

Monastic Musings

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

December 2012

From the Idle keyboard

by: schema-Archimandrite Barb

This is the last newsletter for 2012, and to say the least, I am personally glad to see 2012 come to an end. I can only pray that 2013 will be a much better year for those of us affected by Mother Nature during 2012.

Next year we are planning on doing the newsletter on a quarterly basis. There may be times when we may decide to put out an extra newsletter depending on the needs we see. The format will be different depending on what we are writing about. What we are planning on doing is that we will put our heads together and will decide on a topic to cover in the newsletter for that quarter. We may write separate articles or it might be a joint effort as it depends on what spiritual information we pull together and how we feel we want to present it. Hopefully, we will be writing what the Holy Spirit guides us to do with each of the newsletters. We are looking forward to this new focus in the newsletter. Presently the 2013 schedule is set for the end of: January, April, July, and October.

I want to take this time to wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May 2013 bring us more peace and happiness as we learn to walk together as children of God!

After the Super Storm – A Time for Healing

By Rev. Mother Myrella LeClair

As I begin writing this article, it is the weekend following Super Storm Sandy. Once again, parts of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic are recovering from the effects of a powerful storm. Many people are still suffering – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually – and will continue to deal with pain for many months to come. You see, many of the communities that were devastated lost much more than just their homes and belongings but also an entire community of people who supported and elevated their spirits through other tragedies. In many ways, although they were of different faiths, they were the epitome of a faith community – a community based on Love.

In this era of social networking, some of you may have been lulled into thinking that “friends’ are just those who “like” you or “follow” you – a virtual acquaintance. However, a real friend is a person who is there with you to help you through the difficult times. The people who lived in these close-knit communities were there for one another. For those of you who live in communities in which you do not know and do not interact with your neighbors, you cannot understand the bond that many of these people had. It is the kind of love that can only stem from God, for He is the one who tells us “I love you just as you are” and asks us to extend that love to all His creations. (While the electronic information age can be a blessing, it is not a substitute for one-to-one interaction between true friends.) For many of the people in these communities, life has been turned upside down. All that they can hold onto is their faith in God and not believe those who are spewing forth such lies that this storm was a punishment from God. The true evildoers in this case are those spouting such nonsense. Christ taught us to be loving and forgiving. Just go back and read the Parable of the Prodigal Son and his Forgiving Father. Like our Father in Heaven, the “forgiving Father’ offered only unconditional love to his son. You can only find that kind of love by seeing the Christ in one another – even when it is almost impossible to do so. Christ always offers hope.

A glimpse of hope over NYC on October 30th, the morning after the storm



Photo taken by Inga Sorensen <http://isardasorensen.wordpress.com>

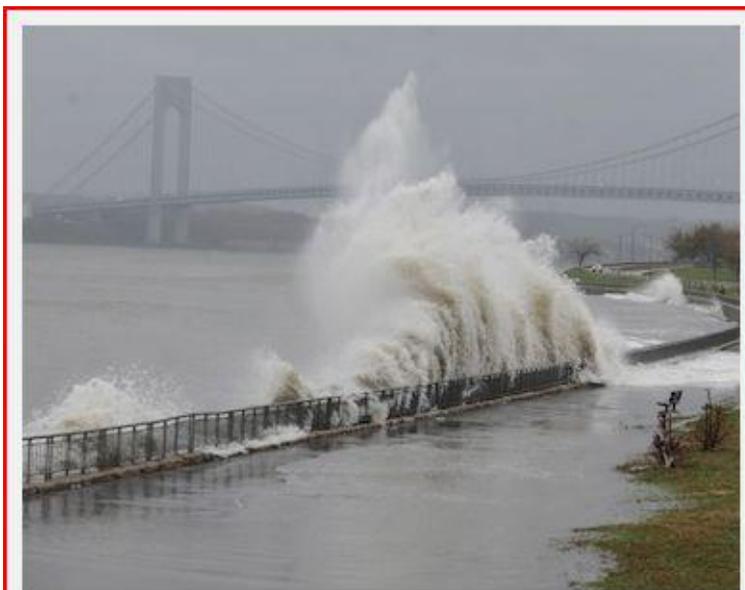
This Christmas will be a time for healing – not only for those who have suffered the effects of “Sandy” but also for all of us. God the Father has given us a most precious gift: Christ as our Savior, who brings Salvation to the entire world for He is the Light that exists within all of us. Through His words and actions, Christ teaches us “to love one another”. Celebrate Him by embracing and practicing what He has taught us. Let Christ be born again in your hearts.

We are all God's Children

by: schema-Archimandrite Barb

As I sit here thinking and writing, my mind still turns to all those who have been affected by Super Storm Sandy on the East Coast. So many lives lost and so many homes/business damaged/destroyed. Life as we knew it was wiped away in a blink of an eye. It is going to take months to return to some sort of normalcy for thousands of people here on the East Coast. Mother Nature really out did herself this time! And I suspect that this will not be the last time Mother Nature slams the East Coast this way. Here at the hermitage, we were very blessed since we only had light rain and wind that did not do any damage to us. We prepared for the worse and count ourselves very lucky!

Part of what I have come to realize over the last couple of years with the different weather



New York meets Hurricane Sandy, Monday, Oct. 29 — this is the Brooklyn waterfront along the Belt Parkway, which was flooded by the storm surge. Photo: Todd Maisel / N.Y. Daily News.

related problems locally is just how dependent we have become on our electronic toys. It is bad enough that we citizens have become dependent, but the governments and businesses have also to the point that all warnings are put out to the cell phones – and only smart phones at that, or the internet. Some information gets to the TV's or radio, but not enough information gets out that way. I wonder – what happens to those who do not have a cell phone (smartphone) or internet? What happens when the power goes off? Just how then do we communicate the most important information to those needing it? Somehow we have managed to put our priorities in the wrong order! Yes the word needs to get out but we need to find a way that makes sure that everyone receives it. Some of the

communities around us have decided to purchase “electronic signs” on which they can keep their communities informed. Actually that is a pretty good idea if they get enough of them and place them in the proper places so that everyone gets the message. And what about those people who have no way of getting themselves out of harm's way? We have become a nation of “me first or me only” which is so sad. We hear of stories of the elderly refusing to evacuate. Well, why is that the case? Could it be they physically could not do so or mentally did not realize the danger that was coming? What did those who are able to help do to help? What happened to the old idea of the community helps each other to see that everyone has what is needed to live through a disaster? We seem to have lost our way....

So how does this relate to spiritual issues, you might ask? Well, it seems that churches as a whole have forgotten their “job” is to spread the Gospel of Love to everyone. Each church/denomination has developed an attitude of who they will or will not minister to! Jesus

started one church and that was a church that taught us of God's Love and how we were to live our lives as children of God! Jesus did not limit his teachings just to one group of people but would teach anyone with whom he came into contact. Yes, he was aware of their "background" but that did not stop him from reaching out. So I ask myself what has happened that caused so much separatism within the churches. What has to be done to once again bring the churches back to the message Jesus was sharing? To begin with, we all must be willing to move out of our "comfort zone" and reach out to the people around us. We must be willing to live our personal lives as a child of God so that others will be drawn to us and thus will want to learn more about God. We also must learn not to try and put words into God's mouth (scriptures). We must learn to quit using the scriptures wrongly to put people down. The scriptures are meant to raise people up as children of God! I must admit that this is not an easy thing to do in so many ways since there is always someone who wants to put up a road block. But we must be willing to move through those road blocks and continue to live and bring forth God's love to all those who we come into contact with each and every day and not just when it is "convenient" to us are we to show/share God's love! Can you imagine a world where everyone treats everyone else with love and respect without caring what their religion/church is? Oh, what a joy that would be! A world that would no longer need wars, but where national leaders could just sit down and talk calmly and rationally about any problem there is and come to a joint consensus to solve the problem. I know, I dream! But really it is what Jesus would want us to do. In God there is only one faith/religion – a faith/religion in him no matter what name you use to call him.

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**Holy Theotokos of Mercy Community
for the
Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church**

**All writings are the views of the author(s) on a particular
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Contact: archimandritebarb@ohioocc.org