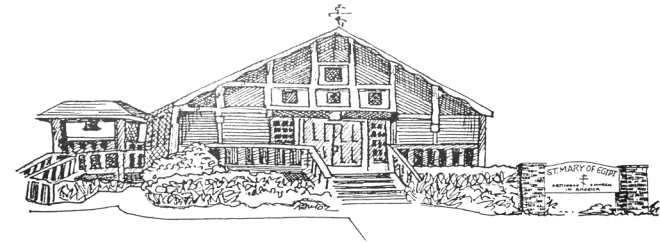


## Living the Orthodox World-View. Part 2

### Life Today Has Become Abnormal

Anyone who looks at our contemporary life from the perspective of the normal life lived by people in earlier times — say, Russia, or America, or any country of Western Europe in the 19th century—cannot help but be struck by the fact of how *abnormal* life has become today. The whole concept of authority and obedience, of decency and politeness, of public and private behavior — all have changed drastically, have been turned upside down except in a few isolated pockets of people — usually Christians of some kind — who try to preserve the so-called "old-fashioned" way of life. Our abnormal life today can be characterized as *spoiled, pampered*. From infancy today's child is treated, as a general rule, like a little god or goddess in the family: his whims are catered to, his desires fulfilled; he is surrounded by toys, amusements, comforts; he is not trained and brought up according to strict principles of Christian behavior, but left to develop whichever way his desires incline. It is usually enough for him to say, "I want it!" or "I won't do it!" for his obliging parents to bow down before him and let him have his way. Perhaps this does not happen *all* the time in *every* family, but it happens often enough to be the *rule* of contemporary child-rearing, and even the best-intentioned parents do not entirely escape its influence. Even if the parents try to raise the child strictly, the neighbors are trying to do something else. They have to take that into consideration when disciplining the child. When such a child becomes an adult, he naturally surrounds himself with the same things he was used to in his childhood: comforts, amusements, and grown-up toys. Life becomes a constant search for "fun" which, by the way, is a word totally unheard of in any other vocabulary; in 19th century Russia they wouldn't have understood what this word meant, or any serious civilization. Life is a constant search for "fun" which is so empty of any serious meaning that a visitor from any 19th-century country, looking at our popular television programs, amusement parks, advertisements, movies, music at almost any aspect of our popular culture would think he had stumbled across a land of imbeciles who have lost all contact with normal reality. We don't often take that into consideration, because we are living in this society and we take it for granted. Some recent observers of our contemporary life have called the young people of today the "me generation" and our times the "age of narcissism," characterized by a worship of and fascination with oneself that prevents a normal human life from developing. Others have spoken of the "plastic" universe or fantasy world in which so many people live today, unable to face or come to terms with the reality of the world around them or the problems within themselves. When the "me generation" turns to religion — which has been happening very frequently in the past several decades — it is usually to a "plastic" or fantasy form of religion: a religion of "self-development" (where the self remains the object of worship), of brainwashing and mind-control, of deified gurus and swamis, of a pursuit of UFOs and "extra-terrestrial" beings, of abnormal spiritual states and feelings. We will not go into all these manifestations there, which are probably familiar enough to most of you, except to discuss a little later how these touch on the Orthodox Christian spiritual life of our days. It is important for us to realize, as we try ourselves to lead a Christian life today, that the world which has been formed by our pampered times, makes demands on the soul, whether in religion or in secular life, which are what one has to call *totalitarian*. This is easy enough to see in the mind-bending cults that have received so much publicity in recent years, and which demand total allegiance to a self-made "holy man"; but it is just as evident in secular life, where one is confronted not just by an individual temptation here or there, but by a constant state of temptation that attacks one, whether in the background music heard everywhere in markets and businesses, in the public signs and billboards of city streets, in the rock music which is brought even to forest campgrounds and trails, and in the home itself, where television often becomes the secret ruler of the household, dictating modern values, opinions, and tastes. If you have young children, you know how true this is; when they have seen something on television how difficult it is to fight against this new opinion which has been given as an authority by the television. The message of this universal temptation that attacks men today quite openly in its secular forms, but usually more hidden in its religious forms is: Live for the present, enjoy yourself, relax, be comfortable. Behind this message is another, more sinister undertone which is openly expressed only in the officially atheist countries which are one step ahead of the free world in this respect. In fact, we should realize that what is happening in the world today is very similar whether it occurs behind the Iron Curtain or in the free world. There are different varieties of it, but there is a very similar attack to get our soul. In the communist countries which have an official doctrine of atheism, they tell quite openly that you are to: Forget about God and any other life but the present; remove from your life the fear of God and reverence for holy things; regard those who still believe in God in the "old-fashioned" way as enemies who must be exterminated. One might take, as a symbol of our carefree, fun-loving, self-worshipping times, our American "Disneyland"; if so, we should not neglect to see behind it the more sinister symbol that shows where the "me generation" is really heading: the Soviet Gulag, the chain of concentration camps that already governs the life of nearly half the world's population.

### SAINT MARY OF EGYPT ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



925 Beaver Ruin Rd.  
Norcross, GA 30093  
770-923-7790

Hieromonk Cyprian (DuRant)  
Rector  
4025 McGinnis Ferry Rd Apt  
1521  
Suwanee, GA 30024  
Home: 678-765-0021

V. Rev. Peter Smith  
Assistant Priest  
4408 John Dr  
Norcross, GA 30093  
Home: 678-924-0004  
[fadapita@aol.com](mailto:fadapita@aol.com)

Rev. Dn. Lazarus Muska  
Attached  
215 Triple Oaks Dr  
Tucker, GA 30084  
Home: 770-638-0472

## February 16, 2014

Saturdays @ 5:00pm All Night Vigil

Sundays @10:00am Divine Liturgy and Coffee  
Hour afterwards

Wednesday Night @7:00pm Vespers

Thursday @ 8:00am Divine Liturgy

"Acquire a Sprit of Peace, and around you thousands will be saved."

Saint Seraphim of Sarov



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### BUDGET SHORTFALL FOR JANUARY 2014: **\$3500**

#### We need \$10,838 per month for Operating Expenses

- House Blessing need to be scheduled, See Father Cyprian or Father Peter
  - Coffee Hour Volunteers Needed
- Have you filled out your Yearly Membership Form? If not please do so as soon as possible
- Volunteers are still needed for the ALL American Council which will meet in Atlanta in 2015

#### **On Tithing: Leviticus 27:30-32**

<sup>30</sup> And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD.

<sup>31</sup> And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof.

<sup>32</sup> And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Usual Schedule of Services are on the front of the bulletin

Thursday at 7:00pm Catechumen Classes at the Church

### Parish News

I just wanted to share with everyone what your council is up to. We had a very productive meeting this past Sunday. Our biggest task, of course, is finding a way to navigate through our current serious financial situation. We have several ideas that we are developing to work through this, including cost savings and money management analysis, raising parish awareness, and the establishment of a stewardship program.

At the same time, we are working on giving the parish a little bit of a "tune up", to shake us out of the rut we appear to be in. To accomplish this, we are giving a top-to-bottom review of parish and personal piety. We want our parish to be a warm, clean, and worshipful place to be. One major change is that we are restricting smoking on parish grounds to the specified smoking area, and the cigarette receptacle has been relocated to this area in the parking lot. Gwinnett county's smoking ordinance was used as a guideline to select this location. Additionally, we ask that those who do smoke, please refrain from dropping cigarette butts anywhere but the provided receptacle. Likewise, we are relocating and cleaning up recycle bins, picnic tables and other items, as well as tending to building maintenance items.

The minutes from this past parish council meeting will be posted very soon, so you can see what we're up to. We all have our work cut out for us, both at the council level and at a parish wide level. The parish council is very desirous of your prayers; and all of you are in mine!

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

In Christ,  
Thomas  
Parish Warden