



THE PARISH VINE



ПРИХОДСКАЯ ЛОЗА

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. John 15

**The Youth Newsletter of St. Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church
Молодёжный Листок Прихода Св. Владимира
Ann Arbor, MI**

January 2007

On January 21st, the youth group held a short, yet informing meeting. We discussed the following topics:

- Hearts for the Arts
- Visiting a convent
- 2007 Mini Conference
- Prayer

The Nativity Ball, which was held on January 12th, was a big success. With the support of the Cleveland youth, we had a decent turn out of young people. The night was filled with great smiles, delightful conversations, and of course enjoyable dancing. If you missed it this year, make sure to check it out next January!



On February 10th, the youth group is planning to volunteer for Hearts for the Arts, which is a joint benefit for the University of Michigan Cardiovascular Center and the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra. This event is set up to raise money for both of the organizations. Not only is this a great volunteer opportunity for the youth group, it also serves as a beneficial fund raiser. If you are interested to help out, please feel free to contact the youth group coordinators.

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During the youth group meeting on January 21, we discussed prayers and questions about the Optina Elders prayer arose. It is actually a very good, short prayer to read in the morning, especially convenient when you don't have much time. One member of our youth group really enjoys the prayer for its good content and questioned whether it was acceptable to use it throughout the day. This led to a question of whether or not one is allowed to break down prayers and use the certain parts in our own prayers. Father Gregory informed us that the answers to both of these questions is yes because prayers are essentially here to guide us in order to pray in a correct manner. For anyone who is interested, the Optina Elders prayer is below:

### **Prayer of the Optina Elders**

***Grant unto me, O Lord, that with peace of mind I may face all that this new day is to bring. Grant unto me to dedicate myself completely to Thy Holy Will.***

***For every hour of this day, instruct and support me in all things.***

***Whatsoever tidings I may receive during the day, do Thou teach me to accept tranquilly, in the firm conviction that all eventualities fulfill Thy Holy Will.***

***Govern Thou my thoughts and feelings in all I do and say. When things unforeseen occur, let me not forget that all cometh down from Thee.***

***Teach me to behave sincerely and rationally toward every member of my family, that I may bring confusion and sorrow to none.***

***Bestow upon me, my Lord, strength to endure the fatigue of the day, and to bear my part in all its passing events. Guide Thou my will and teach me to pray, to believe, to hope, to suffer, to forgive, and to love.***

***Amen.***

### **Молитва последних оптинских старцев**

***Господи, дай мне с душевным спокойствием встретить все, что принесет мне настоящий день. Дай мне всецело предаться Воле Твоей Святой. На всякий час сего дня во всем наставь и поддержи меня.***

***Какие бы я ни получил известия в течение дня, научи принять их со спокойной душой и твердым убеждением, что на все Святая Воля Твоя!***

***Во всех моих делах и словах руководи моими мыслями и чувствами! Во всех непредвиденных случаях не дай мне забыть, что все ниспослано Тобой!***

***Научи меня прямо и разумно действовать с каждым членом семьи моей, никого ни огорчая, никого ни смущая!***

***Господи, дай мне силу перенести утомление наступающего дня и все события в течение его! Руководи моею волею и научи меня молиться, надеяться, верить, любить, терпеть и прощать!***

***Аминь.***

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The Law of God

Fr. Seraphim Slobodskoy

The Attributes of God

God revealed to us concerning Himself that He is a **bodiless and invisible spirit** (John 4:24). What does it mean that God has neither a body, nor bones, as we have, and does not have in Himself anything that makes up our visible world, and therefore we cannot see Him? In order to explain this, let us take an example from our earthly world. We do not see the air, but we see its actions and results; the movement of the air has great power which can move huge ships and complex machines. We feel and we know that we cannot live without the air that we breathe. So also we do not see God, but we see His activity and its results, His wisdom and power are everywhere in the world, and we feel them in ourselves. The invisible God, out of love for us, at various times appeared to righteous people in a visible form — in images, or, reflections of Himself, that is to say, in such a form that they could behold Him. Otherwise they would have perished from directly beholding His majesty and glory. God said to Moses, **There shall no man see Me, and live** (Ex. 33:20). If the sun blinds us with its brilliance, and we cannot look upon this creation of God lest we be blinded, then how much more so, on God Who created it. **For God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all** (1 John 1:5), and He dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16).

God is Eternal

(Ps. 89:3, Ex. 40:28).

All that we see in the world began at one time or another. It was born, and at some time it will also come to an end, it will die, it will be destroyed. All that is in the world is temporal; everything has its beginning and its end. Once there was no Heaven, there was no earth, no time, but there was God, because He has no beginning. Having no beginning, He has no end. God always was and always shall be. God is outside time. **God always is**. Therefore, He is called eternal.

God is unchanging

(James 1:17, Mal. 3:6).

There is nothing in the world constant or unchanging; everything constantly changes, grows, ages and disintegrates. One thing is replaced by another. Only God is constant; there is no change in Him. He does not grow, does not age. He in no way, and on no account and at no time ever changes. Just as He always was, so He is now, and so He shall remain forever. God is always the same. Therefore He is called unchanging.

God is omnipotent

(Gen. 17:1, Luke 1:37).

If a man wants to make something, he needs material; without material he cannot make anything. With paint and canvas man can paint a beautiful picture; from metal he can make a complex and useful machine. But he can never make, for instance, the earth on which we live, or the sun which gives light and warmth, and many other things. Only for God is everything possible; there is nothing that He cannot do. He wished to create the world and He created it out of nothing by His word alone. God can do all that He wishes. Therefore He is called omnipotent.

God is omnipresent

(Ps. 138:7-12).

God always, throughout all time, is present everywhere. There is no place in the world where He is not present. No one can hide from Him anywhere. God is everywhere. Therefore, He is called omnipresent.

God is omniscient

(1 John 3:20, Heb. 4:13).

Man can learn many things, know a great deal, but no man can know everything. Moreover, man cannot know the future, and cannot hear everything and see everything. Only God alone knows everything, what was, what is, and what will be. For God there is no difference between day and night. He sees and hears everything at all times. He knows each of us, and not only what we do and say, but also what we think and what we want. God always hears everything, sees everything, and knows everything. Therefore, He is called omniscient (knowing all things).

God is all-good

(Matt. 19:17).

People are not always good. It often happens that a person does not love someone else. Only God loves all of us and loves us perfectly, not as man loves. He gives all that we need for life. All that we see in the heavens and on the earth was created by the Lord for the good and benefit of man.

This is how one bishop teaches about God's love for us: "Who gave us life? The Lord! From Him we received a rational soul that can think and learn. From Him we received a heart that is able to love. Around us is the air, without which we cannot live.

"We are always supplied with water which is as necessary for us as the air. We live on the earth which supplies us all the food that is necessary for the maintenance and preservation of our life. We are supplied with light without which we could not do anything for ourselves. We have fire with which we can keep ourselves warm when it is cold and with which we can prepare the food we eat. All this is the gift of God. We have a father, mother, brothers, sisters, and friends. How much joy, help, and consolation they provide for us! But we would not have any of these were it not pleasing to the Lord to give them to us."

God is always prepared to give us everything that is beneficial to us, everything good, and He takes more care for us than the best father does for his children.

Therefore God is called all-good, or Most-merciful.

We call God our Heavenly Father.

God is all-righteous

(Ps. 7:12, Ps. 10:7).

Men often tell lies and are unjust. But God is perfectly just. He always preserves righteousness, and He judges people justly. He does not punish a righteous man without a reason, and He does not leave a man unpunished for any evil deed, unless the man himself corrects his life by repentance and good deeds. Therefore, God is called all-righteous and all-just.

God is all-sufficient

(Acts 17:25).

Man is always in need of something, therefore he is often dissatisfied.

God alone has everything and is not in need of anything for Himself; on the contrary, He gives everything to all.

Therefore, He is called all-sufficient.

God is all-blessed

(1 Tim. 6:15).

God is not only all-sufficient, but He always has within Himself the very highest joy — complete blessedness, the very greatest happiness.

Therefore, God is called all-blessed. We can never find true joy in life, except in God alone.

We call God **creator**, or **maker**, because He created all things, visible and invisible.

We likewise call God **almighty**, **master**, and **king**, because He, by His almighty will, rules and reigns and directs all that was created by Him, holding them in His power and authority.

We call God Divine **provider**, because He provides for all things and takes care of all things.

Prayer

God loves His creation; He loves each of us. "And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18).

Therefore we can always at any time turn to God, to our Heavenly Father, as if to our own father or mother. Our turning to God is prayer.

This means that **prayer** is **conversation or speaking with God**. It is as necessary for us as air and food.

Everything we have is from God, we have nothing of our own. Life, abilities, health, food: all these things are given to us by God.

Therefore, in times of both joy and sadness, whenever we need anything, we must turn to God in prayer, for the Lord is extremely good and merciful to us. If we ask from a pure heart, with faith and fervor concerning our needs, He will unfailingly fulfill our wish, and grant all we need. We must completely rely on His holy will and patiently wait, for God alone knows what we need and when to give it to us, what is useful and what is harmful.

People who are slothful about praying to God do great harm to their souls; for as they depart from God, God departs from them. Without prayer man ceases to love God, he forgets about Him, and he does not fulfill His purpose on earth, he sins.

Our next Youth Group event will be held on February 18th, 2007.

The plan is to go ice-skating at 6:30 pm and then go out for ice-cream after. Details will follow later!

"The Parish Vine"

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