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**ZOE**  
FOR LIFE

**An Orthodox Christian Initiative**

3352 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118  
440/893-9990

hotline number 877/436-LIFE (5433)

[www.zoeforlifeonline.org](http://www.zoeforlifeonline.org)



“Photo courtesy of the Orthodox Church in America [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org)”

Twenty-seven Orthodox hierarchs from across North America participated in the third conference of bishops sponsored by The Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas. They convened on Tuesday, October 3, 2006, in Chicago, IL. It was a great honor for ZOE to be invited to speak before them about its work. Being received with more gracious hospitality and generosity of spirit from our beloved hierarchs is difficult to imagine. We left feeling energized and blessed. Our sincerest thanks go out to them for their encouragement and support. We pray for His continued grace upon them, and for their archpastoral blessings.

***All Roads Lead to Washington***

On January 22, 2007, busses will leave home from across the United States, to convene on the Mall in Washington, DC,; for the Annual March for Life. ZOE’s bus will leave from it’s new home at 5935 State Road in Parma, OH at 4:00 am and return near midnight. Please contact Kathy for reservations at 440-842-6639. If your parish is along the way to Washington, and you would be interested in providing hospitality to some weary travelers, please contact us at the National Office at 440-893-9990 or ZOE House at 440-888-9990. Let us join together to make this year’s March the most Orthodox ever!

**Help Her Hold On To Her  
Baby**

She desperately needs your Christian love and support. Offer it to her at ZOE House. Your warm smile and compassion can make a material difference at a pivotal time in her life, and the life of her baby. Call Iryna at 440-582-1051, to see when you can help save a life.

**ZOE for Life! is endorsed by The Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas.**

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 Kristian Powell of Boonsboro, MD. Her home Parish is St. Catherines Eastern Orthodox Church, Hagerstown, MD. Kristina is a Sophomore at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pa.**

The Orthodox Christian religion is based on traditional theology and beliefs that do not change as society changes. It is the Orthodox belief that society should follow the moral laws from God. Following these beliefs is a challenge, especially as a teenager in today's society, because moral values continue to be relaxed and there is a lot of peer pressure to fit in and be like everyone else. Some religions have modernized to accommodate those people who conform to relaxed moral values. Orthodox Christianity is not one of those religions, and those who truly follow the religion are faced with many challenges because they do not live their life based on the changing attitudes of society. Of all the moral challenges that I face as a teenager and Orthodox Christian, there are three that represent the biggest challenges.

The biggest challenge to remain true to my faith that I face as a teenager is in my use of curse words, including taking the Lord's name in vain. In today's society, curse words are no longer considered a dirty part of language. They are considered “cool” and are very popular to use. Curse words are found almost everywhere; schools, movies, friends, and out in public. Curse words are used by many people to exaggerate situations and even to add humor to situations. Now if people don't curse, or if people complain about someone else cursing, they become the target of teasing. They are “goodie-two-shoes” and treated like they aren't cool. Cursing by teenagers is something that many teenagers think make you look more adult and mature. It is really the opposite. However, because cursing has become a popular and accepted part of today's society, and because it is part of many things that teenagers like me look up to, consciously trying to avoid cursing creates the hardest moral challenge for me.

Pre-marital sex presents a second moral challenge. Having sex out of wedlock has become very popular. It is considered a “normal” part of relationships in our society. Because pre-marital sex is now widely accepted as the normal way to relate with people you care for, even many Christians are convinced that love for another is enough to justify engaging in this act outside of marriage. Magazines, movies, advertising, TV and other influences glamorize pre-marital sex without showing the negative side life pregnancy, disease, and heartbreak. I think it is interesting how movies and TV shows like to make sex between unmarried teenagers look wonderful but the movie or TV show never shows the girl having to get an abortion or a teenager getting AIDS or getting used or other things that are the negative side of pre-marital sex. Large numbers of teenagers don't know the whole truth. This is another case like cursing where teenagers think they are more adult because they are sexually “experienced”. Because of that, teenagers don't respect other teenagers that don't want to have sex. There have been many situations where I have been laughed at for being a virgin and deciding to stay that way until marriage. I'm thought of as naïve and not “worldly” because I'm a virgin. Knowing that premarital sex is accepted in society and that many friends have engaged in the act creates huge pressure to “give in” and be “normal”. That makes it a very challenging moral issue to me.

The act of being jealous of others is a sin that is hardly ever given any thought because it seems so normal today to be jealous of someone else. Trying not to be jealous of others is my third biggest moral challenge. Today's society believes that you are a better person according to the money that you make and the nice car that you drive and the big house that you live in. “Beautiful people” are the name the media gives to rich attractive people that go to big parties and have lots of material goods. This attitude of society makes people jealous of other people, because if you don't have all these nice material things or aren't successful, then you're not a beautiful person. Specifically, being jealous of the perfect body is a challenge for me because the idea of a beautiful woman in today's society is a model figure with few to no imperfections. Plastic surgery, Botox, and other medical procedures are increasing in popularity because so many people come home to improve their self-image with the “perfect” body. No one likes to be teased or left out because they are “ugly”. However, many people, including myself, often forget that the body is God's temple and it is created in his image, which is perfection. It is what is in your heart that makes you beautiful and how you live your life is what earns the real reward. Society also makes people want to reward themselves with material goods, so people spend their time trying to create a heaven on earth when the real reward for this life is eternal life in God's heaven.

Remaining true to the Orthodox Christian faith presents a number of challenges. Trying not to curse, avoiding pre-marital sex, and not being jealous of others are the biggest moral challenges that I face as an Orthodox Christian and teenager in today's society. All young Orthodox Christians need to realize that they are not alone in staying true to our faith. Although it may be very challenging, remaining true to our faith brings us closer to God and gives us the extra strength that we need to follow the high moral standards that all of society should follow.

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**WELCOME  
HOME  
ZOE !!!**



The summer brought sunshine, warm weather, blue skies, and the realization of a dearly held dream—a true home for ZOE. 5935 State Road proved to be the spot appointed for ZOE House. What a

particular blessing to be placed next door to beautiful St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Parma, Ohio. With His help, this will prove to be a place of comfort, tangible assistance, counseling, faith building and the opportunity for growth and development for those in need.



We descended on ZOE House like a swarm of bees might go after an intruder, energized by the excitement of new opportunities it presents for service. We cleaned, scrubbed, scoured and sanitized with happy

hearts, preparing the foundation for what we dream will be the actualization of possibilities held so close to our hearts for so long.

In the months ahead, we plan to create a meditation and counseling room, retreat center and thrift store, offering opportunities for service for those of all ages. Sunday, January 21, 2007, will be



our dedication and House Blessing date. The Prayer for a Change Akathist will take place at St. Vladimir's at 5:00 p.m. followed by our dedication and blessing, which of course will officially open ZOE House in the best possible way. Officiating at the Akathist will be Fr. John Nakonachny, Fr. John Mironko, and Deacon Ihor Mahlay, of St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Church. We hope everyone who can attend will, and join us for a tour, food and fellowship.



The ZOE sponsored bus to Washington, D.C. for the annual March for Life will leave in the wee hours of the 22nd of January from here. We look forward to seeing all our Sisters and Brothers in Christ there!



**Ukrainian Orthodox League of the  
United States of America**

UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*'DEDICATED TO OUR CHURCH - DEVOTED TO ITS YOUTH'*

Melanie Anne Nakonachny, President  
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MelanieNak@aol.com

June 23, 2006

Zoe for Life  
3352 Mayfield Rd.  
Cleveland Hts, OH 44118

Dear Dedicated Workers of *Zoe for Life*,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

During the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Ukrainian Orthodox League Convention held in July of 2005 the Christian Caregiving and Missions Commission voted to sponsor a project to benefit *Zoe for Life*. During Great Lent chapters across the country were asked to collect money in baby bottles with the funds collected going to help your organization. This project raised \$1,800.86 which we hope will assist in fulfilling your mission to assist women in crisis pregnancies.

May God grant you success as you continue to serve those in need.

We remain...

Yours in Christ,

*Melanie A. Nakonachny*

Melanie A. Nakonachny  
Senior U.O.L. President

*Katya Carman*

Katya Carman  
Junior U.O.L. President

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**The winning entry from grades 9 through 12 is from Ariadne Kulp of Blue River, WI.  
Her home Parish is St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church, Blue River, WI. and is currently in  
Grade 10.**



What are my struggles as an Orthodox Christian? Being a teenager, many struggles come up, many things that question my faith, make me doubt my faith, and try to pull my faith away from me. There are people that try their hardest to turn you onto the wrong path. They try to persuade you to break the fast, they try to corrupt your mind, and they try to make you become something that is nothing like an Orthodox Christian.

I've had a hard time over the past year, not as hard as many I'm sure, but still very difficult. Last year I met a guy at school, who happened to be a strong Jehovah's Witness. Now, I am a big debater, and people know that about me. I speak my mind and am not afraid to voice my opinions ( I do it many times a day, can't really help myself).

So, we started talking at school, telling each other about our religions. I brought him a pamphlet so he'd have a better understanding of Orthodoxy, and he read it at school, then gave it back to me. We started hanging out after school then, talking for hours about our religions, arguing about them, and also talking about them on the internet for many hours at a time. After a while, though, I think we both realized that nothing would come of us arguing, neither of us would get anywhere with it. I have to say now, though, that before last year I didn't really know all that much about my faith. I just knew what I heard from my parents and family, and other basic things, but I myself never looked more deeply into it. Well, because of him I started looking more into Orthodoxy, finding out things, asking questions, just getting a much clearer and broader view about it. I'm very sorry to say that he put some doubts in my mind, as was one of his intentions, I'm sure. Every time after we talked I'd look up what we discussed, ask my parents questions about it, and in that way get rid of my doubts.

Anyway, we started hanging out then, just as friends, going to the movies, going out to eat, and talking about many other thing for hours. We then started to develop feelings for each other, which only grew and grew the more we hung out. The last, and final, time we hung out we ending up talking about us, our relationship, and we realized then that no matter how much we care for each other, no matter how deep our feelings were, because of our religions, we could never be with each other.

That, I think, was the hardest thing that I've ever had to deal with. I realized I loved him, but I knew we could never be together, even though it tore my heart up. But no matter how hard it is, I'm not going to sacrifice my faith for earthly love. We can't have some of the things that we so desperately want because God has something else in store for us. We think it's unfair now, yes, but we also don't always look at the full picture. Even if he would have converted to Orthodoxy, he would still have an incredibly hard time with it, which, in turn, would make my life very difficult. I pray for him a lot every day still, and I always will. We'll never understand God. He knows what He's doing, so we need to trust him and believe that He's doing what's right and what will bring us closer to him.

We'll never know the people that we touch. By talking to people about Orthodoxy, by showing them a different world, we've planted seed in their minds, seeds that could very well grow over time. It could be years later, years after you've lost touch, and you might never know about it, but they could very well find God. So we can't feel hopeless, we can't think that we didn't do anything for that person, because we more than likely did do something, as long as we did it with love and understanding.

We must remember to pray, pray all the time, for ourselves, for people around us, even for people we don't know. Every prayer helps. Prayer has helped me through all this; it showed me that I wasn't alone and that God is always there. It took away some of my hopelessness, gave me strength when I needed it.

So never give up prayer, never think God has abandoned you. He's always there; we just need to call on Him.

For more information on ZOE for Life!  
Please visit us on the Web at:  
[www.zoeforlifeonline.org](http://www.zoeforlifeonline.org)

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## Your Support Changes Lives!

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### \$1,000 Archangels

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Constance Zimmerman



### Help Wanted!

Have you been thinking the time has come for you to do something meaningful? Have you been longing to get involved with ZOE's work, but haven't known how? Do you have lots of enthusiasm, creativity and organizational skills? If the answer is yes, ZOE needs you!

We are looking for an energetic volunteer to co-ordinate people from across the country as they address the issue of Pure Living in their communities. They need up-to date information on current issues, copies of Newsletters and Pamphlets, and encouragement to help transmit the message that life is a gift from God.

Join us. The rewards are overwhelming! Call Paula at 440-893-9990. Let us see how you can put your talents to work for Him.

THANK YOU to the  
CHRISTIAN BLUE PAGES  
a Christian business directory  
of Greater Cleveland  
[www.ChristianBluePages.com](http://www.ChristianBluePages.com)

ZOE is located on page 28

ZOE Statistics, 9-1-2005 to 8-31-2006  
 Calls: 233  
 Hotline Calls: 57  
 E-Mails: 299  
 Adoption Inquiries: 37  
 Women In Crisis: 14  
 Abortions Averted: YES!!

The pleasure of your company  
 is requested at the  
 dedication and house blessing  
 of ZOE House on  
 Sunday, January 21, 2007  
 at 6:00 p.m.  
 ZOE House  
 5935 State Road  
 Parma, OH

Refreshments, fellowship and tours  
 immediately following

Kindly RSVP to Kathy by January 10th  
 at  
 440-842-6639

*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:**



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