

Elmer the Safety Elephant

by Fr Lawrence Farley

I remember Elmer. Elmer was an elephant, whose image adorned the backs of our notebooks when I was in elementary school, and whose face flew on a flag on our school flagpole. Elmer was “the Safety Elephant,” whose rules we were encouraged to always remember (like an elephant, since “elephants never forget”). His rules consisted of such maxims as “Look both ways before you cross the street” and “Keep out from between parked cars.” There were four other rules also, complete with pictures to illustrate them, but you get the idea. If our school was accident-free, we were allowed to fly Elmer’s flag to celebrate this, but if a child had been involved in a car accident, we lost that right. Even now I can hear our school principal’s voice coming over my school’s public address system to sorrowfully announce, “We lost Elmer.” The idea behind this educational initiative on the part of the grown-ups was that children, if left to themselves, would be heedless of the risks involved in traffic and would get hurt. Thus, the grown-ups, under the persona of Elmer the Safety Elephant, ceaselessly inculcated the six safety rules to keep the children safe from danger.

Today’s young children are now in danger from a source other than traffic. I refer to the pandemic of pornography sweeping our land. In kinder, gentler days, a person who wanted to view pornographic images had to go to a place that sold them and ask for the magazine containing the images, which was kept hidden behind the counter. One ran the risk of receiving cold, disapproving adult glances—and perhaps even being reported to one’s parents. Now, with the omnipresence of the internet, one can view such images in the privacy of one’s own home, or even with one’s friends at McDonald’s through an i-phone. The average boy first discovers pornography in grade five, between the ages of nine to eleven, which of course means that some boys discover it earlier than nine years of age. That means that these boys’ brains are spent marinating in a pornographic culture which distorts the relationship between men and women long before they have any meaningful relationships with

women. It does not take much imagination to see how such a generation of boys growing up damaged in this way will be hampered when it comes to their own adult sexuality and be further hampered in their task of conveying a healthy view of sexuality to their own children.

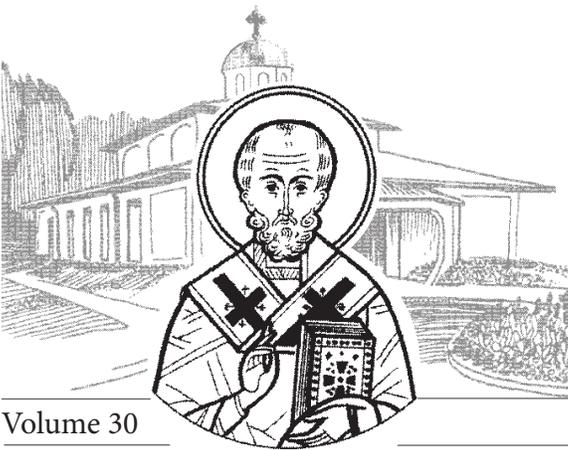
We need help from Elmer. That is, as parents, grandparents, and adults with any responsibility for raising and influencing children, we need to warn them of the dangers of pornography in the same way as our parents warned us of the dangers of playing in traffic. Elmer gave us six simple rules to keep us safe. I suggest three simple rules, which should be pounded into the heads of our children with the same happy relentlessness in which traffic safety rules were pounded into ours. They are:

Do not “sext,” or send sexually explicit messages to anyone.

Do not send sexually explicit or provocative photos to anyone on-line.

Do not view pornography.

In giving these rules and setting these parental boundaries, we should make it clear that we are not giving these rules because pornography is a sin—though, in fact, it is!—but because it is dangerous. The rules are given in the same spirit and with the same motivation as other rules, such as “Cover your mouth when you sneeze,” “Wash your hands after handling food that might be contaminated,” and “Don’t run out into traffic.” It has everything to do with simple safety. When a city faces a pandemic, we see health officials urging people to wash their hands, and people walking about the streets in medical masks. It should be the same with this pandemic. We take these precautions to keep our children safe from consequences that will follow them throughout their lives and have consequences for their children in turn. It is imperative that we remember the plague that surrounds us, even if (like most plagues) it is often invisible, and take steps to stay safe. Like an elephant, we must never forget.



Weekly Bulletin

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County for over 42 Years

Father Andrew Clements, Pastor

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|-----------------|---------------|--|
| Sunday | May 22 | <i>4th Sunday of Pascha / Tone 3 / The Paralytic</i> |
| | 9:00 am | Church School |
| | 10:00 am | Divine Liturgy Coffee Hour |
| | 1:00 pm | Blessing of Graves |
| Saturday | May 28 | <i>St Nicetas</i> |
| | 5:30 pm | Great Vespers |
| Sunday | May 29 | <i>5th Sunday of Pascha / Tone 4 / Samaritan Woman</i> |
| | Readings: | Acts 9:32-42 John 5:1-15 |
| | 9:00 am | Divine Liturgy Coffee Hour |
| | 1:30 pm | Alusheff Wedding |

ATTENDANCE / STEWARDSHIP / May 15

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Attendance: (Adults 123, Children 38) | 161 |
| Operating | \$3,481.00 |
| Uganda Children | 240.00 |
| Icons | 60.00 |
| Funeral Memorial (Theopylactos) | 100.00 |
| Deanery | 30.00 |

CHURCH SCHOOL NOTE

The last day for Church School is next Sunday, May 22. The Graduate, Church School Picnic will be on June 5. Please sign up in the foyer for picnic items. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided.

ALMS DISTRIBUTION

This year we collected \$2,793 in alms during Great Lent. The distribution is as follows: \$1,000 to St Herman's, \$500 to St James Soup Kitchen, \$500 to Good Karma Soup Kitchen in Ashtabula and \$793 to our own Parish Charity Fund.

WEDDING BANNS

Abby Welsh & Alex Alusheff, Sunday, May 29 at 1:30 pm.

BISHOP'S VISIT

Bishop Paul will make his first official visit as our bishop Sept 2-4. He will host Fr Andrew & Debbie for dinner on Friday evening, will meet with the teens and youth after Vespers on Saturday, will preside at our Liturgy on Sunday and

then attend a catered banquet in our hall. Further details to follow as we get closer to the event. Please see Ruth Bede if you can help with the banquet details.

ALTAR PRAYER LIST

Please be tending to any updates for your names on the Altar prayer list.

PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Eleanor Alexander (Tom's mom), Perry (Capitan), Bess (Chongris grndma), Mary & Bruno, Subdeacon Leonard, Donna, (Fross rltv), Fr Ted Bobosh, George Glavinis (Zorka's son-in-law), Helen Cicanski (Andy D's mom), Linnea Kaminsky (Matt's mom), Cathy Theophylactos, Dennis Hocevar (eye surgery), suffering Christians in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Anniversaries: David & Maria Kucmanic (5/27).

Birthdays: Christina Lebedev (5/27).

Newly Illumined: Alexis (Jonathan & Larissa)

Newborns: Mason (Mark & Christy)

Expecting: Tom & Ellen, Jimmy & Heather, Nick & Lindsey, Bob & Lucinda, Dan & Catherine, Dima & Lea, Michael & Katie, TJ & Jessica, Shane & Mary Ann, Matt & Michelle.

Memory Eternal: Carol Santone (Debbie C's sister 5/13).

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!