

The latest news from...
**Joy of All Who
Sorrow**

March 2008

In Patience Possess Ye Your Souls
[Luke 21:19]

The Archangel Michael Orthodox Bookstore and Joy of All Who Sorrow chapel at 12550 Washington Blvd. in Culver City had long been a small, quiet, and prayerful stop for people living in the area. We even had a family restaurant across the street, which served as a place to gather after a feast day or after Divine Liturgy on Saturdays. The sound of liturgical chant and the aroma of incense from all over the world filled the little storefront chapel. Beautiful icons, books, and other Orthodox items could be seen from the windows, and there was usually a person available to offer a friendly smile or encouragement to anyone who entered. Over the years, we saw young, old, rich, poor, and homeless enter our building. Orthodox Church Services had been held regularly since the year 2000, when we became part of the Orthodox Church in America. This simple functioning bookstore/church literally led thousands of people to worship, hear lectures and sermons, and experience the beautifully sung music of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

It seemed that every year brought new friends to join us in worship and prayer. For two years we had been praying for a larger building that would give us room to expand and provide a place for families. Specifically, we wanted a place for children of all ages to learn and grow in the Faith. As a small parish on the Westside of Los Angeles, we had to deal with the fact that purchasing a new house of worship was out of the question at the time. Even if someone had donated a million dollars, it would have been difficult to buy a piece of property and build on it. The Westside of Los Angeles, which is near the Pacific Ocean, has some of the most expensive real estate in the country. We started our search by praying the Akathist to the Theotokos, *Joy of All Who Sorrow*.

In November 2007, a more active search for the right place began. To our amazement, we found a former daycare facility that had 7,500 square feet of land with a 2,500 square foot multi-use building. The building, which used to be a home long ago, is right next to the street on Motor Ave—with *great visibility*. We were quoted a figure of \$8,000 per month, plus incidentals, to rent the space. The address, 3735 Motor Avenue, is in the Palms district of Los Angeles, and it is only two blocks from Culver City (and Sony Studios). Thousands of people live nearby in apartments. Steady streams of

people walk by the building day and night to visit the nearby post office and shops on Venice Blvd.

At first, we all thought the rent was too high. We had to make a speedy assessment because real estate in Los Angeles goes very quickly. After viewing the building inside and out, a group of church members and friends gathered at our treasurer's house to discuss creative financing. Over the next day and night, we all reached out to friends, families, and neighbors to try to get the extra \$3,800 we needed per month to rent the building. Miraculously, in a day and a half we found 33 people who agreed to contribute money beyond their tithes in order to secure the building. In late December, we signed the lease and now we are now fully moved in.

New people come by every day. The bookstore, which had grown practically dormant in our old facility, is now open six days a week. We still have an all-volunteer staff, and presently have many new visitors. We feel that God is blessing us in ways unimaginable and unexpected. The building could have been utilized by Sony as a storage facility for \$8,000 per month, but the owner of the building wanted it to be a place where the sound of children's voices could still be heard.

Renovating is not easy, and a budget that is now struggling to maintain itself will not go away. We know that in order to buy a building, we must first establish a history of making payments. In 1999, the rent at our old bookstore was \$1,100 per month. Now, only nine years later, we are able to pay \$7,500 per month. Everyone who walks into the new bookstore/chapel loves it and sees the potential of establishing a permanent temple someday—one that will stand until the second coming of Christ.

Friends and members of our church, new and old, are stepping forward to take responsibility for this. We are in the process of getting our outdoor signs made, creating parking at the rear of the building, redesigning the Iconostasis, renovating the bathroom, designing a children's room, setting up the office, and establishing new lighting to cover our needs. We are finding new ways to maintain the building and to maintain Church services. The work of Jesus Christ is just beginning for us in our new location. We are always looking for help, either with a skill one has, or financially. We encourage anyone who would like to support this work to contact us and let us know. It is also our goal to establish ministries that will serve our local community. We pray that you will feel the desire to get involved.

God bless you.

[Written by Fr. John Tomasi, Rector, *Joy of All Who Sorrow Orthodox Church*, 3735 Motor Avenue, Los Angeles/Palms, California, 90034]