

Presentation of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Monastery
2011 Diocesan Report

Bless!

Following the monastery's Annual Founders Day last September, we attended the Diocesan Assembly and were privileged to participate in the election of His Grace Bishop MATTHIAS, then his subsequent Consecration in Chicago. We are currently preparing for his first visit to the monastery to celebrate the Divine Liturgy on our Feast Day, November 21st.

Upon our return from the fall assembly, we were immediately faced with the emergency situation that water had seeped in behind the chapel walls, ruining panels and oak trim work. Word went out rapidly through the posting of our emergency appeal on the Diocesan website, with the result that numerous members of the clergy, monasteries, church organizations, individuals, and parishes (both OCA and those of other jurisdictions), responded through their prayers, notes of encouragement, and exceptional generosity.

Our hearts were filled with gratitude to Our Lord and to all whose donations made it possible for work to begin immediately to stop further damage, properly seal the exterior walls down to the foundation, and completely restore the chapel walls. The new landscaping that had to be removed to make room for these repairs was replanted and even expanded through the work of this summer.

In the midst of the repairs, our hearts were especially uplifted by the visit to the monastery of the *Miracle-Working Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God* brought by Father Christopher Stade of St. John Chrysostom Orthodox Church (a ROCOR parish in House Springs, Missouri). At the same time, we were able to move ahead with our annual clothing drive for the homeless.

Although we were aware of being in an area prone to tornadoes (as we were when living in northeastern Ohio), this was brought home to us with great impact by the disastrous tornado of Joplin, Missouri, this summer.

With the heart of our life as monastics being that of prayer, we decided to take special measures to protect our most essential service books and special texts by placing duplicate copies in a bank vault. Thus, if a disaster were to strike the monastery property, and God willed that both the bank and we survived, we could quickly resume services wherever we might be taking temporary refuge.

In the midst of the various challenges of this year, we continued to travel to distant parishes to worship with their parishioners and increase awareness that there is an Orthodox monastery in this region of the country.

As a result, we have had an increasing number of visitors, and it is our hope that among them will be individuals whose hearts are receptive to the monastic life. We ask that you, as clergy and laity, help by encouraging those in whom you see the potential to be monks and nuns to visit our monasteries and explore the possibility that Our Lord may be calling them to this life of prayer.

In Christ Our Lord,
Mother Sergia, Abbess