



Volume 4 Issue 2 — Fall 2005



An Orthodox Christian Initiative

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www.zoeforlifeonline.org

Teen Retreat: How Orthodox Christians Live a Sexually Pure Life

Living in the Light!

Area youth participate in a retreat focusing on love, sex, and morality in current times.

ZOE for Life sponsored another successful retreat. Held at St. Innocent Orthodox Church, in Olmsted Township, on the Feast of Transfiguration, August 6, 2005, 25 area teens and youth, ranging in ages 13-24 from 5 different Orthodox churches participated.

The various lectures, activities and discussions surrounding the topics of love, sex and Orthodox moral teachings. Presenters included Laurie Alexander, Mentor, Cindy Klinar, Olmsted Twp., Michael Tabeling, Lakewood, and Melissa McCutcheon, Olmsted Township.

Participants completed surveys to help tailor the material for future retreats. Planning binders to assist others in hosting similar retreats will soon be available. Any interested parish should contact the ZOE for Life website or phone 440-893-9990.

Future inter-youth gatherings are planned for each season (beginning Fall) for both social and spiritual growth among Orthodox youth. Please check your church bulletins and postings for such events.

Article contributed by: Cindy Klinar



Presenter
Cindy Klinar



Presenter
Michael Tabeling



Presenter
Melissa
McCutcheon



Presenter
Laurie Alexander

Living in the Light – this is the task for all Orthodox Christians. The retreat held recently at St. Innocent Orthodox parish was a wonderful opportunity for me to see so many Orthodox youth who are committed to the struggle to walk in the Light of Christ. As an Ohio licensed clinical therapist, I spend most of my work hours helping people who are struggling with the consequences of lives lived in the darkness. For some the darkness has been self-inflicted. For others, it has been thrust upon them through no fault of their own.

As I stood before these young people, I was humbled. Before me sat a group of people, many of whom has chosen to give up a Saturday to hear the Truth of who they are in Christ and how that shines a light on their own sexuality. Christ allowed me for a moment to see the Truth I was attempting to share with them.

Here were young people created in the image of God. It was a blessing for me to share with them that sexuality was a gift given them to be shared in a sacred place which they would create in marriage. This sharing would reflect the worth each person has in the eyes of God – a worth for which He was willing to die.

We shared the dangers of sexual activity outside of this sacred space, but we also shared the joy and the beauty which would come from sharing themselves fully with another within the sacred space of marriage. In this joyful place of sharing they would not only icon the church, but would allow the image of God to shine through them into a world desparately crying out to see the Holy God we receive at the chalice.

A blessing indeed!

Article contributed by: Melissa Tumbleson

March for life

ZOE for Life will again be sponsoring a bus to Washington D.C. for the annual March for Life on Monday, January 23, 2006. The bus will leave Ridge Manor Party Center located at 4630 Ridge Road in Brookpark at 4:00a.m. and will return approximately at midnight. Cost is \$30.00 per person. The march in Washington begins at noon as thousands of Orthodox laity, clergy and hierarchs from all over the United States gather under the Orthodox Christians for Life banner. The march ends at the Supreme Court building where prayers will be offered by Metropolitan Herman for the unborn victims of abortion. Please join us as we proclaim the truth of the Sanctity of Life. Food and beverage will be provided on the bus. For more information and to reserve a seat on the bus, please call,



"Photo Courtesy of the Orthodox Church in America
www.oca.org"



His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta and Paula Kappos

**Metropolis of Atlanta
Clergy Laity/Philoptochos Conference
By Dee Nicolaou
Metropolis Philoptochos President**

On behalf of the Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos, it is my pleasure to write this article for the ZOE for Life Newsletter. This provides me with an excellent opportunity to share with you how ZOE for Life has touched all of us in our Metropolis.

The Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos held our Clergy Laity/Philoptochos Conference in Mobile, Alabama on June 2 – 5, 2005. The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church was our host parish.

At this year's conference, we recognized ZOE for Life. Paula Kappos, the founder of this important organization was our guest speaker. Her love and enthusiasm for this ministry touched our hearts and souls. She shared with us many stories and experiences that she has encountered since the program started. Paula brought most of us to tears. At the Grand Banquet at the close of the conference many of the speakers stated the highlight of the Clergy Laity was the emotional Philoptochos luncheon that would remain embedded in their hearts forever.

In the spirit of offering service to others, we invited and encouraged all our chapters to help in the charitable efforts by donating \$100.00. A portion of this donation was used to create "Layette Basket" centerpieces for the Philoptochos Luncheon. These baskets were filled with baby items for a newborn baby to be distributed to two local agencies; "Save-A-Life" and "Special Beginnings". Both of these nonprofit groups deal with crisis pregnancies and adoptions. These decorative centerpieces provided special needs to new mothers.

Also, we requested that our delegates bring the unused toiletries from their hotel rooms each day for "Penelope House", a shelter for battered women in Mobile. We had a baby carriage in the meeting room and at the luncheon for the delegates to put their toiletries in. The carriage was filled in no time. We were excited that four charities benefited from our Philoptochos Luncheon.

Through our chapter's monetary donations, dedication, commitment and hard work, we were able to present a check in the amount of \$4000 to ZOE for Life. We also have decided to support ZOE for Life annually. Your wonderful organization is now a line item on our Metropolis budget. The Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos always tries to continue our role of supporting Orthodox ministries in a significant way.

This convention was a rewarding and productive experience for all our Philoptochos sisters. When this convention ended, we carried home beautiful memories of ZOE for Life.

When all our Orthodox Ministries work together we can accomplish much of the work the Lord wants us to complete in our mission here on earth for those in need. Everything, ZOE has achieved and Philoptochos has achieved could not have been accomplished without each of you. Thank you for your commitment to our Orthodox women who are in crisis pregnancy and our church. May God always bless you as you continue to work in His name.

Congratulations to our *Writing Contest for Great Lent Winners* and all who submitted and entry. Each winning entry received a \$250.00 cash prize.

Our essay topic was:

“What are the moral challenges facing me as an Orthodox Christian?”

The winning College entry is from Timothy Clos of Parma Heights, Ohio. His home Parish is Holy Trinity Orthodox Church. Timothy attends Cleveland State University and is a Sophomore.

Today's Moral challenges for Orthodox Christians



I see them everywhere. No, not aliens, but the coercion to live a life alien to Christ and His teachings. These coercions are better known as temptations. These temptations are omnipresent within this world, and we, as Christians, should develop a ‘sixth sense’ to better identify these threats. This ‘sixth sense’ enables the believer to identify, approach, and finally triumph over the moral challenges facing them.

This ‘sixth sense’ is sometimes known as one’s conscience. In order to perceive a threat and vanquish it with God’s assistance with much facility, one must remain vigilant to Christ and His teachings. This can be accomplished by a myriad of tools Christ gives us when we choose to accept Him. The moral challenges facing me as a Christian are varied, especially in an alien world. Most of these challenges stem from one quintessential challenge: to remain true to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit enables believers to accomplish great things through faith, not through zealous legalism, or other spiritual pitfalls. At Pentecost, the official coronation of the Church, God bestowed upon us his Holy Spirit, thus championing virtues such as faith and love in opposition to the dogmatic interpretation of the law that plagued the Pharisees. The challenge for believers today involves winning converts through God’s love for them, not by condemning, coercing, and arguing, as other religions may proselytize.

When the temptation of legalistic pride befalls the believer, it is an indication that Satan’s attempts at attacking us with an obviated, blatant passion such as love of money or carnal passions, have failed. The passion of legalistic pride is a subtle one, and it is an impediment to one’s efforts at making disciples. It is prudent to analyze what temptations befall us, as it is an indicator of one’s position on the spiritual continuum. Thus, Satan’s own weapon of temptation will become an impediment to his wicked agenda.

One can apply the utilities prescribed above when moral challenges oppose us, however, one must first identify these challenges.

One pervasive challenge that Orthodox Christians must rectify involves not losing sight of the Kingdom. This challenge is especially difficult to approach in today’s society with its unhealthy emphasis on worldly possessions. In order to succeed in this challenge, Orthodox Christians must prioritize their perspectives in accordance with God’s Word, which states that one must “lay up treasures in Heaven”. These treasures are intangible, but they should take precedence over worldly possessions.

Orthodox today are actively bombarded with distractions, whether sinful or not. Before we delve into the intricacies of this particular challenge, one should define what is sinful. This is a challenge in itself, since it is innate for humans to downplay the sins that afflict themselves. One can accomplish this by developing a humble frame of mind with an emphasis on God. When something is sinful, it displaces God in our lives. This essentially signifies that a sin is nothing but another ‘god’ in our lives that competes with the favor that God is due. This is idolatry’s relationship to distractions. Even distractions that are not sinful in nature can become sins if they compete with God. Thus, the challenge is not to allow diversions from becoming sins. This does **not** imply that we should not watch television (wholesome shows only!) or strive to make money. Instead, it implies that love for God takes precedence over everything.

Another challenge that Orthodox Christians must face is the issue of faith. Humans have the innate tendency to disregard what is tangible, or, simply deny its existence. This is a shortcoming of undue reliance on science. Humans are limited by our five senses. Science appeals to our five senses in that it reveals what humans could not ordinarily sense, with the intention that humans will gain insight and wisdom. Atheistic scientists, blind to their folly, assume that, in their self-justified ‘wisdom’ that humans supposedly possess, can accomplish anything with the assistance of science (remember the Tower of Babel). However, these scientists are ignoring one aspect of science: it is entirely feasible that science will discover something in the future that will disprove the self-justified scientists who think they are the epitome of wisdom. Thus, the challenge is to believe and yet not see, for those who do are blessed.

Orthodox Christians, better armed to wage war with Satan, can use all of the tools and knowledge prescribed herein to succeed over all moral challenges with the assistance of God. By better understanding the adversary, Satan, you can utilize his own weapons to conquer him. By gaining knowledge concerning the intricacies of the nature of the challenges, one can know how God works within our lives. By having faith in God, we can vanquish the ungodly atheism that is persistently attempting to destroy all of humanity. God bless.

**The winning entry from grades 9 through 12 is from
Courtney Knudtsen of Broomfield, CO.
Her home Parish is St. Luke Antiochian Orthodox Church.
Courtney is homeschooled and currently in Grade 10.**



I creep into the dark church.

Candles flicker before the icons, and a faint smell of incense and flower petals lingers in the air. I sink into a chair, but a moment later, I am forced to my knees. I am trembling. It is Holy Friday, and the youth group is keeping vigil at the tomb. It is not my turn to be in the church. My name is written under 2:30 a.m.; right now it is 12:30. I am drawn by something I cannot resist into church. I can't sleep; I must pray. "O Lady Theotokos, pray for me. Teach me to be pure. 'Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.'" "At the chanter's stand, someone is reading the psalms. *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme Thy name forever?... For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth (Psalm 74:10,12). Thou, even Thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once Thou art angry? Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah (Psalm 76:7-9) Keep not Thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God (Psalm 83:1).* The air is crying out, waiting.

After a while, I take a turn reading the psalms. I've been asked to mumble so that others can pray, but my voice rises steadily. *Arise, O God, judge the earth: for Thou shall inherit all nations (Psalm 82:8). It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law (Psalm 119:126).* I am wide-awake. The Holy Spirit is acting in power; I tremble in fear of God.

I look at the roof. I expect it to collapse; I'm not sure why. Later, though, I remember and know. An enormous hand is falling on the church, covering it, knocking. The force of its blows shatters the air and shakes the church. With C.S. Lewis, my bones turn to water. "Child, child, child, let Me in before the night comes." ("the Shoddy Lands") I think of Jesus' words: *So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors (Matt. 13:29). But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark... (Matt. 24:37-38)*

I walk to the icon of the Theotokos. I pick up the five-page, messy list, where we have written the names of our loved ones and begin to read them. "Lord have mercy." I take the pencil and add, "St. Luke Church." "May fear of God fall on us. O Lord, it is time for You to act."

The door opens and three or four people come in. "O God help me!" I tremble. "I purposely sign up far away from him!" *And He cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto*

Peter, 'Simon, Sleepest thou? Coulest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak (Mark 14:37-38). I try to keep my eyes from following. I pray for purity of heart. "St. Peter, pray for me! I am compelled to your words." *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens bein fire shall be dissolved, and the elements hall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, Look for new heavens and a new earth, where in dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless (2 Peter 3:11-14).*

I steal a glance towards the other side of the church. Is he looking at me? I turn, shaking. Fear of God Falls. "O Jesus, my eyes are not fixed on You!" I hide my face on my arm and I weep. *Streams of water run from my eyes, because they keep not Thy law (Psalm 119:136). Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word (Psalm 119:9).* "Yes Lord." My shaky hand takes a pencil and begins to write.

Open to me the gates of righteousness
Clothe me with salvation
I hate wickedness, now.
Clothe me upon with You
Lord Jesus Christ
Streams of water run from my eyes
Because they keep not Thy law.
Make me perfect
As my Father is perfect
I will be holy
As You are holy.
Cut off from me the favor of men
You abundance
Sweetness only satisfies
Jesus
O Lord I tremble
You cometh
It is time for you to act
Save You People
Come Lord Jesus!
Come quickly!

The next *Writing Contest for Great Lent* will be in our Spring 2006 Newsletter. Remember submissions must be 1,000 words or less, typed written and double-spaced. Two cash awards of \$250.00 will be awarded for student from grades nine through twelve, and another for those in college.

Fall 2005 Supports List—

Thank You For Your Generous Support!

We thank God for our Angels. They help us save lives, two at a time.

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ZOE Statistics: 09-01-04-08-31-05
 Calls: 176
 Hotline Calls: 30
 E-mails: 221
 Adoption Inquiries: 24
 Women in Crisis: 7
 Abortions Averted: Yes !!
 Foster Care Sought: 1
 Sheltering Home Sought: 1
 Abortion Recovery Assistance: 3

What is ZOE?

Through the grace of God, ZOE for life! Began in 1998. A group of individuals in the Greater Cleveland Orthodox Christian community recognized that there was no Orthodox Christian resource to assist women through crisis pregnancies. ZOE has evolved as a non-profit, Christ-centered initiative with three major goals:

1. To help all women in crisis pregnancies.
2. To assist Orthodox Christians seeking to adopt.
3. To create an Orthodox Christian abstinence program to educate our young people.

*"Good-bye, said the fox. And now, here is my secret. It is very simple. Only with the heart can one see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye."
 from "The Little Prince", by Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

To be a good steward of the gifts God has given us, please notify us if you receive more than one issue of our Newsletter or if your address changes.

To help women who need emotional and spiritual support during crisis pregnancies; to provide confidential access to existing professional agencies; to connect interested women with potential adoptive Orthodox Christian families.

Our Mission Statement:

An Orthodox Christian Initiative
 3352 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118
 440/893-9990
 hotline number 877/436-LIFE (5433)
 www.zoeforlifeonline.org



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