



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**

March 2007



18th c. engraving from the Life of St. Sergius of Radonezh

On March 25th, the youth group held another successful meeting. We had a very interesting and informative discussion. The topic for discussion was monasticism.

Fr. Gregory started the discussion by talking about the development of Orthodox Monasticism and that the main purpose of lives of monks and nuns is to pray, although many monks and nuns reach out and help their communities.

Both Fr. Gregory and Sub-deacon John Feloniuk, talked about the life and their experiences of Holy Trinity Seminary and Monastery in Jordanville, NY.

Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary is an institution of higher learning under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. The mission of Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary is to serve the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia by preparing students for service to the Church: training students in disciplines that are preparatory for active service to the Church as clergy, monastics, choir directors and cantors, iconographies, and lay leaders:

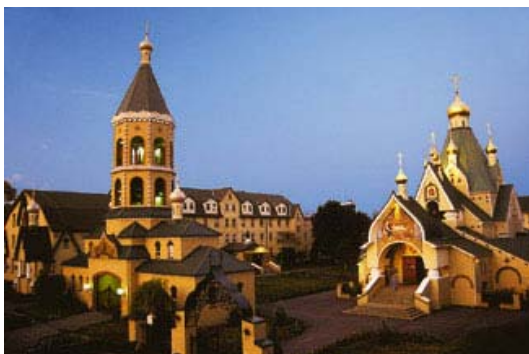
<http://www.hts.edu/>

Holy Trinity Monastery is a male monastic community under the auspices of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. The Typical day at Holy Trinity Monastery begins at 4:30am at the chanting of the bell-ringer through the dimly lit halls: "It is the time for song and the hour of prayer, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us."

To read about history and daily life at the monastery please click on the link below:

<http://www.jordanville.org/>

Holy Trinity Monastery



Rebecca Gabl, a St. Vladimir's parishioner, spent two and a half years at Lesna convent in France. She also shared her many interesting experiences with the youth group about her life at the convent.



The Convent was established in 1885 at the behest of Archbishop Leontii of Warsaw. The first abbess came to Lesna from Moscow along with five nuns. In 1889 the monastic community was reorganized into a general monastery and had town churches in St. Petersburg, Kholm, Warsaw and Yalta. The nuns taught children and the Convent became a center of Orthodoxy outside of Russia. The Royal Family visited the Convent twice. St. Amvrosii of Optina and St. John of Kronstadt were supporters of the Convent. In 1915, the Convent was evacuated into the depths of Russia—all 500 nuns and over 600 others. In 1917, at the invitation of then-Bishop Anastassy (Gribanovsky), the Convent moved to the Kishinev Diocese, and then to Yugoslavia, to Khopovo. From Khopovo, in 1950, the nuns of the Convent left for France (first to Fourquet, then to Provemont), where they remain to this day. In France, the Convent was frequently visited by St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco the Miracle-worker. The Mother Superior of the convent is Abbess Makrina. The main holy object of the convent is the Lesna Icon of the Mother of God. There also are the relics of St. Afanasii of Brest. The nuns bear a multitude of obediences: singing, cleaning, gardening, candle-making, icon-painting, a bookstore, and also warmly greet many visiting pilgrims. More information about the convent can be found here: <http://www.roca.org/OA/41/41e.htm> and here: <http://www.roca.org/OA/92/92h.htm>



Here are a few links to help you learn more about Christian Orthodox Monasticism:

Orthodox Christian Monasticism

<http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/general/monasticism.aspx>

The Monastic Life

<http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/phronema/monastic.aspx>

Gleanings from Orthodox Christian Authors and the Holy Fathers: Monasticism

<http://www.orthodox.net/gleanings/monasticism.html>



Please remember that this **Saturday, March 31**, the Youth Group is planning a trip to the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery. The monastery was founded in 1987 by three nuns from Romania, in a desire to pursue missionary work and spread Orthodoxy further into America. The monastery is dedicated to one of the greatest feast days of the Orthodox Church, the falling asleep of the Theotokos, celebrated on August 15.

<http://www.dormitionmonastery.com/>

We will be leaving from church around 10:30am that Saturday right after the 8:00am Liturgy, which you should also try to attend. Mother Gabriela, who is the abbess of the convent, has graciously offered us to have lunch there.

We plan to leave the monastery by 3:30 P.M.

Part of going on a pilgrimage is making a donation to the monastery. It would be reasonable to give about \$20 per person, especially that they'll be serving us lunch. However, we ask you to contribute about \$10, for we'll also be making a donation from the youth group fund.

There is also a nice book store there, so bring some extra cash, if you're interested in buying gifts.



The Sign of the Cross.

We call ourselves **Christians** because we believe in God as we were taught to believe by the Son of God Himself, our Lord **Jesus Christ**.

Jesus Christ not only taught us to believe in God correctly, but He also **saved us from the power of sin and eternal death**.

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, out of love for us sinners came down from Heaven and, as a man, suffered instead of us for our sins: He was **crucified, He died on the Cross**, and on the third day He resurrected. As the sinless Son of God, **by His Cross** (that is, by suffering and death on the Cross for the sins of all men and of all the world), He conquered not only sin but also death itself — **He arose from the dead**, and He made the Cross the weapon of His victory over sin and death.

As the vanquisher of death, Who arose on the third day, He saved us also from eternal death. He will resurrect all of us, all the dead, when the last day of the world comes; He will resurrect us for joyful, eternal life with God.

The **Cross** is the **weapon**, or the **sign, of Christ's victory over sin and death**.

One teacher gave the following example in order to explain to his students how Jesus Christ could conquer evil in the world by His Cross:

For many years the Swiss fought against their enemies, the Austrians. Finally the opposing armies met in a certain valley for a decisive battle. The Austrian soldiers, wearing their armor, were drawn up in battle array with their lances extended forward, and the Swiss, beating them with their maces (heavy clubs with weights on the end), tried without success to break the ranks of the enemy. Several times the Swiss threw themselves on the enemy with blind courage, but every time they were thrown back. They were not strong enough to break through the thick row of lances.

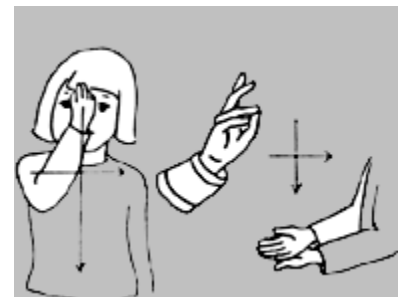
Then one of the Swiss soldiers, Arnold Winkleried, sacrificed himself, ran ahead, grabbed with both arms several of the spears pointed at him, and allowed them to pierce his chest. In this way an opening was made for the Swiss and they broke into the ranks of the Austrians and won a decisive and final victory over their enemies.

So the hero, Winkleried, sacrificed his own life and died, but he made it possible for his people to conquer the enemy.

In the same way, our Lord Jesus Christ received in His breast the terrible spears of sin and death which were invincible for us. He died on the **Cross**, but He also **arose**, as the vanquisher of sin and death, and thus opened for us the way to eternal victory over evil and death. That is, He opened the way to eternal life.

Now everything depends on us: if we wish to be delivered from the power of evil, sin and eternal death, then we must **follow** Christ, that is, **believe** in Christ, **love** Him, and fulfill His holy will, being obedient to Him in everything, live with Christ. This is why, in order to express our faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour, we wear a Cross on our body, and during prayer we form the Cross over ourselves with our right hand, or make the **sign of the Cross**.

For the sign of the Cross we put the fingers of our right hand together as follows. We bring the tips of the first three fingers together (the thumb, index and middle ones), and bend the last two (the "ring" and little fingers) against the palm.



The first three fingers together express our faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, as the Trinity one in essence and indivisible, and the two fingers bent show how the Son of God, when He came down from Heaven, being God, became man; that is, they signify His two natures — divine and human.

In order to make the sign of the Cross, with our fingers in this position, we touch our **forehead**, for the blessing of our mind, our **stomach**, for the blessing of our internal feelings, then our right and left **shoulders**, for the blessing of our bodily strength.

The sign of the Cross gives us great strength to repel and conquer evil and to do good, but we must remember to make the sign of the Cross correctly and without haste, otherwise it will not be the sign of the Cross, but just waving our hand around, which only gladdens the demons. By making the sign of the Cross carelessly we show a lack of reverence for God. This is a sin. This sin is called **sacrilege**.

We make the sign of the Cross, or "cross ourselves," at the beginning of prayer, during prayer, at the end of prayer, and when we draw near to anything holy: when we enter the church, when we reverence the Cross or an icon. We should cross ourselves at every important moment in our life: in danger, in sorrow, in joy, and so on.

When we cross ourselves, mentally we say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Thus we express our faith in the All-holy Trinity and our desire to live and labor for the glory of God.

The word "**amen**" means in truth, truly, let it be so, so be it.

Unction (Soborovanie) in Ferndale March 28, 2007



The clergy from the various parishes will gather to serve the Mystery of Unction (Soborovanie) for all the area faithful. St. Vladimir's has been privileged to host this gathering for the last four or five years. However, this year our sister parish, Dormition Cathedral, has asked that the service be held at their parish. The service will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 28.

The address of the Cathedral is:
2101 LIVERNOIS ST
FERNDALE, MI 48220-2719

Please make a note of this special service and please make every attempt to attend if you are able.

The Mystery of Unction is associated very strongly with repentance, and thus it is important to confess sometime reasonably near to the serving of the Mystery.

The Mystery of Unction

The Mystery of Unction is a sacred action in which, while the body is anointed with oil, the grace of God which heals infirmities of soul and body is called down upon a sick person (Orthodox Catechism, p. 65). It is performed by a gathering of presbyters, ideally seven in number, however, it can be performed by a lesser number and even by a single priest

The Divine Institution of the Mystery

Even in Old Testament times oil signified grace, joy, a softening, a bringing to life. Anointment of the sick with oil was done by the Apostles, as we read in the Evangelist Mark (6:13): They anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them.

The clearest testimony of the Mystery of Unction is to be found in the Apostle James (5:14-15): Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders (presbyters) of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. The Apostle speaks here not of a special "gift" of healing-, rather he prescribes the sacred action in a definite form, which was to enter into the custom of the Church: the performance of it by the presbyters of the Church, prayers, anointment; and he joins to this, as its consequence, the easing of bodily illness and the forgiveness of sins.

One cannot understand the words of the Apostle James about anointment with oil as referring to a usual healing method of those times, since oil, with all its beneficial attributes, is not a means of healing against every disease. The Apostles did not introduce anything of themselves, but they taught only what the Lord Jesus Christ had commanded them, and what the Holy Spirit had inspired in them; and they called themselves not the "institutors" of the Mysteries of God, but only the "stewards" of the Mysteries and the "servants of Christ." Consequently, Unction also, which is commanded here by the Apostle James, has a Divine institution. In ancient Christian literature one may find indirect testimonies of the Mystery of Unction in St. Irenaeus of Lyons and in Origen. Later there are clear testimonies of it in Sts. Basil the Great and John Chrysostom, who have left prayers for the healing of the infirm which entered later into the rite of Unction; and likewise in St. Cyril of Alexandria. In the fifth century, Pope Innocent I answered a series of questions concerning the Mystery of Unction, indicating in his answers that a) it should be performed "upon believers who are sick"; b) it may be performed also by a bishop, since one should not see in the words of the Apostle,

let him call for the presbyters, any prohibition for a bishop to participate in the sacred action; c) this anointment may not be performed "on those undergoing ecclesiastical penance," because it is a "Mystery," and to those who are forbidden the other Mysteries, how can one allow only one? This Mystery is performed on the sick who are capable of receiving it consciously and participating in prayer for themselves: however it may also be performed on children. The place of this sacred action may be either the church or the dwelling where the sick person is. The Mystery of Unction is usually preceded by Confession and is usually concluded with the Mystery of Communion. The visible side of the Mystery comprises seven anointings of the sick person with oil by the participating priests in order; this is done in the form of a cross on the forehead, the nostrils, the cheeks, the lips, the chest, and both sides of the hands, accompanied by prayers and by the reading of specific passages in the Epistles and the Gospel. During the anointing itself, seven times this prayer is pronounced: "O holy Father, Physician of souls and bodies, who didst send Thine Onlybegotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who healeth every infirmity and delivereth from death: Heal also Thy servant (name)," and so forth. The rite of Unction begins with the singing of troparia and a canon; the final prayer in the rite is a prayer of remission of sins. A whole assembly of servants of the Lord stand before Him on behalf of the sick person, and by the prayer of faith on behalf of the whole Church entreats Him, the Most Merciful One, to grant to the infirm one the remission of transgressions and to purify his conscience from every defilement. There is also kept in mind the fact that a person who has grown weak in body and soul is not always capable of offering the proper confession of his sins. This lightening of the conscience of the one who receives the Mystery of Unction opens the way also for a grace-giving healing of his bodily infirmity through the prayer of faith. There is allowed and sometimes practiced a special rite of Unction, which is performed in church on many persons at the same time, on a special day assigned for this, for the general healing of infirmities of soul and body; but this rite is not precisely identical to the Mystery of Unction.

From Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, by Protopresbyter Michael Pomezansk. Translated by Hiermonk Seraphim Rose, St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, CA, 1984. From: stjohndc.org

Date for the next Youth Group Meeting in April: TBA

*"If God be for us, who can be against us?"
St. John Chrysostom*

"The Parish Vine"

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Do you like to help others?
Would you like to learn more about your Orthodox Faith?
Do you like to meet new people?
Join the Youth Group!

St. Herman Youth Group is for ALL St. Vladimir's Teens!
→ Contact our Youth Group Coordinators for more information. ←

Paint the Rock!



Do you know about the rock at the corner of Hill & Washtenaw in Ann Arbor? This rock is painted by UM students sometimes nightly.



Our Youth Group will be painting this rock on Pascha night –
May 1 right after our Pascha breakfast.

Come join the Youth Group! Everyone is welcome!
Who needs sleep on Pascha night anyway!?

Show Ann Arbor that:

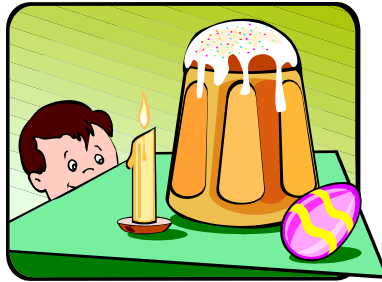
CHRIST IS RISEN!

Egg Hunt! ~ Охота на яйца!

Sunday, April 22

Divine Liturgy ~ Бож. Литургия: 10:00 a.m.

Egg Hunt – Follows Divine Liturgy ~ После литургии



For St. Vladimir's Young Parishioners!

Come find eggs filled with candy and the GOLDEN EGG too!



Brought to you by St. Herman of Alaska Youth Group of St. Vladimir's Church



Cost: Absolutely Free!

Don't miss this fun event!

Rain date: Sunday, April 29 – Following Divine Liturgy