

## BRITISH COLUMBIA DEANERY REPORT - June 2007

**Your Eminence Archbishop SERAPHIM, Reverend Clergy, Brothers and Sisters in Christ:**

Glory to Jesus Christ!

I would offer the following report on the BC Deanery for our 2007 Archdiocesan Assembly.

The BC Deanery continues to be a place of growth and activity. And, despite its challenging geography (the Strait of Georgia forms a barrier between the mainland parishes and the Vancouver Island parishes), it continues to be a place of much parish interaction, cooperation and joint activity.

The Deanery can be considered as a unity of four quadrants: the mainland parishes, the island parishes, the parishes of the north and the interior, and the monasteries. Let me describe the life and activities of each of these one at a time.

### The mainland parishes

First of these is *Holy Resurrection Sobor* in Vancouver, under the able leadership of Fr. Michael Fourik, assisted by Frs. Stephen Slipko, James McLuckie, and Andrey Somow. The Sobor is the mainland parish with the largest facilities, and so forms a logical meeting place for mainland deanery events. It has a vigorous outreach to the increasing Russian population of Vancouver, and so it ministers largely in Russian. Consistent with this, it has recently switched from the New to the Old Calendar.

*St. Herman of Alaska Church* in Langley continues its work under Fr. Lawrence Farley and newly-ordained Deacon Kurt Edward Jordan. The parish has begun sponsoring an annual Women's Retreat. Its first meeting, with speaker Frederica Mathews-Greene, drew women from many parishes and jurisdictions, from as far away as Washington State and Ontario. Fr. Lawrence' writing ministry has borne fruit in the form of a Bible Commentary series, published by Conciliar Press (to date, commentaries on Romans, the Prison Epistles, Mark's Gospel, 1-2 Corinthians and John's Gospel have been published, with a commentary on the Pastorals due out this summer). Conciliar Press has also published his commentary on the Divine Liturgy (dedicated to the memory of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, and entitled "Let Us Attend: a Journey through the Orthodox Divine Liturgy"). Further, Alexander Press has published four Akathists of his, to "Jesus, Light to Those in Darkness", to "the Theotokos, Daughter of Zion", a new Akathist to St Herman and one to God the worker of wonders, surveying the Father's mighty works from Genesis to Revelation.

The two new Vancouver missions continue their hard work. Fr. Christopher Rigden-Briscall serves as pastor to *St. Nina's Mission* in downtown Vancouver as well as working as UBC chaplain. Fr. Justin Hewlett serves *St. John of Shanghai Mission* in downtown Vancouver, where they have just moved into a large building rented from St. Francis of Assisi R.C. parish next door.

### The island parishes

*Holy Apostle Barnabas Church*, under Fr. Alexis Nikkel, has built a chapel on the Nikkel's property in Courtenay. This is a great advance from their previous location in the chapel of St. Joseph's Hospital in Comox, which, though sizable, was difficult for inquirers to find, and also had no place for after-Liturgy fellowship. The new location (adorned with icons written by Matushka Jennifer Hainsworth) not only has a more Orthodox ambience, but greatly facilitates fellowship afterward in the Nikkel home.

*All Saints of Alaska Church* in Victoria continues its vigorous outreach under Fr. John Hainsworth and Deacon Kevin Miller. The Church is developing the "One Hundred Mile Diet for Parish Life", using only products from within a one hundred mile radius. Also, Fr. John hosts the "Group of Twelve", taking eleven people on a five-day faith hike with seminars and worship every summer.

Fr. John is also working hard at his writing ministry, and has two books to be published by Conciliar Press: one on the Beatitudes and another on Christian singleness and the married life. Also, SVS Press has asked him to write a book to be entitled, "The Speed of Human Living: Ecology, Orthodoxy and the Modern Life" which is in the process of development. As well, there is a conference on ecology planned for 2009.

The mainland and island parishes come together for other events as well. The St. Arseny Children's Camp is run by a board drawn from parishes on both sides of the Strait of Georgia. The highly successful camp is in its fourth year, with its numbers continuing to grow. Parishes help raise funds to support the camp, often visiting each other's fund-raising events across the Strait.

On the lighter side, the mainland and island parishes come together for their annual hockey tournament, with two teams: the mainland "Goads of God", and the island "Four Year Olds with Sticks". Last year the mainland hosted the game; this year is the island's turn. The game ends with a time of food and fellowship.

### The north and the interior

The mission station of *St. Nikolai of Zhitsa* offers the praises of God in the far north in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. A faithful family there serves as the catalyst for this work. Fr. John Bingham (priest of St. Nicholas metochion in Langley), takes services there four times a year. The faithful meet for reader's services every Sunday.

The parish of *St. Nicholas* in Kamloops is dormant, in part due to the fluctuating health of its former Rector, Priestmonk Simeon (Weare) who still resides in the area. A local Orthodox man there is beginning the process of discernment, working with Fr. Simeon to see if this well-begun work can be revitalized. If it proves to be so in the future, a family originally from Kamloops and now at St. Herman's in Langley, might return there to help out.

### The monasteries/ metochion

The *Hermitage of Holy Transfiguration* (established in 1977 and currently in Gibsons) continues its work of prayer. Its abbot is Igumen Gregory (Papazian), who resides there with (newly-ordained) hierodeacon Samuel (Panchuk) and Monk Moses (Schneider). They have a candle workshop which produces candles for many parishes. Being a monastic community,

they treasure their solitude and are not away from their monastery. Nonetheless, a steady stream of visitors knock on their doors from the parishes, and a number local Orthodox in Gibsons attend their Sunday morning Liturgy.

The *Monastery of All Saints of North America* in Dewdney (established in 2003) continues its work of prayer, outreach and publishing, assisted by *St. Nicholas Church* in Langley, a metochion (or representation church) of the monastery, and its priest Fr. John Bingham. The abbot of the monastery is Archbishop LAZAR (Puhalo). The other monks

there are Bishop VARLAAM (Novakshonoff, who is also Rector of *St. Nicholas metochion*), and the hieromonk Moses (Armstrong). The monastery also has a candle workshop, as well as the Synaxis printing press, which produces many works, including those of Archbishop LAZAR. Further, the monastery hosts a number of gatherings, such as the “Joy of Canada pilgrimage in August, the *St. Macrina women’s retreat*, and the annual anointing service on the Sunday of All Saints.

Commending the B.C. Deanery to your prayers, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Archpriest Lawrence R. Farley, Dean of B.C.