes. There is some level of truth to each of these possible causes, and on a human level, each one is worthy of note, and worthy of response and action.

Yet as Orthodox Christians, we are called to see beyond the material causes, to look for the spiritual roots behind such heinous acts. As the spiritual threads of western society continue to unravel, the interior life of an increasing number of people, both inside and outside the Church, is deeply afflicted with spiritual burdens and wounds that are usually

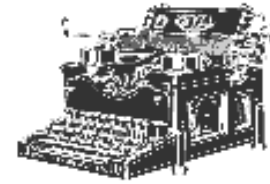
invisible to the eye of most other people. High school and college campuses are particularly precarious places for the many individuals who are struggling for spiritual stability and true interior peace; many on campus are completely unaware that such a struggle exists, or where they might turn for instruction in the most basic tools of the interior life.

The need for spiritual support on Canada's campuses has never been greater, and while the number of interested individual students is likely low, Orthodox faithful should not underestimate the power of the prayers of the Church for the spiritual well-being of those who are studying in preparation for the adult lives that hopefully lie ahead of them. The creation of small Orthodox campus groups, the presence of a priest on campus, and the offering up of the prayers of the Church in the form of Vespers or the Divine Liturgy on campus on a regular basis, should not be underestimated. In the times in which we live, these very simple acts do not simply provide instruction to a handful of faithful students: they provide the grace of God to an entire campus, providing effective weapons in a spiritual battle most will never see.

Each year, some Orthodox campus fellowships serve a blessing of the campus at the beginning of each school year, or at Theophany; some offer prayers for students at exam time, or circulate lists with the names of students to their parish prayer group. To the world, these are very small acts indeed, but on a deeper level - and a much more real and potent level for those who are serious about the Orthodox Faith - such small acts are a mighty defense against the spiritual evils that afflict the hearts and minds of many bright, promising young people.

In light of the unfolding of such tragedies on our campuses, such small acts of spiritual defense are critical for our life today, and for the well-being of our future as a nation.

- Father Geoffrey Korz +



POETRY

A Prodigal, Impassioned, Pilgrim Soul

A prodigal, impassioned, pilgrim soul,
An exile self-declared, I wandered far
Afield: desire unfulfilled the star
By which I steered, as headstrong as a foal
Which knoweth not the bit. I sought the goal
Of truth, which all man's folly could not mar,
And so, upon the path where many are
The heavy steps of time, I paid my toll.

Although my inmost heart I did beguile
With knowledge, judged as wisdom by the world,
Yet Thou, oh Christ, didst never cease to smile
Upon my weary pilgrimage. I hurled
Myself down many stony steeps, and while
They broke me, Thou with tears my soul imperiled.

- Sara Hillis





THE CHURCH KITCHEN

DUNDEE CAKE

A Butterweek or Paschal Favourite

- 6 oz margarine
- 6 oz soft brown sugar
- 8 oz self raising flour
- 1 tsp allspice (mixed spice)
- 3 eggs
- 15 oz mixed fruit
- 1 oz split almonds for decoration

+++++

Preheat oven to 180C or 350 F.

Grease and line a 7" cake tin.

Cream margarine and sugar, add spice, flour and fruit, add eggs one at a time and beat.

Place in cake tin and smooth level; arrange almonds on top in an attractive pattern.

Bake for 1 hour then reduce heat to 150C or 300F and bake for a further 1 1/4 hours (total baking time 2 1/4 hours).

- *Laurentia Woods*



NORTHERN NOMENCLATURE

SAINT JOHN (*pr. noun*)

Saint John the Baptist is one of the most honoured saints in Canadian place names, and not only because the French Canadian inheritance.

The city of St. John's is the oldest English-founded settlement on the continent, which tradition tells us was honoured with this name by the Italian explorer John Cabot (Giovanni Caboto) when he landed on its shores on the feast of St. John's birth, June 24th, 1497 (according to the Julian calendar which was in use in Britain at that time). Others suggest that Portuguese fisherman later named this bay for its resemblance to the Bay of Pasaia in the Basque country.

The Saint John River, and its port city of the same name, bear a parallel history. It was discovered by the French explorer Samuel de Champlain in 1604 on the feast of St. John, and became the capital of New Brunswick years later. The traditional celebration of the feast day in St. John has generally fallen into disuse.

Of all Canadian observances of St. John the Baptist, the Quebec Fête Nationale is perhaps the best known. The day is celebrated as a festival of French culture throughout North America, but it is in Quebec that the day has the greatest resonance. The first National Congress of French Canadians was held on this feast day in 1880, at which the singing of the original French-language "O Canada" was presented. The lyrics of the original are still used in its official French version of Canada's national

anthem today, testifying to the Christian roots of the song. It's French patriotism is evident:

*Ô Canada!
Terre de nos aïeux,
Ton front est ceint de fleurons glorieux!
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix!*

*(O Canada! Land of our forefathers
Thy brow is wreathed with a glorious garland of flowers.
As in thy arm ready to wield the sword,
So also is it ready to carry the cross.)*

After the Quiet Revolution and the secularization of Quebec in the 1960's, the Fête National lost much of its outward religious significance, and was taken up as a politically symbolic event, buoyed by Quebec separatism. The year 1970 marked the only time the annual St. Jean Baptiste parade did not take place, following a riot at the event in 1969 at which an icon was destroyed during a riot.

In some areas, the feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist (August 27 N.S. /September 11 O.S.) is associated with disaster, growing out of the tragic events surrounding the martyrdom of the Forerunner. Ironically, the terrorist attacks in New York (2001) and London (2005) took place on the Beheading and the Nativity of the Baptist, respectively, according to the Julian calendar.

In many Orthodox Christian countries in Eastern and Western Europe and Scandinavia, the feast of the birth of Saint John the Baptist superceded the pagan festival of Midsummer. While fertility rituals have been discarded, the feasting has remained, now in memory of the Baptist, and the custom of bonfires has in various places been changed into campfires or even (in the case of the Danes) mock witch burnings.



Q & A Questions from Readers

My son is excited about Martial Arts overall and thought this would be beneficial to help enhance discipline and respect from a male role model. Are you able to offer further insight on how this would not be beneficial for my son and perhaps offer alternatives for another active activity. I'm open and flexible to try something different. I'm thinking all forms of Martial Arts, Judo, Takewondo, Kung Fu, should be ruled out, but what about Kick boxing? Many thanks.
- N.V., Kitchener, Ontario

There are many good things about martial arts in general; the question is one of planting certain seeds which may take root and grow into a worldview that is very different than Orthodox Christianity. If such seeds (such as the particular view of the spiritual energy of the person that is taught in oriental martial arts, i.e. "chi", or the potential for blurring meditation with the practice of the Jesus Prayer) do not take root, one need not worry much. However, if they do take root, spiritual problems will grow. The operative question is: do we as parents have control over whether or not such things take root? The fact is, if we enroll our children, the answer is absolutely no.

Other sports that lack an explicit spiritual component are one alternative. Basketball, track clubs, and archery are all discipline-teaching sports. You might balance such activities with "hard" sports, such as soccer, football, or rugby at a later age, and other disciplines at an early age. A solid male reading coach, piano teacher, pets expert, or

outdoor education centre program operator can also provide male role models.

If you absolutely must send your son to a martial art, I would suggest that judo is the least spiritually problematic, although I say this by way of concession, not endorsement. With so many viable alternatives, there are certainly many other choices that would be suitable.

Hope this helps

I was wondering when fasting resumes after Christmas. Some sources say there is one week fast-free, while other sources, including the book "The Law of God", suggest that we do not resume fasting at all until after Theophany.
- J.D., Hamilton, Ontario

The standard Eastern Orthodox practice is to enjoy a one week fast free period; this parallels the observance of Bright Week following Pascha, in which there is no fasting. The Earlier practice (and certainly the practice in the Orthodox West before the Schism) seems to be no fasting for the full twelve days between Christmas and Theophany - thus marking the Twelve Days of Christmas. While this practice seems to be more widespread in the early Church, one should consult the parish priest and local bishop to look into the local practice. An argument can be made for either position; this is one of those many, many matters in which the order and harmony of local practice is more important than being "right".

I wanted to ask for your opinion. I've "bumped" into this 2-Volume "Orthodox New Testament" translated from the "original Greek authorized version of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (1912)", with plentiful patristic footnotes and commentary to guide the reader in traditional interpretation of the Holy Scripture. This was prepared and published by the Holy Apostles Convent and the Dormition Skete.

Now, two things concern me. First, these monastic communities seem to be schismatic, i.e. they are under the Greek Old-Calendarists, so, their canonical status seems to be problematic. However, they could still make good stuff. So should this be a problem if I'm interested to purchase "The Orthodox New Testament" that they prepared?

Second, are you familiar with this work? I've read some mixed reviews. I would like to have a good translation of the New Testament with a well prepared set of patristic notes, references and commentary, all in one place. Since I am not a theologian and my time is constrained, having something like this to add to my morning and evening devotions would be great. I just need someone authoritative to tell me whether this is a good choice or not.

- Z.R., Toronto, Ontario

We own and use this translation. The translation itself is at times clunky, sort of a King James modified by individuals who insist that certain Greek words must be translated literally, even if they lose their poetic quality and their context. One example of this is found in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9, where "Heaven" is rendered "the heavens" - a technically accurate translation of the Greek original, but one which gives the impression that the Lord dwells within the strata of clouds, which is not the intent.

Another example can be found at the end of the Gospel of Saint Luke (24:52), where the terms "they did obeisance" is used to describe the Apostles' veneration of the Lord, rather than the term "worship". This terminology is used in only one other translation - the so-called "New World Translation" used by the Jehovah's Witnesses. The words are selected on purpose by the Jehovah's Witnesses, to support their rejection of Christ's divinity (since only God can be rightly

"worshipped") - a detail, but a critical one, for Orthodox Christians.

Most of the time, these issues do not pose a major problem, but I would keep something else handy for the sake of clarity (the New King James Version is clear enough, and the Third Millennium Bible from Regina press is a very nice, poetic, King James edition, with the full Orthodox canon - the only one on the market as far as we know).

As for the patristic quotes, this Bible has perhaps the best selection available, from Fathers both East and West. At the end of each book, they offer a verse-by-verse quotation selection from the Fathers, as well as some linguistic clarification. The collection is traditional, and there is no sectarian agenda, as far as I have seen.

As for buying from schismatics, the scriptures tell us that while we are to exhort sinners within the Church, if we start going after those who are outside, we will simply have no rest; it is an impossible and fruitless task. My doctor is a Roman Catholic, our accountant is Jewish, and my grocery store follows the majority faith of our country: the worship of money. Each of them does a very good job at the work they do, and all have offered some kind of assistance to the parish. In short: I would not hesitate to purchase something that is quality material, whatever the source (within reason), but one must take things from whence they come. If the content is weird at some point, just take it in context. For the record, there are obviously causes and movements which one would never support: a manufacturer who bakes the tastiest chocolate chip cookies, but give the proceeds to support the abortion or pornography lobby, are not suitable patrons for the Church.

As for those who are Orthodox in their beliefs but in schism from the Church, pray that they may find their way back to the Church, and that their good labours will be rewarded with God's mercies.





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