

THE VEIL



JANUARY 2008

The Monthly Journal Covering the News at St. Mary's

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS, OLD YEAR'S TEMPTATIONS

By Rev. Fr. David G. Subu

Most of us will at least give a passing thought to the tradition of New Year's resolutions, and many of us will cynically dismiss the thought of even making them, knowing how easy it is to forget them or break them. And indeed, even we try to make a resolution on the basis of our own strength, we are likely doomed to failure. "Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." (Ps. 127) However, the good news is that striving to improve is not itself a bad thing, nor is it automatically doomed to failure, for "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil 4:13). If any of are serious at overcoming temptations and bad habits this new year, then here are a few ways in which Christ can strengthen us.

1. **Watchfulness**—"I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart..." (Hab. 2:1) In the Divine Liturgy we pray that receiving Holy Communion may be unto "awakening" or "watchfulness" of soul. When we are vigilant about what comes into our minds and sense, our souls and bodies, this is half the battle. Why? St. Peter tells us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8). When a soul is vigilant and watchful, the enemy does not have easy access to the gates of our soul. We also come to realize that even though the potential to sin exists throughout the day, the devil only launches the sortie of temptation when we are distracted and not paying attention to our spiritual state. Just as in war the actual combat tends to come in short bursts with long periods of waiting and watching and taunting, so too the crucial moments of decision between God and giving into temptation and bad habits are not constant but only arrived at after a period of build up. The watchful soul sees the temptation coming and can be

prepared to defend.

2. **Counter-attack!** "A strong offense makes a good defense!" In spiritual battle, we must always strive to retake the ground we have lost to sin. If nature abhors a vacuum—so does the soul! It is not enough to hold back the onslaught of temptations and to *not* sin, we must replace that sin and bad habit with the good habits of the virtues. If idle hands are the devil's playthings, then we must occupy our hands with good deeds and hard work. If eye causes us to sin, we must redirect it toward holy things, to reading scripture, to looking heavenward, spiritually "plucking it out" of this world. If our mouth is used to curse, we must fill it with a voice of prayer, blessing, praise, and repentance. By doing these things we give less and less ground from which the devil may launch his attacks against us. An enemy within the gates is always more deadly than the one outside.

3. **Strength in numbers!** "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed." (Jas. 5:16) If we are ever to be serious about overcoming our bad habits and to improving our state, we must involve others. Fellow strugglers in the fox-holes of spiritual warfare make it possible for Christian soldiers to hold their ground and fight the good fight. They keep us accountable, when we confess our problems and ask their help, they support us with the covering fire of prayer, they encourage us when our resolve starts to falter. Just opening up to another person, revealing to them our imperfections, and humbling ourselves to ask for another's help is a victory against pride and anathema to our enemy. A broken and contrite heart—these God will not despise, but the devil does!

May these three tactics be of use to all of us this new and blessed year of 2008 as we continue our striving for the crown of victory in Christ Jesus!

— Fr. David G. Subu

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

"Redeeming the Time, A.D. 2008"

By
Jon Jacobson

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:15-17)

One of my frequent wishes is for 26-hour days. I think of all that I could do with 120 additional minutes each morning: 30 more minutes of sleep, 30 more minutes for prayer and reading of Scripture, 30 more minutes on the treadmill, and 30 more minutes to enjoy with my family.

Sadly, however, I don't have those extra two hours. All I have are the 24 hours that God gives me each day of my life on this earth, until my final breath. During the busy season between Thanksgiving and Christmas, as the calendar year draws to a close, and as the Church in her wisdom calls us to fast and pray in preparation for the Feast of the Nativity, I find myself thinking with a certain self-pity and bitterness, "I have too little time to do all that I need and want to do." Then, after Christmas, during the slow, "fast-free" days between Christmas and New Year's Day, I find myself thinking just the opposite: that God has given me time to spare. On those lazy winter days, I sometimes get bored and think I can afford--and perhaps even have a God given right--to waste time doing "nothing" or just "hanging around" snacking on food, surfing the Internet, or watching TV.

Of course, my problems with time--whether having "too little" or "too much"--are not God's fault. My problems are with me. It's my self-delusion that leads me to pretend that I can accomplish all the things I want to do, without recognizing my limitations, setting priorities, and asking help from others so necessary work gets done. It's my self-love that causes me to waste time on frivolous things, rather than use time as an opportunity to show my love for God and the people He has placed in my life. And it's my lack of faith that causes me to complain about the finite quantity of time God gives me in the face of my various responsibilities. I fear that, if I don't accomplish all that others expect of me, or that I expect of myself, I won't impress mortal human beings, whereas my real concern should be using the gift of time to serve the Holy, Mighty, and Immortal God.

Each week Fr. David urges us to remember the Lord and His great love for us, but I have focused too little on "the one thing needful" (Luke 10:38-42). For falling short, I ask not only God's, but your forgiveness.

We move from the Nativity Fast to the twelve days of Christmas, to be followed by Theophany, the blessing of the waters and our homes, and our celebration of how "the worship of the Trinity was made manifest." God, in His mercy and love towards mankind, brings us to the end of the Year of Our Lord 2007 and the beginning of the Year of Our Lord 2008. He grants us the mystery of repentance, and allows us to see the true Light, receive the heavenly Spirit, and find the true Faith in the communion of the Holy Orthodox Church.

After five years at the Protection of the Holy Mother of God parish, I am full of gratitude for the work of Christ in our midst. I thank the Lord for the guidance of our priest; the witness of holy men and women such as His Eminence Nathaniel and Mother Gabriella; the piety of our Bible study and prayer groups; the enthusiasm of our chanters and choir members; the dedication of our Church School principal and teachers; the talent of our Christmas Pageant directors and performing artists; the faithfulness of our Parish Council members; and the generosity of our community in contributing towards the beautification of our church and the needs of our neighbors both far and near.

Above all, I thank Christ our God for entering into finite time and sharing our human nature, "for us and for our salvation." May He bless us and guide us in the New Year, and draw us closer to Himself and each other, so all of our remaining time may be lived for His glory, and seekers of truth and love may be drawn into His holy Church.

"The Veil" Monthly Journal
Protection of the Mother of God
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MINISTRIES IN FOCUS:

A monthly look at programs that enrich our parish and communities

2007 Women’s Nativity Retreat

By

Libby Hall, Retreat Participant

On Saturday, December 8, the St. Juliana’s Guild presented the annual Women’s Nativity Retreat, which drew almost 70 faithful from across our area, including Baltimore and one from Pennsylvania! This year’s theme was Silent Night, Holy Night: Finding Inner Peace in a Noisy World. Our speakers were Mother Gabriella, Abbess of Holy Dormition Monastery, and our own Debra Hile, who is one of our Sunday School teachers and church Chanters.



The first presentation was given by Mother Gabriella, who talked to us about tuning out the “noise” that distracts us from tuning into God. One way we can do this is to participate in all the feast days during the Nativity fast leading up to the birth of Christ. She highlighted how these 40 days should

be spent reflecting on the time Israel spent in the desert, which was period of purification before entering into the Promised Land. She also emphasized to give up the ‘vices’ of modernity that interfere with our ability to getting to know God intimately, rather than be a passing thought by setting spiritual priorities over secular ones.

After a short break, Debra Hile spoke on “Preserving Holiness in the Beltway.” Her focus was on recognizing the traits of “holiness”. She asked us what a holy person looks like and asked us to list character traits such as compassion, prayerful, joyful, calm in spirit, and many others. Debra then pointed out that if this is a holy person and we are called to be holy, then this is what we are to be too. How are



we to learn “holiness” when we each only get 24 hours in a day in one of the busiest cities in the country? This is best done by prayer, fasting, and reading the Bible. Simple things we can do at home. Attending church regularly is also just as important. She asked us to think of Saturday Vespers, Sunday Matins, and Diving Liturgy as all parts of a whole which lead up to communion, not just “extra services” for the sake of having them. She also challenged us to find out what God wants to do in our lives and let Him guide us in doing it.

Though the retreat officially ended following Debra’s talk, the day was not over. After a one hour break, Great Vespers with Litya was served, which was attended by almost 80 faithful men and women who came to pray and worship together in anticipation for Mother Gabriella’s final presentation.

Mother Gabriella’s last talk built on what Debra had said about preserving holiness in ourselves and each other. To the parents there, she said that building a child is building a temple of God. What an awesome responsibility! If you are here at Church, “we need your help”. Who is “we”? In the church we are one. We are we! Union with God is pursued outside the cloister in everyday life. The calling is achieved in community and is a call to everyone. Asceticism is an important part of the Christian life. Self-discipline is crucial to the spiritual life. Our society offers us the greatest opportunities to be saints! The aspects of modern life are our biggest impediments. WE created “things” for our own destruction. These “things” distract us from God by keeping us too busy to think about who God is and who we are as His children. We need to take time to meditate. We need to make room in the “Inn” of our hearts for Christ.

MINISTRY ‘MINDERS

- **M.O.O.P.S** (Mother’s of Orthodox Pre-Schoolers) will meet on **Thursday January 10th and 24th from 10:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.** at St. Mary’s.
- **WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY**-The next meeting will be on **Tuesday, January 15 at 7:30** in the **home of Eleni Woglom**. All are welcomed!
- **O.M.B.** (Orthodox Men’s Bible Study) The next meeting of the Orthodox Men’s Bible study will be **Thursday, January 17 at 7:30 p.m.**, at St. Mary’s.

Protection of the Holy Mother of God Orthodox Church January 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 10 AM - 11:45 AM Divine Liturgy	31 5PM - 12 AM New Year's Eve Celebration	January 1 New Year's Day	2	3 9 AM - 12 PM Office Hours	4	5 Eve of Theophany 9 AM - 10:30 AM Liturgy of St. John w/ Blessing of Waters 10:30 AM - 12 PM Choir Practice 5 PM - 6 PM Great Vespers of Theophany
6 Theophany 9 AM - 10 AM Matins 10 AM - 11:45 AM Divine Liturgy 11:30 AM - 12 PM Blessing of Holy Water 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	7 St. John the Baptist 3 PM - 6 PM Office Hours 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	8 9 AM - 12 PM Office Hours 3 PM - 6 PM Office Hours 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	9 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings 7 PM - 7:30 PM Vespers	10 9 AM - 12 PM Office Hours 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM MOOPS 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM Parish Council	11 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	12 5 PM - 5:45 PM Vespers 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings
13 Sunday after Theophany 9 AM - 10 AM Matins 10 AM - 11:45 AM Divine Liturgy 11:30 AM - 12 PM New Member Sunday 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	14 3 PM - 6 PM Office Hours 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	15 9 AM - 12 PM Office Hours 3 PM - 6 PM Office Hours 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings 7:30 PM - 9 PM Women's Bible Study	16 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings 7 PM - 7:30 PM Vespers	17 St. Anthony the Great 7 AM - 8 AM Divine Liturgy 9 AM - 12 PM Office Hours 7:30 PM - 9 PM Men's Bible Study	18 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	19 10 AM - 12 PM Choir Practice 2 PM - 4 PM Inter-Orthodox Service (TBA) 5 PM - 5:45 PM Vespers 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings
20 St. Euthymius the Great 9 AM - 10 AM Matins 10 AM - 11:45 AM Divine Liturgy 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 3 PM - 6 PM Office Hours 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings 6 PM - 6:30 PM Prayers for our Troops	22 9 AM - 12 PM Office Hours 3 PM - 6 PM Office Hours 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	23 10 AM - 11 AM Adult Education: Jesus Christ and the Temple 7 PM - 7:30 PM Vespers	24 9 AM - 12 PM Office Hours 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM MOOPS 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	25 St. Gregory the Theologian 7 AM - 8 AM Divine Liturgy	26 5 PM - 5:45 PM Vespers 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings
27 St. John Chrysostom 9 AM - 10 AM Matins 10 AM - 11:45 AM Divine Liturgy 12 PM - 2 PM Annual Parish Assembly 6 PM - 9 PM Home Blessings	28 3 PM - 6 PM Office Hours 6 PM - 6:30 PM Prayers for our Troops	29 9 AM - 12 PM Office Hours 3 PM - 6 PM Office Hours	30 Three Hierarchs 7 AM - 8 AM Divine Liturgy 10 AM - 11 AM Adult Education: Jesus Christ and the Temple 7 PM - 7:30 PM Vespers	31 9 AM - 12 PM Office Hours	1	2 Presentation of the Lord 9 AM - 10 AM Divine Liturgy with blessing of candles 10 AM - 12 PM Choir Practice 5 PM - 5:45 PM Vespers

**MANY YEARS!
MANY CHEERS!**

January Birthdays

- 2 Greg Zimmerli
- 4 Armand Scala II
- 7 Mihail Ziu
- 9 Demitri Apodaca
- 16 Adrian Apodaca
- 24 Davis Myers Robertson
- 25 Luna Asghedom
- 31 Toni Robertson

January Anniversaries

- 30 Sarah & Arthur Zimmerli
- 31 Julie & John Grecco

January Saint's Name Days

- 12 St. Tatiana, Martyr in Rome-
Dsa. *Tanya Danilchick*

**JANUARY COFFEE
HOUR SPONSORS**

January 6- The Subu Family

Traditional Romanian "St. John the Baptist" pork dinner! Join us!

January 13- Sponsor Needed

New Member Sunday

January 20- The Maxim Family

In memory of Dorina's father, Gheorghe Andriescu, on his 40th day of repose.

January 27- Parish Council

Annual Parish Assembly

**CALL TO ORDER OF ANNUAL
PARISH ASSEMBLY**

**Protection of the Holy Mother of God
Orthodox Church**
7223 Roosevelt Ave., Falls Church, VA 22042

**2008 Annual Parish Assembly Agenda
(Proposed)**

Sunday, January 27, 2008

12:00 PM until completion of business

- I. Opening Prayer
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Proposed Agenda
- IV. Approval of Parliamentarian and Tellers
- V. Review and Approval of January 2008 Parish Council Minutes
- VI. Pastor's Report
- VII. Parish Council President's Report
- VIII. Ladies Gild President's Report
- IX. Sunday School Principal's Report
- X. AROY President's Report
- XI. Icon Project Report
- XII. Auditors' Report
- XIII. Treasurer's Report
- XIV. Recommended 2008 Budget Proposal from the Parish Council
- XV. Recommended 2008 Parish Council Slate and Election of the Parish Council
- XVI. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

AROUND THE COFFEE URN

News, Updates, and more!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT ADULT EDUCATION WINTER 2008 SERIES TO BEGIN!

January 23-March 5: Jesus Christ and the Temple by George Barrois. We will be looking at the historical development of liturgy and worship from the earliest times of the Old Testament to its culmination in the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ and how that worship has been transformed in the New Testament. We'll pay particular attention at how Orthodox Christianity preserves the quality and reverence of pre-Christian Jewish practice while expressing the renewal of the Spirit in the New Covenant. Please join us at St. Mary's on Wednesday evenings following the 7:00 P.M. Vesper service! All welcome.

HOUSE BLESSING SEASON IS HERE!

Fr. David wants to visit you this January during this season of Theophany with a traditional home blessing! Besides having your home blessed with holy water, this tradition is an excellent time for Fr. David to get to know you and your family better. A prayer list with instructions is included on page 3 in this newsletter. Please arrange with Fr. David a convenient time for you at frdavid@stmaryorthodox.org or 703-254-8914.

NEW ST. MARY'S MEMBERS TO BE RECOGNIZED!

Please join us **Sunday January 13** as we recognize and welcome new members who joined St. Mary's during 2007. Come and meet them personally during a special coffee hour to follow!

ENRICH YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE WITH WEEKDAY SERVICES

In addition to Wednesday night Vespers, we will also be offering morning liturgies (7 AM) on the 17th (St. Anthony), the 25th (St. Gregory the Theologian) and the 30th (Three Hierarchs), as well as Saturday festal liturgies (9 AM) for the great Feasts for Theophany (January 5-6) and Presentation of our Lord (Feb. 2).

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS! PRAY FOR THEM!

Join us in our "Prayer Surge" on Mondays starting again on January 21 at 6:00 P.M. in support of our troops. "The surge is working!"--Joe Lieberman. "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."--St. Paul, 1 Cor. 15:57.

As we reach the end of 2007, we remember with gratitude all who have made offerings to the Lord, including those who have offered Christmas flowers in memory of:

Dinu C. Alim

Homer and Estelle Bacas

Fr. Daniel Donovan and Matushka

Helen Donovan

Fr. Niklos

Barbara and Martin Herold

Richard Hile

Catherine Lettow

Gheorghe Andriescu

Eva Pavuk

William I. Wright

and for the health of

Joseph Sikorski

...and on behalf of all the loved ones of our community.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE
FOR NEXT ISSUE:
JANUARY 20th!**

Traditional St. John the Baptist Dinner

Sunday, January 6th 11:30 P.M.

Menu:

Sarmale (Stuffed Cabbage)

Kielbasa

Mamaliga cu Brinza (Corn meal mush with cheese casserole)

Fasole Fricata (Mashed northern beans)

Salad

Dessert



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In this issue: Home Blessings,
Annual Parish Assembly, Nativity
Retreat Recap, and more. . . .