

The Orthodox American

Witnessing the Spirit, in the West

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Round'n About

Notes from the Dioceses & Vicariates

Western Great Lakes and the OCCA Pastoral Theology Institute

+David Kotajarvi:

Greetings and Happy New Year to all. The winter chill and snow has hit the Midwest with full fury. How folks survive in places like Alaska is beyond me.

Vicar Donn Mielke has submitted his report which details the news from Chicagoland. He has mentored Benjamin Roe and his efforts are much appreciated. This weekend Benjamin will begin his continuing journey with OCCA and serving the Lord. Please pray for him.

Father Yanchy in Hudson, WI reported an incredible trip he enjoyed. Fr. Doug Smith continues to speak throughout the country and always manages to go someplace warm in the winter. I have come to treasure every contact with him. He is truly a gifted and remarkable man. We were fortunate to hear his presentation at the synod.

Moving to the communities in Indiana, Fr. Tom is courageously battling cancer and serving his congregation, with Joan at his side. They are an extraordinary couple and our jurisdiction is blessed by them. I have spoken to Bishop Vince and Fr. Cliff and both are doing well, as is Kris'ta. I've had a couple of chats with Vicar John, who reports all is well with the exception of the search for worship site. He always makes adversity more tolerable and much appreciated

for being an outstanding man of God and vicar. Mother Maria and I spoke recently and she is still as charming as ever. It is hoped that she and all Western Great Lakes clergy will attend the proposed diocese gathering in Chicago this summer. Vicar Donn, Fr. Cliff and I are working on the project. Tentative dates are June 4, 5 or 11, 12 or 25, 26.

The Vicar Generals Report

There is no news to share at this time.

The Institute News

As was mentioned earlier in the diocese report Benjamin Roe has successfully completed the necessary studies to be ordained deacon. His coursework was outstanding and I was well pleased with his dedication, insightful essays, and commitment. His submitted essays displayed his understanding of the material, his viewpoints, and his contemporary interpretation.

I haven't heard if there is any other diocese with seminarians hard at work. Please let me know if there are any and if any resources are needed.
Bishop David Kotajarvi

Chicago

Vicar Donn Mielke:

Hi, to all in the OCCA from the Windy City! Having survived a great Thanksgiving with guests from the dinner club and a wonderful Divine Liturgy at Christmas, the snow shovel now gets a real workout.

St. Thomas Mission is looking forward to Benjamin Roe's entry to the Monastic Order of St. Benedict, and celebrating his becoming a Deacon. To help us in the celebration, both Bishop David Kotajarvi and Bishop Francis Fontenot, OFMO will be in attendance. Benjamin is both excited and nervous. With guitar and flute in hand, Benjamin will help the congregation to sing, The Gathering song, "All Are Welcome". This will be our first attempt at live music at St Thomas Mission. We pray for good weather as the Bishops and Benjamin's family journey to this joyous occasion.

There are two special gifts that Brother Michael Kierpiec and I are grateful for this last year. In Illinois, we have civil unions and nationally "Don't Ask - Don't Tell" has been taken off the law books. We both look forward to becoming "Legal" soon.

This also presents the opportunity to add the words "Monastery without Walls" to St. Thomas Mission. Many other good things are also in the works.

The New Year looks to hold many wondrous things for us all. We ask: God (Father, Mother, Creator) in Christ, through his Holy Spirit, to bless all our work.

Very Rev. Fr. Donn Mielke

Gulf Coast

+Francis Fontenot

New England

+Douglas Wright:

News from the No'th

Greetings from Paradise this snow covered section of it, that is. While life goes on here and we progress slowly on finishing the church as funds permit there is not much of interest to the national church. No baptisms, no funerals either. Father Peter believes that the liturgy will sooner or later attract the spirituality hungry folks who live in the area and grow our church. This in a time when the parking lots of all the churches are less filled than in the past. For those looking for a quick feel good, religion takes too long to produce the results apparently.

In the larger picture here in Maine, how can a tiny Orthodox parish help the staggering number of unemployed with no hope of a job in sight. Growing up, within 25 miles of my home there were three name brand shoe factories, the Bates Mills, world famous makers of bed spreads, Van Baalens who made sleep wear, the Romper Factory that made children's clothes, the Hathaway shirt factory, four large sawmills, dozens of small farms. All are gone, closed and boarded up. LLBean had a large call in customer service center (moved to India).

A national study on the abuse of prescription drugs revealed that Maine has eight times the incidence of drug addiction of any in the nation revealing a connection, of course, between the hopelessness of job loss and addiction. Maine also vastly exceeds the rest of the country in the consumption of alcohol per capita. Allen's coffee brandy is sold more than all other liquors combined. Coffee brandy in a glass of milk, (Redneck Champagne) tastes good, looks harmless, has the kick of a mule and soon you are dozing in front of the TV. Of course it is 40% alcohol and 60% sugar syrup, so as you doze you get fatter by the minute. If you observe the folks in any of the big box stores you will be appalled by general health of the populace. People are comforting themselves at the table and the refrigerator rather than looking within.

Personally, I think it is easier to live a productive good Christian life if you aren't burdened with bad health and a rebellious body that resists exercise. I am blessed with a strong constitution and iron grit. It is a hard time of year during the short days

of winter to remain optimistic. Perhaps that is why we regale our homes and churches with candles using the holidays as an excuse to waste wax. I must admit to a few blue days this Christmas season. But there is comfort if you keep your eyes open: The People's Companion to the Breviary which I use here, during Advent gave me several outstanding presents, one of them was finding the reading for Christmas morning: God's Glory, now, is kindled gentler than low candlelight under the rafters of a barn. Eternal Peace is sleeping in the hay, and Wisdom's born in secret in a straw-roofed stable....we unnumbered children of the toiling centuries come with our penances and prayers, and lay them down in the sweet-smelling hay beside the wise men's golden jars. "Carol" by Thomas Merton. I burst into tears as I sat in the empty church before the crèche. And again on Tuesday before Epiphany the reading: Who is this Lamb, Whose love shall fall upon His people like an army? Again Thomas Merton: St. John the Baptist. And a few minutes later in the intercessions: To all who serve in the single life - grant the support of human companionship and the awareness of Your presence. Amen.

New York and the Atlantic Coast

+Elizabeth Walker:

"The last several months have seen very good work in the Atlantic Diocese. Father Barry Lillis continues his multifaceted ministries of teaching, preaching, counseling, and worship. Father Giles Spoonhour is at his work at a correctional facility, and with the New Seminary for Interfaith Studies and the Interfaith Temple. Mother Francesca Fortunato has developed a ministry of Sunday morning worship at a local adult residence. Several of our clergy are associated with parishes of other jurisdictions: Father Michael Moss works with the local Charismatic Episcopal parish, while Bishop Elizabeth assists an Episcopal parish, and Father Jim Brigl with an Old Catholic parish. Father Roger Vaughn is working with alcoholics and addicts at a treatment center in Manhattan and supporting a local Episcopal church. Father John O'Connell pastors his parish which meets weekly in his home.

During the last several months Bishop Elizabeth, as the Ecumenical Officer for the OCCA has been in contact, for worship, retreats, and dialogue, with the Catholic Apostolic Church in North America (CACINA), with a view to formal cooperation and intercommunion. In that connection, Mother Francesca Fortunato, Father John O'Connell, and Bishop Elizabeth gathered on a Saturday in November for a retreat with clergy of two other jurisdictions, hosted by the Church for All People, a CACINA parish in central Brooklyn. In the spring, we expect to gather together for a diocesan assembly at the Bethany Spirituality Center, north of NYC. Also Bishop Elizabeth has been working with our new friends in the International

Council of Community Churches (ICCC) in establishing ecclesiastical endorsement and a linkage with the Civil Air Patrol for chaplaincy. More details on that project will be forthcoming.

Finally, the clergy of the Atlantic Diocese send their hearty greetings for a holy and happy Christmas and New Year to all our brothers and sisters in the OCCA."

Great Plains

The Pacific Coast

+James Gleeson:

Bishop Jerry Hegarty completed his move but then faced leaks in his apartment and had to vacate the premises and board the honorable pet while the carpeting and underlayment were replaced. Sound familiar? He is back in the apartment and is staying put as of January 8th.

Bishop Jerry continues his learning curve on the computer (Fr. Barry you can sympathize on this). I told him to give the computer one year to adjust to its new owner before giving up on it. Patience, progress will follow.

Fr. Ralph Curtis had a hearty laugh on his past birthday when asked about retirement. He and his husband are deep in the financial thickets of a reverse mortgage trying to stay abreast of the Bay area cost of living. He has worked closely with the local Congregationalist-UCC in the past months organizing a candlelight vigil for those lost to bullying this year and has been invited to occasionally fill the pulpit with the search for a new pastor with retirement of their current minister. The recent premature birth of twin grandsons in Sacramento somewhat distracted Fr Ralph as he and hubby shuttle back and forth. Keep Randy and Mary, the exhausted parents of the twins in prayer.

Bishop James Gleeson is involved in the purchase of a new house in these his 'winter days'. He is unwilling to say why and probably has not a clue except that he wants a view of the beautiful lake he lives on. Anyone who has survived such a transaction recently will hold him your prayers. He attempts to keep in phone contacts with as many as possible.

Fr. Richard Parker plans to move East with his sister this summer when the weather is more benign. The move will bring the immediate family together in one place with his nephew Michael. We wish him good speed and know that since he is moving to be with family it is the best for all. He is happy but aware of the work AHEAD. Bishop Jerry having just endured his own move will keep him in his prayers.

Mother Laura Emerson and Mother Annie French are having trouble getting their computers back on line so that those who wanting to contact them will have to wait a bit longer. I note a change of addresses and as Christmas cards have returned undelivered. I remind all to make sure that the information in the directory is correct or accept responsibility for their incommunicado status./

Fr. James Donadio asked and received permission to be initiated as a postulant in an order of Franciscans whose mother house is in Canada. We wish him all the prayerful good in his journey and are sure he will complete initiation. Many of us have travelled similar roads and know it is not a easy or undertaken lightly. Best of Luck +Jim.

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Peter's Two Pence

Archbishop Peter:

A very blessed new year to each and everyone, now and throughout the new year.

Cathedral Fund The end of year activities at the Chancery have kept Mother Maria and me busy. You have already received the annual appeal for the Cathedral Fund (so many couldn't pronounce the Latin "cathedraticum" that we adopted the English). I hope that most of us will participate this year. Everyone should mail the pledge form to the Chancery address by January 15 in the enclosed envelope. THANK YOU **ICCC** The ICCC sent membership cards for all of us. They arrived the day before Christmas, so they were put aside until Maria+ and I could finish celebrating Christmas sans stuffing envelopes. They will be mailed early in the new year.

Surgery scheduled On January 11, Father Tom North will have surgery to remove the recurrent cancer. He and Mother Joan will certainly appreciate your prayers, and notes of support. I am happy to say that both are optimistic and in good spirits. Tom doesn't know how long the recovery will be, so keep him on the prayer list until we know he is back in the saddle.

Father Kevin Kearney made it to Australia. He isn't out of touch—email him at his old email address in the Directory. He applied for and received an Australian pension, and for the moment is living with his sister, as housing rentals are scarce. He and Father Robert are at different ends of the continent, but do intend to get in touch soon. I miss Kevin's presence here but we have doubled our presence Down Under. Keep Father Kevin in your prayers, would you?

Presider workshops Father Ken Waibel and I met in the fall and decided that in the new year we'll schedule

workshops for presiders. They will be offered several times throughout 2011, in a form designed by Father Ken, in the regions of the country. In other words, we're coming to you, or as near to you as we can. It is hoped that ALL will participate in the presider workshop. This is as close to being a required event as I can imagine. Why? you might be asking? Well, my observation is that the presiding style of our members is quite varied. Some are superb at presiding, and others aren't. Some welcome feedback and help in their presiding style; other may not know they need help. Since the Divine Liturgy is the principle way in which we interact with those we serve on a regular basis, it behooves us to gather to discuss specifics on how we do what we do. The first workshop will be in the spring in Dallas/Fort Worth. Look for other dates and places in the future.

Old Catholics and Us Over the past few months, I've been rereading our history, and the history of the intentional churches in general. I'm intrigued by the Old Catholics. And recently, several Old Catholic groups have made an effort to unify in ways not considered before. I have decided to continue this investigation in 2011 and initiate some informal conversations with Old Catholics. At this point, it is for my own personal growth, but perhaps chatting may lead to opportunities for ecumenical activities.

Ministerial stories Since the Synod, our conversations on line have been limited. Maybe we wore you out and you are still recovering. I hope you found use for the coffee mug and the OCCA seals! I'd like to encourage folk to share on line some of the stories of your ministerial experiences. These don't have to be huge events, but how in our quotidian presence we make a difference in the lives of the people around us and with those we serve in Sunday worshipping communities. Who wants to go first?

Remember to pray for each other

A while back I reminded our group that praying for one another is a good activity. Whether you go through the names in the Directory one or a few at a time, or pray for the person listed before and after you, or if you choose another method of remembrance, please do keep on keeping on. Believe me, each of us needs the prayers of the others, just as all of us must remember that our kinfolk in OCCA are praying for us each day, and that there should be nothing that comes between us.

Valentine Cards for Vets Now that Christmas is behind us, please join with me in buying a card or several cards for Valentine Day. Write a short message to a veteran in each, and mail them to us at the PO Box. The cards will be given to one of my co-workers at Allen County Adult Probation who is active with active duty military (her son is a Marine deployed in the Middle East) and veterans. Many veterans don't get remembered at Valentine Day, so this is one, easy way for all of us to help cheer someone's day. Also, this is a great community-building, ministerial project for your faith community or diocese/parish.

Charitable donations Your gifts throughout the year to OCCA can be included in your tax deductions. If you wish a statement for tax purposes, please contact Mother Maria and we'll send you a statement.

Blessings and peace to each and all, now and always. Thank you for all you are and all you do.
+Peter

BOOK REVIEWS:

READ A GOOD BOOK LATELY? SHARE WITH THE FELLOWSHIP AS A WHOLE A FEW LINES ABOUT THE TOPIC AND VIEWS OF THE AUTHOR AND HOW IT CAUGHT YOUR INTEREST.

Footnotes in History

The ancient British Church was active very early in history with participation at the Council of Arles, 314 AD, the Council of Sardica, 344 AD, and at Ariminum (Rimini), 359 AD. The bishops are variously listed, but represented Eborius (York), London, and Legiorenium (probably Caerleon) as the 4th Century centers of British and Welsh Christianity. It is recorded that the congregations being too poor to support the travel costs, the bishops used the Imperial Post to attend. These were probably the three British bishops also noted as attending the Council of Nicaea.

Augustine's mission from Rome arrived in Britain in 597 AD, two hundred years later. Therefore, York founded 3rd Century, not Canterbury of the 6th Century, might be considered the seat of the Primate of Britain.

Opinions and Viewpoints

An invitation for articles of interest to the OCCA family.

Working in the Vineyard

Open for profiles of ministries and persons.

The Orthodox American

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Signed submissions for publication are accepted, but will be edited for length and conformity with publication guidelines. Views expressed in any article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the archdiocese or the editors of this newsletter.