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# THE ALEUTIAN

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## **UPCOMING POINTS OF INTEREST**

- ❖ *2012 Church Calendars are on their way!*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- ❖ *Pictures of Vladyka Andrew's visit are now on the parish website.*
- ❖ *Epherm Cummings has been tonsured a subdeacon for our parish.*

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## **Do Orthodox People Witness to Others?**

*By the Reverend Father Mark Templet*

If you're from the southern United States then the terminology "witnessing to people" has a unique and specific meaning. Having grown up in Protestantism, there is a clear connotation that is called to mind when I hear those words. Mostly, I picture someone who strikes up a conversation with someone (often a stranger) where the Christian begins to tell the other person why they need to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. I get feelings of discomfort and awkwardness when I think about telling someone about Christianity who didn't solicit my input. I have to admit that during my time as a Protestant, I can't say that I ever actually wit-

nessed to anyone that I can recall.

The Protestant outlook from which this ideology springs from sees salvation like a light switch—a person's soul is either in the "saved" position or the "not saved" position. The point of witnessing to others about the Christian faith is therefore an exercise in convincing others to flip the switch from "not saved" to "saved." There are only three practical outcomes under such a system: the person makes the switch, they consider it and make the switch later, or they reject such a notion as needing to switch.

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***"We should be allowing our actions and especially our forgiveness to be our witness."***

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Is this what we should do as Orthodox Christians? My answer may surprise you: No, at least nowhere near the same way. We are definitely called on by God to be the Light of Christ to others, both believers and non-believers. Notwithstanding, the differences between Protestant and Orthodox teachings on salvation, the bottom line is that we should not concern ourselves with the status of other people's souls. What we should be doing is showing love and compassion to *everyone* we meet. We should be allowing our actions and especially our forgiveness to be our witness. Although there may be chances and appropriate times to tell people what we believe in, the majority of the time we need to worry more about our own sinfulness and disobedience. When we show others that we can be humble when we have and change to gloat we show Christ's charity. When we let others off the hook for their past wrongs, we gain forgiveness for ourselves. When we give our money or time to others without expecting anything in return we are truly witnessing better than any tract or awkward conversation will ever be able to match.

# Our New Subdeacon

By the Reverend Father Mark Templet



On October 23 (n.s.), Ephrem Cummings was tonsured a subdeacon during Vladyka Andrei's visit to our parish. This was a fantastic event and we are joyful in it!

Some of you may not know what a subdeacon is or why it is useful to have one. The vocation of subdeacon is very old in the Church and serves as a tremendous blessing to the Church as a whole.

Subdeacon is the highest order of what are commonly referred to as the *minor orders* of clergy. They are set aside through tonsuring, where a bishop lays hands upon them and says certain prayers over them. Subdeacons make very serious commitments of obedience to the Church, signified by their wearing the cassock. This means that they are suppressing their own will and tastes for that of the Church. Likewise, they commit that after their tonsuring they will not marry (if they are already married then they stay that way, but may not remarry in the future). They take on these commitments as a result of their awesome responsibilities. Their main job is to assist the bishop during the services. However, their duties reach beyond that—they are the leaders of the altar servers and for keeping good order during the divine services. Subdeacons have no speaking parts, this is because they are there to maintain order in the church. If an altar server is being rowdy in the altar, then it is the subdeacon

that puts them back in line. If someone is being distracting to others in the church during the service, it is the job of the subdeacon to come out and restore order. During the early years of the persecuted Church, when the priest declared "The doors, the doors...", which we still have to mark the change from the Liturgy of the Word to the Liturgy of the Faithful, these words signaled to the subdeacon to get everyone who was not a baptized Christian out of the church, they then barred the doors and stayed there throughout the rest of the liturgy. During the height of the Great Church in Constantinople there were more subdeacons than any other clergy, 150 at a typical Divine Liturgy. Because the subdeacons do their job, the deacons, priests, and bishops can focus on the prayers of the service without worry.

Subdeacons are allowed to touch sacred objects such as the altar table, chalice, disks, etc. and are therefore able to maintain the altar and assist the clergy as necessary. Their functions are of great help to any church. A good subdeacon is worth his weight in gold.

I, for one, am thrilled that we have a subdeacon. As you all know, Ephrem has been serving in the altar for some time now, and thanks to his quiet professionalism, I am able to focus more so on the beautiful prayers of the service. Now that he is a subdeacon he is even more valuable and I have every confidence that he will teach future altar servers in the correct way to serve. Thanks be to God for subdeacons and our own Subdeacon Ephrem!

## DID YOU KNOW?

In 1054, when Pope Leo IX sent Cardinal Humbert to deliver his uncanonical excommunication of the entire Eastern Church, he placed it on the altar of the Great Church after the Divine Liturgy. A subdeacon cleaning up saw it and knowing that papers do not belong on the altar; he took it out of the church and threw it in a ditch. Cardinal Humbert had to retrieve it out of the mud and bring it back inside.

# Our Sacred Music

By the Reverend Father Mark Templet



I am sure many of you have noticed that we are working on and changing the music sung during the Divine Liturgy. Some of you are involved in these changes, and some of you might be flustered that new melodies you are not familiar with are being introduced. As all of you know, our little parish is a work in progress; *these* are the growing pains that we must endure.

As all of you know, I work diligently to make the appearance of our chapel to be one of great beauty from the walls to the vestments and vessels. I do this labor not only because it makes our chapel look nice, rather it has to do with (the attempt at) uplifting our spirits to the level of heaven and the beauty that is His glorious majesty. The icons, the incense, the gorgeous vestments, and splendid singing transform our minds when we enter into worship. Before I became Orthodox I remember reading about the legates that Saint Vladimir sent to Constantinople to behold the worship in the Great Church. They reported by that they were so impressed and uplifted by the service that they reported to the Holy Price, “we didn’t know if we were in heaven or on earth.”

Saint Augustine of Hippo once remarked, “One who sings, prays twice.” We are trying (stress the *trying* part) to create such an experience that when we come into our chapel and hear the singing that we get goose-bumps and tingling throughout our whole

bodies.

This *will* take time! It will mean trying things out and making a mountain of mistakes. Not everyone will like everything at all times. I ask for your patience as we struggle with this and try to move forward. I also ask that you join me in prayers, asking God to help us and to send those who can help with the music. Unfortunately, music is not one of my strong suits, and it’s not something I can learn quickly and bang together a great choir.

To those beautiful souls who are giving it their all each Sunday: thank you from the bottom of my heart. I appreciate you trying and often succeeding in making our music better. More and more often, when I am listening to the singing I experience what I am talking about here. Please know that you are appreciated! Keep up this sacred work and please continue to pray twice.

## Fasting Biscuits

These biscuits are best eaten straight from the oven. They will keep, tightly wrapped, about a day. (Makes 16 biscuits)

2-1/2 cups unbleached white flour  
1 Tablespoon baking powder  
2 teaspoons Sucanat or other granulated sweetener  
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1 cup rice milk or soy milk  
1 Tablespoon lemon juice  
3 Tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon oil

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Combine dry ingredients. In a separate bowl, combine rice or soy milk and lemon juice. Using two forks or a pastry cutter, add oil to dry mixture and mix until well combined. Slowly add rice milk mixture until dough just clings together. Do not over-mix. Place dough on a lightly floured surface and knead about 10 strokes. Roll out to 1/2-inch thickness and cut into biscuits. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake in a 450-degree oven for 10-12 minutes or until light golden brown.

# Parish Education Survey

*The following is brief survey to help us determine what the Christian educational needs are of our parish family. Please return to Fr. Mark.*

## **Adult Education:**

Aside from Catechism, what other classes would you like to see. Keep in mind that these classes should last about 6-8 weeks and be about 30 minutes long. Put in order (1st, 2nd, 3rd...) your preferences:

Bible study \_\_\_\_\_ If so, which book would you suggest? \_\_\_\_\_

Works of the Holy Fathers \_\_\_\_\_ If so, which would you suggest?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Practical applications of our faith in everyday life \_\_\_\_\_

Study on a specific subject area \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, which area (e.g., soteriology, theology, hymnography, iconography, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*\*And if you want to volunteer to lead one of these efforts, please talk to Fr. Mark.*

## **Parish Notes:**

- **NEW MEMBERS:** We welcome into our church family John and Maria Bzik. They are both originally from northern New Jersey. They moved to Slidell in 1981. John worked for Martin Marietta in the Materials Science department working on the foam insulation for the NASA's Space Shuttle program. Maria worked for the same company as a computer analyst in the Product Assurance department entering and tracking non-conformance documentation. They raised two children here; a daughter Alexandra, and a son Mark. Alexandra is expecting and John and Maria look forward to spoiling grandchildren very soon. They are both retired and now enjoy several hobbies such as traveling, gardening, and sewing. They have recently traveled to Kiev, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Paris, and the Austrian Alps as well as Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany. **WELCOME John and Maria!**

- The 2012 full color Calendars are now on pre-order and will be available in December. These are really wonderful calendars compared to last year and feature beautiful icons commemorating feasts from each month. They are \$10.00 each.

