



## ***St. John Chrysostom Church***

A Mission of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America  
[www.stjohnchrysostomchurch.org](http://www.stjohnchrysostomchurch.org)

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### **August SJCC News**

My Joy in the Lord,

It is hard to believe that it is already August. On the 13<sup>th</sup> we celebrate our 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary. (actually we'll do the celebrating on the 16<sup>th</sup> after Liturgy – when the Fast is over.....). On August 6<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate the Holy day of the Transfiguration of our Lord. So often commentators on this Feast talk about it as if Christ suddenly gained something new – but that is not how the Fathers saw it – they saw this day as the time that God revealed what was there all the time – His Glory. It was the eyes of the apostles that were opened to see what they had not before, not God who gained something new. We talk about Christians reflecting the light of God – and when we do it is that light of Mt. Tabor that refer to. Most of us are poor reflectors. Not only, in the words of St. Paul do we “see through a glass darkly”, but we also “shine” darkly. But no matter how poor a reflector we are, there are times – for each of us – when we truly reflect the light of God to our friends and neighbors. As we celebrate this Feast – let us pray that we may be lights to the world, lights as individuals, lights as families and lights as a Christian Community.

With love, in Christ,  
Fr. Seraphim

#### **The Parish Council has called a Special Meeting for Sunday August 23 after Liturgy**

We will be discussing the future of our parish. Our lease is up on October 31 and we need to make plans for the future.

#### **Bishop Basil will be with us on Tuesday, September 8 for Vespers at 6:00 pm**

Please note the TIME. Followed by a Potluck dinner. I know it is early and you will have to fight traffic but PLEASE be on time – maybe arrange to leave work a little early that day. There is nothing special scheduled. Hopefully we can discuss our plans for the future with him.

#### **Inquirer's Group**

Will meet at Fr. Seraphim's on August 20. Join us – bring a friend!

The Open Discussion on a Saturday evening is meant for all to come. This is a time to talk about questions, comments, and ideas – and the Orthodox Christian view of things. Please join us this month on August 22..

## The Christian Concept of Man/Woman relationships

*The lecture delivered by Professor S. Verhovskoy at a Church School Teachers' Conference in the summer of 1964 and the response it provoked marks quite a milestone in the development of our Church consciousness. It is a first attempt over a long period of time to face squarely the problem of man-woman relationships from an Orthodox Christian point of view in terms of here and today. Our theologians, priests and educators, have long been silent on this aspect of human relations and personal growth, and yet it permeates our society and our culture and is discussed daily by all kinds of authorities and our young people are so deeply involved in it.*

*As any first attempt it does not exhaust the subject and does not answer all the questions. The dialogue provoked by Prof. Verhovskoy shows clearly that there is a great need for better semantics,--for a clearer understanding of just what meaning is injected into the words we use. Let us hope that this booklet will prove to be a starting point for honest, sincere, realistic thinking; enlightened by our Orthodox Christian vision of life. This kind of thinking will help us to embody a truly Christian way of life, growth and relationships, to which we could then introduce our young people.*

*Sophie Koulomzjin*

*Transcribed from a tape-recording of the lecture given by PROF. S. S. VERHOVSKOY at the Church School Conference at Douglass College, New Brunswick, VT, organized by the Russian Orthodox Metropolia, Religious Education Department. Prof. Verhovskoy teaches Dogmatics and Moral Theology at St. Vladimir's Seminary,*

### *From Fr. Seraphim*

When reading the section below (and over the next few months) Please remember that this was spoken and edited in 1964 – before many of the movements that have so changed our vocabulary. Please read it with innocence – in the way it was intended. Prof. Verhovskoy – as he himself states below – is speaking in generalities and using language formulated before our more gender neutral sensibilities. Where he says manly – just read male, and where he says womanly, just read female.

I seriously considered updating/changing the language in Prof's (that is how he was known to all students at St. Vladimir's – as Prof) speech but when I started it, I found that I could not do it without rewriting everything – and then it would be my version rather than his words. He was born in Russia in 1907 and grew up in Prague and Paris between the two world wars. His attitudes were somewhat European and even 19<sup>th</sup> century, but they also were always Orthodox. For those of you who managed to attend Fr. Jeremy's retreat this past Lent, some of the ideas are not new – he gave a very precise explanation of the implicit ideas that the Church has had from the Greek – the same ideas that Prof reflects in his speech.

I did remove several sentences in this section which were some personal observations he made. The elimination of them made no difference in the context of what he was saying. The full text will be available on our web site later this year when we post the entire article. The place where they were removed are marked by (...)

For everyone – if you have questions – bring them to the Saturday night Open discussion or contact me directly.

### **Part 3**

We can now take up the problem of what types of vocation men and women take up in the modern world. This is considered a vital problem of our day and our time and in which radical changes are necessary. I am often called conservative and backward, but I must say that I can see no reason why women should not do any kind of work they are capable of doing. From a Christian point of view, I can see no reason against opening the doors of almost all professions to women, i.e. equalizing opportunities and possibilities for both sexes. (...)

We now come to the problem of moral relationship between men and women.

I believe that there can be no better image of the relationships between the sexes than the one I found in the Epistle of Saint Paul. I purposely used the word "image," because the passage I refer to is in no way a rational explanation. Writing to his beloved disciple Timothy, Saint Paul advised him that a man should treat a woman who is older than himself as a mother, a younger one as a daughter, and a woman of the same age as himself as a sister. Likewise a woman has to treat a younger man as a son, an older man as a father and a man her own age as a brother. Let us examine this "brother-sister" relationship which is particularly relevant at this point. It is just an image, of course, but a meaningful one, which opens the real depth and specific character of the Christian idea of man-woman relations. On one hand a brother and a sister are really different. In any family where there are boys and girls, their mutual relations will reflect very clearly that the attitude of a boy, a brother, to his sister is very different from the attitude of the girl, to her brother. It shows that their sex is reflected in the psychology of their relationships, yet unless you are perverted you would never think of brother-sister relationships in terms of sexual relations, or falling in love with each other.

The Christian idea of "sister-brother" relationship does not ignore the difference of sex and yet it invites us to exclude from our man-woman relations any elements of sexuality. The idea of purity, inherent to the concept of brother-sister, or mother-son, of father-daughter relationship, is set as a Christian standard of a natural man-woman relationship. No other relations than these are admissible, or desirable, or normal from the point of view of the Church, except, in the relationship of marriage.

Outside of marriage all sexual relations of any kind, all specifically sexual attitudes to each other are wrong in the eyes of the Church, and if pursued will lead to sin, or to put it more bluntly to fornication.

This brings us to a problem which is of very great concern to both the parents and the youth of America. What I will have to say will probably be unacceptable to many young people, and would be denied by approximately two-thirds of the intellectual leaders here in the United States. Quite different ideas are being imposed on us, consciously and systematically by psychologists, doctors, colleges, so called specialists, through the media of books, magazines, conferences, advertisements, movies, etc. Basically the idea they present is: "Let's give sex a real place in life, and let its expression be as important to us, as dynamic, as any other human function, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, speaking, working." Though not all boys and girls will completely accept this, the idea is prevalent enough, is extremely influential and widely practiced in colleges and high schools. Promiscuity is lawful and desirable. Go ahead and do whatever you like, because this is life, this is nature, this is normal, this is what we are driven to by the very elements of our human nature. If I am a man, and someone else is a woman, then the consequence is clear. If you don't do this, you will be inhibited, frustrated. There will be some kind of flaw in your personality, and it will have a most disastrous effect on your development. You will deprive yourself of normal life, will become repressed, will suffer break-downs, complexes, and all sorts of psychological traumas.

What is the Christian reaction to this kind of thinking and teaching? Let me remind you again that from the Christian point of view there can be no sexuality outside of marriage. This is the law, the absolute rule and standard, and Christians cannot deviate from it even if they do not understand the reasons behind it. I shall try to explain however why these restrictions are imposed upon us.

The first positive assertion to be made is that sexual life is sacred. Sex was created by God with the highest, sacred purposes and our natural intuition supports this attitude. Normal, uncorrupted men and women have a feeling deep in their hearts, even though they might fight it sometimes, that there is something really sacred in sexual relations, the profanation of which is a major and specific sin. In some way fornication, and everything connected with it, is more profane, more degrading to a human being, than stealing, or assaulting someone, because there you come in touch with something which is the very basis, the foundation of your existence. St. John Chrysostom asks: "What is sex? It is the root of existence." And speaking as far back as his own times he says how terrible it is that this sacred root of our existence is covered by garbage. St. Paul said that if you had intercourse with a prostitute, you are a part of her, because when you unite sexually, you truly form a unity. Even if we think of sexual relations from a different point of view we must recognize them as a function having a sacred, existential, essential character. You cannot play with sex, because then you destroy a function of your being which has the highest purpose of existence and you really degrade and profane yourself, your companion and your life. From this point of view it is not unreasonable to say that if a young man really cares about a girl he will not want to be promiscuous with her. You might say that these considerations have no more validity in the American way of life and experience, nevertheless it was so at one time, even if it is not so now. And I must say that I doubt very much that if a young man has serious feelings for a girl, his first reaction to her is a desire to be promiscuous. It is in some way implied in our natural psychology that, if one really loves a person, something more than just physical relation is involved.

Let us further develop the idea of the purpose for which sex was created. The Holy Scriptures state quite clearly that the purpose of sex is marriage and marriage alone, but that marriage is something much more than sexual relations. It is one of the most abominable degradations of the idea of marriage to say that it is simply a legitimate sexual relation. Read attentively the short passage about the creation of man and woman in the second and third chapters of Genesis. God looks at Adam and says: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helpmeet for him." There is not a word about sexual relations, or about male and female relations. A woman is created to be a helper of man and she will help him to overcome his loneliness. The implication is very clear: men do not need women to

overcome this famous "sexual drive," but because it is terrible to be alone, and a man needs someone who will forever and totally share his life. Totally-not just a sexual mate.

There are books in which marriage is described as a way to use each other's bodies. Their entire content is a terrible, dirty perversion of what marriage really is, because they present its main purpose as the best way to enjoy yourself in bed. From this point of view, if everything is centered in sexuality, what's the need for marriage, for a wife? Marriage brings certain financial and social and legal responsibilities. Why bother, when supposedly any girl will do? If one needs a wife, it is not for this purpose. Sexual enjoyment is included in marriage, but the main idea of marriage is this totality of relationship. In marriage a man and a woman are totally united into one new being-two persons, he and she, but one being, one life. Nothing is excluded from this unity.

The Church warns us not to use sexuality for the inferior purposes of mere animal enjoyment. Youth grabs at this physical pleasure, for the sake of its enjoyment, but has God created sex for such a very little thing as physical enjoyment, no more important than eating and drinking? Is there no difference between eating and drinking and sexual relations? Is it not rather the total love of two beings that is involved? If it is, total love, the unity of flesh is what is advised by God "and these two will be one flesh." It is right that there should be unity of flesh, unity of souls, unity of life, unity in everything which we share in life.

## Schedule of Services and Events

### August

1	Sat			<i><u>Dormition Fast begins</u></i>
		5:00 pm	Vespers	
2	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
6	Thu	6:30 pm	Liturgy	<b>Transfiguration of our Lord</b> Blessing of Grapes (Potluck Dinner)
8	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
9	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
11	Tue	7:00 pm	Parish Council at J. Spencer's	
15	Sat	9:00 am	Liturgy	<b>Dormition of the Theotokos</b>
		5:00 pm	Vespers	
16	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
20	Thu	7:00 pm	Inquirer's Discussion at Fr. Seraphim's	
22	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
			Open Topics Discussion	
23	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
			Special Parish Meeting	
29	Sat			<i>Beheading of John the Baptist – <u>Strict Fast day</u></i>
		5:00 pm	Vespers	
30	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	

### September

5	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
6	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
7	Mon	5:30 pm	<i>Vesperal Liturgy for the Nativity at St. Luke's with Bishop Basil</i>	
8	Tue	<b>6:00</b> pm	<b><u>Vespers with Bishop Basil at St. John's</u></b>	Nativity of the Theotokos
12	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
13	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
14	Mon	6:30 pm	Liturgy for the <b>Elevation of the Cross</b>	<i>(Strict Fast Day)</i>
15	Tue	7:00 pm	Parish Council at J. Spencer's	
17	Thu	7:00 pm	Inquirer's Discussion at Fr. Seraphim's	
19	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
			Open Topics Discussion	
20	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
26	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
27	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	