



Gordon Lankton and the Rhode Island Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood at the Russian Icon Museum

Woonsocket Priests Visit Icon Museum

Rev. Onisie Morar (pictured, top), the rector of St. John Romanian Orthodox Church, and Rev. Anthony Perkins (pictured, far left), the rector of St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church recently visited the Russian Icon Museum in Clinton MA. They and the other members of the Rhode Island Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood received an enthusiastic and informative tour from the museum's founder, Gordon Lankton (pictured, middle).

Mr. Lankton, the chairman of Clinton-based Nypro Inc, bought his first icon at a flea market during a business trip to the Soviet Union in 1989. The beauty of the medium sparked within him a deeper appreciation for it and the Russian Orthodox culture that grew around it. He has become a major collector, assembling what his website refers to as the largest collection of icons in North America. His collection spans six centuries, ranging from the simple gilded icon he bought in 1989 to important historical icons from the major epochs of Russian iconography.

All the visiting priests were moved by the presence of so many holy images in the museum, many of which mirror those found in their own churches and homes. They were also impressed with the green design of the museum itself, which includes photovoltaic collectors and LED lighting. Fr. Onisie, a professional woodworker, noted the quality of the renovations made to the 150 year-old former mill building. The setting is an impressive mix of modern and ancient, and appropriate context for introducing people of all backgrounds to the sacred art form.

Because they affirm the core Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, icons have always played a central role in the worship life of Orthodox Christians. This past Sunday, Orthodox Christians in Woonsocket and around the world celebrated the first Sunday of Orthodox Great Lent with processions and sermons proclaiming the incarnational theology of the icon. From their many framed icons, stained glass icons in the windows, and iconic frescoes on the walls and ceiling to the gilded iconostases between the altar and nave, the Woonsocket churches of St. John's and St. Michael's provide opportunities to see such images within other, more traditional, settings.

Both of the priests recommend the Russian Icon Museum to all those interested in Christianity, art, and Russian history. If you are interested in learning more about icons and their place in Orthodox theology, please contact Fr. Onesi (www.stjohnroc.org) or Fr. Anthony (www.stmichaeluoc.org). To learn more about the Russian Icon Museum, its tours and classes, please visit www.museumofrussianicons.org.