

UNIT 3C: MINISTRIES AND MISSION

83: The Orthodox Parish

The Historical Development of the Parish

From its inception at Pentecost the Church has been a community both gathered (that is, called together by God), and sent out (lit. apostolic):

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

(Acts 2:42-47)

This (above) is the enduring core and identity of a parish or local communal expression of the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church,” as set out in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

In an outstanding commentary on the book of Acts, Jaroslav Pelikan has pointed out these verses are not only a “descriptive statement ... of the situation of the Christian community some decades later,” but theologically “also prescriptive, as an itemized list of the criteria by which the Church in any age would both preserve and manifest its continuity with the apostles.”¹ Anything less than this, and we do not behold the Church; or rather, we *may* see the Church, but it is certainly deformed. Of course, the organisation of the Church’s communal life has

¹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts* (London: SCM Press, 2006), p. 58.

varied enormously over time and in different places but it is this basic enduring model from Acts that has adapted to each locality and temporality.

Father Thomas Hopko has stressed this apostolic link to the contemporary Orthodox parish:

An Orthodox parish has only one God-given reason for being. It exists to be the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ. Whatever the original reasons and conditions for its founding, whatever other services and activities it may provide, whatever other desires and needs it may fulfill for its members, a community of Orthodox Christians must be Christ's one holy Church. If it is not, then it is neither Christian nor Orthodox, whatever else it may be and do.²

These words have remained true throughout the centuries.

We have already considered in Lecture 81 how the classic threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon developed from the early “apostles-with-their-deacons” template. It is time now to consider how the community itself developed over time, and how today, in a particular place and time, it is responding under the Holy Spirit to new situations and challenges.

The first place of the parish was the city. The cities in question were the major apostolic sees, that is, those cities where the apostles and first evangelists had either themselves worked [Jerusalem (St James), Rome and Antioch (Sts Peter and Paul), Alexandria (St Mark)] or where there had been a previous local association [Constantinople after Byzantium (St Andrew)]. Other historic centres were built on Pauline New Testament foundations (Ephesus, Colossae, Thessalonica, Corinth). During the first three centuries, there were periods of episodic but severe persecution; and we do not find references to permanent church buildings, but rather “house churches,” (cf. Colossians 4:15). Out of necessity, the community

² Very Rev. Thomas Hopko, *The Parish Community: Our Life in Christ, The Orthodox Parish in North America*, 13th All-American Council Orthodox Church in America. Orlando, FL: July 21-26, 2002, p. 4. Available on the web by searching for: The Parish Community: Our Life in Christ “The Orthodox Parish in North America.” See the Appendix of this lecture for further reflections from Father Thomas.

with its bishop, his representative co-workers, the presbyters and his assistants, the deacons met in these larger homes of wealthier Christians, often moving, as danger warranted, from place to place. The ever-present prospect of persecution meant that the Church had to guard her own life and membership with great care; and this is why we have little detail from this period concerning the character and organisation of the parish and its life. We do know that Christians often had to disperse and meet in wild and forgotten places to maintain the faith, much in the same way that Christians had first met in the catacombs in Rome or in our own era in deserted Russian forests during the Soviet yoke. St Dionysius of Alexandria wrote: “Thus these Christians made the most anguished setting into a festal place, the wild desert, the fields, a ship, the jail, the hostel.”³ In an important sense then, in these early centuries, “the parish” was often wherever Christians were able to gather.

The historical changes in the meaning of the English word “parish” are of interest as set out in *Dictionary of the Christian Church*:

The word comes from the Greek Πάροικία [meaning] ‘district’, via the Late Latin *parochia*. Originally the Πάροικία was the ecclesiastical area under the bishop (the modern ‘diocese’), but from the later 4th century it came to be applied to the subdivisions of the diocese, which the bishop put in charge of resident presbyters.⁴

We do have more detail concerning the organisation of the parish and the diocese particularly in its codification from the 4th Century onwards. This reflects the outworking of a missionary dynamic begun two centuries earlier. From this time, the faith moved into outlying areas of the city and eventually into the countryside, as the bishop sent out his presbyters, initially as visiting priests, but later as permanent pastors of new communities.

³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 7, 22 PG 20.688

⁴ F. L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone (Eds.), *Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), p. 1,221. This reasonably priced 1,786 page paperback has the same text as the latest edition of the originally published *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*.

Each parish soon came to have clearly defined boundaries but with the bishop always maintaining his overall jurisdiction, and with the presbyters standing in his place and being both obedient and accountable to him. Thus, the Church grew but also maintained its unity. This unity (or oneness of the Church) has been characterised by Pelikan as “the first” among “the identifying marks of the Church;” and St Cyprian reflected upon the opening chapters of Acts that: “God is one, and Christ is one, and His Church is one; one is the faith, and one the people cemented together by harmony into the strong unity of a body.”⁵

A new bishop, duly acclaimed by the people, could only be consecrated with the participation of at least two other bishops in order to ensure catholic and apostolic unity in both faith and order. Such a bishop would not be consecrated for a community or area where a resident priest would suffice.⁶ The bishops themselves also respected the boundaries of each other’s episcopal areas or dioceses, which after the Constantinian Settlement were configured to Roman civic administrative areas.⁷ A priest could only be ordained with the agreement of both the bishop and the community itself whose “Axios!” [(he is) Worthy!] was not, as it is so often today, a matter of merely nominal assent, but rather an essential meaningful requirement. From time to time, it became necessary to suppress or regulate the activities of visiting or even itinerant bishops and presbyters who always required a blessing of the local bishop to minister.⁸ By the time of the Council of Chalcedon (451) the ordination of clergy “at large” (that is, without the care of a community) had been effectively and strictly forbidden. It would be fair to say that by the 6th century the Church in both the East and West exhibited much the same organisational profile that has endured to this day, with the significant exceptions of course of the second millennial papacy and the more radical reconstructions of

⁵ Pelikan, p. 58, citing St. Cyprian, *Unity of the Catholic church* 23-25.

⁶ See Council of Sardica, Canon 6, 343.

⁷ For the canons regulating bishops in their dioceses, see Lecture 80, pp. 2, 3.

⁸ See Canon 13 of the Council of Neocaesaria, 315).

the 16th century Protestant Reformation.⁹ More theological detail will be added to this picture of diocesan and parish development in Lecture 86 on Ecclesiology.

Parish Life, Then and Now

No matter how interesting or important these historical developments and organisational aspects are they impart very little insight into the actual character of parish life in the crucial evolutionary early periods associated with the great missionary expansions into and beyond the Pax Romana. Even if such accounts had survived they would have little bearing on the issues faced by Orthodox communities today except in a more general pastoral sense. The challenges and opportunities confronting the parish now in its mission within the secular western post-Christian culture of the UK are radically different than those, say, of a community in Alexandria in the 4th Century. There are no normative models or visions of parish life that can simply be transposed from one age and place to another. The Spirit blows where He wills (John 3:8); and the parish has to follow where God leads, adapting and introducing new strategies to unleash the transformational power of the Gospel message in the present context. This section of the lecture, for example, would always be written very differently from place to place and from time since the intention would be to help the *local* Church respond faithfully to God. So, I make a choice in order to describe a particular and, therefore, authentic parish situation, in this case the author's own: the parish of St Aidan of Lindisfarne, Levenshulme, Manchester, SK3 8HQ UK, (53.439 N; -2.189 W), from its consecration in 1996 to the present (2017).

⁹ It is relevant to note that in England: “The earliest English parishes were large territories controlled from monastic churches, mostly founded in the 7th and 8th centuries. During the 10th century these parishes of ‘old minsters’ were starting to fragment, as private manorial lords built churches on their estates and diverted to them the tithes and parochial allegiance of their tenants. By Doomsday Book (1086) England contained many thousands of these manorial churches, and the transition from a system of minster parishes to one of local parishes had largely been achieved in fact, though not in name.” F. L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone, *Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), p. 1221. Thus, the initiating force for parish development in England changed from the monastery to the lord of the manor. However, “during the 12th century the parochial network crystallised as bishops applied the principles of canon law at a local level, and restricted the rights of lay patrons.” Cross & Livingstone, p. 1221.

A Case Study: The Orthodox Community of St Aidan of Lindisfarne, Levenshulme, Manchester, United Kingdom

Lessons from the Timeline

The pre-history of the community is significant in that it started as a new parish with an initial core of members, mainly English converts and a smaller number of those raised as Orthodox. No more than 20 in number and comprising mainly middle-aged and more elderly members, the community was served by a priest who had been received from the Anglican church as an Orthodox layman and re-ordained. The small community, more properly a mission at this stage, met weekly for the Divine Liturgy—for the first year in 1995, in rented premises in a town some four miles distant from its final location in Manchester. It soon became abundantly clear that the mission would not grow into a fully-fledged parish unless and until it acquired its own premises for public worship. **This is the first lesson of the local context. In a post-Christian society, the public do not take you seriously, or at least they are dissuaded by embarrassment from attending if you are not accessible, in a building of your own used primarily for worship and are able to offer regular and consistent services and ministries.**

This is a tough hill to climb if, as is mostly the case, new Orthodox communities are small in number and of modest financial means. Nonetheless, with faith, dedication, sacrifice and a common vision, the community can achieve great things in God. However, if the prospective new community thinks, secretly if not openly, that some mysterious benefactor lurking in the background will make it happen, relieving everyone else of ownership of the project, then the parish or mission will remain dead in the water even if such a benefactor were to exist. Thankfully, this was not the case with St Aidan's. The people gave generously and with great faith. Our approach was to have a single Sunday in March as Thanksgiving Sunday in which each member of the community was asked to pray about what percentage of their total income God wished them to give to the work of the Church

through St. Aidan's.¹⁰ God honoured their sacrifice, joyfully and willingly made; and after 18 months a building had been acquired, financed partly by a bank loan and partly by donations the bank loan being subsequently fully repaid.

This was the **second lesson** learned from the challenge of faith. **The Church will not grow without her members thankfully, joyfully and willingly giving to God's work, proportionately as to their incomes.** The parish from the beginning integrated this principle into its life of prayer and worship by dedicating one Sunday each year (Thanksgiving Sunday) to the renewal of each member's giving. From the outset, therefore, the community was able not only to acquire a building but also to begin to pay towards a full clergy stipend together with expenses. It took a decade for the parish to be able to discharge the bank loan and pay its priest to be in full-time ministry. In the meantime, the priest retrained as a teacher to augment his income, until achieving paid full-time status as a parish priest in 2007.

Once the church had been consecrated by the Bishop in 1996, the first four years to the end of the millennium saw only modest growth with an average weekly attendance rising only from 25 to 35.¹¹ In this first stage, some younger people started attending, but the demographic remained essentially English in background. **The third lesson** was occasioned not by the context or environment—since in the early years the local impact of the parish was only modest, at least on the surface—but by the need to pray. **The parish learned that it had to be, first and foremost,**

¹⁰ We no longer have jumble sales or bring-and-buy sales or mention fund-raising at other times in the year. This September we shall begin a “Time and Talents” Sunday in which we ask each member of the parish to consider in prayer how their time and talents can best be used in the parish.

¹¹ Weekly attendance graph here: <http://www.aidanorthodox.co.uk/parish-history.html>. Some double counting is involved since the attendance at each service is registered. As an approximation, 75% of those attendances would equate to individual worshippers, so in the first four years (1996-2000) the “non-repeating” aggregate weekly congregation would be between 25 and 30 persons and in the next seventeen years (2001-2017) between from 60 rising to 100 persons. Of course, not everyone attends every week so a parish membership estimate may be derived by doubling these figures so as to give the number of those persons attending at least once a month, in 2017 standing at approximately 200 persons ... much enhanced, of course, at major feasts. These figures agree with actual parish records but as a matter of principle we do not collect parish membership subscriptions. The only definition of membership we accept is baptism. Active membership is calibrated monthly by attendance at worship.

faithful and consistent in prayer, quietly praying in one place until such time as the surrounding community became more aware of both its existence and its life. In this we might be reminded of those numerous parables of our Lord which had to do with cycles of growth and harvesting and indeed the injunction of the risen and ascended Lord to His people: “stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). What is most needful in this and every stage in the life and growth of the parish is prayer—prayer that the people might grow in the knowledge and love of God, as well as prayer that in this grace the church itself might grow, numerically and in its more general impact locally and beyond.

From 2000 to 2007, the parish started to experience significant growth, as attendance rose from 35 to 85 for the Divine Liturgy each Sunday. The bulk of this increase consisted of new members raised in Orthodoxy, increasingly of many different ethnic backgrounds. The demographic profile has remained substantially the same since 2010 and exhibits a truly multicultural mix [English: 40%; East African: 15%; Greek/Cypriot: 15%; Romanian 15%, Russian/Slav: 5%; Others (Middle East, East Asian): 10%].

Back in 2000/2001, the parishes burgeoning growth and diversification was, the author thinks, stimulated both by the seed of prayer that was sewn in the early years and an active commitment in the late 1990’s to reach out to those in need in the community. This was a time when asylum seekers and refugees were being housed locally pending the outcome of their cases. The parish became deeply involved in a number of tragic situations where people had been displaced to the UK by violence and political oppression in their home countries. It was an endeavour that many applied themselves to in the parish and not just the clergy. Most of the cases(except one) that the community supported concluded satisfactorily in that the government granted the individuals and families concerned permission to stay in the country.

Of course, not all of the people the parish supported were Orthodox. A number were Muslims; and others belonged to different Christian churches. Nonetheless, this work, together with other practical action in the community (for

example, in the provision of a small charity shop in church), brought many new people into the parish, those staying either being Orthodox themselves or becoming Orthodox. Alongside this diversification of ethnicity in the parish, further growth occurred through a small but consistent reception into Orthodoxy of converts with an English or Celtic background. The charity shop came to a natural close, but the work with asylum seekers and refugees, albeit at a lower level, has continued to the present. This then was the **fourth lesson** learnt from the environment and social context of the parish. **Growth and transformation in Christ is deepened, to use New Testament metaphors, by being salt, light and yeast in the world.**

In terms of parish membership, the ten years from 2007 to 2017 have seen a consolidation in numbers with continuing net growth. The number of individuals worshipping at least once a month now approaches 200 with 100 regularly attending Sunday Divine Liturgy across all ages. This period has also seen the parish receive a greater number of transient members, mainly university students.

Another phase in the development of the parish began in 2008, shortly after the repose in the Lord of the community's deacon, the beloved Father John-Mark (Memory Eternal!). It became clear to the parish priest and the parish council¹² that there was a need to deepen and extend theological education in the parish. **A fifth lesson** was being learned: **the people of God need to be theologically equipped for service and ministry according to the varying capacities and callings of each member.** A weekly Bible Study had already proved to be a great success. This had been tried over a number of years but not until the parish had reached its present size had this really functioned properly. To this was added in September 2008 a three year Diploma Course in Orthodox Faith and Life (E-Quip of course) which the new bishop (His Eminence Metropolitan John, now Patriarch) blessed for use not only in the parish but also in the Deanery. This lecture together with 89 others (including other supplementary talks) has been the fruit of this idea and project.

¹² Each parish in the Patriarchate of Antioch (to which the parish belongs) must have an elected parish council so that priest and people together may develop a shared vision and common work in the mission of the Church in its own place.

E-Quip has attracted an international as well as local and national clientele. In 2017/17 the parish contributed the major portion on an Archdiocesan young person's catechetical programme entitled: "Followers."

These, then, are the five lessons we have learned in parish development:

The Five Lessons

1. In a post-Christian society, the public do not take you seriously, or at least they are dissuaded by embarrassment from attending, if you are not accessible, in a building of your own, used primarily for worship and are able to offer regular and consistent services and ministries.
2. The Church will not grow without her members thankfully, joyfully and willingly giving to God's work, proportionately as to their incomes.
3. The parish learned that it had to be, first and foremost, faithful and consistent, quietly praying in one place until such time as the surrounding community became more aware of both its existence and its life.
4. Growth and transformation in Christ is deepened, to use New Testament metaphors, by being salt, light and yeast in the world.
5. The people of God need to be theologically equipped for service and ministry according to the varying capacities and callings of each member.

A Vision for the Future of the Orthodox Parish

A vision of the future Church, as proposed by the Orthodox lay authors of *Oriented Leadership: Why All Christians Need It*, is worthy of consideration:

The challenge for us is to give up our conventional definitions of power and authority, and begin to think and live the definitions of Christ incarnated.... The only *power* in the Church stems from the Eucharist. As the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, it is the power of the Resurrected Christ. The only power in the Church is the power of *grace*. The purpose of this power is the unity of the Body in a communion of love. It is

characterized by the clergy and the laity as *a unity in* rather than *a unity under* the power of the bishop.¹³

Such an ecclesiology begins with vision clarification in which all Christians are involved:

Our role is to be good and faithful stewards—and to do so we must define the vision *together*. The vision of Kingdom is the (icon) model for our local vision, and from it we discern and develop our personal and Church visions. Our hierarchs are to be leaders in the process of defining the vision, but it is a task we must all do together. Without the experience, training, and calling which our leaders bring, the vision could easily be wrong; but without the consensus and practical perspective brought by the followers, the vision could just as easily be incomplete.

...The key to getting the vision is the process of discerning and describing the vision and building consensus to affirm and support it.

...The process begins with the people, with getting them to express their vision of the Church. In a parish setting the process must focus on getting the members to express in honest terms “who they are and what are about.” Be prepared for two things: struggle and surprise.¹⁴

¹³ Benjamin D. Williams & Michael T. McKibben, *Oriented Leadership: Why All Christians Need It* (Wayne, NJ: Orthodox Christian Publications Center of the Orthodox Church of America, 1994), pp. 172-173. Italics in original. This passage is rather too loosely expressed, as spiritual power in the Church stems not only from the Eucharist and grace, but from the Trinity and the expression of love among all members of the Church toward those within and outside the Church.

¹⁴ Williams & McKibben, pp. 51, 53. Italics in original; bold type added. The authors elaborate: “Why struggle? It is not easy to get people to *honestly* (i.e. [with] gut-wrenching honesty) express these kinds of things—things they have probably never consciously thought about before. Why surprise? Because the vision or visions will not *only* be different from each other, but the common denominators in them will probably be very *different* from the leader’s vision (i.e. Bishop or his priest). Even that should not surprise us though, because each of us is unique and has a unique perspective. Consensus about *our* vision is what we need to achieve.” p. 53. Italics in original.

Such a vision is very difficult to achieve, but without such a vision it is probably fair to comment that “the result is always the same. Nothing changes, nothing grows. The parish stagnates spiritually.”¹⁵

Although this attempt to clarify the vision of a local church is challenging, it is not overwhelming. It may well be that our initial vision becomes: “we are an Orthodox Church in this city;” and that in this awareness “we make sure we are all standing together on the first rung of the ladder, the one that’s going to the Kingdom.” We can then “begin to define what an Orthodox Church should act like in [our] city.”¹⁶

In a personal comment about *Oriented Leadership: Why Every Christian Needs It* a layman from St Elias Orthodox Parish Church in Atlanta, Georgia, John W. Truslow Jr., reflects that if some immigrants believe that “the parish is and should be a safe place and a social group to support me and my family in a strange land,” while others have had their lives “changed for the better by [an] encounter with Christ and His Church ... this ... need not be the beginning of a parish civil war, but may rather start a constructive search for one, shared vision of parish life.”¹⁷ It is right that (multi) ethnic roots and the experience of growing as a person in commitment to Christ should be balanced within each parish community, but with an appreciation of the importance of worshipping in a language that invites all people to join the united parish community.

Perhaps in a significant sense, our survival as a thriving Orthodox parish depends on the survival and deepening of the commitment to Christ of each person and household who are part of the parish. As we each deepen our own commitment to Christ, we also inspire others to deepen their commitment to Christ. Then in the mutual awareness of how we are together drawing closer to

¹⁵ Williams & McKibben, p. 54.

¹⁶ Williams & McKibben, p. 56.

¹⁷ John W. Treslow, Jr., “A Vision for Orthodox Christian Parish Life,” published by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, available on the web at: <http://www.antiochian.org/node/22175>.

Christ and closer to each other, the parish will discover a mission and a purpose beyond its initial vision.

Appendix: Personal Commitment to Christ . . . and New Purposes for the Parish

As in the concluding paragraph of this lecture, Father Thomas Hopko also stresses the need to build the parish through personal commitment to Christ:

Jesus says that God must be loved first of all with all one's heart. In biblical usage, the heart is the center of a person's being. It is the ground of a person's life, the seal of a person's will, and the source of a person's activity, beginning with one's words. It is the 'place where God bears witness to himself,' according to St Isaac of Syria; the place in a person, according to St Macarius, which contains God himself, and Christ and the Holy Spirit, and the whole of creation, visible and invisible, spiritual and material, good and evil.¹⁸

The role of the parish is to empower this personal commitment to Christ primarily through its own commitment to worship and education:

An Orthodox Christian parish is first and foremost a worshipping community. It exists to praise, bless and glorify God, to ceaselessly sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-creating Trinity. Its essential purpose is to baptize people in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; to enable them to die in Christ and to be raised with Him to newness of life; to be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit; to hear God's word, to respond to God's gospel, to confess and repent of our sins, to participate in the eucharistic sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood; and to actualize God's Kingdom on earth, in spirit and truth, by faith and grace, until Christ comes in glory at the close of the age.

¹⁸ Hopko, "The Orthodox Parish in North America," p. 8. Full details in reference 2 above.

... The first thing that is said about those who believed in God's gospel of Christ crucified and glorified is that they 'continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine.' (Acts 2:42). An Orthodox Christian parish, therefore is essentially a teaching and learning community for all its members. It is a school of disciples whose master is Christ as He speaks within the community of believers, especially through the pastors and those with the charism and training for teaching and preaching. An Orthodox parish without well-prepared evangelical and exegetical sermons at its liturgical services, and well-prepared doctrinal and catechetical sessions as part of its educational ministry, whatever else it might do, including having lots of liturgical services and loads of social events, can hardly be an Orthodox Christian Church.¹⁹

In addition to this three-fold focus on personal commitment to Christ, worship and education, Father Thomas also calls for "evangelical and philanthropic activity" and continues his series of warnings with the firm statement that: "A parish without carefully planned and implemented evangelical and philanthropic activity directed both within and outside its parochial bounds, is, once again, simply not Orthodox Christian."²⁰

It may well be that the growth of a new purpose in the parish might be in an unexpected direction. For example, in both the United Kingdom and the United States a number of parishes are supporting a ministry of parish nursing.²¹ In New England six Greek Orthodox parishes have established Christian Orthodox

¹⁹ Hopko, pp. 9, 11-12.

²⁰ Hopko, p. 14. The study notes linked to Father Thomas' talk suggest that: "Romans 12:9-12 could be seen as a 'short course' on godly parish life. Apply several points specially to your parish situation." p. 16.

²¹ For the United Kingdom, see the website of the charity, Parish Nursing Ministries UK at: www.parishnursing.org.uk which sets out the location of the 90 parish nurses in the UK, as well as providing comprehensive guidelines for parish nursing. For the USA, see the Orthodox Church of America paper by Natalie M. Stavrevsky, RN, "Development of an Orthodox Parish Nursing Ministry," available by typing the name of the paper into a search engine. See also the website of Westberg Institute for Faith Community Nursing (formerly International Parish Nurse Resource Center) at: <https://westberginstitute.org>. This charity runs courses in both the USA and UK.

Nurses of New England, pointing out that this ministry is in keeping with the first deacons and deaconesses who “brought care and faith into the homes of the ill [and] established hospitals and hospices ... [tending] to the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of the person in their care.”²² Church Tradition and earlier parish practices need to be known and appreciated in order to be renewed in the present.

²² See Christian Orthodox Parish Nurses of New England at: <http://opnnewengland.org/> .