

Monastic Musings

News and Views of the Eastern Rite Monastics
of the
Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church

March 2010

From the Idle keyboard

by: hieroschemamonk Barb

Welcome to the inaugural Monastic Newsletter! This newsletter will be published, hopefully, monthly by Mother (hieroschemamonk) Barb as a ministry of the Holy Theotokos of Mercy Community. As you can see in the header, this newsletter is for the Eastern Rite Monastics within the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church. Mother Barb has been appointed the Spiritual Elder/Abbess for the Eastern Rite Monastics by Bishop Charles Smith, OSF.



The colors chosen for this newsletter are the colors for the Holy Mother (Theotokos). In the Western church, blue is usually used for Mary's shawl/outer wrap while in the Eastern Church, maroon is the color used.



So what can one expect within the monthly newsletter you might ask? If all goes as planned, there will be news from the monastics, teachings from the Desert Mothers and Desert Fathers, and prayer requests (to be remembered by the monastics daily) and other items as they come forward to the editor. But then we all know that the best laid plans can be changed without warning by the Holy Spirit! I will not be publishing a calendar within the newsletter since the calendar is already available on the web site at: <http://www.ohioocc.org/olp/news.html> . This is your newsletter, so feel free to send me items to include (nothing copyrighted please).

The newsletter will be shared monthly with not only the Eastern Rite Monastics, but all the clergy within the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church. The clergy are given the permission to reprint the newsletter to distribute to their congregations if they so desire. Please note that the information cannot be posted electronically outside of the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church! The newsletter is copyrighted by the Holy Theotokos of Mercy Community for the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church.

Announcements:

Welcome to our newest monastic – Br. Damien. Br. Damien is a Riasaphor monk who has just recently joined the church. Welcome to your new spiritual home, Br. Damien! May God continue to bless your spiritual walk.

The entire Eastern Rite Monastic Community extends their congratulations to Deacon Maria Martinez for her recent ordination to the Diaconate for Our Lady of Peace Cathedral and the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church. Deacon Maria becomes the first female Deacon for our Church. We also extend our congratulations to Fr. Rick Hobbs for receiving his full incardination into the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church and his new positions of Rector for the Our Lady of Peace Cathedral and Chancellor for the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church. As is the tradition within the eastern churches to show that the community completely agrees with the decisions made, we from the Eastern Rite Monastic Community say: AXIOS, AXIOS, AXIOS (Worthy, Worthy, Worthy)!!! May God bless both of them as they continue their ministries within God's vineyard!

LENT AS TRANSFORMATION

By Mother (hieromonk) Myrella LeClair

It is that time of the liturgical year again. We are taught that Lent is a somber time – a time for sacrifice. However, Lent is truly a time of “blessed hope”. Let us view it as a time for transformation. That’s what my first mentor taught me. While preaching his First Sunday of Lent sermon, Bishop Martin-Henri told the congregation that he was giving up Alaskan King Crab for Lent. First, the congregation reacted with silence and then with laughter. We all knew that Martin-Henri was a monastic living his vow of poverty and could not afford to buy Alaskan King Crab. He then went on to teach us that Lent was not about what we *give up* but rather what we *give out* and that it was a time to “tune-up” our spiritual journey.

Lent remains a time of sacrifice, but it is what we sacrifice that transforms us. During this time, let us sacrifice our judgment, anger, hate, and anxiety by giving it all to the Holy Spirit so that he can transform them into forgiveness, peace, love, and trust. Let us work to change our hearts and minds so that we can truly live the Gospel.

Holy Spirit, I surrender my judgment to you. Teach me to be forgiving.

Holy Spirit, I surrender my anger to you. Transform me into an instrument of your Peace.

Holy Spirit, I surrender my hate to you. Help me to truly “love my enemies”.

Holy Spirit, I surrender my anxiety to you. Teach me to trust in you.

For it is in my forgiving that I am forgiven. It is in being an instrument of peace that I am at peace. It is in loving my enemies that I will know God's unconditional Love, and it is in placing my trust in you that my heart and mind will be transformed. Amen!

Daily Rule

by: hieroschemamonk Barb

Often I am asked about what my Daily Rule should be or how do I set up a Daily Rule? Well, to answer those questions, one has to understand what the purpose of the Daily Rule is. The Daily Rule is actually a tool to help you develop your spirituality and to bring you closer to God. Within the Eastern Rite, the Daily Rule is developed by the hegumen/abbot/abbess with input from the monastic to help them grow spiritually. It is thus individualized for each monastic! What I try to do with the monastics is to seek answers to several questions before I start helping them to lay out their Daily Rule. Questions I often ask are: What is your secular job? What is your work schedule? What Psalter do you use and Which Saint do you seem drawn to? The basic Daily Rule is developed from these answers. The Daily Rule always contains periods of prayer, reciting the psalms of the day, reading and studying of the Holy Scriptures, reading/studying the writings of the Holy Fathers/Mothers, and includes some kind of obedience. The Daily Rule starts out somewhat easy and builds in the amount of time spent each day. I believe that since we live within the world, we have to be able to balance our secular lives and our spiritual lives.

So to answer the question(s) often asked of me: talk with me and let us work together to set your Daily Rule. You may already have your ideas of what you see as a Daily Rule, and I always welcome those ideas. Maybe all that is needed is a little "tweaking" of your Daily Rule to help you continue your spiritual growth.

Desert Wisdom

The Fruit of Obedience

They told this story of John the Short. He went to live with a hermit from Thebaid, who was living in the desert of Skete. His abba once took a dead stick and planted it, and told him, "Pour a jug of water over its base every day until it bears fruit."

Water was so far from their cell that John had to go off every evening to fetch it and it was dawn before he returned. At the end of three years the stick turned green, and bore fruit.

The hermit picked some of the fruit and took it to church, and said to the brothers, "Take and eat of the fruit of obedience."

Monasticism within the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church

By: hieroschemamonk Barb Martzall

Monasticism within the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church will be taking two forms – Western Rite and Eastern Rite. There are not many of us monastics within the church at the moment, but who knows what the future shall bring.

Essentially the only differences between the two forms will be the monastic titles, Daily Rule, and habits. The requirements to be a monastic will be the same for both rites. I am working very closely with +Charles as we develop the requirements for monasticism. I don't want to see two sets of requirements: one for the western rite and one for the eastern rite. Yes, ranks/titles will be different, but that is in keeping with the traditions of each Rite. These ranks/titles are being discussed and set into a pattern for use within the church. Monasticism is evolving within the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church. Stay tuned as more is to come in time as +Charles and I continue to put together the monastic framework and foundation. Please know that this does not change anything we are already doing. It only changes the application process, education, and hierarchy of the monastic rites.

Prayer Requests

Mom LeClair
Br. Yossi and Jim
Bill and Trish
Barry Lillis
Linda and Wayne
Deacon Maria Martinez
Fr. Rick Hobbs and family
Br. Damien and family
Our Bishop -- +Charles Smith, OSF

Eastern Rite Monastics within Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church

Br. Damien Simmons (Riasaphor monastic)
Mother Myrella LeClair (Stavrophor monastic)
Mother Barb Martzall (Schema-hegumen/abbess)

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