

Monastic Musings

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

September 2012

From the Idle keyboard

by: schema-Archimandrite Barb

September has finally arrived. I am so very glad as it means I travel to Our Lady of Peace Cathedral for our 1st Synod as the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church! I am really looking forward to my visit and getting a chance to see everyone. I have been busy putting together CD's of public domain worship music. I have finally gotten the CD's cut and ready to bring with me. Hopefully it will allow for even more music to be used within the different Masses/Liturgies of our parishes/communities and will not cost us anything. Now all I have to do is make a list what to bring and start the packing of my suitcase following the list! I know, I am cutting it a little close, but hopefully that means I will pay close attention to what I am packing. I am planning on using only Western clergy attire during my visit this time. Since I am taking a suitcase on the plane, I did not want to chance having my veil (hat part is made of cardboard covered with cloth) damaged if another suitcase gets piled on mine. And that can happen very easily at the airports! I am planning on arriving on Sept 5th and leaving Sept 10th. That should give me plenty of time to catch up/meet with people and also be able to do some church work while there. Besides playing with Patrick and Madagan that is! One has to get their dog play fix in when one can, you know! At least this time I am coming when there will be no snow! I get to see Cincinnati in late summer so that will be a joy for me. I can't wait to land at the airport and see Archbishop Charles' friendly face! See you all in a few days!!!!

September – A Month of “New Beginnings”

By Rev. Mother Myrella LeClair

“Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.”

— Mother Teresa

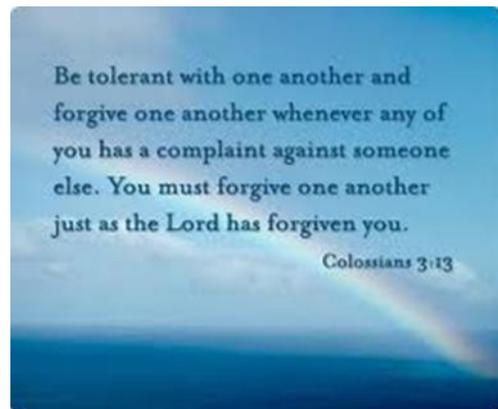
For my September 2011 article, I began an occasional series of articles intended to stimulate and challenge our spiritual beliefs regarding how we practice Christ's Message of Love, Forgiveness, and Mercy in our daily lives. I had chosen to call that series “The Elephant in the Room”, which is an idiom “for an obvious truth that is being ignored or goes unaddressed. The idiomatic expression also applies to an obvious problem or risk no one wants to discuss. It is

based on the idea that an elephant in a room would be impossible to overlook; thus, people in the room who pretend that the elephant is not there have chosen to avoid dealing with the looming big issue.”

The “elephant in the room” syndrome, unfortunately, still is alive and well when it comes to practicing Christ’s Message in our daily lives. We only need to look at what has happened in July and August with the mass murders to know that violence reigns. Look at the aftermath of the shootings in Aurora. People began to buy even more weapons, justifying that by saying that they were doing so to protect themselves. Unfortunately, that kind of behavior only seems to incite more violence. Now, some of these people say that they believe in and love Christ, but they certainly do not believe in Him nor in his message of Love. Look at what Christ did when the multitude came to the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Him:

*“Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, **“Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish^[1] by the sword.”***
(NKJV - Matthew 26:50-52)

You cannot claim to be a Christian and yet not practice what Christ has taught us, which is to be the Gospel in action. I know that for me that is not an easy thing to do especially in light of the events of the past few days. Just this morning, I learned that our beloved Friar Frankie had been killed by a couple of pit bulls. My first thoughts were not of forgiveness but of retribution against both the dogs and the owners. Since I do not live in the area, I was not able to carry out what was in my heart. Those same strong feelings of anger surfaced when I found out that my dear friend had been forced into retirement. Without him, the company has lost its moral compass. He treated every employee with kindness and dignity – the kind of person who did the right thing even though it may not have been in his best interest – career wise – to do so. He, like the young man in Aurora who forgave his attacker and wanted only to pray for him, are role models for the rest of us. They remind us – and teach us – that the only Way to Christ is to practice what Christ has taught us. No matter how justified our rage or retribution may appear to be, it is not the Way to Christ. In the midst of our anger, we must put down the sword and place our trust in God.



Let us together turn September into a month of offering prayer and forgiveness for those who we have hurt as well as for those who have hurt us. And, as you gather together at Synod, practice those “new beginnings” by allowing your hearts and minds to be open to transformation. Although my secular job prevents me from attending, I will be there with you in spirit, joining you in prayer and hope. For we walk the pathway together....

Where are we today?

by: schema-Archimandrite Barb

The Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church (OhioOCC) is holding its first Synod. I thought I would take some “time” here in this newsletter to share some things that have been accomplished over the

last couple of years for the Church and some areas that could use a little help in. These are areas that I have been directly involved with. But before I start, I want to say, this is OUR



Church and it will only grow and be dynamic by the effort and time people are all willing to put into the Parishes and the Church. So put on your thinking caps and dream large or small. Bring those dreams to the meetings during Synod. Let us all hear them and discuss them. Who knows, your idea may just be just the thing that we clergy need presented to us! This is one time "silence is not golden". We can only know what you are looking for in a church or what you want us to do by you talking with us. And yes, at times we will ask you to put your idea in writing and have your Parish President bring it before the Board of Directors. Some of your ideas might be good just for the Parish but some others might be good for the Church as a whole.

Archbishop Charles asked for suggestions for a theme for the Synod. The theme became: *From Common Ground, to New Beginnings*. When I look at the theme, I realize just how true it is for all of us involved in OhioOCC. We all came from different religious backgrounds to form a church that hopefully meet the needs of all who attend. What we all have to remember is that the Church is not the building, but it is the people who attend and participate as members! What is unique for many is the administration of the Church. From the very beginning, Archbishop Charles wanted the church to be run by a Board of Directors and not just by him. This is actually a wise and even a bold decision. The Board of Directors is comprised of no more than 50% clergy. The rest of the Board members are laity, who may or may not be members of OhioOCC. All parishes will have one representative on the Board, usually the president of each of the Parish Councils. Having Board members who are not members of the Church allows for a fresh perspective from someone who is outside looking in, thereby helping others within the Church to see things differently. The Church is thus run very democratically and with the constant eye to the future of the Church.

As you are aware, the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church has put together its own calendar of saints. We asked the clergy to put forth their ideas of who they felt should be on the calendar and from there it was built. We have tried to balance the calendar with Western and Eastern Saints. Archbishop Charles told us to take a hard look at the saints that predated the schism of the Church in 1054. From there we also took a look personally at people who set an example of living the Gospel as taught by Jesus. It was a challenge to put the calendar together since it meant that at times we had to explain to one another why we suggested certain people. Some months we are heavy with remembrances and in other months there are many observances.

The Eastern Rite Monastic Community (The Holy Theotokos of Mercy Community) has donated funds toward an online calendar for use by the church as a whole. The calendar is provided through a company called KeepandShare. The calendar can be free, but as long as the Community is functioning, we wanted the Church to have the ability to have more than one calendar if there was ever a need, so we bought a membership. You will find the calendar online at: <http://www.ohioocc.org/olp/news.html> . I decided to put it on the Our Lady of Peace (OLP) web site figuring that most of the scheduling would be done for the activities within OLP. If you ever need something added, please feel free to contact me at: archimandritebarb@ohioocc.org . I will gladly add the information to the calendar. Presently I put on the information I find within the Sunday Bulletins from OLP, and I am always looking to list other activities that might be going on at the Cathedral as well as activities that OLP is helping at and/or sponsoring. The calendars are printable.

The Eastern Rite Monastic Newsletters (*Monastic Musings*) are being kept online at: <http://www.mercychapel.org/newsletter.html> . If you have misplaced your copy, forgot to pick it up, were not at church at some point, or just want extra copies to give away, you can print them for your use. I plan on keeping the old newsletters up there as long as I have server space. (It looks as if it will take years to fill up the space!

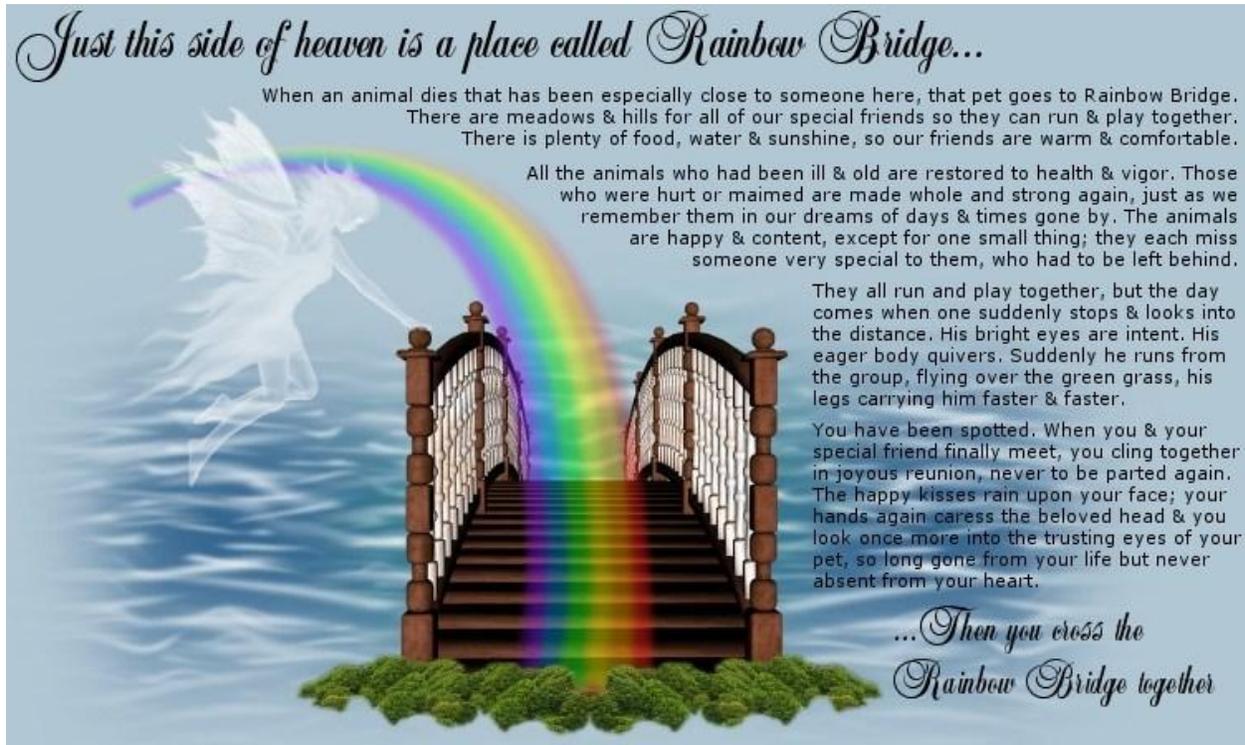
By the way, we have lots of space on the Church server (OhioOCC); so, if you have something you want to write, send it to me (archimandritebarb@ohioocc.org) and I will see that your article is published. You will notice a link labeled “*Ramblings*” (www.ohioocc.org/ramblings.html) on the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church’s web site (www.ohioocc.org/) where I put writings up from anyone of our church. Presently there are writings from +Charles, Mother Myrella and myself. I am always looking for more writings. The only requirements are: it must be your own writing (provide references when quoting something) and the writing must deal with a religious subject. Let me know your full name (first and last) and I will have fun featuring you on the website! I do not censor the writings other than for spelling errors. If you want me to check grammar, etc. let me know and I shall run it by Mother Myrella. (She has a degree in English and Secondary Education!). I usually let the writings stand as written since it shows your personality. We all have a personality when we write. Also, I am always looking for pictures of activities that have taken place within the church. I will need to know the date and title of the activity so that I can make a photo album to put online.

You see, the website really helps to bring more people to visit us physically and hopefully they will want to join us. The more we share about ourselves as a church, the greater the interest others will have! In this day, people always start with the internet to locate a church they may want to attend. We are lucky that the search engines are picking up our web pages, which means that people looking for us or a church can find us easily. Our web pages are fairly simple – some might even say plain – but that is done intentionally. I want the words of the page to be the focus and not a fancy design. Simplicity also means that the web site shows well on any device you use to view the internet. However, what is on the page needs to be what people are looking for to draw them in. We get a lot of visitors to our web pages each month (over a 10,000 pages viewed per month). Let’s work together to put up even more information about what is going on around the church so that people will want to come visit with us! This is where all of you come in. This is your web site. What information would you be looking for if you were looking at a Church website that would draw you to the church? Do we have that information on our web site? No, then who can provide me that information. Is it written in a way that would draw people? No, then help me rewrite the information in a better way. I am just the person who puts the information on the internet. Please give some thought about what you would like to see on the web site (OhioOCC and OLP) and let me know. I will see what I can do.....

Just a little side line concerning the OhioOCC and OLP websites. Because +Charles insists (along with myself and the Board of Directors) that we do everything “by the book” when it comes to anything affecting the church, we are actually searched often by other Independent Churches. We are being recognized as a valid Old Catholic Church with a valid episcopal lineage. Although we do not publish our constitution, bylaws, and canons on the web site, we do publish some teachings” and/or definitions that are important. For example: definition of terms used for clergy separation, handling of abuse within the church, and a listing of clergy/monastics, etc. That information shows how we handle situations that have come to the forefront within so many churches.

Hopefully I have given all of you a little something to think/dream about over the next couple of days. I can't wait to hear your ideas during the Synod. Remember, I am always as close as an email (archimandritebarb@ohioocc.org) if you want to ask me a question or send me something. I will get back to your very quickly. This is OUR Church and I want to be sure all of you are included!

In Memorial



On August 11, Friar Frankie passed away after being attacked by two pit bulls. May his little loving soul rest in the arms of Jesus and St. Francis. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him as he was one of the “mascots” of the Friary.



Frankie on +Chuck's desk when he was 12 weeks old

Call to Action

*“The world is my cloister, my body is my cell, and my soul is the hermit within.”
-- St. Francis of Assisi*

St. Francis really could not have said anything more true today. That is how the monastics of the Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church feel each and every day. Whether it be the Franciscan Order or the Eastern Rite Order, all have been called to serve God in the place they are living at the moment and in a way that will help the community they live in. Our monastic orders do not have physical monasteries; so our monastics have to provide everything for themselves while they live their lives as monastic hermit!

Have you felt the call to be a monastic or hermit? If so, why not explore this calling with Archbishop Charles (chancery@ohioocc.org) and see just where it might lead you.

Prayer Requests

Mom LeClair
Linda and Wayne
Bill and Monica
Fr. David and family
The Our Lady of Peace Cathedral Congregation
Weber Family
Fr. Rick Hobbs and family
Our Archbishop -- +Charles Smith, OSF

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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 subject and are meant to challenge your thinking so as to help you grow in your spiritual walk with God.

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