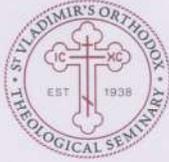


ST VLADIMIR'S
ORTHODOX
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY



April 6, 2016

St Panteleimon Church
7545 W 61st Pl
Summit IL 60501

Dear Fr. Andrew and Parishioners of St. Panteleimon Church,

575 Scarsdale Road
Yonkers, New York 10707

TEL 914.961.8313

FAX 914.961.4507

www.svots.edu

I have spent 18 years of my life in a seminary community, either as a seminarian, graduate student, Dean, or Chancellor. But my favorite role has been as teacher.

I have taught a wide variety of courses, mostly in the area of pastoral or practical theology. I particularly enjoy teaching a course in Parish Administration to the Senior Class in their final semester here at St. Vladimir's. As a senior priest, I give them final instructions, before they take flight into the world of church service.

I remember their arrival at our doorstep three years ago, with their aspirations, hopes, and dreams, and I've come to know them well—including details about their life in Christ, both before God called them to seminary and after they answered the call. They have come to regard seminary as a place where their vocations will be tested and clarified many times over before they take flight, diplomas in hand.

Thank you for realizing the value of our seminary's residential life—as a place where trials turn out to be blessings in disguise. Through our educational programs, chapel services, and community life, we have three years to form the good candidates sent from your parishes into seminarians of faithful character, who will retain a faithful understanding of Orthodox Christianity as received through the ages, and who will faithfully practice Orthodox Christianity to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Your support makes all this possible, and we are grateful.

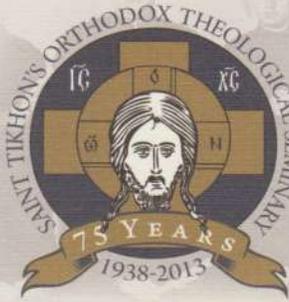
In Christ Jesus,

The Very Reverend Dr. Chad Hatfield,
Chancellor/CEO, CFRM

This letter also serves as your receipt for this gift, which will be used to benefit The Seminary Fund for 2016. Please retain a copy for your records. We received your gift for \$500.00 by Business Check (Check Number 1867, dated 3/13/2016), and your receipt number is 28464. No goods or services were provided by SVS in return for this contribution.

Engaging the world with Orthodox Christianity since 1938

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ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Waymart, PA 18472

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April 7, 2016
Repose of St. Tikhon, Confessor and Patriarch of Moscow

The Rev. Andrew Bartek, and Faithful
St. Panteleimon Orthodox Church
7545 W. 61st Place
Summit, IL 60501

Dear Fr. Andrew and Parish Faithful:

We received your generous March donation of \$500 to St. Tikhon's Seminary. We are most grateful for your contribution assisting in the formation of future pastors. It may be of interest to know that we celebrated several seminarian ordinations during this spring semester.

We celebrated the repose of St. Tikhon with a Presanctified Liturgy. I was the celebrant, likewise with two of our recently ordained deacons, and during the Liturgy I shared with them my sense of the significance of our seminary clergy remembering this blessed saint who was the founder of St. Tikhon's Monastery, providing pastoral formation during the times that no other seminary was operating.

Once again I am, on behalf of St. Tikhon's and especially our seminarians, grateful for your contribution. Please remember us in your prayers, and may you and your parish family experience the radiance of God's love on the Feast of Great and Holy Pascha!

In Christ,

V. Rev. Dr. Steven Voytovich
Dean

This document serves as an acknowledgement of the charitable contribution you made to St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary. No goods or services were provided by the seminary for this contribution. This acknowledgement must be retained and is required by the Internal Revenue Service in order to substantiate and verify this charitable deduction on your tax return.

For the Life of the World and Its Salvation

Christ the King by Fr. Lawrence Farley

In the Western liturgical calendar we find the Feast of “Christ the King” (often changed to conform to the draconian canons of political correctness as “The Reign of Christ”). Someone once asked me if we Orthodox kept such a feast, and I answered, “Yes, we do. It is called ‘Palm Sunday.’”

On the first Palm Sunday, Christ entered Jerusalem in triumph and was hailed by the multitudes as the coming Messiah. In John’s eyewitness version of the event, he reported that the people cried out, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” (John 12:13). It was long since they had a king, and now at last they had one. (Herod—technically a king—hardly counted. Everyone wanted a real king who would rule over an independent Israel, not a puppet of Rome.) The last real king was Zedekiah, who was pulled from his throne by the Babylonians, had his eyes gouged out, and was sent in chains to Babylon in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25:7). Since that time, Israel remained as a province and plaything of the major powers and empires of the day, and as such suffered much humiliation and injustice. But that would all change when the Messiah came. He would set things right. He would free Israel from Gentile tyranny and exalt the nation to a place of political supremacy in the world. The hated *Pax Romana* would be replaced by a *Pax Hebraica*. Though Jesus never explicitly claimed to be the Messiah—His preferred title was “Son of Man” from the Book of Daniel and the Book of Enoch—everyone more or less knew that He must be the Messiah. After all, when the Christ did come, how could He possibly do more miraculous signs than Jesus did? (John 7:31). So it was that when Jesus entered Jerusalem after raising Lazarus from the dead, the whole city exploded in joy and anticipation. His triumphal entry was meant to proclaim His Kingship, and the people responded with an almost-hysterical outpouring of acclamation and enthusiasm: “Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” (Mark 11:9-10). And what did they mean by “the coming kingdom of our father David?” They meant the death of Rome.

The reason why Jesus avoided the title “Messiah” or Christ in favor of the title “Son of Man” was precisely because in His day the title “Messiah” had become politicized and militarized. The Messiah was, by definition, a warrior, someone who gathered an army and rose up to overthrow the Gentile oppressors by force of arms. The Messianic kingdom would come with the shedding of Gentile blood, and with Gentile corpses piled high in the street. God was on their side, and shining angels would fight along side of courageous men in

That battle. The final result would be a free Jerusalem—freed at the cost of the streets flowing with the blood of Rome. If you want to imagine how the crowds of Palm Sunday regarded the coming kingdom, think “Zionism” without the collaboration of the great European powers and with none of the ambiguity.

This is not, however, the kingdom that was actually coming, and Christ was not that sort of king. He proclaimed this loudly with deeds when He entered the Holy City humbly on a donkey, and not proudly on a war-horse; He proclaimed it calmly with words later when He stood before Pilate. In that interrogation, Pilate, having received the one purported to be a threat to Rome, tried to understand if Jesus could really be the threat His accusers said He was. Jesus didn’t seem to him to be the fanatical fire-brand the Sanhedrin insisted He was. Pilate looked at Him and said, “Are *You* the king of the Jews?” Jesus explained that He was, but that His kingdom was not of this world. If it had been of this world, then His servants would be fighting that He not be delivered up to the Jews, but as it was, His kingdom was not of this world. Pilate pounced on the admission: “So then *You are* a king?” Then Jesus told him what His kingship entailed: “For this I have been born and for this I have come into the the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (John 18:33f). Jesus knew of course where such witness and truth-telling would lead. It would lead to a cross. “This is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). Be sure of it: Jesus was not crucified *despite* His goodness, but rather *because of it*—speaking the truth to power and bearing divine witness in this world always leads to suffering.

The people of Palm Sunday thought that the Messiah was the one who would kill the Romans. As it turned out, the Messiah was the one who would be killed *by* the Romans to save the whole world. Though they could not then have known it, this is what it meant for them to take the palm branches in their hands that day and acclaim Him as King—to hear His voice speaking the truth and to follow Him, speaking the truth themselves. What that in turn would mean for them, the history of martyrdom revealed. To speak the truth in a world which loves and prefers lies always means suffering for the one speaking the truth. The darkness of the world and the death of Jesus meant that all of His future followers would be martyric and follow Him to the cross.

That remains our task and our calling today. We are now the people of Palm Sunday. It is we who now hold the palm branches in our hands and acclaim Jesus as our King. We too must speak the truth, even if we are shouted down by the world and pay a price. Palm Sunday revealed Jesus as the King of Israel, the One Who came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Holding those palms means we must hear His voice and speak His truth.

PASCHAL MESSAGE OF HIS GRACE, BISHOP PAUL

May 1, 2016

Beloved Clergy, Laity, and Monastics of the Diocese of the Midwest,

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

Something strange is happening—there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and He has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and Hell trembles with fear. He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, He has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, He Who is both God and the Son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the Cross, the weapon that had won Him the victory.

St. Epiphanius of Cyprus

These wonderful words from Saint Epiphanius on the Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ make mention of a “great silence and stillness.” Because “God has fallen asleep in the flesh.” As we celebrate the Pascha of our Lord this year, it would be good reflect the mystery of silence and how it leads to salvation and how it can lead us down the wrong path. When God the Word is silent in having fallen asleep He is still mystically freeing those held captive by the power of death. He does so by approaching them with the Cross, “the weapon that had won Him the victory.”

How important it is to encounter this Divine Silence. But how can we encounter it when the idea of being still and silent ourselves scares us to the point that we need to stay busy to avoid the inner noise of our lives? We avoid because as long as we do, we never have to encounter the restlessness and anxieties in life that plague us. This stops us from hearing God’s silence. We will never enter into real communion with God by prayer unless we first hear this silence. The silence will lead us on a pathway of crying out to Him all the more and will mold the virtue of perseverance in us. We should not be afraid of this Divine Silence, because it was the Silence of the Tomb that liberated all held captive by death, which was a consequence of sin in our life.

Yet there is another kind of silence that leads to condemnation, and that can be best termed as the silence of inaction towards others. During the course of Holy

Week, at Tuesday’s Presanctified Liturgy, we heard this in the Gospel of Matthew:

“Then He will say to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to Thee?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me.’” Matthew 25:41-45

Those mentioned in this gospel are not condemned because of the common sins we may hear about in life. They are condemned for their failure to act, the silence of inaction. They failed to see Christ suffering in the needs of the people God daily brought into their lives, whether they were family, friend, neighbor, stranger, or enemy. We were reminded of the following at the Bridegroom Matins of Holy Tuesday:

You have heard the condemnation, O soul, of the man who hid his talent. Do not hide the Word of God! Proclaim His wonders, that, increasing the gift of grace, you may enter into the joy of your Lord!

Now that the Divine Silence of the Tomb has raised us from death, let us no longer be paralyzed by the silence of our inaction. We have been baptized into Christ and put on Christ, the celebration of our Pascha on this day as well. As Basil the Great states in his Liturgy, “Thou hast given us all things!” Let us be empowered to share this gift with others in word and in deed; grounded in the love of Christ that calls upon us to love one another as He has loved us. Let us not hide the talent God has given us. Let us use that talent that we may glorify our Father in Heaven through His Only-Begotten Son Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ is Risen!

With love in Christ,

IPaul
Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest