

## **TOGETHER IN WORSHIP, IN LOVE, IN SERVICE--ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD**

### **Now hear a modern parable taken from a real-life situation . . .**

Once upon a time, there was a young man who, after completing his college education, went into his chosen profession. He was the pride of his parents. Then, one day, he announced to his folks an important decision he had come to. He had decided to drop the Orthodox faith that he had been raised in and become a member of a newly organized religious group.

This new group was exciting, he said. It was appealing and encouraged liberal thinking. Of course, it would be quite expensive – something like 10% of his gross annual income. They also required a good amount of time and sacrifice, but it would be worth the rewarding experience.

The parents were shocked to hear these words from their son, for whom they had worked hard to raise. They were average parents, no richer and no poorer than others. And yet, here was their pride and joy renouncing the Faith they had raised him in. “Why are you doing this?” they asked him.

“It can’t be as serious as all that!” he retorted. You sound as though I were being disrespectful; that I was letting you down. If it was so serious, why didn’t you take me to church as a child? Why didn’t we attend as a family? I can only recall our attending on Christmas and Easter services; occasionally at a Baptism, Wedding, or Funeral. In fact, I can remember you saying that you had to rest on Sundays, or had to read the newspaper, or putter around the house.

“If your Church was so important to you, why did you and Mom complain so much that the Church was always asking for money? Didn’t you say that what you gave was enough, and that nobody was going to tell you how to support the Church? You always said, ‘Let the “big shots” and the people with lots of money do the work.’

“This new exciting group I want to join asks for sacrifice and dedication from everyone. They practice tolerance and understanding. You always taught me never to trust anybody – and that includes the Church! I know you will understand why I have come to this decision.”

The parents sat in a daze, stunned by their son’s revelation. Perhaps they should have devoted Sundays to attending Church as a family. They lived as though Sunday would just continue—and now here they were in the twilight of their life. Maybe they should have believed more in the work of the Church and supported it wholeheartedly with money, time, and talent. All too clearly now, they saw what had transpired. Their son followed their example—the one they had set, and not listened to the words they had uttered. Having been deprived of full participation in the life of the Orthodox Church, the young man was forced to seek this self-fulfillment in another religious body.

PARENTS, it would seem advisable to be cautious and vigilant for the spiritual welfare of our children! What happened to that family described above can happen to yours as well.

+ Fr. Peter