

# The Confessor's Tongue for September 28, 2008

## 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost: Venerable Chariton the Confessor

In honor of St. Maximus the Confessor, whose tongue and right hand were cut off in an attempt by compromising authorities to silence his uncompromising confession of Christ's full humanity & divinity.

### 28 September: St. Chariton the Confessor

Born in Iconium, he was presented before the court for confessing Christ during the reign of Emperor Aurelius. Being protected by "the life-bearing armor of the cross", Chariton fearlessly confessed the Savior "before the cruel judge" and accused the pagan gods of falseness. They began to torment Chariton, but he, "counting mammon and glory as nothing", remained unbowed. Then the tormented martyr was imprisoned where the Lord wonderfully healed his wounds. During the reign of the new emperor Chariton together with other prisoners were freed and Chariton went to Jerusalem to venerate the tomb of the Lord. Near Jericho Chariton was seized by robbers who threw him bound into a deep cave, intending to kill him later, and went on with their shameful deeds. By the providence of God, snakes crept into a vessel with wine standing in the cave and poisoned the wine, which the returning robbers drank. All of them died. Having loosed his bonds, Chariton decided to remain in the same cave and began to lead an ascetic life there. Soon others seeking the life of a hermit came to him, and Chariton built for them the Pharan Laura which later became well-known and for which he wrote a typicon (Ustav). Later, seeking solitude, Chariton left for a deserted place, but even here he was found by adherents of the monastic life, and he founded a new monastery, the Jericho. To be precise Chariton also founded a third monastery, the Souka (the Old Laura). Ven. Chariton died in the year 350 and is buried in the robber's cave. He established the Rite of Monastic Tonsure.

### Mission Council News

At the last meeting of the mission council, a motion was approved to commission Fr. Michael Storozuk to build us a canonical altar table for \$2000 to be taken from our building funds. This will get that need out of the way in preparation for our new church and will make it possible for us to update our altar vestments in the correct size in the meantime. Our current altar table is not of canonical size and will be donated to a mission parish (or used by us to start one).

### Annual Parish Meeting

Next week, we shall have our annual parish meeting. Here is what to expect.

We have not yet reached official parish status. That entails 50 adult members (as defined below in Article III, section 1), a full-time priest, and a permanent, parish-owned location. We have a location, but not one in which we can grow much further, we have a full-time priest, but are not in full compliance with OCA guidelines for clergy compensation; nor do we yet have 50 adult members.

Official word from our dean is that we should apply for parish status once we build our new church.

As we are still officially a Mission rather than a Parish, the Uniform Parish Bylaws of the Diocese of the South do not apply as strictly to us as they do to a parish. For example, instead of electing council members, parish representatives to councils, and the like, the priest appoints them with the bishop's blessing. Many decisions concerning life in the mission are made less formally by the priest or the council than they would be in a parish.

Nevertheless, the bylaws still express a vision of conciliarity among the bishop, the priest, the council and the people towards which we aspire as we grow towards becoming a full-blown parish. The bylaws are set out below to help us all better understand how things should come to function at St. Maximus, the importance of the annual meeting in governing the parish, and our role in it.

At the Annual Meeting next week, we shall have several important items of business.

First, and most importantly, we shall examine the parish budget for 2008-2009, discuss it, answer questions about it, and approve it or modify it.

Second, we shall hear reports from the Priest and Treasurer about parish business in their areas of responsibility.

Third, we have a few issues to discuss and decide as a parish:

1. Coffee Hour: shall we keep doing what we have been doing or scale it down? It is an important part of our ministry here, but we don't want it to be an unnecessary burden.
2. Church Cleaning: the same three or four people do it all the time. How can we take care of this need?
3. New Church Building: where we are in this process, current obstacles, and where shall we go from here.
4. Elect a parish delegate for the All-American Council and next year's Diocesan Assembly. Decide whether to send delegates this year.
5. Parish Bylaws: discuss a few aspects of the Parish Bylaws, answer any questions.
6. Formal Parish Membership: In light of Article III, Section 1 below, what guideline, if any, for financial stewardship shall be established for purposes of determining formal parish membership? (This is required to be able to vote at an annual meeting or to hold office in the parish.)
7. Date of Meeting: our financial year runs from September to August. Typically we have had the annual meeting in September or October, but have not set a consistent Sunday. This we need to do.
8. Other matters: if there are any other issues you would like to have discussed, please bring them to Fr. Justin by this coming Friday.

## **Uniform Parish Bylaws, Diocese of the South**

St. Maximus Orthodox Church, located in the city of Denton, Texas, is a parish of the Diocese of the South, a territorial unit of the Orthodox Church in America, which is the local autocephalous Orthodox Church, belonging to the world-wide federation of Orthodox Churches. The Primate of the Orthodox Church in America is the Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada.

The Parish is governed by the Tradition, that is, the whole body of teaching and practice of the One Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Tradition is expressed, first of all, in Holy Scripture, and also in the Canons of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, the Canons of the Provincial Councils, the Canons and writings of the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church, in the liturgical life of the Church, and in the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America.

The regulations contained in these By-laws are standard and obligatory for all parishes of the Diocese of the South, having been adopted at the Fourth Annual Assembly in Tarpon Springs, Florida, August 19-22, 1981, and are promulgated for the application of the Tradition to the day-to-day organizational life of the Parish.

These By-laws consist of the eleven Articles that follow this Preamble.

### **ARTICLE I Name**

The name of this parish is St Maximus Orthodox Church, Inc., and will be referred to in these By-laws as the Parish.

### **ARTICLE II Purpose**

**Section 1** The purpose for which the Parish exists is to maintain a local Orthodox Christian community under the authority and protection of the Ruling Bishop of the Diocese of the South:

✠ to worship God in accordance with the Tradition of the Holy Orthodox church, "in spirit and in truth;" (John 4: 24)

✠ to preserve, protect, defend and propagate the Holy Orthodox Faith; The Apostle Jude exhorts us to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (v. 3) The Parish must be zealous in carrying out the Lord's commandment to make disciples of all peoples. (Matthew 28:19-20)

✠ to provide charitable aid to the poor and Christian education for its members; "Give alms of such things as ye have." (Luke 11:41) "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to the needy, in thy land." (Deuteronomy 15: 11) "Increase in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:10)

✠ and to build and maintain churches, chapels, schools and such other religious, educational and benevolent institutions as may be expedient.

**Section 2** The languages of worship in the Parish shall be those that meet the needs of the membership, so that the people may understand. As St. Paul says: "How shall he that occupieth the room of the

unlearned say 'Amen' at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? ... I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." (I Corinthians 14:16-19)

**Section 3** The Parish must strive to maintain an apostolic zeal and a missionary spirit to draw new souls to the Orthodox Faith, in accordance with its purposes as enumerated in Section I of this Article, thus carrying out the Lord's commandment to make disciples of all peoples. The Parish, likewise, must be ever ready to accept into its fellowship all persons who desire to follow the Orthodox way, that is, become members of the Orthodox Church and to live in accordance with her teachings. This the Parish must do, following the example of the Apostolic Church, which "added daily to the Church such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47)

## **ARTICLE III Membership**

### **Section 1 Definition**

Members of the Parish are those persons who:

- a) have been baptized and chrismated in the Orthodox Church and consciously uphold and profess the Orthodox Faith;
- b) are regular communicants, that is, participants in the Holy Mysteries of Confession and Communion. The term 'regular communicants' means those who partake of the Holy Mysteries frequently, ideally weekly, and no one can be a member of the Parish if he fails to comply with this obligation once a year;
- c) fulfill the financial obligations established by the Parish. All members of the Parish are urged to make a yearly commitment for financial support to the Parish in the form of a pledge, the ideal of which is the tithe of his income.
- d) and declare their intention to be members.

### **Section 2 Purposes of Membership - Privileges and Obligations of Members.**

Following the Tradition of the Church, the purpose of membership in the Parish is to seek the knowledge of God and union with Him through Jesus Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and to express that unity with God in Christ in all religious, moral, family and social activities. Generally, this expression consists of an enlightened obedience to the teachings of the Orthodox Faith, and is manifested in regular attendance at the divine services of the Parish, in frequent reception of the Holy Gifts of the Body and Blood of Christ, in care for the Parish property and buildings, in regular contributions in fulfillment of the financial commitment, and in doing all that is possible to promote the Christian spirit of love, unity and brotherly concern among the members of the Parish.

### **Section 3 New Members**

Any person desiring to become a member of the Parish, and who is baptized and chrismated in the Orthodox Church, must present himself to the rector

or priest-in-charge, who will inform him of the life and activities of the Parish. When that person shall have received the Holy Mysteries of Confession and Communion, he may then declare his intention to become a member of the Parish (The Parish should provide a form for a written declaration.), and will be received as such. The pastor and the parish secretary will enter his name in the list of members.

#### **ARTICLE IV The Parish Meeting**

##### **Section 1 Authority**

The Parish Meeting is the highest legislative, judicial and administrative authority of the Parish as a corporation. All members (as in Article III, Section 1) who have been members of the Parish for a period of six months and are at least eighteen years old may attend and vote at the Parish Meeting.

##### **Section 2 Place of the Parish Meeting**

The Parish Meeting must be held on Parish premises.

##### **Section 3 Periodicity of the Parish Meeting**

The Parish Meeting is held annually, on a determined Sunday of the year, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

##### **Section 4 Notice of the Parish Meeting**

Notice of the annual Parish Meeting shall be given by the rector or priest-in-charge from the ambon at the Divine Liturgy on the three consecutive Sundays preceeding the date of the meeting. Notice must also be made at least once in written form, in a special circular or in the parish bulletin, mailed to all voting members of the Parish (*See Section 1, Article IV*).

##### **Section 5 Competence of the Parish Meeting**

Matters pertaining to the life of the Parish that may be discussed and acted upon at the Parish Meeting include:

- a) the approval of the annual operating budget submitted by the Parish Council (Article X) or by a special budget committee;
- b) the election of the Parish Council members, the lay delegate to the Diocesan Assembly, and the lay delegate to the All-American Council, if the latter is to be convened in the current year.
- c) hearing and approving of annual or special reports by committees and parish organizations.
- d) decisions on matters concerning the purchase, improvement or sale of real property, investment of Parish funds (other than in savings accounts), and the use of Parish funds for loans for any purpose;
- e) proposal of resolutions to the Diocesan Assembly, these, if any, to be submitted to the bishop six months prior to the date of the Assembly.

##### **Section 6 Special Parish Meetings**

In addition to the annual Parish Meeting, Special Parish Meetings may be convoked by the bishop, the rector or priest-in-charge, or by the Parish Council, with the approval of the rector or priest-in-charge. Voting members of the Parish may petition the rector and the Parish Council to convoke a Special Parish Meeting, such petition requiring the

signatures of two thirds of the total number of members.

Special Parish Meetings are called to discuss and act upon specific matters, and no other matter may be discussed at such meetings.

The matters to be discussed and acted upon are to be announced when notice of the Special Meeting is given. Regulations regarding the notice of a Special Parish Meeting are the same as those in Section 4 of this Article.

##### **Section 7 The Quorum for the Annual Parish Meeting and the Special Parish Meetings**

The quorum for the annual Parish Meeting shall be no less than 50% of the number of voting members of the Parish.

The quorum for a Special Parish Meeting shall be no less than 33% of the voting membership of the Parish.

In the absence of a quorum at the annual Parish Meeting or at a Special Parish Meeting, said meeting shall be adjourned and reconvened on the same day of the following week, and at this, adjourned, meeting no quorum shall be necessary for a lawful meeting.

##### **Section 8 Voting**

A simple majority vote by those voting members in attendance at the Parish Meeting, Annual or Special, shall be decisive on all matters within the competence of the meeting.

##### **Section 9 The Presiding Officer**

The rector or the priest-in-charge is the presiding officer of the Parish Meeting, Annual or Special. The warden may also chair parts of the meeting sessions, in accordance with a prior agreement reached between him and the rector and the Parish Council.

##### **Section 10 Confirmation of Minutes**

A copy of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting or of a Special Parish Meeting, signed by the rector or priest-in-charge and the warden, shall be sent to the bishop, through the district dean, for confirmation. All decisions and resolutions in those minutes become effective upon receipt of such confirmation.

#### **ARTICLE V The Rector or Priest-in-charge**

The rector or priest-in-charge of the Parish holds his office by virtue of his appointment by the diocesan bishop. The rector or priest-in-charge cannot leave the Parish without permission of the diocesan bishop.

All matters concerning his salary, his housing, and his benefits are to be agreed upon between the district dean and the priest and the Parish Council prior to his appointment.

By virtue of the Apostolic Succession abiding in the Church, which the priest shares through his ordination, it is his primary responsibility to preach teach the doctrine of the Holy Orthodox Church, preside over the celebration of the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) and divine services in accordance with the Tradition of the Church, and to ensure that the life of the Parish as a whole is guided and directed toward spiritual and not secular ends:

Since the priest must answer to God for the lives and the salvation of those who are entrusted to his pastoral care (Hebrews 13:17), nothing in the Parish can be initiated without his approval and blessing, neither must he do anything pertaining to the life of the Parish without the knowledge of the Parish council and the parishioners, so that always there may be unity, mutual trust, cooperation and love. In the event of a disagreement between the priest and the parishioners or the Parish Council, the matter shall be referred to the district dean.

## **ARTICLE VI The Parish Council**

### **Section 1 Composition**

The Parish Council is composed of five (5), seven (7), or nine (9) persons, according to the needs of the Parish, elected at the annual Parish Meeting. Only one member of a household may serve on the Parish Council during a given year.

### **Section 2 Officers**

At the first meeting of the Parish Council following the Parish Meeting at which they are elected, the members of the council elect the parish officers from among their number. The officers are: warden (or senior warden), treasurer, (assistant treasurer), recording secretary, (and corresponding secretary). There may also be a junior warden, if there are enough council members and the needs of the Parish warrant an additional officer. The remaining members are designated councilmen.

### **Section 3 Term of Office**

The term of office for members of the Parish Council, officers and councilmen, is one year.

### **Section 4 Eligibility**

A voting member of the Parish who has been a member for one year is eligible for election to the Parish Council. The Parish Council will elect as its three principal officers, that is, warden, treasurer, and recording secretary, from among those members who have been members of the Parish for at least two years.

In addition to the technical qualification of one-year membership in the Parish, the Parish Meeting must elect to the Parish Council only those members of the Parish who are zealous for the Orthodox Faith, who are regular communicants at the Eucharist, who are active in the Parish, who are willing to work for the improvement, both spiritual and temporal, of the Parish, who are not contentious and rebellious against the authority of the Church, and who are not motivated to seek office out of pride, but only out of a strong desire to work for the Lord and the building up of His Church. Specifically, no one who fulfills only the minimum requirement of receiving the sacraments, who is known to be rebellious against the Church, the Diocese, the bishop, the rector or the priest-in-charge, who promotes divisions and factions among the membership, and who is not regular in his attendance at the church's services, should ever be elected to a position of leadership in the Parish.

Wives of clergymen assigned or attached to the Parish, widows excepted, are not eligible for membership in the Parish Council.

### **Section 5 Installation**

Each year the newly elected members of the Parish Council must be duly installed in the church following the Divine Liturgy in the presence of the assembly of the faithful by the rector or priest-in-charge. They must prepare themselves spiritually for their duties through the Holy Mysteries of Confession and Communion before their installation. The installation cannot be administered until their election has been confirmed by the diocesan bishop. The new council shall assume its duties immediately upon being installed.

### **Section 6 Competence of the Parish Council**

See Article Xi Section 7, of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America.

1. The parish meeting shall elect a Parish Council to assist the Rector in the administration of the parish and to execute the decisions of the parish meeting. The Parish Council shall consist of as many officers and members as provided for in the parish by-laws. Their mode of election and their terms of office shall also be determined by the by-laws regularly adopted.

2. All officers and members of the Parish Council shall, after their election at the parish meeting and approval of the Diocesan Authority, be duly installed by the Rector, making a solemn commitment to uphold their office.

3. The Orthodox Church teaches that there should be an active cooperation between clergy and laity on all levels of Church life. And since the Parish Council is the main parish organ of such cooperation, none of its meetings may be held without the knowledge and blessing of the Rector who, as the head of the parish, must take part in the discussion and solution of all parish affairs. While the priest is the head of the parish, he does not have to be Chairman of meetings. Laymen may be Chairmen. The minutes of all meetings of the Parish Council shall be signed by the Rector and the senior elected officer of the parish. In the case of the Rector's disagreement with one or several decisions of the Parish Council, his motivated opinion shall be recorded in the minutes and the matter referred to the parish meeting.

4. The Parish Council shall be responsible not only for the spiritual and material needs of the parish, but also for the parish's unity and connection with the Diocese and the Church, for each parish is called to be a living cell and a member of the Body of Christ, and each carries responsibility for the whole Church.

### **Section 7 Duties of Officers**

Although local circumstances may require a redistributing of the duties of the officers of the Parish Council, in general, the scheme given below is to be followed:

a) The warden presides at meetings of the council in the absence of the rector or of the priest-in-charge or at any time by mutual agreement. He shall aid the priest in preparing the agenda for the council meetings. He is to be the ex-officio chairman of such committees as the priest and/or the council may appoint.

b) The recording secretary is to keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the council, to prepare and distribute copies of the minutes to the priest and the other members of the council within one (1) week following the meeting.

c) The treasurer is to maintain an accurate record of all monies received and disbursed, as well as pending accounts, to disburse monies as approved by the Parish Meeting and the Parish Council, to be in charge of filing proper tax forms and financial reports as required, to deposit all monies in the approved bank(s) weekly, to prepare monthly financial reports to the Parish Council, and to prepare the annual financial report for presentation to the annual Parish Meeting.

#### **Section 8 Removal from the Parish Council**

a) All Parish Council members must continue to fulfill the qualifications for membership in the Parish Council during their entire tenure of office. Failure to retain membership as described in Article III, Section 1, will bring automatic dismissal from the council.

b) All Parish Council members are expected to attend all council meetings during their tenure of office. The absence of any council member for three (3) consecutive meetings will render him subject to dismissal.

c) Any council member who, during his tenure of office, engages in divisive or rebellious activities, who endeavors to create factions, or brings disharmony to or disturbs the peace of the Parish, is subject to dismissal.

d) Although the rector or the priest-in-charge initiates all dismissal procedures, the diocesan bishop, through the district dean, may intervene in cases in which a council member becomes subject to dismissal for the causes stated in a, b, or c, of this section of Article VI.

#### **Section 9 Vacancies**

a) All vacancies which occur shall be filled by appointment of the rector or priest-in-charge with confirmation by the Parish Council.

b) Such appointees shall hold their office until the next annual Parish Meeting.

c) Persons appointed to fill vacancies must have all the qualifications of elected members of the Parish Council.

#### **Section 10 Parish Council Meetings**

a) The Parish Council shall establish a regular time for its meetings once a month; for example, the second Monday at 7:30 p.m. All meetings shall be held on Parish premises.

b) The presiding officer of the council meeting is the rector or the priest-in-charge, but another

member of the council, usually the warden, may chair sections of a given meeting.

c) The quorum for discussing and acting upon matters within the competence of the Parish Council is a simple majority of the members.

d) At its meetings, the Parish council may consider only matters that are within the competence of the council.

e) A majority vote of those members in attendance at a meeting of the Parish Council shall decide all issues brought before it.

f) In the absence of the rector or the priest-in-charge, all decisions of the council must be submitted to him for confirmation before becoming effective.

g) The minutes of the Parish Council meetings shall be signed by the rector or the priest-in-charge and the secretary (or warden). Original copies of the minutes are the property of the Parish and shall be filed by the rector or the priest-in-charge in the Parish archives.

h) Parish Council meetings are open to all voting members of the Parish. Only members of the council may vote, but any voting member of the Parish may speak on an issue, if he is recognized by the chairman. At its discretion, the Parish Council may hold a closed meeting, that is, one restricted to council members.

### **ARTICLE VII Real and Liquid Property of the Parish**

#### **Section 1 Ownership**

a) The Parish corporation is the sole owner of all Parish property, assets and funds, and these are administered by the Parish Council in accordance with decisions made by the Parish Meeting and with the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America. Note: No decision of the Parish Meeting with regard to the property shall be contrary to or in conflict with the provisions of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America in this respect.

b) Disposition or disposal of Parish property shall be strictly in accordance with Article X, Section 8, of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America,

#### **Section 2 Expenditures**

All expenditures of the Parish shall be made by check, except those made through 'petty cash.' All expenditures made through petty cash must be accompanied by vouchers.

### **ARTICLE VIII Official Signatures**

**Section 1** All official documents for the Orthodox Church in America, the Diocese and the 'Metrical Records' of the Parish shall be signed by the rector or the priest-in-charge. In cases in which additional signatures are required, the warden, the recording secretary, or the treasurer may sign the document in question.

**Section 2** All civil (legal) documents shall be signed by the rector or the priest-in-charge and such other officers as may be required by the voting membership of the Parish or by law.

**Section 3** All expenditures made by check shall be signed by the rector or the priest-in-charge and either the warden or the treasurer. In case there is no assigned priest, the signatures of the warden and the treasurer are required.

**Section 4** The Parish corporation seal shall be affixed to all documents requiring the same. Entrusted to the care of the rector or the priest-in-charge, the corporation seal is the property of the Parish. In the event of the transfer of the rector or the priest-in-charge, the seal is temporarily entrusted to the warden, who shall deliver it to the new priest, as soon as the latter is assigned and in residence.

#### **ARTICLE IX The Auditing Committee**

**Section 1** An auditing committee of three (3) voting members of the Parish but who are not members of the Parish council shall be elected at the annual Parish Meeting to hold office for one year.

**Section 2** The auditing committee shall audit the accounts of the treasurer (and the assistant treasurer) or financial secretary, inspect the vouchers for disbursements from petty cash, verify bank balances and securities, and generally investigate the financial administration of the Parish. They must audit the records at least one time a year and present a report of their findings to the annual Parish Meeting.

#### **ARTICLE X The Budget Committee**

**Section 1** Annually the Parish Council shall appoint a budget committee of at least two council members in addition to the rector or priest-in-charge and the warden.

**Section 2** The budget committee shall prepare an estimated budget for the approval and adoption of the voting members of the Parish at the annual Parish Meeting.

**Section 3** The estimated budget shall be presented to the parish council at least thirty days before the annual Parish Meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XI Amendments and Additional Regulations**

##### **Section 1 Amendments**

These By-laws are uniform for all parishes of the Diocese of the South and may not be amended by the Parish. Proposed amendments may be presented by the Parish to the Diocesan Assembly in accordance with Article IV, Section 5,e.

##### **Section 2 Additional Regulations**

In matters not covered by these By-laws, the Parish Meeting may enact legislation applicable to the particular situation of the Parish. Such additional legislation must be presented to the diocesan bishop for his approval before it becomes effective.

##### **Regarding Mission Parishes**

Please note that an official addition to the DOS Uniform Parish Bylaws has been made (but not included in the above copy) to include that in a mission, the priest-in-charge may appoint the mission council, with the approval of the Diocesan hierarch.

#### **A Word About Parish Membership**

We have not been very formal about parish membership here at St. Maximus. If you are Orthodox, attend services and receive the Mysteries here, we have generally considered you a member. And anyone, Orthodox or not, who wishes to attend services and is respectful towards the people and the parish is welcome here and may consider us 'home.'

Yet as we grow and as our business grows more complicated, a greater clarity regarding membership through closer adherence to the bylaws is needed. And as your priest and shepherd, I need to know who are the sheep for whom I will answer before Christ.

The requirements for formal membership in a parish, which permits one to vote in the annual meeting and hold office in the parish among other things, as laid out in the bylaws are 1. to have been Baptized and/or Chrismated an Orthodox Christian, 2. to Confess and receive the Eucharist in the parish and least once a year (the bare minimum), 3. to fulfill one's financial obligations to the parish, and 4. to express one's desire and intention to be a member.

Though those who are not yet Orthodox cannot be formal members, they are welcome here and may still consider St. Maximus their spiritual home.

Membership requires an active faith in Christ and commitment to doing His will in our lives. This is manifested first of all in making the effort to participate in the Eucharist. To neglect Confession and Communion as an Orthodox Christian is not to live in the fullness of Christ and constitutes an impediment to full membership in the parish.

At St. Maximus, we have never determined as a parish what constitutes a member's 'financial obligations' to the parish. We have taught tithing and almsgiving and have left it to each person's conscience to give. We do not wish change this drastically, but we do need everyone to realize that Orthodox parishes don't just happen, and that their foundation and maintenance requires us to honor God consistently by bringing our tithes and offerings as part of our worship of Him. We shall discuss this point of membership at the annual meeting and try to discern God's will for our parish in this.

Finally, we have never given you the formal opportunity to express your desire and intention to be members. We shall offer that to you at the meeting. A form which will address the various points of membership will be given you to fill out. So please prepare by considering the points of business on page one, come, and participate in our Annual Meeting!

#### **Upcoming Events 2008**

- 5 October, Sunday: Parish Annual Meeting
- 1 November, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. at St. Seraphim's in Dallas: Consecration of Abbot Jonah to the Episcopacy.
- 9 November, Sunday: Visit of Bishops

**GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!**