



ORTHODOX SCHOOL ASSOCIATION HOLDS ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN BOSTON

The second annual Conference on Orthodox Schools was held at the Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology in Boston, MA on August 1 and 2, 2008. Funded by the Virginia H. Farah Foundation, over 50 teachers, educators and interested participants attended the conference from some 15 different states, including Texas, California, Michigan, North Carolina and Georgia. It was a very enthusiastic group.

The conference was organized and run by the Orthodox School Association, based in Fort Worth, TX, which “promotes Orthodox schools in America by providing information, curricular resources, institutional supports and conferences that are specific to the needs and interests of Orthodox schools.” Its founding board includes a representative of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops of America (SCOBA), Bishop Basil Essey.

Among the presenters at the conference was Dr. Vigen Guroian, professor of theology at Loyola College in Baltimore, MD, an author of nine books. He spoke about the importance of morality taught through fairy tales, employing Grimm’s “Cinderella” as an example. Dr. Ann Bezzerides of Hellenic College discussed St. John Chrysostom’s “Philosophy of Education,” noting that the attributes of the “Divine Teacher” are “omnis-

cient, persuasive, humble enough to descend to the level of human limitations, and ineffably loving.”

Other speakers were Rev. Simeon, abbot at St. Isaac the Syrian Skete near Bescobel, WI, who developed an Orthodox school curriculum for a school the community opened in 1993; Bryan Smith, the headmaster of St. Peter’s Classical School in Fort Worth and director of the association; Kathryn Smith, his wife, who is the literature department head at Cambridge School in Dallas; V. Rev. Anthony Scott of New York, a consultant to many non-profit organizations within the Orthodox Church; and Andrew Kern, president and founder of the CIRCE Institute and co-author of the best-selling *Classical Education, The Movement Sweeping America*, now in its 2nd printing.

All of the speakers were Orthodox Christians and most of them are recent converts. Meals were served in the seminary cafeteria and vespers services were held each day in the seminary chapel. Representing the Center for Orthodox Christian Education of Greater Harrisburg, PA, a non-profit in the planning stage of establishing an Orthodox Christian private school, was V. Rev. Daniel Ressetar, its executive director and president. His expenses were mainly funded by Elizabeth Middlesworth, a benefactor and avid supporter. In addition to

Father Dan, other members of the executive board are active members of the Harrisburg “O” Club, #199: Elizabeth Howe, secretary, Joanne Wevodau, treasurer, Rev. Timothy Hojnicky, member, and Very Rev. Dr. Michael Kovach, consultant.

There are now 82 private Orthodox Christian schools in America, up from 42, and the movement to establish more is evident. If parents, especially those of lower incomes, were able to use the voucher system to have “school choice” to send their children to private schools, the momentum to establish Orthodox schools would increase. The idea of having such schools in our local communities will not disappear. If there was one message of this exciting conference, it was: be persistent and don’t quit, no matter what.

For further information on the Orthodox School Association, visit its website: www.orthodoxschools.org.

