

ORTHODOX BIBLE/BOOK STUDY @ OREGON STATE PRISON, SALEM

OSP NEWS & PRAYER LETTER

Class Date: May 17, 2017

Inmates Present: 7

Leaders Present: 2; Fr. Jerry Markopoulos, Paul Crawford.

Study Subject: Journey to Fullness by Fr. Barnabas Powell

Father Jerry presented the first two parts of the video series by Father Barnabas Powell, Journey to Fullness. The group of seven men all liked it; Father Barnabas held their attention. The men like to watch DVD's but they also want to talk and express their opinions and responses. So Fr. Jerry asked for any questions or comments and we discussed what Fr. Barnabas had to say regarding his personal journey into Orthodoxy. His story, coming from being a Pentecostal pastor/teacher to being an Orthodox Priest was unusual and very interesting. Some of the men listening may have been Pentecostal themselves.

Two statements from the video caught our attention: (1) "I've found the borders of my Pentecostal, Protestant world." The background of his faith did not extend far enough. He believed there was more to know of Christ, that he hadn't reached the fullness of the Christian Faith! and (2) "The Destination is a Person, not a place" (i.e. the Journey to Fullness). We talked about these things and the inmates, disarmed perhaps by God's presence among us, shared some personal things and stories. One man shared the story of himself as a boy of 12 or 13 in Los Angeles, when he went inside a large Orthodox Church with two friends, saw the icons and candles, then was told he was not to come into the church again and was thrown out. From that time to this day in class he'd wanted nothing to do with Orthodoxy. Now he wants to hear more.

Near the end of our class one of the men said, "The Buddhists run this place" (i.e. the Salem Prison). Another man said the Buddhists would glare at him as they passed by his cell. He said, "If they want to do something to me, why don't they just do it or stop the harassment?" Buddhists are formed as a gang in this prison.

Pray for:

- 1) The class leaders to discern the Holy Spirit's urging and speak only what He gives us to say;
- 2) All the prison inmates at OSP, that our Lord Christ would protect them and keep them from harm;
- 3) The inmates in our class be given the spiritual strength to stand firmly in their Christian Faith in situations of persecution;
- 4) For them to hear and understand God's voice as He speaks to their souls;
- 5) The Lord's blessing on their Christian fellowship;
- 6) The Lord to teach them to pray for each other;
- 7) More inmates to join our class; we will have our class included in the weekly schedule of religious/college classes for the week of Wednesday, June 7.

In Christ our Life, Paul