

Pastor's Corner

Knowing about God, and knowing Him

BY FR. THEOPHAN BUCK

When I am invited to talk at local colleges I often struggle to find a common language with the students. How does one describe what one believes and has experienced to people who may have no context?

In a class room it is easy to reduce the Christian faith a set of "do's" and "don'ts" or to reduce the faith to dogmatic proclamations about God. Our faith certainly has "do's" and "don'ts" and important dogmatic teachings; however, our faith is not primarily about intellectual rules and propositions about God. The Christian faith is a faith that moves beyond "teachings" into the uncomfortable realm of

encounter. It has been said that "true theology is a narrative story of encounter, a meeting with God."

It is one thing to read and learn about a person; it is quite another to truly encounter and come to know a person. For example, if I were to



Fr. Theophan Buck

friend you on Facebook, I would be able to see all your pictures, read your profiles, read your history and come to know a lot about you. Your page would tell me everything you are willing to share about yourself.

However, if you were to move in with me and my family, and talk, eat and live with me, over time we would come to know each other. Over time

we would truly encounter and come to know each other.

Our goal as Christians is not to simply fill up on knowledge about God, but rather to come to know in an intimate way the living God. This "knowing" of God takes time and effort like any other healthy relationship we have. Coming to know God also requires openness and vulnerability. To truly know others we have to be willing to be known.

We live in a time where the primary emphasis is on learning about God rather than seeking to know the living God. In most instances the people I have encountered only want to hear what we profess about God. It could be said that the people of our time (myself included) are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the

truth" 2 Timothy 3:7. It is much easier to be a collector of theological opinions than it is to travel the path of relating to the invisible God.

In Matthew 7 Jesus gives us an unsettling teaching that should challenge every Christian. Jesus states, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

As Christians what we do or don't do is important; what we dogmatically profess is also important; but most important is that we

seek to know and to be known by God.

Knowledge about God does not save. We are only saved by coming to know the living God. May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bless us to encounter and develop a relation-

ship with the living God.

Father Theophan Buck is rector at St. Innocent Orthodox Church in Bolingbroke. The Forsyth Ministerial Association sponsors the Pastor's Corner.

MP Class of 1959 rallies to help classmate's sick daughter

BY DIANE GLIDEWELL

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The Mary Persons Class of 1959 is sponsoring a fundraiser to help

with the medical expenses of Meg Reeves, the daughter of classmate Suzanne Reeves. Mary Margaret "Meg" Reeves was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis on Oct. 31, 2013.

Pulmonary fibrosis is a rare disease that is incurable; the life expectancy is usually only two to five years.

Meg had worked as a registered nurse for 15 years until she had to quit working because of

the disease in January. When she had to give up nursing because she cannot breathe without oxygen, she lost her insurance. Meg is living



Meg Reeves

with her mother in Forsyth. Suzanne is also on oxygen because of COPD and is limited in what she can do.

The disease that caused Meg's pulmonary fibrosis is scleroderma, an autoimmune disease that attacks connective tissue and makes it hard. In Meg's case, it attacked her lungs. It entered the lining of the lungs and made them stiff so that it is difficult for oxygen

to get through to her cells. It has caused pulmonary hypertension and a small hole in her heart. It also attacked her esophagus. The damage it caused has made her a high risk for a lung transplant.

Meg has been under the care of the pulmonary clinic at Emory Hospital. She has been given medicine to prevent the disease from attacking other organs. But to live she needs a double lung transplant. Her doctors at Emory consider Meg too high risk for their capabilities; so they have sent her records to Duke University in North Carolina and Presbyterian Hospital in Pennsylvania. These two hospitals take cases that Emory does not.

"The doctors and staff at Emory are wonderful," said Suzanne. "Through prayer, God's help and friends, we have been able to maintain. Never has the

power of prayer been so obvious."

Meg is the daughter of Sonny Reeves, who passed away in January 2013. She has one sister, Anne Woodward, an artist and art teacher who lives in Savannah. Her grandparents, who are all deceased, were Walker and Marguerite Waldrep and Harold and Frances Reeves, who operated the Western Auto in Forsyth. Meg earned an associate degree from Gordon College, a BA from Mercer University, and her nursing degree from Gordon.

Suzanne's classmates from the Class of 1959 want to help and are asking the community to join them in assisting in whatever way it can, including prayer and financial contributions. An account has been set up at the Farmers Bank as "MPHS Class of 1959 F/B/O Mary Margaret Reeves."

Wright's Grove Baptist has August youth activities

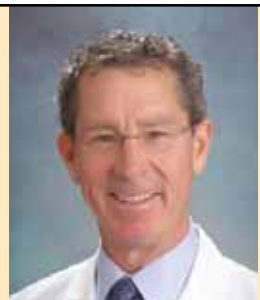
Wright's Grove Baptist Church, 3056 Old Atlanta Highway, Forsyth, invites all youth to fellowship at "The Grove" each Sunday in August. Programs on Aug. 17 & 31 will be at 9:45 a.m. and on Aug. 10 & 24 will be at 11 a.m. An entire month of excitement is planned.

Girl Talk/Boys to Men: These two youth empowerment events will be on Friday, Aug. 15, from 6-9 p.m. Youth ages 13-18 will come together to discuss topics to include purity, healthy relationships, health, and more. Girl Talk event will be held at "The Grove" {3056 Old Atlanta Hwy} and Boys to Men will take place at the Freshmen campus cafeteria at Mary Persons high school {Brooklyn Avenue}. Light refreshments will be served.

There will be a Carwash & Donut Fundraiser on Saturday, Aug. 26, from 8 a.m.-12 noon at O'Reilly Auto

Parts Store. August will climax on Sunday, Aug. 31 at 9:45 a.m. with the youth leading the worship service. For more

information, call 478-994-0707 or visit www.wrightsgrove.org.



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