

Acquiring The Spirit

A Publication of St. Seraphim's Outreach Ministries of High Point, North Carolina

Summer 2004 – Edition

St. Seraphim's Ministries is an Outreach Ministry of St. Seraphim of Sarov Eastern Orthodox Christian Church. Our Diocese affiliation is: The Orthodox Catholic Church of North and South America, under the omiphorion of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Roman of Akron, Ohio. St. Seraphim of Sarov Eastern Orthodox Church was founded December 6, 1992. Parish Priest and Pastor : The Right Reverend Father Michael D. Jordan. Church and Food Pantry location: 303 Eastchester Drive, High Point, North Carolina. (At the corner of Eastchester and Johnson Streets in High Point, NC) Our mailing address: Post Office Box 77342, Greensboro, NC 27417-7342. Church telephone number is: **(336) 869-8607**. Email: rrfmdj@hotmail.com. Web Address: www.st-serahipm.com.

Acquiring the Spirit is Back!

Dear Members and Friends of St. Seraphim's,

We're excited to announce the re-launch of our newsletter. We'll be making an effort to publish this letter on a regular basis to keep our parish family informed of news and upcoming events.

- In this issue you can read about all the latest activities and accomplishments here at the parish.
- Father Michael gives us an inspiring and thought provoking meditation in "Choices". We end the issue by taking a little time to laugh.
- This is your newsletter. So all comments and suggestions are welcome. If there is anything you would like to see added please feel free to let us know.

I hope you enjoy this issue and all issues in the future.

Thank you,
Nicholas

News & Announcements Yard Sale Successful

On Saturday June 5th, St. Seraphim's participated in a joint yard sale with St. Christopher's Episcopal Church. Members of both congregations donated a variety of items. Baked goods were also available in St. Christopher's basement. Father Michael reports the yard sale was a success and proceeds were over \$200.00. Thanks to everyone from both churches who participated and to those who patronized the sale.

Food Bank Gets High Marks

St. Seraphim's food bank was recently audited by Second Harvest and passed with flying colors. The food bank, one of St. Seraphim's major outreach ministries, continues to collect food and distribute it to the needy. On the second Sunday of the month parishioners from St. Seraphim's and St. Christopher's pack and distribute the food. One St. Seraphim's parishioner was quoted as saying. "I like the idea that on a certain day of the month the food goes out the door to the needy rather than gathering dust on a shelf like I have seen at other food banks." Thanks not only to those who pack and distribute the food, but those who do the shopping and logistics ahead of time and of course to any and all whose donations of food and finances make this ministry possible. The food bank is an ongoing ministry and appreciates donations of non-perishable food and funds. Why not consider helping out one Saturday? Come by on the second Saturday of the month at 10:30 AM. You will get a nice workout, enjoy some fun and fellowship, and at the same time follow the command of Jesus Christ to feed the hungry.

St. Seraphim's Launches new Outreach to the Disabled

Reaching out to those in need has always been a mission of St. Seraphim's. As part of that mission we are excited to announce the creation of a new outreach ministry to people with disabilities in our area. St. Seraphim's will be launching this ministry in partnership with Kapabilities, a 501(c)3 Non Profit Organization in the Eden area. Under the working name of "Kapabilities © of High Point", this outreach will seek to support and assist people with disabilities of the High Point area. Regular

activities will include a support group, recreational activities, information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and general assistance with questions and issues concerning the disabilities. The Eden chapter of Kapabilities ® has been in existence since September of 2000. In addition to providing the same type of activities that are planned for the High Point chapter, Kapabilities ® regularly operates informational booths on the ADA at local job fairs, conducts sessions and seminars on the ADA, and conducts private employment coaching to individuals informing them of their rights on employment issues and approaching the interview process. Kapabilities ® of High Point invites any and all with disabilities, their family members and caretakers, and anyone interested in ADA advocacy to become involved.

For more information email:

rrfmdj@hotmail.com or contact the Church at 336-869-8607.

St. Seraphim's Marks Third Anniversary of the Miracle

On July 7th, St. Seraphim's held an evening Vespers and Healing Service in commemoration of the third anniversary of the Commemoration of Our Lady of the Holy Protection of High Point. It was an especially joyous occasion as our Church Reader and his wife (Chrismation Sponsors), and then-catechumens Nicholas and Tabitha were able to attend this special service. The service was an inspirational opportunity to commemorate the blessings that God has bestowed upon St. Seraphim's and to share them with our two new members.

If you would like to know more about the Miracle at St. Seraphim's, visit our web page at:

www.st-seraphim.com.



Father Michael's Sermon

CHOICES

By: **The Right Reverend Father Michael D. Jordan**

If you're a Christian and you lose everything you own, everyone you love, and even lose your own physical life; you've actually lost nothing! "Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupts, and where thieves do not break in nor steal." Matthew 6:28 The early Christian Saints and Martyrs knew this fact very well, because many of them actually gave up their physical life for their faith in Jesus Christ. They knew that the most a human could do to them is end their physical life. They knew that their spirit belongs to God and no human can possibly destroy it. They also embraced what was waiting for them when their physical life ended. In other words, they lost nothing, but gained everything! It was a choice on their part to not succumb to pressure and renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. Their choice won them a Martyr's Crown and an eternal home in Heaven. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark 8:35-36

God's greatest gift to us is freedom of choice. The greatest glory we can give to God is to use our freedom of choice to choose Him. Our eternal future is affected by our choices! "Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31. Our freedom of choice gives us two basic options: We can choose to follow light (God), or, we can choose to follow darkness. When we choose to follow light, we comply with the Scripture passage cited above, our actions glorify God.

- A club that can kill can also be used to drive a stake to secure a tent to provide shelter.
- A knife that cuts flesh can also be used to cut cloth to make clothes to protect us from the elements.
- A spear that kills can also be used as a lever to lighten the burden of lifting heavy objects.

Clearly, the choices we make either enlighten or darken our spirits. We have the freedom to choose to glorify God or not through our actions and interactions with our fellow human beings. All creation was created and intended for good

purposes and for the glory of God. Misuse of anything perverts its original good intention and casts darkness upon the one that misused it. "... As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15

The Prophet Isaiah said of Jesus Christ, "The people that sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region of the shadow of death light has sprung up." Matthew 4:16 "You have heard that it has been said, you should love your neighbor and hate your enemies. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Matthew 5:43-44

How many times have you heard the phrase, "Love the sinner, but hate the sin?" This statement is only half correct! Indeed we are to love the sinner because we are asked by Jesus Christ in the Scriptures to love everyone, even our enemies.

We are not to hate anyone or anything. Hate is a negative emotion that brings darkness to those who employ it. An enlightened version of this statement would be: "Love and enlighten the sinner and forgive the sin."

If you go to a calculator and enter 1 and press the minus key, then enter 1 again and press the minus key again what is the total of the two numbers? You get a minus 2, or you double the negative number. When you hate evil, you double the effect of evil. If you strike out against darkness in hate, you, yourself enter the darkness! When you shine the light of God and of love upon darkness you dispel and cancel out the darkness. Just as you enter a minus 1 and plus 1, your answer is Zero. Cancel out the effect of darkness by making wise choices based on the enlightened love of God.

"But now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and foul talk. Lie not to another, seeing that you have put off the old self and its deeds." Colossians 3:8-9

"For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known." Luke 12:2

As I have mentioned earlier, we have the choice to choose darkness or light. When we choose to lie we choose darkness. According to the Scripture passage of St. Luke cited above, the darkness of our dishonesty always surface when the light of truth is focused upon it.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 21, Jesus explains in a parable about a father that had two sons. He asked his first son to go to his vineyard and work. The first son said no, but later repented and went to work in the vineyard. The second son told his father that he would go to the vineyard and work, but he did not.

The first son was honest, he did not tell his father what he wanted to hear, he repented and ended up doing the will of his father. The second son chose to lie to his father by telling him what he wanted to hear, but had no intentions of doing his father's will. Eventually the second son would incur anger from his father because it would be revealed that he did not do as he promised. "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed."

Dishonesty leads to darkness, the choice of truth is the way of enlightenment!

From the dawn of mankind, as reason-endowed beings, we have been presented with choices. We learn from our choices, or the consequence of our choices. Many times we think that the little mundane, everyday choices we make do not have an affect on us; however, nothing could be further from the truth.

"For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and what measure you give out, it shall be given to you in return." Matthew 7:2

Through your choices, if you short-change others through judgment, dishonesty, greed, or hatred, you are only short changing yourself, because you will receive in return what you have given.

God has given us the gift of free choice. We are the architects of our own destiny. We can build toward the light, or toward the darkness.

We build toward the light when we put the needs of others ahead of our own. We build toward the light when we choose, love, forgiveness, honesty, and fairness. By building on the side of light we lay up treasures in Heaven and what we do we do to the glory of God. By building toward the light we give God the greatest glory by using our freedom of choice to choose Him through the path He has laid out for us through His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.



A Time to Laugh

The children had all been photographed, and the teacher was trying to persuade them each to buy a copy of the group picture.

"Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grownup and say, 'There's Jennifer; she's a lawyer,' or 'That's Michael. He's a doctor.'"

A small voice at the back of the room rang out, "And there's the teacher. She's dead."

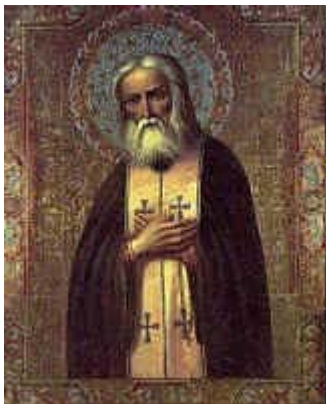
A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, "Now, class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face."

The class nodded in agreement.

"Then why is it that while I am standing upright in the ordinary position, the blood doesn't run into my feet?" the teacher asked.

A little fellow shouted, "'Cause yer feet ain't empty."

After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I wanted to stay with you guys."



PLEASE, COME WORSHIP WITH US!

"Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. In this fast paced world of pagers, email, and cell phones, few can find the spiritual rest and peace of mind that they so desperately need. Unfortunately, even some churches are filled with politics and power struggles, as if we don't get enough of that at work! "Be still and know that I am God". Psalm 46 Our spirit needs to be rested and recharged so we will be better able to cope with the day-to-day struggles of life.

In this world of turmoil we are all looking for a peaceful place to escape, if only for a short while. Finding a peaceful spiritual home these days can sometimes be a daunting task. St. Seraphim of Sarov Eastern Orthodox Christian Church is a rare haven of spirituality, peace and prayer. "My Kingdom is not of this world". John 18:36. Christ's Holy Church is an earthly glimpse of His Heavenly Kingdom that is not of this world. Orthodox Christianity offers an "other worldly" appeal for those who want to rest and renew their spirit. If you are looking for a church home free from the politics of this world, St. Seraphim's is certainly the right place for you.

St. Seraphim's is a small but growing church that has been in the Triad area for 11 years. We are a member of the Orthodox Catholic Church of North and South America, an independent, self-governing Diocese based in Ohio. Our primary worship service is the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom which we celebrate every Sunday morning at 11:00 AM. All of our worship services are done in English. We are located on the corner of Eastchester and Johnson Streets in High Point.

DIRECTIONS TO OUR CHURCH:

We are located in High Point, North Carolina on the corner of Eastchester and Johnson Streets. We are in the Fellowship Building of the St. Christopher's Episcopal Church. Our physical address is: 303 Eastchester Drive - High Point, North Carolina 27262 - The Church phone number is: (336) 869-8607. Divine Liturgy every Sunday morning at 11:00 AM in English.

Visit us on the web at:

www.st-seraphim.com