



Protection of the Holy Mother of God Orthodox Church

Monthly Parish Bulletin
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Children: The Heartbeat of the Church

By Psa. Stephanie Subu

I once read an article dealing with the struggles of parenting children during church services, hoping I could find some solace after a difficult morning at Liturgy. To my delight, a Bishop was quoted on the subject as saying, "We are the body of Christ... but the children are the heartbeat. Without them, there is no life in the Church."

Was this his kind way of acknowledging that like the heart, children have a rhythm and hum that can be heard in the sanctuary? Well, sure. But this analogy goes far deeper than reminding parishioners to accommodate a little "noise" during services.

Let us reflect then how we should view the participation of children in the body of Christ as we would view the function of the heart in our own body.

The human heart is one of our most important organs and plays a vital role in sustaining our life. It pumps blood, circulating throughout our body necessary nutrients and oxygen. It is a sensitive muscle that reacts to what we taste, touch, smell, see, and hear. We need to take care of it and make sure it stays healthy and strong. How do we do this? By eating a proper diet, exercising regularly, and seeing the doctor when ill and healthy. What happens if we do not do what is prescribed? The heart will get sick, become weak, and eventually will stop working.

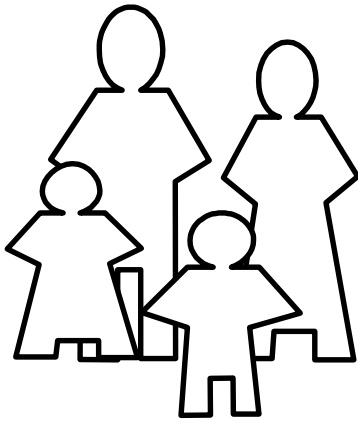
The same will happen with our children. Like the heart, children are active, rather than passive, circulating around the church from their inquisitive spirit to know God. They love to touch, taste, smell, see, and hear. The Orthodox Church provides the perfect environment to invite children to worship God in a multi-sensual experience: they listen to the music and words of prayer, smell incense, taste communion, kiss icons, and visualize the cross. These are all works of active participation of full worship, which is a sign of healthy spirit. To see children innocently come up to an icon or image of the cross to venerate it during services is such a blessing! How I wish we could be like children and "run" up the aisle when it's time for communion, and be filled with excitement and awe! All this is not done out of impropriety, but it is the natural way we are created to worship. It is difficult to expect little ones to be passive and be still as a cat when there is so much to experience!

Continued on next page

An English Speaking Parish Community of the Orthodox Church in America
Most Rev. Archbishop NATHANIEL of Detroit & the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America

Rev. Fr. David G. Subu, Parish Priest
Protodeacon Peter Danilchick, Parish Deacon
Christopher Thomas, Parish Council President

Of course, some hearts in the church beat a little more loudly or harder than others, which like the body, can make parents tired and exhausted from trying to keep their children from being a distraction. Though we do our best to have them



move to a slower beat, it is sometimes necessary to take them out of the sanctuary and calm them down. Parenting children during services is a cross that can be difficult to bear. It is most welcomed when others can share this cross by offering to help busy parents out or giving useful advice. What does not contribute to the health and vitality of the parish, however, are criticisms and complaints that discourage parents from taking children to church. By the time parents might feel brave enough to come back, it will be too late for their children and they will be in a weakened spiritual state.

So with all this in mind, how can we ensure that the “heartbeat” of the Church stays active, healthy, yet won’t create too much stress for parents and others? Like the physical heart, we need to make sure children have a prescription for spiritual health:

1. **Feeding a proper diet** by filling their souls with Holy Communion regularly.
2. **Exercising** their faith by participating in church services, home prayer, fasting, youth activities, and church school. As with all exercises, the more you work out by attending services and praying at home, children will grow stronger in faith as well. Remember that all children go through “wobble” stages. The more you go to church, the quicker they adjust.
3. **Visiting Fr. David** once every feast cycle or fast period as a check up on the state of

their soul. Like adults, children need opportunity to talk about their relationship with God, their families, and friends to make sure they are staying “on target” with their spiritual life. The more often they can talk with a priest, the easier the relationship will be over time as an adult.

4. **Watching out for the fat!** In this case, it means not overindulging your child in unhealthy habits like too much TV, video games, and internet. Like all diets, moderation is key.
5. **Not overextending.** Find a balance between secular activities and those of church life. The number one killer of the child’s spiritual development is putting all other activities before God, making the spiritual life last. As in the Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt not put any other god before me.” A “god” does not have to be ethereal or a person, but can be an activity or institution that is valued more than Him. We want to teach children to give first fruits, not what is left over from a heavy schedule of school activities, family obligations, and sporting events.

In Christ,

Psa. Stephanie

Women’s Prayer Group Forming

One of the most important ministries we do as Christians is pray for each other. As an outreach of the Women’s Bible Study, an informal women’s prayer group is being started that focuses on supplications for the sick, the well, and any other issues or concerns someone might have. Women are invited to join us in our homes starting on Thursday, August 10th at 7:30 pm. If you have further questions or would like directions, please contact Michaela Duta at michaeladuta@hotmail.com or Lisa Robertson at lisaileen@cox.net.

Perspective: Orthodoxy in America

The following article by Frederica Mathewes-Green appears in a recent issue of Sacred History magazine, a new illustrated, glossy publication that explores historical information about all religions. For more information on this magazine, visit [www. Sacredhistorymagazine.com](http://www.Sacredhistorymagazine.com).

Deep in the heart of a typical American city there is a magnificent old Orthodox church. The community housed here was founded about a hundred years ago, a gathering of families who had emigrated from Greece, Russia, Syria, or some other ethnically Orthodox land.

These newcomers found America vast, confusing, and intimidating. They banded together and formed a congregation, then called a priest from the “old country.” The growing parish was an island of familiarity, a place where they could not only worship in the language they longed all week to hear, but also share news from home, enjoy the foods and dancing that eased homesickness, and choose mates for their growing children.

Time passed. The parishioners saved up and bought a church building from a Protestant congregation. They beautified it lavishly, with icons that looked vaguely Italian, in a 19th century devotional style. They look more like the kind of art that Americans think is beautiful than the austere Eastern icon style. There were other adaptations, too. In the old country, they had sung all the hymns a cappella, but this church building came with an organ, so they learned to play it. Back home, there were no pews, just a few benches along the walls for the elderly; during worship everyone stands in the presence of God, just as they would before a king. But this building came with pews, so they learned to sit down between prayers. They wanted to be good Americans.

As decades passed, feasts and weddings and funerals were celebrated in this building, and it was imbued with a thousand dear memories. But today, on a typical Sunday, the pews are about a third full. Most of the heads in the congregation are gray.

On the outskirts of town, in a strip shopping mall, there is an Orthodox mission. Three years ago this priest was a Protestant pastor. He was able to do most of his theological training by correspondence, while still working in his previous congregation, and spent just one year in residence at an Orthodox seminary. On the day of his chrismation (the service that makes a person a member of the Orthodox church), a couple of dozen members of that old congregation came with him. They are enthusiastic about this new faith, strongly committed to each other, and exhilarated by this adventure.

They will talk to friends and neighbors about the excellence of Orthodoxy whether the others want to listen or not.

The small community located cheap rental space, and decked it with readymade icons purchased on the internet, carefully chosen for their historic significance and beauty. They taught themselves to sing hymns to the ancient melodies. They spurn the idea of pews or an organ. They aren't interested in looking like typical Americans; they want to be Orthodox in the classic style, and when this means being counter-cultural, they rather enjoy it. On a typical Sunday, most of the attendees are in their 30's, and many dads hold toddlers on their shoulders. The room is packed to the walls.

What happened?

The beautiful old church downtown is suffering loss due to changing needs in the congregation. While it was vital to emphasize the ethnic mother tongue and ties to the old country a hundred, or even fifty, years ago, recent generations have felt less of this need. It seems to them that the only place where ethnic identity even comes up is at church; everywhere else they go they are just plain Americans. Most younger people like it that way. They see no reason to marry within the community. The only place they encounter the old language is at church or grandma's house. While they are proud of their heritage, it doesn't dominate their daily lives any more.

Unfortunately, some will discard their faith as well. Perhaps they attended church every week all their childhood, but never understood what was being said in worship. Orthodox faith looked like a matter of going through the motions, and it's easy enough for them to drift away as adults. Some sleep in on Sunday mornings, while others transfer membership to established mainline churches, as a way of completing their transition to upscale American life.

Others will visit the churches of their evangelical friends and be surprised and moved by the content of fervent hymns and prayers. They might feel, with some bitterness, that a faith this vibrant has never been presented to them before. They might decide that the Orthodox church of their childhood is nothing but dead ritual, and gladly switch allegiance to a livelier church.

Zooming past them on the other side of the beltway are the mostly young families flowing into Orthodoxy from other backgrounds. The range among these converts is vast. Some are leaving “low-church” congregations, because they find that ancient liturgical worship satisfies a longing to worship God with awe and beauty. Some are leaving mainline congregations, because they find Orthodoxy's structural foundation in the early church's faith and practice guarantees stability. Some are leaving a heady, intellectual Christianity for one that provides access to mystery and sacrament. Some are leaving an exuberant Spirit-filled background for one which provides careful discernment, accountability, and spiritual direction—not to mention two millennia of experience—yet is

comfortable with miracles, angels, and visions. And some who have been involved in Eastern religions find that Orthodoxy offers a similarly ancient tradition of spiritual transformation, but centered in the compelling presence of the God-man Jesus Christ.

Are the downtown Orthodox and the strip-mall Orthodox prone to collide? Surprisingly, no. Relations are friendly, and the communities support each other's events, and worship together in joint services a few times a year. They are in full communion with each other and hold the same moral and theological beliefs. This might seem strange to American Protestants and Catholics, who are used to fierce strife not just between but within denominations, but there is no liberal-conservative divide in Orthodoxy.

This tacit unity arises because Orthodox don't look to an earthly leader or a malleable text as their authority, but rather to the faith and practice of the early church. This mode of Christianity has not been excavated from the Bible in recent centuries, but has been passed down uninterrupted, from parent to child, through long unbroken years. And since nobody can change the past, nobody can change the faith. The beliefs, practices, and moral teaching will stay the same from church to church, from country to country, and from century to century. One important mechanism for supporting this continuity is the fact that Orthodox do not revise their worship services. The downtown church and the one in the mall both celebrate a Sunday liturgy in use since the fourth century, and earlier.

Another reason that converts have been blended into this ancient church so readily is the characteristic friendliness and hospitality of Middle Easterners. This is no doubt one reason why so many of the first wave of converts came in by way of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, with international headquarters in Damascus. The Antiochian Archdiocese is the second largest Orthodox body (a "jurisdiction," not a "denomination") in the United States, one of about a dozen, including Greek, Romanian, Ukrainian, and others.

The Antiochians were ahead of the curve in seeing the need for a way that clergymen in other churches could travel from their current position to an Orthodox pastorate. In the watershed year of 1989 the Antiochians reaped the bounty of this foresight, as dozens of pastors and their congregations—a total of some 2,000 individuals nationwide—were chrismated. The other Archdioceses are catching up, and throughout American Orthodoxy well above half the clergy are now converts—a dose of enthusiasm that is leavening the entire church.

A third reason converts have been welcomed rather than snubbed probably can be ascribed to the privileged position of Anglos in American culture. Many ethnic Orthodox feel like outsiders, even after the passage of generations. We get a glimpse of this in the childhood scene in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," in which Toula feels that in comparison with

the willowy blondes in her class she is too dark, too fat, and eats funny foods. If Episcopalians occupy the top of the social heap, then the sight of Episcopal clergy leaving their careers in order to start over in humble Orthodox missions is something native Orthodox find astounding. They are delighted to welcome in these newcomers, and find new pride in their ancient faith.

Indeed, they may begin to understand their faith for the first time. Converts are usually thoroughly well-read, and champions at book-buying and internet research. They may have digested many volumes of information about Orthodox theology and practice before setting foot in a church. They make zealous and articulate converts, and life-long Orthodox generally find their enthusiasm appealing and affirming. Many also find it contagious, and in the wake of converts there often spring up "reverts," ethnic Orthodox who are discovering new meaning in the faith they've been part of all their lives.

What lies ahead? When immigrants landed on these shores a century or more ago, it was understandable that they would establish congregations based on their language and national background. Much the same happened among Catholic immigrants in the 19th century, who set up separate Italian, German, and Irish Catholic parishes. But with the passage of time all those coalesced into simply-American Catholic parishes, and Orthodox churches are undergoing a similar process.

The complicating extra step is that each of the dozen-or-so Orthodox jurisdictions was established in relationship with a different authority in the old country. Those connections must be dissolved, and the American entities granted independence, before they are free to merge into one American church. This is bound to be a sometimes-painful process, especially if the old-country church is struggling to survive in conditions of economic stress or even persecution. The process is under way, but it may take some years to complete—not least because Orthodox generally don't share American concepts of efficiency.

Administrative unity also feels less urgent because theological unity already exists. Unlike Western Christianity, Eastern Orthodoxy has not been plagued by denominational splintering; it is already "one church" in the most important ways. Administrative unity will make little difference on Sunday morning. Where divisions occur among Orthodox, it is due to basic human sin—pride, power-hunger, greed—rather than disagreement about what the faith entails.

When Western Christians first examine this faith, it seems "Eastern" indeed—more mystical, more rooted in personal experience of God's presence, less confident of the ability of words to express numinous truth. But as weary Western Christians continue to flood into Orthodoxy, the day is coming when it won't be "Eastern" at all—just American. -*Frederica Mathewes-Green*, www.frederica.com

Help The Reading Connection

St. Mary's continuously accepts donations of reading materials and school supplies for The Reading Connection, an Arlington-based 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to bringing books and a lifelong love of reading to children in housing crisis.

However, a special emphasis is made in late summer to collect items for the 'back to school' bags that TRC puts together for children who otherwise wouldn't have them. Judy Hijkata of TRC says they especially need the following items:

- kids' scissors
- boxes of markers (8 or 10 to a box)
- 1.5-inch binders
- scribble pads (unlined white paper) or tablets made for kindergarteners, first and second graders (made especially for kids just learning to print)
- glue sticks, glitter glue, erasers, pencil sharpeners, and rulers

The Reading Connection also needs donations of new books for the children. Suggested titles include:

- *Dora (The Explorer)* books, published by Simon and Schuster (in the paperback 8" x 8" format)
- *Little Bill* books, published by Simon and Schuster (in the paperback 8" x 8" format)
- *Captain Underpants* series books, by Dav Pilkey
- *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, numbers 1 through 11
- *Alex Ryder* mysteries by Anthony Horowitz in paperback
- *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini in paperback.

We will be collecting back-to-school supplies for TRC through the month of August. Please give generously, and place your donations in the collection box by the library downstairs. For any questions or clarification contact Jeff Beranek at (703) 875-3090 or by e-mail at jmberanek@msn.com, or in person at coffee hour.

Volunteer Opportunities

Parishioner Nia Gianulis is coordinating a new partnership between St. Mary Orthodox Church and the ministry Doorways, a women's shelter located in the Falls Church area. So far we have two opportunities to help this life-changing ministry: hosting a "holiday wishes" (Christmas!) party in December, and hosting a "Dinner With Friends" in

February. Our role would be to prepare a meal, serve the meal, and host the party activities for the children and mothers. Nia is also looking into opportunities for St. Mary volunteers to help the shelter on a monthly basis, perhaps by serving a monthly meal.

To offer your time and talents to this worthwhile ministry, contact Nia Gianulis at niagia@hotmail.com.

September Ministries Conference

CANAAN, PA [OCA Communications] — [Saint Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary](#) will be the site of a skill-building conference, "Equipping the Saints: Building Skills for Education and Youth Ministries," on Saturday, September 30, 2006.

With the blessing of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, the conference is being sponsored by the OCA Departments of [Christian Education](#) and [Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries](#), in partnership with the [Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania](#). The conference is geared specifically for teachers, youth ministers, clergy, and lay persons.

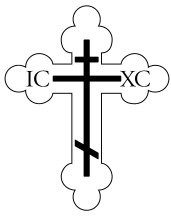
Presenters and workshop leaders will include Mrs. Valerie Zahirsky, Mrs. Myra Kovalak, and other DCE members; Deacon Joseph Matusiak, Youth Department director; the Very Revs. David Mahaffey and John Matusiak; and other department members.

In addition to keynote presentations on the conference theme, several individual workshop sessions will be offered. Topics will include ways to develop parish youth ministries from scratch, the welcoming classroom, making the distinction between youth ministry and youth activity, curriculum resources and planning, and discerning effective teaching methods.

A variety of displays highlighting the many educational resources available for parish use will also be available.

The \$10.00 registration fee covers all conference events, materials, and lunch. Checks should be made payable to the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. Special rates for out-of-town participants desiring overnight accommodations are available by contacting the Comfort Inn, Hamlin, PA, at 570-689-4148; fax 570-689-3043 (mention Saint Tikhon's Seminary when making reservations).

To register, contact Maria Proch at smile9561@juno.com or 1107 Sunset Drive, Clarks Summit, PA 18411; or log on to the DCE web site at dce.oca.org. Additional information may be obtained by writing christianeducation@oca.org. Deadline for registration is September 22.



**+ PROTECTION OF THE HOLY MOTHER OF
GOD CHURCH PARISH CALENDAR**

AUGUST 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
July 30 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 Liturgy	31 Office, 3-7 PM 7:00 PM Vespers	August 1 Procession of Cross 10 AM Liturgy w/ Holy Water 7:00 PM Paraclesis 7:30 PM Women's Bible Study (Dormition Fast)	2 7:00 PM Paraclesis (fast)	3 Office, 9-5 7:00 PM Paraclesis 7:30 PM Parish Council (fast)	4 7:00 PM Paraclesis (fast)	5 Eve of Transfiguration 5:00 PM Vespers with Litya (fast)
6 Holy Transfiguration 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 Liturgy <i>Blessing of first fruits and nuts</i> (fast)	7 Office, 3-7 PM 7:00 PM Paraclesis (fast)	8 7:00 PM Paraclesis (fast)	9 Relics of St Herman of Alaska 7:00 PM Paraclesis (fast)	10 Office, 9-5 7:00 PM Paraclesis 7:30 PM Financial Committee (fast)	11 7:00 PM Paraclesis (fast)	12 St. Timothy 5:00 PM Vespers (fast)
13 St. Hippolytus 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 Liturgy 12:00 Noon Sunday School Info Meeting (fast)	14 Office, 3-7 PM 7:00 PM Vigil (fast)	15 Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary Theotokos 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy	16 Ss. Constantine Brancoveanu and his sons 7:00 PM Akathist (fast)	17 Office, 9-5	18 Men's Retreat to St. Tikhon Monastery Aug. 18-20 (fast)	19 St. Andrew the General NO Vespers
20 Prophet Samuel 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 Liturgy	21 Office, 3-7 PM	22	23 7:00 PM Vespers (fast)	24 St. Cosmas of Aitolia Office, 9-5	25 (fast)	26 Sts. Adrian and Natalia Cap-AROY outing to Lake
27 Martyr Eftalia 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 Liturgy	28 Office, 3-7 PM 7:00 PM Vespers	29 Beheading John the Baptist 7:00 AM Divine Liturgy (strict fast)	30 St. Alexander of Constantinople Office, 9-5 7:00 PM Vespers (fast)	31 Nat'l AROY Convention Dearborn Hts., MI	Sept. 1 (fast)	2 St. Mamas NO Vespers

Special Events in August

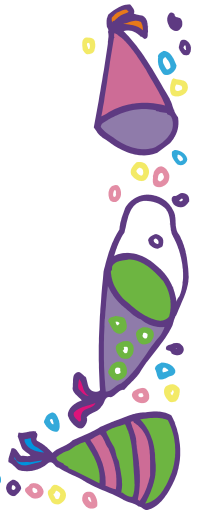
- **Dormition Fast.** Several special services occur in the first two weeks of August in the Orthodox tradition, with the beginning of the Dormition of the Mother of God Fast. On August 1st we have the Procession of the Holy Cross, similar to the third Sunday of Lent, followed by a blessing of Holy Water. Families with children are especially invited to come to this service, and it is scheduled for 10 a.m., Tuesday, August 1st. Starting that night, the church offers the special prayers of Paracletis, or service of comfort, asking the intercessions of our protector the Holy Mother of God. This is served each night (except Saturday) during the fast at 7:00 p.m.
- On Sunday, August 6th, we celebrate the **Transfiguration** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with a festal liturgy followed by the blessing of fruits and nuts, particularly the fresh and new fruits of the season. Please bring a basket to bless that Sunday!
- **Sunday School Informational Meeting.** On Sunday, August 13th after Liturgy we will have an open forum for parents of Sunday School parents and students to learn and ask about our Sunday School Program for Fall 2006. We are planning to adapt the class schedule to an earlier time and wish to accommodate all families as much as possible for the benefit and salvation of all.
- **Feast of the Dormition: “St. Mary’s Day.”** This is the greatest of the feast days dedicated to the Virgin Mary, protector and patron of our parish. We will honor her with song as is truly meet with a full schedule of services, including the Vigil on the night before (combining Vespers and Matins), which includes a **special procession** very much like that Holy Friday, and liturgy the next day at 10:00 a.m. so that especially families with children may attend the fullness of the feast, followed by a potluck picnic in the social hall. An ancient Orthodox tradition for all of you gardeners, chefs, and plant lovers is to bring fresh fragrant herbs on Dormition for blessing. Anyone who would like to donate such herbs to decorate the icon of the feast is welcome to do so!
- **Men’s Retreat to St. Tikhon’s Monastery August 18-20.** Our theme will be “Spiritual Warfare, Spiritual Reality: Living a Life of Prayer and Struggle.” Guest Speaker will be Dr.

Christopher Veniamin, PhD. (Oxon). Cost is a free-will donation to St. Tikhon’s Seminary for hosting us.

- **CAP-AROY-Youth Outing to Lakehouse:** The Youth Group of St. Mary’s has been invited for an outing at the Robertson’s lake house on Saturday, August 26th. Jr. High and Teens are welcome to come for a day of swimming, boating, and “last days of summer”-style fun. We’ll meet at the church and then carpool there. For more information, contact Lisa Robertson at 703-815-5576.

August Birthdays

- 8 Athanasios Rick Hanson
- 8 Lisa Robertson
- 9 Victoria Cherpes
- 11 Marie Ficken
- 11 Juliana Subu
- 12 Timothy Yuskavage
- 12 Cathy Dujmovic
- 15 Linda Cheplick
- 16 Andrew Berry
- 16 Mana Mussi
- 23 Panagiotos (Perry) Cherpes
- 24 Alex Yuskavage
- 27 Annalee Robertson



August Anniversaries

- 10 Lori Monica and Jonathan Jacobson
- 14 Lisa and Dave Robertson
- 16 Fr. David and Psa. Stephanie Subu
- 19 Eva Marie and Jeffrey Michael Beranek
- 26 Eleni and George Woglom

August Saint’s Name Days

- 26 St. Natalia: Natalya Sophia Beranek
- 30 St. Alexander of Constantinople: Alexander Woglom

Please send any corrections or omissions to updates@stmaryorthodox.org. We particularly need parishioners’ Saints’ Name Days as our list is incomplete.

*Monthly Bulletin of St Mary Orthodox Church
Copy Editor: Eleni Woglom Layout: Lori Monica Jacobson
Circulation: Ileana Alim and April Masick*

AROY Alert! - The AROY Convention will take place in Dearborn, Michigan, the Friday before Labor Day. If any of the youth wish to attend, contact Steve or Kathy Miroy at church or at yorimevets@yahoo.com. The Miroyes will chaperone a van-load of attendees and are planning a Virginia-themed suite for the convention.

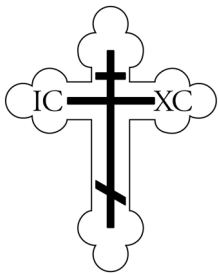
Women's Bible Study - The next meeting of the Women's Bible Study is Tuesday, August 1st, at 7:30 p.m. at the Woglom home in Fairfax. Led by Stacy Gullette, the group will be studying Chapter 8 of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Call Stacy Gullette at (703) 925-9247 for more information, or call Eleni Woglom at (703) 425-0834 for directions.

Looking to Ordain Some Weeders - Do you have a spare hour or two per week to help keep our grounds weed-free? If so, please contact Nick Dujmovic, our Grounds & Building Coordinator, at (703) 242-1432. This is a perfect activity for retirees or just about anyone with a bit of time to share. It's good for the body as well as the soul—and it helps beautify our church, so it's a good work as well.

Looking Forward to September

- **Parish Picnic at Cherry Hill Park** is September 10th.
- **Sunday School:** Teachers' meeting is on September 9th at 11:30 a.m. Sunday school orientation is September 10th, and the first day of classes is September 17th.
- **Pan-Orthodox Singles Event** September 23rd (more information coming soon).
- **International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC):** Fr. John Kaludas of IOCC will be visiting our parish on Saturday, September 16th, after Vespers, to talk to us about IOCC's work here and across the globe.

Questions, comments ,updates or submissions? E-mail us: newsletter@stmaryorthodox.org



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