

Magnificat

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Priestly Ordinations

In October of last year, shortly after we closed the Jampot for the season, we once again journeyed to Holy Transfiguration Monastery, in Redwood Valley, California. This was to be our second visit to Mt. Tabor that year, longer than the one we had made in February, but, like it, also the occasion of great blessing.

There, on November Eighth, the Feast of the Archangel Michael, in the Monastery Church of St. Nicholas and at the hands of His Grace, Bishop Michael Wiwchar, the two founding members of our monastery, Father Nicholas and Father Basil, having been Deacons for some fifteen months, were raised to the Sacred Priesthood.

Present to share the joy with us were our brother Monks of Mt. Tabor, family and friends from as far away as Chicago, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, a representative from Springbank Cistercian Abbey in Sparta, Wisconsin, and also some forty or so members of Mt. Tabor's extended community. We were especially pleased at the presence of our long-time friend and supporter, Father Tom Schmied of Ahmeek,

and three other friends from the Copper Country, as well; they represented to us the many good people who had stood behind us during our years of hardship, struggle, and difficulty, and served as a powerful reminder of the beautiful and rocky land where our monastery had taken root. We felt it was as much their celebration as it was ours.

The ordinations came after an association of four years with Mt. Tabor Monastery, numerous visits there, and three long, winter-time stays for in-depth formation in Byzantine monastic life. Indeed, in many ways, the ordinations can be seen as the culmination of the process of the assimilation of and to Byzantine monasticism that began with our first meeting with Bishop Michael in January of 1994. With the presence of priest-monks within the community, the spiritual resources needed for the living of authentic monastic life are now in place. The Divine Services can be properly led, we can have Divine Liturgy every day, and the monks have constant access to the Sacrament of Penance.

When we began community life some sixteen years ago, this seemed like an

We are a Catholic Monastery of the Byzantine Rite, under the jurisdiction of the Eparchy of Chicago, and belonging to the Ukrainian Metropolis in the United States of America, which is in union with the Pope of Rome, supreme pastor of the universal Church. We embrace Evangelical poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability of life, according to the Rule of Saint Benedict and the traditions of the Christian East. In our skete at Jacob's Falls, on the shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, we devote ourselves to a common life of prayer and work for the praise, love, and service of God and for the upbuilding of His Kingdom through the arts.



The Deacons, Frs. Nicholas and Basil, with Bishop Michael and Archimandrite Boniface at the beginning of Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

impossible dream, but now, through the infinite mercy of God, it is a reality. We pray we be worthy of the blessing and always appreciate its inestimable value.

When a blessing comes after long struggle and hard work, there is a tendency to feel that it was deserved, that it had been earned, somehow. With Ordination - or any Sacrament, for that matter - this can never be the case. A Sacrament is a grace, a free and undeserved gift from God; it can never be earned. What God gives us we owe to His mercy, not to our own merit. Ordination is the exclusive work of Divine Grace, as the Rite, itself, makes evident from the outset.

During the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, after the Great Entrance, the Archdeacon presents the candidate to the Bishop and the assembly with the simple declaration of fact: *By the will of God and the work of the all-holy and life-giving Spirit, and with the blessing of our God-loving Bishop, this devout Deacon is being elevated to the Sacred Priesthood.*

No mention is made of the candidate's training or of any particular suitability to the priesthood other than being devout. Important as proper preparation is for priestly ministry, it has no bearing on the efficacy of the Sacrament. What matters are the will of God, the action of the Holy Spirit, and the blessing of the Bishop. These are what will make the man a priest.

Led by the Archdeacon, the candidate reverently approaches the Bishop, who is seated in front of the Altar, does him homage, and responds to his greeting. Then, again following the Archdeacon, he makes a three-fold procession around the Altar which he venerates with a

kiss at each corner. He thus expresses his love and reverence for the man through whom he will receive the inestimable gift of priesthood, as well as his love for the liturgical ministry into which he is about to enter.

The candidate then kneels before the Bishop, places his right hand upon the Book of the Gospels which rests upon his lap, and solemnly professes his belief in the truths of faith expressed by the Nicene Creed, which he recites, in the seven Sacraments, in the transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, in the oneness of the holy, apostolic, and catholic Church, and in all that it teaches. He swears obedience to the Pope of Rome, to the Bishop, and to their successors. He also promises rectitude in handling the church finances and property which may be entrusted to him, that he will minister conscientiously in the position he is assigned, and that he will leave that position for another only with the consent of proper ecclesiastical authority.

Having received the candidate's profession and oath, the Bishop then proceeds to ordain him. The candidate kneels before the Altar, crosses his hands, and rests his forehead on the Altar's edge. The Bishop covers the candidate's head with his omophorion (stole), makes the Sign of the Cross over him three times, places his hand on the candidate's head, and recites the Prayer of Ordination. This, again, takes the form of a simple declaration: *Divine Grace, which always heals the infirm and supplies what is lacking, elevates this devout Deacon to the Priesthood; therefore let us pray for him, that the grace of the Holy Spirit may come upon him.* He then blesses him again, making the Sign of the Cross three times over his head and saying: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

The Bishop again imposes his hand on the head of the newly ordained priest and prays that he might receive this great grace of the Holy Spirit in innocence of life and with unwavering faith, and that he might do everything to please the One who has chosen to bestow on him the great honor of the Priesthood.

The new priest then prostrates himself before the Royal Doors while the Archdeacon leads the assembly in a litany with special petitions for the newly ordained. Then the Bishop again imposes his hands on him and

prays that he might minister worthily and faithfully carry out all the spiritual responsibilities that are now entrusted to him.

The newly ordained priest then puts off the vestments he has worn as a deacon and receives from the hand of the Bishop his priestly vestments, the epitrakelion (stole), the epimanikia (cuffs), and the phelonion (chasuble), as well as the chalice and diskos (paten) and the Liturgikon (Sacramentary), as symbols of his office and of his responsibilities in the Church.

Only now, as he is being solemnly invested with these insignia, does the assembly acclaim him with cries of: *Axios!* (He is worthy.)

This acclamation is not an expression of appreciation for anything the new priest has accomplished up to this point. It is not recognition of having completed an arduous course of study, nor of any special ability he might possess or spiritual insight he might have attained.

Rather, it is an expression of faith in the validity of the Sacrament he has just received and in the efficacy of the prayers the Bishop has prayed over him. It is this that makes him worthy to take his place at the Altar with the Bishop and the senior priests as the Divine Liturgy continues.



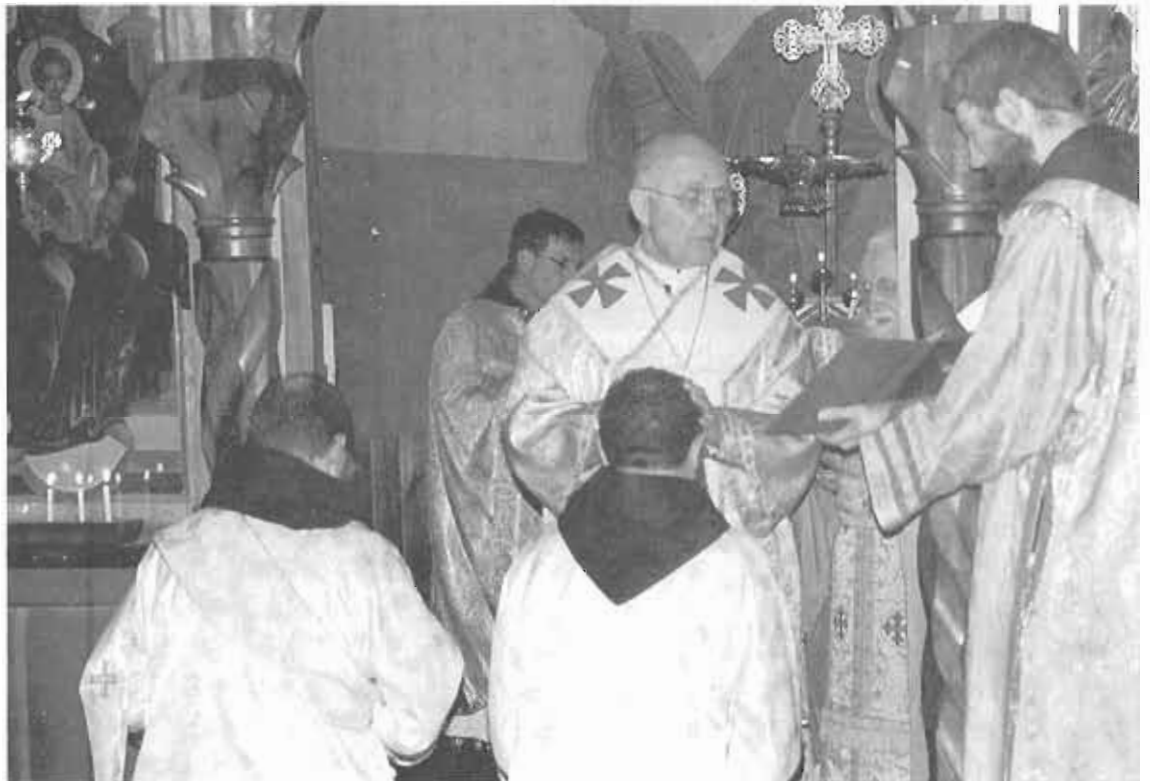
The Deacons, Frs. Nicholas and Basil, profess their faith and swear obedience to the Church and her Hierarchs.

AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!



Divine Grace, which always heals the infirm and supplies what is lacking, elevates the devout Deacon, Nicholas, to the Priesthood...

O Lord God...fill Your servant, whom You have chosen to be ordained to the priesthood, with the gifts of Your Holy Spirit, so that he may stand worthily and blamelessly before your holy altar; preach the Gospel of Your kingdom; sanctify the word of your truth; offer gifts and spiritual sacrifices; and renew Your people in the bath of regeneration.





Newly ordained priest, Fr. Nicholas, bestows his priestly blessing upon Achimandrite Boniface, Abbot of Holy Transfiguration Monastery: *May the Lord bless you from Zion, and may you see the good fortune of Jerusalem all the days of your life, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Bishop Michael and Archimandrite Boniface lead the assembly in greeting the newly ordained priests: *God grant you many years!*

Многії літа!



The dignity of the Sacred Priesthood comes to no one by right, nor can it be earned even through the greatest effort. It is purely and simply the work of Divine Grace, an action of the Holy Spirit upon a man's life. God grant that the two priests He has raised up for our monastery may always live out that grace to the full.

A Matter of Evil

It was a scene that had often been replayed.

The day was hot, and she was clothed so as to leave little to the imagination, a shapely woman of about thirty. She came directly to the sales counter and pointed to an item that had caught her eye. "What's that?" she asked.

"That's a rum-raisin fudge brownie."

"Now, that's sinful," she said. "Don't you guys feel guilty about selling all this evil stuff?!"

"It is not evil! Thoughts can be evil. Actions can be evil. People can be evil. A brownie is incapable of evil. It's a piece of food, nothing more. The only thing sinful about it might be our attitude toward it."

She seemed somewhat taken aback by our vehemence. In the end she bought two and left without further comment.

A middle-aged man had observed the encounter from a distance. When he brought his jam to the counter, he said, "Don't you think you were a little hard on her? Maybe she meant the rum."

"Maybe," we said, feeling a little foolish for having gotten so irritated, "but rum is not evil, either. She probably doesn't really understand what evil is."

Therein lies the problem.

We live in a society that is fueled by advertising. Our economy of plenty results in the availability of a surfeit of products and services, all vying for our attention. Hyperbole is a tried and true means of making us take notice, and we all smile occasionally at the extravagant adjectives employed by ad copywriters. But, given the power of the mass media, advertising's overblown use of the language has sometimes corrupted the meaning of words.

A case in point: Awe is "reverential fear; dread mingled with veneration; solemn and reverential wonder, inspired by what is sublime and majestic." Its adjective, awesome, formerly was used mostly in reference to God, to His power or beauty, to His revelation in nature. Its use in an ad campaign was, no doubt, intended as humorous hyperbole, something to catch people's attention. Certainly it did that. Whatever it might have been promoting, the word caught on, and it is now bandied about in a way that has little to do with reverential fear. Perhaps this was all done in innocence. None the less, a once powerful descriptor of the Divine has been lost.

Somewhere along the line, someone also coined the phrase, "Sinfully delicious." This was hardly done in innocence. Here sin, an offence against God, the perpetration of evil, is paired with delight. This juxtaposition might be seen as gently ridiculing a Puritan attitude that considered pleasure sinful. More than likely it was, rather, intended to speak to the darker regions of the human heart where there lurks a propensity toward evil, a tendency to delight in offending God.

In any case, for many people "sinful" has become a synonym for "delicious", and its use in the context of food is probably intended as a light-hearted compliment. Certainly, those who use it in the **Jampot** do not mean to offend; usually we let it pass without comment.

Still, most people do know what it really means. The scantily clad young woman did equate it with evil, after all. But, if a brownie can be called evil, what word are we to use to describe abortion or murder? And if we use the same word for both, do we not run the risk of truly feeling that one is no worse than the other?

All In the Lord's Good Time



The architect's rendering of our new monastery and Chapel prompts many questions from visitors to the Jampot. Most want to know when we expect to finish. And that is a good question.

Like everything else in this endeavor, the building program is the Lord's work; it proceeds according to His plan and on His schedule. We cannot expect to know exactly. Still, since it all boils down to the availability of money to pay for the work, we can make some tentative projections.

As a result of last year's work and fundraising, we have been able to reduce the

construction debt by \$130,000.00. Some \$245,000.00 still remains. If all continues to go at this pace, the debt will be repaid by January of 2001. We would then hope to see our way clear to proceed. We pray this is the case.

It depends on generosity. **Jampot** revenue has remained stable for the past several years, and repairs and improvements this summer have taken a toll on the season's surplus.

May the Lord raise up a generous response to this year's fundraising campaign and keep us on schedule!

Abundant Blessings

We enter our seventeenth winter by the shore of the Great Lake feeling abundantly blessed. The hardship and toil of the past sixteen years have brought their share of rewards. Our business provides us a stable support and has every potential for growth. We have expanded our living quarters and made significant improvements to the beauty and utility of our temporary Chapel. We will be working in the coming last weeks of good weather to tighten up our older buildings and make them more snug against the winter storms. We've laid in a good wood supply. We have even managed to make some attempts at beautifying our landscape. We've come such a long way since that first, hard winter some sixteen years ago.

In all this we give God the glory, for, truly, this is all His doing. Building a monastery is, indeed the Lord's work; from the beginning we trusted that He would see it

through to the end. In many ways we have been useless tools in His hand, but, despite our inadequacies to the task at hand, the work continues to move forward. Divine Grace does, indeed, heal the infirm and supply what is lacking.

This is a great comfort to us; we have still a long way to go. The challenge grows no smaller with time, even as we feel our own energies diminishing. We thank God for all the help He has raised up along the way, and in particular for the thousands of good people whose support has brought us thus far. Through them, the Lord is building this monastery. We trust that they, too, will see the work to the end.

With gratitude for what has been wrought until now and with confidence in what is yet to come, we lift them up to Him daily as we stand before His Divine Presence.

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