

## Fall Session of Metropolitan Council

The Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America was held on November 12, 2002 via teleconference call. Diocesan representatives Archpriest Michael Westerberg and George Ludko along with at-large alternate Archpriest John Dresko all participated in the call.

The conference call was held instead of the customary two-day meeting by decision of the Holy Synod of Bishops to save the travel and lodging expenses for delegates. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, presided at the session and opened with comments about his election, enthronement and the work of the central administration.

Protopresbyter Robert Kondratich gave his report on the work of the Church since the 13<sup>th</sup> All-American Council. At the request of His Beatitude, Fr. Robert also highlighted the work of the Holy Synod of Bishops at their fall session held in October.

The central task facing the members of the Metropolitan Council was the adoption of the Operating Budget of the Church for 2003, along with the review of the implementation of the "fair share" system of support adopted at the All-American Council.

As work began on the budget following the All-American Council, the financial officers of the Church reviewed the "visionary budget" presented at the Council. After that review and a review of diocesan membership figures coming in, the officers trimmed the proposed budget before the discussion by the Holy Synod. Upon the recommendation of the financial officers and with the blessing of the Holy Synod of Bishops, an operating budget that was reduced by over \$600,000 from the budget discussed at the All-American Council was presented to the Metropolitan Council.

Discussion by the Metropolitan Council reviewed the operating budget line by line, focusing especially on the line items reduced since July. Following a thorough review line by line, the Metropolitan Council adopted a balanced operating budget of \$3,687,796.00. It was understood that the revised budget would mean

COUNCIL TO 6



## Orthodox Youth tackle hunger on "Souper Bowl Sunday"

On Super Bowl Sunday, Orthodox Christian young people across the country will huddle to help children and families suffering from war, poverty and natural disaster.

Youth groups and church school classes will collect dollars and non-perishable food items in large soup pots during the "Souper Bowl of Caring" on Sunday, Jan. 26, 2003, to support charities of their choice. This is the fifth consecutive year that Orthodox churches are joining the nationwide, ecumenical effort to help organizations such as International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC).

IOCC, the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians, encourages participation in the "Souper Bowl of Caring" as a way to promote volunteerism and community service among Orthodox young people.

The "Souper Bowl of Caring" began at a Presbyterian church in Columbia, SC, in 1990 and has grown into a grassroots movement linked with the national pastime of Super Bowl Sunday. In 2002, nearly 11,000 congregations, including many Orthodox parishes, participated and generated \$3.1 million for various charities.

The game plan calls for young people to receive donations in large soup pots at their church exits. As parishioners leave worship on Super Bowl Sunday, they are invited to give a monetary and canned-good donation.

The young people, with the guidance of their youth leader or parish priest, can help locally by giving the food items to a food pantry or soup kitchen, and globally by supporting a charity such as IOCC. This year, "Souper Bowl" organizers expect 15,000 churches to raise an estimated \$4 million for worthy organizations nationwide.

By selecting IOCC as their charity of choice, youth groups will be able to support programs that feed and clothe vulnerable children and educate and train young people in 13 countries. Once the donations are counted, each parish is encouraged to call 1-800-358-SOUP or visit [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org) to report the amount col-

SOUPER BOWL TO 2

**O.N.E. (ORTHODOX NEW ENGLAND)**

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## ON THE DOCKET

A listing of upcoming events in the Diocese.  
Please forward any dates you wish to be included to the Editor.

February 6, 2003

*Connecticut Deanery Meeting, 7:00 P.M.*  
*Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT*

March 10, 2003

*GREAT LENT BEGINS*

March 16, 2003

*Orthodoxy Vespers, 4:00 P.M.*  
*Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT*

March 23, 2003

*Connecticut Deanery Vespers, 4:00 P.M.*  
*Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Waterbury, CT*

March 30, 2003

*FORCC Mission Vespers, 4:00 P.M.*  
*TBA*

April 6, 2003

*Connecticut Deanery Vespers, 4:00 P.M.*  
*Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Springfield, MA*

April 13, 2003

*Holy Unction Service, 4:00 P.M.*  
*Three Saints Church, Ansonia, CT*

April 20, 2003

*PALM SUNDAY*  
*Bridegroom Matins, 4:00 P.M.*  
*Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT*

April 27, 2003

*THE HOLY PASCHA*

### SOUPER BOWL FROM 1

lected, so that the efforts of Orthodox Christians can be added to the national total. All the money raised goes to the charities selected by the participants.

Since it's founding in 1992, IOCC has helped people in 21 countries through programs of development, emergency assistance and community empowerment.

Packets have been sent out to all Orthodox parishes with a "playbook" for participating in the "Souper Bowl of Caring." Resources also are available on-line at [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org).

*(See graphic on page eight.)*

# Around the Parishes

## *Bethel, Connecticut*

November was an active month for our Mission. The weather held up so that we could apply a fresh coat of paint to front of our building, white picket fence and all. Little did we know that when we planned this activity earlier in the fall, that we would also be preparing our church for a visit from His Grace, Bishop Nikon.

On the first evening of the Nativity Fast, we had the first of a two part lecture series. Fr. Steven Voytovich, Pastor of St. Alexis of Wilkes Barre Mission in Clinton, CT, offered his talk; "Dying and Behold We Live," Reflections on death and dying through the eyes of faith. How rich and full of compassion and understanding was his lecture. If not for consideration of the clock and allowing for Fr. Steven's return commute, I believe we all could have stayed up well into the night opening our eyes and hearts to the depth of knowledge offered in the room that night.

The following Friday evening's talk was an inspiring lecture by Prof. Lazarus Reid, a lecturer and iconographer. Prof. Reid's slide presentation was entitled, "The

## OUR DIOCESE

PEOPLE  
PLACES  
EVENTS

Light of the Age to Come," How icons assist our daily rising and dying in Christ.

Both lectures were sponsored by our mission and our outreach bookstore, Wisdom Books and Icon Store. We were very appreciative to have Fr. Vladimir and Suzanne Aleandro along with a number of the faithful from our sister mission, Christ the Savior Mission in Woodbury with us for both lectures.

Fr. John served a panikhida for a dear friend of the parish and blessed Paul Knudsen to go off to serve our nation in the United States Marine Corp.

We were pleased to acknowledge Alice Unschuld's completion of The Diocesan Choir Directors Program, we look forward to her leading us in making a "joyful noise unto our Lord."

– submitted by David Unschuld

## *Hartford, Connecticut*

It was bigger and better than ever – the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Russian Tea Room and Bazaar. The number of persons has been growing each year and this year proceeds increased by 40 percent! Contributing to the growth was the reputation of the bazaar as well as some new touches this

year – a free drawing for a trip to Aruba; more food; some great Matrushka figures – much bigger than life – on the front lawn announcing the event; and even a delightful article in *The Hartford Courant* on the making of holuptsi at All Saints. The bazaar itself offered a new layout to ease foot traffic and brand new banners advertising each booth.

Kudos go to Joan Holobinko and Val Olesnovich, who coordinated this year's event; and to the more than 80 volunteers working on the event, who included various booth and area captains: John Holobinko and Chris Evans, who with many volunteers kept the flood flowing; and Sam Wecal, Stephanie Hendewich, Mary Beth Stenko, Susan Ranstead, Cathy Vargas, Lynn Gudelski and Carol Plotica, George Babey, Tom Denisky, Basil Matychak, Hibdon, Dr. Chet Andrzejewski, Michael Stenko, Olga Powlisen, Alan Schultz and Nick Medynski, as well as to the volunteers in all the booths and kitchen who assisted. Incidentally, Chris Evans, who is executive chef of the Polytechnic Club in Hartford, did not even let a broken foot slow him down, as he delivered barrels of homemade borscht with a stylish soft cast.

Only a week later the auditorium took on an entirely different and elegant look as it hosted a wedding reception given by the parish for Nadia DuBovik and Hector Lugo. The two were married in a ceremony celebrated by Fr. William, Fr. Nicholas Timpko, Nadia's former long-time priest; and Fr. Joseph Irvin, who serves at All Saints.

Joan Holobinko coordinated the decorating and planning for the reception with assistance from Jeff and Kim Tingley, Val Olesnovich, MaryAnn Armentano, Marsha Coombs, Susan and Mark Ranstead, along with much help on the day of the wedding from Kathy Andrzejewski, Nick Medynski and many others.

We blessed baby bonnets and booties made through our Altar Sisterhood, which will give the to a maternity ward in one of the city hospitals. Thanks are extended to the knitters who include Jean Ostapkevich, Sam Wecal, Olga Powlisen, Ola Ferla, Helen Lichatz and Olga Mucha.

Recent funerals included John Smayda Sr. and Anatoly Irsa. Memory Eternal!

– submitted by Fr. William DuBovik

## *New Haven, Connecticut*

Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, during coffee hour, we served cake for Father Michael's name's day. Special thanks to Luba Dowling, Natalie Kruchok and Chris Semenkovich for organizing this event. Susan Lickwar was welcomed to our parish. Susan is an elementary (2<sup>nd</sup> grade) teacher in the Orange school system. Many Years!

In the afternoon, we celebrated the joining of Barbara Pope Piccolo and Daniel Padro in Holy Matrimony. We ask that God grant you a blessed life and many years.

# STRAIGHT TALK WITH ORTHODOX

## On Tithes and Offerings

by John W. Truslow, Jr.

For over a dozen years now, I have been truly amazed at what I have heard other Orthodox saying and writing about the topic of “giving” and particularly about “giving to the Church.” To hear many of them tell it, there simply is no straight-forward, well-defined standard for Orthodox Christian giving to guide the actual behavior (“praxis”) of members of the Church. This alleged truth apparently leaves each of us free to deal with God “one on one.” This individualistic approach surely is familiar to us all as the Protestant approach to theology and to biblical interpretation in particular.

Much of what is cited among Orthodox from Holy Tradition on “giving” concerns motive, not method or result. Motive is crucial, no doubt. God loves us, making it possible for us to love God. God gives to us as part of His expression of love for us, making it possible for us to give in love to God and to godly efforts to spread Christ’s Kingdom and help others in His Name in this world. We must not give for the purpose of personal glory or community praise. All this is true and needs saying, but note it is also about motive, not method.

Almost nothing is cited from Holy Tradition in contemporary Orthodox discussions on the results of giving. The results which are so often referenced among us when the Fall/Winter pledge-and-budget time rolls around are typically such as this: “If we give, we can feed Father and his

family, we can pay the electricity bill, and perhaps we can even rebuild the leaking roof.” These are all noble results of giving, necessary to the continuance of the parish and her ministries; but note that none of them typically begin, end or are justified in terms of Holy Tradition as is the case with the motives. Such hoped-for local results are really attempts to influence the outcome of our “private talks with God about how much I should pledge.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ in no way placed giving beyond our spiritual disciplines. He sequenced giving ahead of praying and fasting in his recital of disciplines of the Kingdom in Matthew 6. It is not Christ, but we ourselves who see giving as “unspiritual!” But even if giving is a spiritual discipline – and it surely is to Christ Jesus – and not merely a secular virtue explainable on



of giving which are God-promised?

Of course there are! Matthew 25:31-46 is one of the most clear statements by our Lord Christ about His coming Judgment of us. And what will be the criteria for the separation of us into two groups: (1) the sheep to the right, headed for the Kingdom and eternal life and (2) the goats to the left, headed for everlasting punishment? The answer is, interestingly, “giving” in several forms, and particularly giving to the benefit of the “least of these My

brethren!” Holy Tradition is full of clear results to us of our giving with the right motives! Being blessed by God through giving as God directs is simply a fact of life. As such, there is nothing improper about us sharing godly results of godly giving, as encouragement to each other to give as God directs.

But, still, is there any guidance at all in Holy Tradition on the question of an appropriate, godly method of giving? Indeed there is, and this is exactly the point at which we Orthodox must reform our practices, our statements and our coffee hour chattering to conform more closely with Holy Tradition!

For four thousand years the people of God have had the standard of tithes and offerings. Let’s be brave and admit that is the case. Beginning with Father Abraham (Genesis 14:18-20, about 2000 B.C.) and continuing to our own time, there actually is a standard for our giving behavior which is quite objective. There are dozens of passages in Holy Scripture which are unambiguous on this point. Here are just two:

Malachi 3:6-12. “I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes, and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord of hosts. “But you say, ‘How have we robbed Thee?’ ‘Will a man rob God?’ Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed Thee?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need. Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,” says

the Lord of hosts. And all nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land," says the Lord of hosts. (Malachi dates from about 432 B.C.)

Matthew 23:23. Jesus said, "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone."

The "storehouse" of the people of God today is the "parish." My tithe is due to the storehouse, and I owe my tithe to the "general operating fund" of my parish. I owe that to God, and I owe that to God regardless of whether: (a) I like the priest; (b) I think the parish council has its collective head in the sand; or (c) I'm tickled by the views of the bishop on international affairs. My tithe is 10% of absolutely everything God gives me by way of income or increase in my wealth over a period of time, usually a year. By the way, did you note the very clear results in the Malachi passage? This is an explicit promise of God to us!

Let's get real, brothers and sisters in Christ. The median income of a household in the USA for the most recent year for which figures are available is \$40,000. A tithe of such a household's \$40,000 is \$4,000 given to the parish general fund. If my household happens to be exactly at the median for the USA, we should give as a tithe to God \$4,000 during the year. Clear enough?

Perhaps there are some among us who wonder if the "tithe" continued beyond biblical times into the times of the Holy Fathers. Good question, and the answer is a loud and clear "Yes!" There's a topical booklet called *Tithing* by Fr. Richard Ballew (Conciliar Press) from which the following two examples are drawn:

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D., Saint Irenaeus wrote that Christ was referring to the tithe when He said to the Twelve: "To His Disciples, who had the Lord's Levitical substance (i.e. the tithe), He said, "The work-

man is worthy of his food" (Matt. 10:10). Then Irenaeus went on to refute those who said "the law of liberty" in Christ freed them from giving a tithe to the Church:

"And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations among the Jews and oblations in the Church, but what is changed is those who offer, for the offering is now made not by slaves, but by free people" (Against Heresies, Book IV, Chapter XVII, 2-3).

After discussing the requirements of God and especially of the Jews in the Old Testament, Saint John Chrysostom (4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) made this comment on Ephesians 2:10: "For what did not they of old do? They gave tithes, and tithes again upon tithes for orphans, widows, and strangers; whereas some one was saying to me in astonishment of another person, 'Why, such an one gives tithes?' What a load of disgrace does this imply, since what was not a matter of wonder with the Jews has come to be so in the case of the Christians? If there was danger then in omitting tithes, think how great it must be now!" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, volume XIII, First Series, page 69).

By the way, you may need some encouragement if you are beginning to believe that tithing is God's will for you, but you are now "scared to (financial) death!" Many people strive to tithe over several years, moving toward the tithe with God's help: this year 2%; next year 4%; next 6%; next 8%; and, in the fifth year, 10% – God's tithe is reached! As you move toward the tithe as God's will – and after you arrive – you will "catch on" that God's promise of blessings is true for you and your household. I've never known a **former** tither.

But what about offerings? One of the greatest "offerings" stories ever told was told by Jesus based on an actual offering He observed:

Luke 21:1-4. "And Jesus looked

up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw a certain poor widow putting in two small copper coins and He said,

"Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live one." (Note that this offering was really 100% for the widow!)

Thus, there's much more to the story of Orthodox giving than "tithes." Offerings are our gifts to God – and to godly needs – without necessarily any reference to proportion. Tithing is quite different from offerings. Tithing is proportional to income; offerings are not. Tithing produces giving which goes directly to the "storehouse" of the parish general operating fund for community needs; offerings go to specific needs we believe God wants us as individuals to address with our gifts, inside or outside the parish. Tithing is based on a simple calculation, offerings are variable and depend upon the needs God shows us and the resources he has given us. All of this is most reasonable!

There really is a clear Orthodox standard for giving for individuals within the Church, the Body of Christ, and that standard is now and has been for four thousand years nicely summarized by the short phrase from Malachi, "tithes and offerings" – God expects both tithes and offerings of us all.

The tithe is 10% of our income or increase over a given period of time

**TITHES TO 6**

**PUBLICATION DEADLINES**

**March Issue  
February 1st**

**April Issue  
March 1st**



**TITHES FROM 5**

– generally the year – which is easy to calculate by taking our income and moving the decimal point one place to the left. If your income shrinks, note that your tithe automatically shrinks also. God knows what he is giving you! The tithe goes to the “storehouse,” the parish. The parish supports the diocese and other needs.

Offerings are our individual response to the opportunities for giving that God places before us. Offerings are non-proportional, personal, related to the need involved and to our individual resources.

The giving of “tithes and offerings” does have proper motive, proper method, and proper results, all of which are grounded in Holy Tradition.

While we are “not slaves but free people,” we do have a clear, God-given standard for giving in His precepts of “tithes and offerings,” about which we may certainly choose as we do with other disciplines such as praying and fasting. Our choice as free-will creatures is quite simple: obey God or not.

*John W. Truslow, Jr. is a member of St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church, Atlanta, GA. This article first appeared in The Word, December 2002. Reprinted with permission.*

**COUNCIL FROM 1**

staff reductions at the Chancery.

In addition to the balanced budget, the Metropolitan Council also reaffirmed the fair share distribution of the budgeted income needed from the territorial dioceses. The Office of the Treasurer has distributed those figures to each diocesan treasurer. Beginning in January 2003, all dioceses currently supporting the assessment system of the OCA will simply carry a fair share of the budget responsibility based on their proportion of total OCA membership.

Also approved by the Metropolitan Council was authority for the Church Administration to negotiate and finalize a “bridge loan” to assist the Church in paying bills still due from the All-American Council and the Enthronement ceremonies of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman. Such a loan may be necessary until the fair share system is fully implemented and income flow becomes more stable.

Discussion was also had on making a teleconference call meeting part of the regular rotation of meetings of the Metropolitan Council. No final decision was made concerning this matter.

The Spring Session of the Metropolitan Council has yet to be officially scheduled, although it will be held in late March-early April 2003.

**PARISHES FROM 3**

On Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, we offered congratulations and God’s blessings to Alexander and Lori Frank on the joyous occasion of the baptism of their infant twins, Hope and Andrew. Dan and Heidi Crosby were the godparents.

Congratulations to Nancy Muro upon successfully completing the requirements for a Connecticut teaching certificate.

Our youth coordinator, Alexis Swan had a busy schedule for the children. November 16, lunch and holiday craft workshop. December 7, children and adults from throughout the area attended Vespers. Following the service, a caravan of cars drove to Lighthouse Point to view the Festival of Lights. They enjoyed the beautiful display of lights and then returned to the Church hall for a Pizza Supper. The “R” club treated the youth of the parish and the adults went “dutch treat.”

The church was glistening with candlelight, poinsettias and a Christmas tree. The Sunday school children and teachers sang carols and decorated the tree on the Sunday before the Nativity, during the Nativity Prefeast.

Special thanks to Matushka Lydia, choir members, parishioners who assisted with the Advent and Nativity services, decorated the church and those who helped to take down all the trimmings. God grant you many years!

We ask God’s blessings on our very generous Altar Guild and Ladies Auxiliary. The Altar Guild donated coffee, tea, rolls and bagels for the coffee hour; their Christmas gift to the parishioners. The Ladies Auxiliary coordinated a visitation to our parish from Saint Nicholas, who left bags of goodies for the youth. All through the year, these very dedicated parishioners give of their time and energy to support our parish. Thank you.

*– submitted by Barbara Ann Dixon*

*Pittsfield, Massachusetts*

On November 30 and December 1, 2002, St. Nicholas Church was honored to have His Grace, Bishop Nikon, visit our parish. This was the first hierarchical visit to Pittsfield in ten years. On Saturday night, His Grace met with the parish council to discuss strengths, weaknesses and goals of our parish. Steps taken by our parish to attract a new priest were presented.

Our need for missionary work with the large and growing number of immigrants and ex-parishioners was also discussed. His Grace recognized and was sympathetic to the lengthy delay in securing a permanent priest for our parish. He also understood our concern that our state of limbo has hindered growth and has caused an unnecessary burden of supporting a vacant rectory. He promised to discuss these issues with appropriate church authorities.

On Sunday, His Grace served Devine Liturgy assisted by Fr. Joseph Petranin and Archdeacon Roman Skvarnavicius. Lunch was served in the church hall to all

clergy, guests and parishioners.

– submitted by Nicholas Bobrovsky

### *Salisbury, Connecticut*

Autumn 2002 has been fast-paced and filled with remarkable occasions. On September 11<sup>th</sup>, we held a memorial service in honor of the victims and their families of the terrorist attacks. The whole community was invited to join members of our church to remember and to sing a litia for the departed.

We are happy to announce that our church school is back in session for the year. With just 29 adult members, we have the potential to have 18 children in our church school. The ages range from 5-13 so we have had to split them into age appropriate groups. This year we decided to hold church school before rather than after liturgy. This has worked out well for the students. They are fresh and eager to learn first thing in the morning. Also, they are better equipped to take what they learn in church school then apply it to what they see and hear during the liturgy. Matushka Evelyn Kreta and Hope Mongeau say that the experience has been wonderful for both the students and themselves.

Our Fall Festival bake sale was a huge success this year thanks to all who donated their time, effort and dollars to the church. Joan Jardine, an artist and member of All Saints, generously donated one of her impressionistic style paintings to be raffled at the festival. We specially thank her for her gift.

On August 30, Fr. John Kreta, Matushka Evelyn Kreta, Renee Betar, Sandy Evans, Joan Jardine, David Jardine, Hope Mongeau and John Mongeau volunteered their services to Salisbury Catering Service at Lime Rock Racetrack. They helped to serve 600 people at a buffet for a Lime Rock sponsored function. In return, Salisbury Catering Service gave the church a monetary gift.

The women of All Saints have formed a Sisterhood. They have met twice already in more of a fun, social capacity, but they plan on developing a mission statement in order to take on a more active, vital role in the church as well as the community.

We thoroughly enjoyed our annual Christmas pageant presented by the children of All Saints on December 22.

– submitted by Heather Mongeau

### *Waterbury, Connecticut*

The Parish Adult education program, meeting monthly, recently concluded a year long study of the Divine Liturgy. Typically about sixty people participate and the questions are many and diverse. We began a new discussion of the liturgical structure of the services in the daily, and yearly cycle of the Church.

Our Bible Study began recently and we are looking at



*Church school students perform in Waterbury.*

the Old Testament Prophecies about Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, and their fulfillment on the New Testament. While we are moving slowly due to the questions and discussion, we are discovering many things about God's plan for our Salvation.

On Sunday December 8, the Church School Students performed an original play telling the "other story" about St. Nicholas. The connections between St. Nicholas, and Santa Claus were revealed in this entertaining and informative production. Many events in the life of St. Nicholas were incorporated into the production and everyone enjoyed learning a bit more about this great Saint. Kathy Smick wrote and produced this enjoyable and educational work.

The youth of St. Mary's have been busy in several projects and fundraising. A recent brunch raised money for the Christmas Stocking Program, and a Bake Sale raised money for the support of Families struggling in abused shelters. The youth of our Parish are very active in our Parish Life, and want to reach out to others.

Recently, Elizabeth Searforce read in Church for the first time, and according to her Father, it was the voice of the Angels speaking in Church. Perhaps Fr. Matthew Searforce is a bit prejudiced!

### *Woodbury, Connecticut*

The month of November, for our little mission, was a whirlwind. Though the Winter Fast, a time of white quiet, has descended upon us, there was yet much celebration and gathering in His name.

Once again, on December 8 and 9, we asked all to join us in worship and festivity for the feast of our patron St. Nektarios. Our chapel was full, as were everyone's bellies when they departed (in peace, we hope). Fr. John Hopko from Terryville, Connecticut, spoke to us of St. Nektarios' steadfast faithfulness in times of sorrow, dejection and unemployment; he spoke of the healing power of his relics.

Truly the high point of the evening came when Fr. Michael Westerberg, Chancellor of the Diocese, presented the parish with the relics of our beloved saint as a gift from our beloved former Metropolitan Theodosius. This gift is one for which there are no words to express our

**PARISHES FROM 7**

thanks.

A family who has already become an integral part of the life of our mission was received into the Church on November 17<sup>th</sup>. The Latanzis (Neil, Ellen, Bethany and Phoebe) were chrismated and together recited the Creed before the community. We welcome them with joyous hearts into the full life of the Church.

On November 20<sup>th</sup> we joined with the Waterbury parish in celebrating the feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple. We thank our gracious hosts for the opportunity to gather with them in prayer and fellowship.

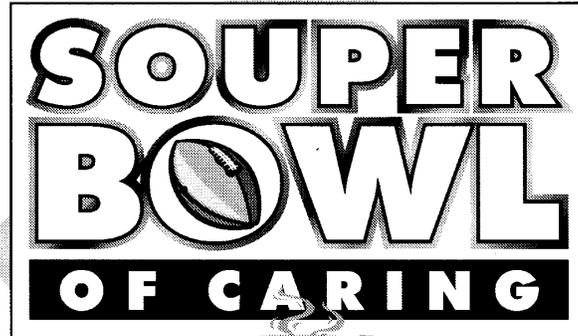
As if all of this was not enough, on November 23 and 24, Bishop Nikon came to Woodbury and celebrated Great Vespers with us...and also, to our knowledge, the first Hierarchical Divine Liturgy ever to have taken place in our town. After Vespers the Bishop dined with us and answered various questions asked by members of the community. On the following day, after liturgy, he had to face a more staid crowd, the children, and he spoke to them of the life of the Church and graciously spent time with them and answered their questions.

The culmination of this blessed month was the giving of thanks at the Eucharist Table on the Great American Feast of Thanksgiving.

*- submitted by Burgess Speed*

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**SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2003**



**HELP OUR PARISH  
BECOME SOUPER  
BOWL CHAMPIONS!**

On Super Bowl Sunday, Jan. 26, 2003, team up with our parish's youth to help the needy in our community and around the world. Help our team in the "Souper Bowl of Caring" by bringing one dollar and a canned good with you to Liturgy. Please support this effort and help our parish become Souper Bowl Champions!



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