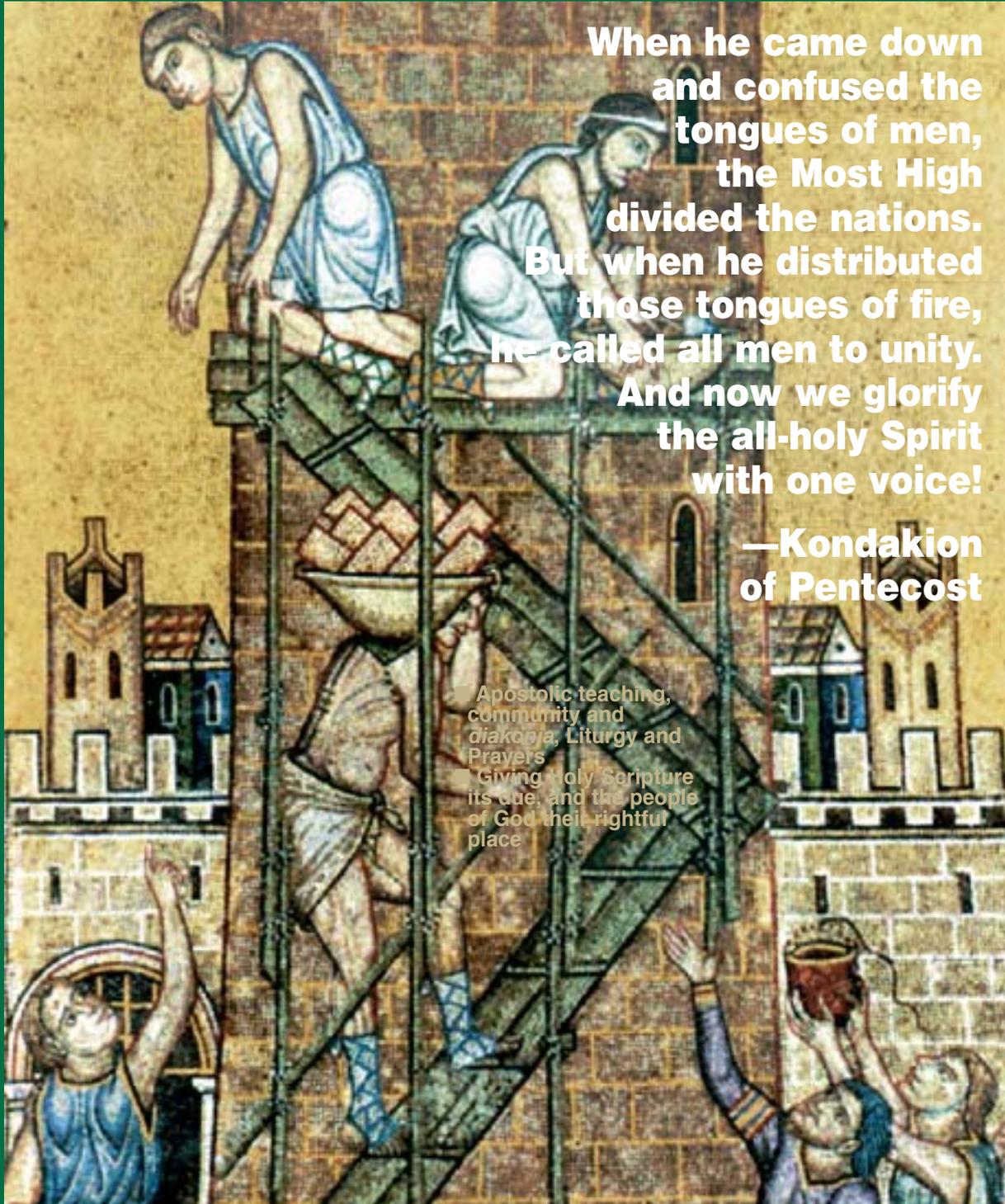


ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY IN RESTON



When he came down
and confused the
tongues of men,
the Most High
divided the nations.
But when he distributed
those tongues of fire,
he called all men to unity.
And now we glorify
the all-holy Spirit
with one voice!

—Kondakion
of Pentecost

Apostolic teaching,
community and
diakonia, Liturgy and
Prayers
Giving Holy Scripture
its due, and the people
of God their rightful
place

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA.

200 YEARS AGO eight missionaries — monks from Russia’s frozen North — arrived at Kodiak, Alaska. The Orthodox Church in America is the fruit of their labors. Today there are 14 dioceses and perhaps 600, mostly small, parishes, their memberships representing a cross-section of America. In communion with the 14 autocephalous Orthodox Catholic Churches of the East, the OCA maintains close ties with the much larger Greek (Kyr Demetrios) and Syrian (Kyr Philip) exarchates and with the smaller ethnic jurisdictions through the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA) and its emerging successor, the Episcopal Assembly. The Orthodox Church in America looks to the day when all our divisions here yield to administrative unity. (www.oca.org)

At the November 2008 All-American Council in Pittsburgh Archbishop Johah [Paffhausen] was elected First Hierarchy of the Orthodox Church in America headquartered in Syosset, NY.



July 4, 1990, Washington, D.C.: Archbishop Theodosius (I.), now retired, welcomes to Saint Nicholas Cathedral the late Patriarch of Constantinople, Kyr Kyr Dimitrios I.

HOLY TRINITY— UNIQUE IN THE WASHINGTON AREA.

IT WAS FR. JOHN MEYENDORFF of happy memory who brought Holy Trinity to life during his sabbatical from St. Vladimir’s Seminary to mind Harvard University’s Dumbarton Oaks Research Library in Georgetown. He crowned the efforts of a small group of faithful (from area Greek and Russian parishes) striving to establish an English-language parish in the Reston-Sterling vicinity.

Today we are a small, stable community, striving to bring Orthodox Christians together in English and believers to Orthodoxy. We have no ethnicity to speak of, yet in important ways we are more like a parish in the Orthodox world — in Athens, say, or Damascus, in Bucharest, or Kiev — than the local ethnic parishes are. Our goal is to embody the Orthodox Way in Protéstant America while giving ourselves to the renewal of church life our Bishops have called for. In their 1976 encyclical *On Spiritual Life in the Church* they tell us, “We... must strive to revitalize the mystical, sacramental life of our churches and monasteries. To renew sacramental participation in the life of the Church we need only begin.”

TRADITION—THE CHURCH’S PAST INVIGORATES HER.

ONE SURE—AND AUTHENTIC—WAY to revitalize the sacramental life is to put back on the lips of people the people’s own prayers and responses. This is not a new idea. For fifteen hundred years and more, Orthodox Christians sang their way through the Divine Liturgy. (In his *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* Nicolas Cavailas, +ca. 1391 A.D., tells how the people of Thessalonika were doing just that.) But something happened. Someone somewhere said stop. Almost everywhere the “royal

priesthood” (1 Peter 2.9) began to turn into an audience. But it was a mistake to muzzle the faithful... and then corral them. So at Holy Trinity we are set up to draw our faithful back into divine service. And we sing. We sing a mix of melodies from the Orthodox world—Greek, Syrian, Rumân, Slav. Melodies that broadcast the Church’s native genius and catholic spirit. Melodies sung for generations by people like us, only in English. (Children have their place in this too; it is only natural.) We strive to enjoy the fruits the Fathers ascribe to singing with one heart and one mind. With understanding. And convincing power. We begin to make sense of things. Our Sunday Liturgy, as sacrifice of praise embraced by Christ sacrificed for us, comes closer to what it is meant to be. It is our school. This is good for us and for the Church as well.

On the eve of the Russian revolution, some pastorally minded bishops, observing gatherings of their faithful flocks, sensed the need to reinvigorate parish life in their eparchies and suggested another tool for renewal. Their idea—another from the Church’s store of knowledge—is slowly becoming the norm in this country today: priests are intoning for all to hear the so-called “secret” prayers of the Divine Liturgy. This trains a light on divine service that has been missing for far too long. Providently, the Church of Greece has come to agree. In 2004 her Synod of Bishops in Athens issued an encyclical letter endorsing the practice and authorized a new edition of the *Priest’s Service Book* [*Ieratikón*] to support it.

“THE WHOLE CONGREGATION PARTICIPATED.”

IN HIS POPULAR BOOK, *The Faith We Hold*, Archbishop Paul of Finland, one of the lamps of renewal, explains it this way:

In the early Church all the prayers of the Liturgy were read aloud. The whole congregation participated in them. But as early as the sixth century some of the prayers of the Liturgy began to be read in a low voice by the celebrating priest. Although there were attempts to oppose this change [*the emperor Justinian for one—Ed.*], it gradually became the general practice.... However, insofar as there has been an effort to deepen the congregation’s understanding of the Liturgy, it has now been found necessary to go back to the practice of reading the prayers of the Liturgy aloud.

How can the whole assembly of God’s people participate in the sacrament of redemption with full understanding and true feeling and realize that they are a royal priesthood bringing spiritual offerings, if they hear only fragments of closing sentences of the common prayers without being aware of their meaning as a whole?

The people standing in the church are not passive attenders but are co-celebrants with the officiating priest or bishop, and they must be able to follow the course of the Liturgy and participate in its prayers. Only in this way can the Liturgy be real liturgy—common worship—and the Church an *ekklēsia*—the people of God assembled for the Eucharist.

(pgs. 47–49)

THE BOOK TO READ. AND MOVIE TO RENT.

ARCHBISHOP PAUL’S levelheaded little book and a critically acclaimed film offer insights into the nitty-gritty of Orthodox renewal and the revitalization of one’s spiritual life—and into what we are striving for here at Holy Trinity. *The Faith We Hold* (www.svspress.com) is about walking on water; *Babette’s Feast* (Best Foreign Film, 1987), about a lavish meal that costs the giver everything she has, and a wary religious community’s helpless response... to something with unexpected power to transform.

OUR DIVINE SERVICE AND DIAKONÍA.

WE SPEAK MANY LANGUAGES. We extend a welcome to everyone. English lets us join voices. We cherish the Orthodox Way, the great spiritual heritage of the Christian East, so divine services here are always engaging. Faithful to tradition. Full of joy. And appropriate to our circumstances. The piety of the Lord Jesus is the piety of the Orthodox. The Lord Jesus sang in church. So do we. And mindful of St. Paul's talk to Timothy, we attend to the public reading of Holy Scripture with renewed zeal. ■ The Eucharist—the great Prayer of the people of God—is at the very heart of our parish life as it must be. ■ The Reston Catechetical School meets Sundays with teaching for the family. In the best traditions of the Church. A catechesis duly profound, clear, and convincing. ■ Confession—generally—follows a communal, mutually evangelizing rite that respects Synodal guidelines and is scheduled seasonally, yet one may come to Confession before any divine service. ■ There is ample opportunity to learn and to serve. ■ Through church programs and locally we try to extend a helping hand to those in need.

After the Divine Liturgy on the occasion of his May 2008 pastoral visitation, Archbishop Herman, First Hierarch of the Orthodox Church in America (now retired), repeated what he told us with delight so many years ago: "Your singing today put me in mind of Sunday Liturgy when I was a boy."



Donna Ellmore welcomes Archbishop Theodosius with bread and salt on the occasion of his first pastoral visitation to Holy Trinity in March, 1979. During his 25 years of service as First Hierarch, he looked with favor upon efforts to renew church life. Elected in Montreal in October, 1977, he retired in the Summer of 2002.

On our land on Potomac View Road (Route 637) north of NoVa and Route 7.



OUR BISHOPS URGE US TO EMBRACE RENEWAL.

“...we need only begin....”

Every parish and every family and every person should be immersed in the liturgical prayer of the Church. The liturgical worship of the Church should be the context of our lives, the content of our spirits, the atmosphere in which we think and speak and act. As such it should be conducted simply, decently and in order without any needless adornments and embellishments which detract from its divine purpose and power....

We Orthodox Christians in America must strive to revitalize the mystical, sacramental life of our churches and monasteries. To renew sacramental participation in the life of the Church we need only begin. Everything is there. Nothing needs to be added. All things are prepared. We need only receive what the Church gives us, practice what the Church teaches us.

Baptisms and chrismations, marriages and funerals, the services of healing through the anointing of the sick, must once again be understood and experienced as corporate acts of worship and praise.... They must become once again the communal actions of the Church...; the common liturgical actions of the whole people of God; witnessed, celebrated and accomplished by all, together in one place, at one time.

Confession... must become once again an abiding element in the lives of the faithful, deformed and revitalized as the most common and normal of actions of a people continually united and reunited with each other and with God....

Participation in the holy Eucharist... must become normal and regular for all the members of the Church. It must be the rule and not the exception, that the faithful come forward at the Divine Liturgy, with fear and with love, to receive the body and blood of Christ for the sake of their salvation and inspiration in the faith. It is the Lord himself who invites....

The holy Eucharist is the center and focal point of the spiritual lives of Christians.... It is the unique and certain means of communion with God the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit....

—Encyclical Letter of the Holy Synod of Bishops
On Spiritual Life in the Church, OCA, Syosset, 1976

OUR CHALLENGE? HEARING THE BISHOPS, AND HEEDING THEM.

“ Our fundamental task is to remain faithful to what God has given us through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Church.

- We must study the Scriptures,
- participate in the sacraments,
- follow the fathers,
- imitate the saints....

We must be firm in faith and stable in our judgments, steadfast in our devotion and constant in prayer.... ”

—Encyclical On Spiritual Life, OCA, 1976



Detail, mosaic, XII century, Kiev, the hand of a master from Constantinople.

Put in a different way, a parishioner—baptized into Christ as he or she is—welcomes the way of life the Spirit brings and accepts responsibility for the Church’s work and well-being. Guided by the Church—the teaching of the apostles expounded for today—a parishioner embraces enlightened moral values and advances them in his or her life in the world.

We have high aspirations....



View from the southeast.

■ We have high aspirations for our corner of Northern Virginia: a small jewel of a church—Byzantine and full of light—a baptistry reminiscent of Kiev, a classroom wing, The Fr. John Meyendorff Memorial Library, office space and a parish hall, all clustered around a private courtyard. ■ Our building site is in Potomac Falls, on Potomac View Rd., north of Route 7 and Northern Virginia Community College. Our master plan for a parish center will be realized in phases we can afford. In Mr. Christo J. Kamages and his firm we have the best church architects at work in Orthodox America today. We are now making our way through the Loudoun County site-plan approval process.