

On Being Mindful of the Lord's Many Kindnesses¹

Stephen Wojcichowsky

Merci père le doyen Normand pour votre introduction très gentille.

Premièrement je voudrais saluer vous tous dans la langue de mes ancêtres. Permettez-moi: *Slava Isusu Xrystu! Dorohi moyi i liubi, iakyi ia shchaslyvyi buty z Vamy i pomizh Vamy s'ohodni. Day Bozhe shchastia vsim vam u nashii pratsi.* Honorables professeures [et professeurs], dignes équipes de soutiens, chères étudiantes et étudiants: Que je suis heureux d'être avec vous pour aujourd'hui et parmi vous pour un temps suffisamment long afin qu'on puisse réaliser une satisfaction mutuelle. En même temps que vous me faites une bienvenue, je vous fais un accueil chaleureux à notre Institut. J'espère que la pizza soit assez piquante, que les petits éclairs exciteront vos palais, et surtout que vous trouverez notre hospitalité bien aimable.

In his inaugural address as president of Dallas Theological Seminary, Mark Bailey told this story: The coat of arms of the Fitzgerald family of Ireland shows the figure of a baboon carrying a baby, and underneath is the Latin motto, *Non Immemer Beneficii*. The story connected with this strange device says that long ago the father of the family was away at war and had left his household in the charge of one or two old retainers and some female servants. Suddenly the enemy came to the house

¹ *Editor's note:* This essay is adapted from a reflection given 1 March 2007 (Venerable Martyr Eudoxia) by Fr. Stephen Wojcichowsky at a luncheon to recognize his installation as the new director of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies and, in that capacity, also as managing editor of *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*.

and all fled, forgetful of the little baby, the future heir of the family. A pet baboon noticed the baby, ran to the cradle, grabbed the child, and ran with him to the top of the abbey steeple, holding him out for the people to see. The servants were all in terror, but the baboon carried the baby down safely to the ground. When the child's father returned, he felt that he owed a debt of gratitude to the beast that had saved the heir of his house. So he set the monkey in the center of his knightly shield and placed beneath the motto, "Not unmindful of his kindness."

While the Wojcichowsky family does not have such a household crest, I am not unmindful of God's kindness in my life in bringing me to this moment. Nor am I unmindful of the many kind people who have paved the way for my coming here to work with and among you. It seems that with every move my family and I have made there has been a great price to pay (and I am not only referring to moving costs). Something dear has had to be relinquished. Yet, what wonderful blessings we have received – not the least of which is the growing assurance of God's Providence in our lives. With each move, we have taken quantum leaps both in our personal development as individuals and as a family. We have met people who have become family to us right across Canada. My wife Maria and I will miss our children and grandchildren, but we know they are within reach technologically (they bought me a webcam) and travel-wise. The joy of this move lies in discovering the many ways God plans to be kind to us again.

A ce moment-ci alors que je commence dans la position de directeur de l'Institut Métropolitain Andrey Sheptytsky pour l'Étude de Christianisme Oriental ici à l'Université de Saint-Paul, je me trouve honoré et en même temps je me sens humble. Honoré – dans le sens que l'administration de notre université, en particulier les pères Normand Bonneau et Colin Levangie, les évêques Ukrainien Catholique de Canada et les membres de notre Institut avait la confiance en moi que je puisse servir notre Seigneur et l'Église universelle en cette façon. Humble – dans le sens que je me tiens debout sur les épaules de géants: Métropolitain Andrey Sheptytsky lui-même, notre directeur-fondateur le

mitrofore père Andriy Chirovsky, et mon prédécesseur, père chanoine Andrew Onuferko.

Je suis très fier de nos professeurs, les pères Andriy Chirovsky, Peter Galadza, et John Jillions qui apportent leurs compétences non seulement dans la salle de classe ou les revues académiques. Ils ont également l'enthousiasme pour prêcher et sont impliqués dans toutes sortes d'autres formes d'activités pastorales emportant décennies de recherche au développement spirituel de la communauté étendue.

I am equally proud of Rosemary O'Hearn, Lorraine Manley, and Julie Daoust who not only fulfill their daily tasks with great savoir faire and enthusiasm: they also reflect an appreciation for and intuitive understanding of the importance of our Institute and its work. Not only that but already they have shown great patience in bringing this rookie along. We all know that support staffs are the fuel that keeps the academic machine running. Special recognition to you, Adam, for your editorial skill in producing our publication *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*.

I am especially proud of our students who have distinguished themselves in so many ways and continue to make a unique contribution to this scholarly community. To our graduate and undergraduate students and seminarians, thank you for your presence and witness, and to those who faithfully come to keep the prayer going in our chapel – I am more indebted to you than you can ever know.

I am honoured and humbled indeed to be a member of this Institute and part of this great university. I call it "great" because it had and continues to have the vision to integrate into its very life and identity an academic unit which, though small in magnitude, is itself great in scope. Consider our mission statement. We say we are "a centre of higher learning, a centre of research, a centre of ecumenical understanding, and a centre of prayer, dedicated to integrating academic study and worship of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit." We conclude by declaring: "In dialogue with contemporary societies, the Institute hopes to communicate the power of Christian Faith and living Tradition, so that all may share in the very life of God."

If this sounds like a traditionalist critique of a rationalist approach to the study of theology, that is, holding a self-suf-