



# Newsletter

Of the Eastern Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

## Pilgrimage on the Road to Reconciliation

Reconciliation. What does it mean in terms of faith and race – our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and our fellow man? Orthodox Christians recently gathered to answer this question in prayer and fellowship at Joy of All Who Sorrow Orthodox Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.

When Fr. Nicholas Letten invited me to join him and Matushka Connie Shank's pilgrimage to The Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black's 23rd annual conference, Oct. 7-9, I said I'd consider it. When he said, "No, I think you *really* should go," I knew I had better. I'm glad I did.



*The Divine Liturgy. Celebrated by His Grace, Bishop Neophitos of Kenya, with clergy in attendance.*

The fellowship was blessed with many new acquaintances and, for most of us, a reunion with lots of old ones. (I even met a goddaughter I hadn't seen since she was a toddler more than 20 years ago!) What also piqued my interest was that – in conjunction with the brotherhood's mission of "multiracial, pan-Orthodox fellowship," study of the Church's "ancient African roots" and Orthodox evangelism to African American communities – it had chosen "Principles of Reconciliation" as this year's theme.

Fr. Jerome Sanderson, one of the co-founders of the St. Moses Brotherhood, along with Fr. Moses Berry, emceed the event with opening remarks on how it had grown, from its humble beginnings when the two clerics were the only black Eastern Orthodox priests in the country, to the scores of black (and white) clergy and laity on hand for the event nearly a quarter of a century later.

Following Fr. Jerome's welcome, an African American panel of "young Orthodox preachers" took questions from the audience – well, actually only two questions. That's because the topic of the second – recent, long-overdue national attention to law enforcement practices toward African Americans and other minorities – exhausted the allotted time as nearly all seven panel members weighed in on it.

While we all seemed about as prepared to address reconciliation in this context as the rest of America, diverse perspectives from panel members – which ranged from a former activist to a member of a family with a proud history in law



enforcement – took on the topic nonetheless. Needless to say, it neither set the tone of the conference, nor made the playlist for the Ancient Faith Radio podcast being recorded.

What did set the tone for the event, however (and perhaps rightly so), was the first presentation that soon followed: “Abba Moses Historical Sketch and Sayings with Moses Spirituals.” Ms. E. Elmore unfurled a heartfelt medley of spirituals that highlighted – in a classical Christian context – African American experiences, punctuated with vignettes taken from Patristic writings on the life of St. Moses the Black, as read by Dr. Carla Thomas.

With operatic breadth and Gospel depth, songs such as “Were You There” (when they crucified my Lord), and “Swing Low Sweet Chariot” laid the groundwork for the weekend, while a beautiful yet heart-wrenching rendition of “Mamma, is Massa Gonna Sell Us Tomorrow?” spoke softly to the need for racial reconciliation in America.

Throughout the weekend, presenters continued to address reconciliation from a variety of vantages. Dr. Thomas, an M.D. and Orthodox missionary, espoused fundamentals for spreading the faith in her talk “Rx for Reconciling African Americans to the Orthodox Church.”

Mother Katherine Weston expounded on “Deep Reconciliation: Looking Beneath the Surface” to untangle the socio-psychological realities that – especially of late – make differences of opinion seem so much more important than singularity of spirit.

In his final talk, Fr. Jerome drove home the importance of repentance, humility and forbearance for our salvation – principles of our ultimate reconciliation with

God. Then Fr. Alexii Altschul, a white hieromonk and also cofounder of St. Moses Brotherhood, spoke from the heart about Scripture and literature on the Church’s understanding of how “the sins of our fathers” also are worthy of our repentance – and how denial of this truth is detrimental to our reconciliation both with God and our brother.

Fr. Paul Abernathy offered a glimpse of the potential fullness of American Orthodox culture as well as missionary work. In a fiery Southern-style sermon, the newly ordained priest drew on his own community work in Pittsburgh, Pa., to call on Orthodox laity and clergy alike to get down into the trenches and labor for the Lord to meet all the needs of our communities.

The recently ordained Fr. Dn. Turbo Qualls drew on the Old Testament account of Jacob and Esau as a parable for how both humility before God and our brother are essential for truly reconciling a racial divide. He noted how the Old Testament prophetic voice of advocacy resonates with the African American experience, and drew on a comparison of the Apostles Peter and Paul as an allegory for how such divides might be reconciled within the Church.

The major highlight of the conference was His Grace Bishop Neophitos, who traveled from Kenya to share his inspiring successes and challenges as that country’s first native-born Orthodox hierarch. His sometimes humorous accounts of working to foster both growth and self-sufficiency in Kenya’s Orthodox Church was rivaled only by his impromptu call on our own Matushka Connie and another attendee to teach us all a Swahili song they learned on their recent missionary trip to his diocese. Truly, “Mongo



sawa sawa” (by the Grace of God, things are getting better).



*His Grace, Bishop Neophitos of Kenya*

Lectures from The Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black’s 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference can be heard online at Ancient Faith Radio, and at: <http://mosestheblack.org/past-conferences/#conferences>. More about The Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black is available at <http://mosestheblack.org>.

Those wishing to experience this rare and much-needed ministry firsthand should consider attending next year’s conference. Unconfirmed rumor has it that it will be in Princeton, NJ. Hope to see you there.

Oscar (David) Johnson

## Our Second Annual Autumn Harvest Festival

What a day of celebration we had this year on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, at our second Annunciation Harvest Festival!

We were graced once again with a beautiful fall day for our celebration, which began early in the afternoon. Tables were laden with fresh foliage, and harvest decorations and hay bales were scattered throughout our beautiful property.

A new stage was built this year by the Vallejos Family. The stage was the focal point for music, and a special saint reading by Fr. Nicholas, and was beautifully decorated with pumpkins, scarecrows and quilts. The children laughed and frolicked in the bouncy house provided by Dave and Tricia Taylor, and relay games and contests provided by the Youth Group was a huge part of the afternoon entertainment. Even the adults joined in with the kids for many of the relay races. Just good ole’ fun was had by all. Many thanks to Lori Jensen for organizing and manning the art booth where the children had a delightful time making autumn crafts.

Fr. Matthew and Bruce Broding provided the salmon they caught in Alaska the week before, and Borys Smolyansky was the barbeque chef, handing out fresh cooked salmon as appetizers. Seraphima Green and Anna Derugin created a beautiful tea house with delicious desserts which provided a restful spot for relaxation and fellowship under the tall trees.

As the afternoon turned toward early evening, we all sat at one long decorated



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table that was a beautiful autumn sight to behold.



Last year we had close to 100 people at the Harvest Festival. There were probably close to 130 this year. Many thanks to the “chicken ladies” who prepared our platters of chicken in the kitchen and for the special dessert event that was hosted by Anne Peugh. The dessert contest really caught on this year with over 20 scrumptious sweets for the judges to choose from.

How do you plan a party for 130 people and then find that, at the end of it, within 30 minutes, everything has been put away, and we find ourselves participating in Vespers? Many hands make light work. The Annunciation Harvest Festival is a testimony of our strong community and everyone’s willingness to pitch in and make it a memory to hold onto.

Fr. Matthew stood at the pulpit the next day and encouraged everyone not to miss a Harvest Festival in the future. He said, “Our Harvest Festival is really a day spent like we’re supposed to live on earth.” It was a good day to celebrate God’s goodness for all of us.

Mat. Molly Shaw

## Annual Wildwood Pilgrimage

Our annual pilgrimage to St. Xenia’s Skete in Wildwood, CA, to help the four nuns there get ready for winter was a great success! We had a dedicated group of people who worked really well together, and we accomplished almost all of what the nuns had planned for us to do.

We split four cords of wood, stacked said wood in all of their various sheds and woodpiles, cleaned and repaired some of their roofs, cleaned paths, helped them with cooking the meals, and did whatever else they asked us to do. (Since they have limited electricity, their cells, the chapel, and all of the other buildings are heated with wood stoves).

Participating this year were Rdr. Gerald Daily, Roberto Silva, Marc and Anna Olson, Roxy (Mary) Rohan, Jeremy Rick,



Oscar (David) Johnson and his wife Miwa (Daria), and their two daughters, Nichole and Marie, and Dn. Cuthbert and Mat. Martine Downs. The nuns took photos of us at our work, and these are displayed on the bulletin board downstairs in the Parish Hall. Please have a look, and, if you feel like you'd like to go with us next year, put it on your calendar. We go when the nuns can have us, sometime between mid-September and mid-October. We'll announce the dates plenty early next summer so you can have time to plan to come with us!

We would especially like to thank all those who helped us with our expenses, and/or donated food and materials for the monks or nuns (especially the BIG, YELLOW, TWO-WHEELED Wheelbarrow—the nuns were thrilled to get it!). And all those who prayed for us—we couldn't do this work without you!!!

Dn. Cuthbert

### Sacraments and Blessings

#### Baptisms

10/16: Luca Shuurmans (St. Luke) (infant)  
Godparents: Victor Bondarenko and Mary Rohan

### Calendar of Events

#### November

- 11/8 - Synaxis of the Archangels Liturgy
- 11/13 - Infant Baptism
- 11/15 - Nativity Fast begins
- 11/20 - Vigil for Nativity of the Theotokos
- 11/21 - Liturgy of the Nativity

11/24 - Thanksgiving Liturgy

#### December

- 12/5 - Service for St. Nicholas at St. Nicholas Parish
- 12/6 - Liturgy for St. Nicholas at St. Nicholas Parish
- 12/12 - Vigil for St. Herman
- 12/13 - Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska
- 12/23 - Royal Hours of Nativity
- 12/24 - Vespertal Liturgy of Nativity in the afternoon
- 12/24 - Festal Liturgy of Nativity in the evening

### HACCM Museum 2-Night Event

The Hellenic American Cultural Center and Museum (HACCM) is presenting a very informative, historical and fun-filled evening of music and dance at Holy Trinity Cathedral. This is a two-day event. Friday, Nov. 18, will feature the film "Smyrna, The Destruction of a City," and everyone is welcomed and invited to attend. There is no admission charge to see the movie. A lecture entitled "From Piraeus to Portland" will begin the second evening, Saturday, Nov. 19. Appetizers, live music and dance will round off the second evening.

If you would like to attend the second evening, please RSVP by calling (503) 858-8567 no later than November 12th. There will be no tickets issued, but only the names of people who RSVP'd will be able to check in and pay that evening. The cost of admission on the second night is \$50 per person; 18 and under \$25.



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## Hospitality Schedule

Oct 30	Youth Group
Nov 6	Johnson / Asano / Olson
Nov 13	Barton / Aveling
Nov 20	Gunderson / Dales / Sayre
Nov 27	Herring / Bell / Rupp
Dec 4	Cazel
Dec 11	Dorning / Seylon Belai
Dec 18	Larkins / Reynolds
<b>Dec 25</b>	<b>NATIVITY</b>
Jan 1	Sarah Silva / Gabriella Hesselink
Jan 8	Tadesse / Martinsen / Sege
Jan 15	Broding / Selander / Johnson
Jan 22	Seraphina Green / Derugin
Jan 29	Shaw / Nash / McFadden
Feb 5	Jensen / McMichael
Feb 12	Shechenko
Feb 19	McConnell / Johnson / Asano
Feb 26	Walker / Boyd
Mar 5	Vallejos / Matta
Mar 12	Youth Group
Mar 19	Schulmans / Hesselink

If you have submissions for the newsletter, please e-mail them to  
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