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Greeting from His Grace, Bishop Maxim

“The Church and the Challenges of Contemporary Life”

Dear brothers and sisters, our Children in the Lord.

Expressing my most profound joy and gratitude, I greet you as part of the Body of Christ as we gather for another Diocesan Days celebration of our Western American Diocese. On this occasion, let us call to mind a different gathering: that of Christ and his disciples in the tempest-tossed boat (Matt. 8:23-27), prefiguring the Church and the existential challenges of contemporary life that risk our very mode of being. After calm sailing on a peaceful sea, a wind blows dark clouds across the sky and ominous waves begin to pitch the little boat; the disciples, drenched and increasingly worried, awake Jesus. “Master,” one asks, “don’t you care if we drown?” Jesus, seeing the fear in the faces of his disciples, stands, stretches out his arms to the wind and the waves, and commands: “Peace! Be still!” At once, the wind dies down and the waves grow calm as he then asks His disciples: “Why are you so afraid? Where is your faith?”

Every Orthodox Christian parish – a living prayerful-liturgical community – is an image of this boat, which gathers persons baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity and anointed with the Holy Spirit into the one Body of Christ. Without Eucharistic union, participation, and Communion, a parish cannot exist. When a parish reflects on its “successfulness,” both the firmness of Faith and the dynamic pulse of its Eucharistic life measure maturity, success and achievements, not merely impressive church buildings and social halls; what matters is the quality of the living members of the Body of the Church: their unshaken Faith, their maturity to the “measure of the stature of Christ,” and their ascetic victory over life, sin, death, and all that is transitory.

The Orthodox Church in the United States of America, unfolding in the field of history, is interwoven with God’s plan. No wind stirs, no wave crashes without His will. Serbian Orthodoxy now reflects the Church’s consciousness of His will on this continent, not only as moral and spiritual support for an ethnic community of Serbian immigrants, but as the salvific vessel that more than meets the tempestuous challenges of modernism, post-modern pluralism, and relativism, teaching us to live with Faith among those of other faiths and confessions, and even those altogether indifferent to religion.

Only in true Ecclesial communion with the Triune God, which is both the authentic source of relationships and the source from whence our customs find their meaning, can our customs, philanthropic work, recreational time, Sunday school, and other activities accurately reflect the Mystery of Christ’s peace and the True Faith that dispels all fear.

Prayerfully, I encourage you to measure your life according to the standard of the Kingdom; in this way, the historical and social life of the Serbian people in North America will reflect that vision of the Kingdom of God that comes in Glory. With the assistance of our two newly proclaimed Saints, Justin of Chelie and Simeon of Dajbabe, together with Saint Sava, Orthodoxy in America can thereby be existentially translated to meet every challenge, whether from the East or from the West, for the benefit of all.

Pursuing the Will of God, we will proclaim our faith in God’s manifestation and His effective presence in all our lives. In so doing, we will answer our Lord’s query to His disciples after quieting the winds: “Where is your faith?”

His Grace, Bishop Maxim

Patriarch Pavle – A True Servant of Jesus Christ and a True Father of His Flock



“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.” (Colossians 3:23)

The Serbian nation mourned the falling asleep in the Lord of their beloved father, His Holiness Patriarch Pavle. With them stood the entire family of Orthodox Christians and many worldwide nations. The eyes of the world were on Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox Church as the earthly remains of His Holiness were laid to rest at the monastery Rakovica in Belgrade, Serbia.

It was on Sunday, November 15, 2009, that the news about the blessed repose of Patriarch Pavle reached the hearts of his children. They knew of his illness for the prior two years he was hospitalized. Yet even from his hospital bed he continued, as from the throne of St. Sava, to guide the Serbian Orthodox Church. The outpouring of his spiritual children at his burial on Thursday, November 19, and in the days before as they came to the Belgrade Cathedral to pay him tribute, was a testament to the enormous spiritual guidance and paternal love he had for his flock.

Hundreds of thousands of people drew together in Belgrade’s streets to express their love, respect and gratitude to the 44th Serbian Orthodox patriarch, His Holiness Pavle. He stands in a long line of Serbian patriarchs. Each one of them was given the cross of leading the church at a particular time, and each one of them served the Lord to the best of his ability. About them we can read in the Prologue or church historical books, while Patriarch Pavle for us, his contemporaries, was a living book. Moreover, he was not just any living book, he was a living Gospel, i.e., he lived according to the Gospel.

Truly, he was first and foremost the servant of God. Whatever he did, he was doing it as to the Lord. He was not looking for any rewards, but for the reward that comes from the Lord, the true inheritance prepared for the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Colossians 3:23).

Because of this unshakable belief, Patriarch Pavle aptly sailed the ship of the Serbian Orthodox Church during the most tumultuous times in recent history. His guide was Jesus Christ and Him he served with every word and deed.

His Holiness will be remembered for his unshakable faith in God. He will be remembered as a true servant of Christ. He will be remembered for his humility and unsullied approach to life’s challenges. Indeed, he will be remembered as a peacemaker. For us living in the Americas his guidance and paternal love in bringing Serbian Orthodox brothers and sisters together after many years of separation will not be forgotten. As St. Sava reconciled his two feuding brothers, Stefan and Vukan, so did the Patriarch, by the grace of God, reconcile the Free Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate, thus making the Church indeed free of division and strife.

It is remarkable to hear the stories of visitors to the Patriarchate in Belgrade, of how His Holiness gave them a fatherly reception. His short and pure teachings still resonate in the hearts of his listeners. Life is not complicated at all so long as we love God and live as His children. *“Budimo ljudi-let us live as people of God”*, he is known to have repeated many times. During these trying times of the last two decades his message was that we must examine our own consciences, to ensure that perhaps tribulations are not inflicted upon us because of our own sinfulness, and that we ourselves are found in a pure conscience before God. His call to prayer and fasting was the call of a true pastor and father of his flock. He knew that he was to present to God

the people entrusted to him, and he wanted to do it in the only true way – according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Nothing else mattered to him; not the wisdom of this world nor the gimmicks of politicians. His answer to the late U.S. Ambassador Warren Zimmermann in 1991, when the Ambassador asked the Patriarch what America could do to help him and the Church attests to that: “Your Excellency, the most you can do to help us is not to do anything to harm us!”

The throne of St. Sava indeed had in him yet another great spiritual giant. Patriarch Pavle was a true leader of his flock. He was a true father to his flock. Faithfully and without blemish he presented his flock to the Master and Lord whom he so devoutly served until his last breath.

We thank God for blessing us with His Holiness Patriarch Pavle. We are grateful for his ability to captivate, encourage and edify his listeners and beyond.

May we also do everything *heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you (we) will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you (we) serve the Lord Christ.*



His Grace Bishop Irinej of Nis Elected as 45th Patriarch on the Throne of St. Sava

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and the Church of Christ. From that day on, the Life-giving Spirit guides the Bride of Christ, The Church, into the fulfillment of the Eschaton, the establishment of our full communion with God in the age to come.

From the Apostles, their disciples and onward, the Lord has called and appointed countless laborers in His vineyard. The fullness of God's Church in Serbia beginning with St. Sava (1169-1236), her first archbishop, St. Arsenije I Sremac, Sava's successor and consequently all their other successors including Patriarch Pavle of blessed memory, in an unbroken chain linked all the way back to the Apostles and Christ, has been blessed with a new Patriarch, His Holiness Irinej.

Indeed, the Lord calls and He appoints his laborers. The 45th patriarch on the throne of the Serbian archbishops and patriarchs, called by God as the first among his equal brethren the bishops, has a heavy cross to bear. He nonetheless has accepted that cross with faith bearing in mind the words of Christ: *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* (Matthew 16:24)

The electoral assembly began early in the morning on January 22, 2010 with the celebration of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in Belgrade's Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel, served by His Eminence Metropolitan Amphilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral, locum tenens of the Patriarchate throne. His Eminence served with the concelebration of Bishops Lukijan of Osijek Polje and Baranja, Jovan of Shumadija, Irinej of Australia and New Zealand, and Vicar Bishops Teodosije of Lipljan and Antonije of Moravica.

Following the Liturgy the bishops gathered at the Patriarchal residence for the electoral assembly. Presiding at the assembly was Bishop Lavrentije of Shabac, the senior bishop by consecration of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Holy Assembly of Bishops has 44 members, and 34 bishops met the requirements [to have served as a diocesan bishop for at least five years] to be nominated as the new Patriarch of Serbia.

In accordance with the Church's electoral procedures, three candidates were proposed by secret ballot of the assembled bishops. Each candidate needed to receive a majority vote. Chosen on the first ballot was Metropolitan Amphilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral, with Bishop Irinej of Nis chosen on the second ballot and Bishop Irinej of Backa chosen on the fourth ballot.

These three candidates having received more than half the total votes during the four rounds of voting, their names were placed in identical envelopes and placed on the Holy Gospel book. The envelope with the name of Bishop Irinej of Nis as the new Patriarch was randomly chosen by Archimandrite Gavriilo, superior of the Lepavina monastery (Metropolitanate of Zagreb-Ljubljana). This method of election, by lot, follows the method by which the Holy Apostles chose Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot among their number as described in the Book of Acts, 1: 21-26. It is meant to allow the Holy Spirit, "who knows the hearts of all," to make the final choice.

Following Christ means to constantly seek to fulfill His will and to live in communion with Him. The Church and those appointed to 'oversee' (the meaning of the Greek word for bishop, *episkopos*) her mission



in the world know that it is necessary to be existentially involved in the world while not being conformed to the world, but rather, working to elevate the world to the level of the Church as the Kingdom of God.

His Grace Irinej – The Patriarch elect succeeded His Holiness Serbian Patriarch Pavle, who fell asleep in the Lord on November 15 of 2009.

Immediately after the election a service of thanksgiving was served and the Many Years was intoned for the new Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovac and Serbian Patriarch Irinej. The newly-elected Patriarch addressed his brothers Bishops, acknowledging that his election was the will of God and the will of the Holy Assembly of Bishops, and promising that he would work diligently in the Field of God in close cooperation and consultation with all the Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The bells of the Cathedral Church rang out at 2:15 PM to announce that the 45th Patriarch of Serbia had been elected.

The enthronement of the newly elected Patriarch took place the next day, January 23 at the Belgrade Cathedral. The Hierarchal Liturgy was served by His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia with the concelebration of his brothers Bishops, priests and deacons, and also the representatives of Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches as well as the representatives of other Christian and religious bodies in Serbia.

In passing the Patriarchal insignia of office to Patriarch Irinej as he ascended the throne of the Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovac at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Amphilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral recalled the life, deeds and sacrifices of the previous Serbian Patriarchs. Metropolitan Amphilohije expressed his hope and confidence that His Holiness will be a worthy successor to St. Sava and to all his worthy and honorable predecessors as first hierarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

In his first Patriarchal sermon, His Holiness Patriarch Irinej reflected on the importance of this day not only for him personally, but also for our Church and our people, because the Patriarch of Serbia has always represented before God and in history the fullness of his people, sharing its fate, its tragedies, and also its joys. His Holiness said that his heart quaked within him and that he trembled with the consciousness of the great challenges before him, and prayed that God would make him worthy of this great honor and responsibility.

“So at this time my thoughts are directed to God our Savior, the Great Shepherd of the Church, who has bestowed upon me His goodness and grace,” the Patriarch said.

His Holiness Patriarch Irinej (Gavrilovic) of Serbia was born August 28, 1930 in the village of Vidova, near Cacak to his father Zdravko and mother Milijana. His baptismal name in the world was Miroslav. He finished elementary school in his village, and completed high school in Cacak. He then enrolled in and completed seminary in Prizren in 1951, and went on to complete his studies at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Belgrade. Following completion of his mandatory military service he was appointed a professor of the Prizren seminary. Before taking up this responsibility, in October 1959, he was tonsured a monk at the Rakovica monastery by His Holiness Patriarch German, receiving the monastic name of Irinej.

That same month, on St. Petka’s day, October 27, 1959 at the Ruzica church on Kalemegdan in Belgrade he was ordained a hieromonk. While serving as a professor at the Prizren seminary he was sent for post-graduate studies in Athens. In 1969 he was appointed head of the monastic school at the monastery of Ostrog. He later returned to Prizren and became rector of the Prizren Seminary. In 1974 he was elected as a vicar bishop to His Holiness the Patriarch of Serbia with the title of Bishop of Moravica. A year later, in 1975 he was elected as Bishop of Nis, where he served faithfully and diligently until his election as Serbian Patriarch. During his time in the Diocese of Nis many churches have been built or renovated. Intensive efforts have been undertaken to educate both youth and adults in the Orthodox Faith, and to bring the population into closer contact with the Church after the years of communist oppression.

In the 1980’s he served for a time as Administrator of the Midwestern American and Western American Dioceses.

May our Lord grant spiritual strength, divine wisdom, guidance and many years to his Holiness Patriarch Irinej. We wish him many fruitful years on the throne of the Serbian archbishops and patriarchs.

Diocesan Days 2009 Report



“Receiving One Another as Jesus Christ Received Us to the Glory of God”

September 4-6, 2009

This 2009 theme indeed was indicative of the way that all the faithful on the west coast greeted each as true brothers and sisters in the Lord. The 13th, gathering at the St. Sava Mission in Jackson, CA was especially memorable for it reinforced the love that exists among all of us.

The weekend festivities began with a clergy luncheon and conference. His Grace Bishop Justin of Timok (Serbia) was the conference presenter building on the Apostle Luke’s call to “cast your nets into the deep.” (Lk. 5:4) His anecdotal talk prompted many questions and lively discussion.

Vespers was served before dinner. Following dinner Fr. David Lubliner of St. John’s Church in Eugene, OR talked on “Our call: Orthodox Evangelism and Lay Missionary Labor on Modern American Culture.” His expose on the roots of our faith on this continent was especially interesting. The interactive discussion with their Graces Maxim and Justin was enlightening for all. Fellowship continued into the night.





Saturday began with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in the tent chapel at the Mission followed by a memorial service at St. Sava Church. Barbecue lunch was served picnic style while everyone enjoyed sitting outside and visiting before the Kolo Srpskih Sestara (KSS) semi-annual meeting was held. Following this meeting, the parent/teacher conference was held with its theme as “From Stormy Sea of Life to Your Tranquil Haven.” During the afternoon, the swimming pool was open and the sports fields were occupied with much competition while the younger children did craft projects with Popadija Nina Barfield. The Youth Rally conducted by Fr. James Barfield with assistance from Fr. Michael Boyle stimulated the youth to go beyond themselves and realize how connected we are and dependent on each other. Following Great Vespers dinner was served with a dance following.

Matins and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were served Sunday morning at the Mission. Afterwards, the banquet hall was filled to capacity as everyone enjoyed the delicious meal and listened to the keynote address by Bishop Justin. His Grace Bishop Longin of New Gracanica Metropolitanate was also present during the whole weekend. At the banquet, everyone received a copy the Diocesan Annual for 2009. The day ended with great optimism and hope for the coming year in the life of our Diocese.



Fishing for Souls

His Grace, Bishop Justin, Bishop of Timok, Serbia
Diocesan Days – 2009

At the loving invitation of my brother and concelebrant in Christ, the Bishop and Shepherd of the Western American Diocese, His Grace, Maxim, I was given the opportunity to participate in the joyous celebration of these Diocesan Days. Such an event reminds us of our existence as Orthodox Christians, and testifies to the enduring presence of Christ's Church. Today we rejoice at gathering on such a wonderful Sunday, the day of the Lord's Resurrection, after having celebrated the Divine Liturgy and partaken of the Most Pure and Holy Mysteries—the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ—which is both our foundation and our hope.

Living amongst you these few days, I have learned about both your needs and struggles, just as I have done for those in my own Diocese in Eastern Serbia from which I come. I have grown to understand that you have many virtues, but that you also have weakness, which is an indication of the “whole man”—because the Lord came to save sinners, which we are.

But we have hope because we find ourselves in a boat. This place that we find ourselves is, yes, a boat, which slowly but surely moves towards its destination. Its goal is to arrive at a peaceful and blessed harbor, the Lord Himself. But, because we know that great danger is found out at sea—tumultuous waters, pirates, and rocks on which a vessel can run aground—we know that we are also in danger. We are like Peter who came out of the ship when the Lord called him to Himself. He walked for the first few steps as if on dry land, but then beginning to sink, crying out: “Lord save me!” The Lord said to him, “Why did you doubt, O you of little faith?”

And the Lord God asks the same of us. Why is it that we who have received the grace of the Holy Spirit and the Power of Heaven, and have been baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity, are often frightened in these stormy seas and seek help elsewhere? We often forget the Lord Who is our Creator and Saviour.

These words are of a spiritual nature; let us now move to things that are a bit more personal. As is our custom in the Serbian household tradition with which you are all familiar back home, when an unexpected guest comes to our house, we ask him: “Who are you and to what house do you belong?” so that he can briefly represent himself.

You probably see me as a man of the Church, isn't that right? As such, I do not seem to be much different than other hierarchs or celebrants. But, what if I were to tell you that from the age of five I really loved to fish, because while fishing I saw the secret and invisible world: the fish emerges from the “hidden world” that we cannot see beneath the living water. I fished all the way up to my twenty-fourth year, fishing in almost every river and participating in every competition, until the Lord caught me in a miraculous way! Through fishing, the Lord fished for me for His own purpose. I heard that holy and blessed calling which He had given to His disciples and apostles, “Leave your fishing and come, fish for the souls of men.” That preparation which I had for this new type of fishing was of great benefit to me, because I knew which bait to use depending on for whom I was fishing. Not every fish will bite every bait and there is no universal method to catch a fish. But through fishing I thought about the essence of life. I was far from God and not all that close to the Church at one point earlier in life, but I was at least close to this hobby. When I was young, I didn't go to the disco clubs and such where the youth of my age went at those times. But, within nature, I found the creation of God. And, little by little, the Lord prepared my soul and heart so that, through the creation of God, I could open up my heart to the Creator Himself.





And that is why I now attempt to cast out my bait for all of you, so that you also might enter into the wondrous Providence of God and, when the Lord catches you, you will never be free to live in the water again without your Creator. Beneath the water—and by “water” I mean life in this world—life has its own interesting ways wherein everyone finds his own reason to distract himself from the things of real value. But today I tell you that the greatest joy and the greatest happiness is being under the wings of the true Church. There is no room there for fear; There is no room there for doubts—because the Lord who has called us all will also redeem us.

May the Lord God grant that we who have gathered around Him, our one Saviour, beneath the guidance of our Bishop who is the head of the Church here in Western America, may confess as one: “Holy is the Lord God of Sabbath, the Creator of Heaven and Earth; Heaven and Earth are full of Thy glory!”

May you all live many years and may the Lord God grant you to have more virtues than weakness. In the words of the Apostle Paul, may the grace and love of God be with you always. Amen.



On the Work of the First Episcopal Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America

United, We Celebrate the All-Holy Spirit!

Recently a historic event took place in New York: A pan-Orthodox Assembly of the Fullness of God's Church on the North American continent, represented by the Hierarchs of the local Orthodox dioceses. The most important goal of this body is to witness Orthodox unity in a "new world", and to secure a more effective organization of mission, witness and cooperation of the local Orthodox Churches in diaspora.

In accordance with the decision of the Fourth Pre-conciliar pan-Orthodox conference held June 6-12, 2009 in the Orthodox center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Switzerland, and at the invitation of Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the first Assembly of canonical Orthodox Hierarchs of North and Central America was held in New York May 26-28, 2010. Of sixty-six hierarchs of this region, fifty-five were present at this historic gathering.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios presided over this Episcopal Assembly, having Metropolitan Philip (Antiochian Orthodox Church) and Russian Archbishop Justinian (Moscow Patriarchate) as co-chairs. Bishop Basil of Wichita (Antiochian self-ruling Archdiocese) was elected secretary. His Eminence Metropolitan Christopher of Libertyville/Chicago and His Grace Bishop Maxim of the Western American diocese represented the Serbian Orthodox Church. (The other three Serbian hierarchs here did not attend this historic event because of prior commitments).

It needs to be said that the entire gathering was held in a spirit and atmosphere of brotherly love, in the joy of the Pentecost Feast Day: Greeks, Serbs, Romanians, Bulgarians, Russians, Syrians, Arabs, Americans, and Latin Americans, all together spoke with one mouth and one heart. Discussions about various questions and problems of the "diaspora" went on in a spirit of understanding, while Archbishop Demetrios wisely and capably led the gathering.

One of the topics which was repeated many times as a refrain during this three-day Assembly was the will and the wish of all participants "for the swift healing of all canonical anomalies which resulted from historical circumstances and pastoral necessity."

Along with this the participants emphatically called to mind the contributions of the Primate and representatives of the Orthodox autocephalous Churches gathered at the Ecumenical Patriarchate from October 10 to 12, 2008 to confirm their "unswerving position and obligation to safeguard the unity of the Orthodox Church" (Chambésy Rules of Operation, Article 5.1a). A slightly different view was presented by Antiochian Metropolitan Philip, who questioned the necessity of jurisdictional connections with autocephalous Churches which are, as he stated, over seven thousand miles away and do not have any ties with the "new world". This was an isolated opinion. If there was an opinion that it is only necessary to follow the Primate of the autocephalous churches, or so called "Mother Churches", in spirit rather than in letter, Archbishop Demetrios gave a witty answer: "This would test the distinct American sentiment for independence and democracy." Through this exchange of opinions the participants came to the conclusion that the relatively "young" American Orthodoxy has a need for guidance and help from the "mother Churches" of the Old World, Middle East, Bosphorus and Balkan. There is the need for both dependence and a certain independence in making decisions.

During this gathering, and in conformity with the rules for regional Episcopal Assemblies brought forth during the Fourth Pan-Orthodox pre-conciliar conference, the following were established: A registry of canonical bishops (Article 6.1); a committee to decide the canonical status of local communities in a region which cannot be connected with (have no reference to) any of the Holy autocephalous Churches (Article 6.2); a registry of canonical clergy (Article 6.3); committees that will take on the work of the Assembly in addressing liturgical, pastoral, financial, educational, ecumenical and legal questions (Articles 11 and 12); a committee to plan the organization of the Orthodox in this region on a canonical basis (Article 5.1). In addition to the above, it was agreed upon that the Assembly establish and maintain a directory of all canonical congregations in our region.



A decision was also reached regarding the question of SCOBA. This Episcopal Assembly understands itself as the heir of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), and it has taken over all SCOBA agencies, dialogues and other services. Interestingly, the question of the OCA (the Orthodox Church in America, formerly the Russian Metropolia) was not discussed, but it has become clear that its “autocephaly” (given by a unilateral decree of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1970) is understood only as autonomy. Even though the OCA’s autocephaly is not recognized by most Orthodox local Churches (including the Serbian Patriarchate), the fact is that her hierarchs at the Assembly enjoyed the same rights and honor as others. The order of seating at the Assembly followed the Diptychs (the established order of precedence of the ancient and newer Patriarchates and autocephalous Churches), so that the bishops of the OCA came after the Serbian and Romanian delegations (a representative of Georgian church was not present at this gathering).

Upon formal petition of the Hierarchs who have jurisdiction in Canada, the Assembly will send to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in accordance with the rules of procedure (Article 13), a petition that the current region of North and Central America be divided into two separate regions, of the United States and of Canada. In addition, upon petition of the Hierarchs who have jurisdiction in Mexico and Central America, the Assembly will similarly recommend that Mexico and Central America join the regional Assembly for South America. For example, Serbian Bishop Mitrophan, who has jurisdiction in both those regions, would become a member of both those Episcopal Assemblies. Canadian Bishop Georgije, on the other hand, will be a member of the Canadian Episcopal Assembly, given that he has no jurisdiction outside Canada.

In open discussions, one could hear opinions on various questions of importance for Orthodoxy: questions of liturgical practice, pastoral challenges, financial aspects, the future of educational schools and programs, ecumenical dialogues, as well as some other legal issues.

It was clearly established that the Episcopal Assembly does not have jurisdictional power; rather it is of a *consultative* character, although in some questions it naturally has authority (as in establishing and maintaining the previously mentioned registries of canonical bishops, clergy and parishes).



His Eminence Job, Greek Metropolitan of Chicago, strongly emphasized that we Orthodox have a gift of dogmatic and liturgical unity that we already share, and that incidental differences: (customs, liturgical practices, language and similar things) need to be secondary. The fact that this assembly-conference, as every church assembly from apostolic times to this day, has its own controversial points need not discourage us; on the contrary, it should inspire participation and motivation. The use of the English language in services was also discussed, especially the focused on the variations in usage of the personal pronoun when directly referring to God.

The question of the boundaries and limits of participation in theological dialogue with heterodox and non-Christians was raised, and in the discussion which followed the answer was crystallized: the Orthodox Church, not being afraid of dialogue because it has Truth, enters into such discussions with the deepest conviction that faithfulness to her Orthodox Tradition and active ecumenical engagement are not incompatible with each other, but rather one demands the other.

The Serbian Orthodox Church views this regional Episcopal Assembly as something positive, as is reflected in the Communiqué from the regular Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church held in Belgrade from April 26 to May 5, 2010:

“The Assembly of Bishops heard and approved the following reports regarding the life of the Church over the past year period since last year’s meeting: ... on the decisions of the Fourth pan-Orthodox Pre-conciliar conference in Chambésy near Geneva in June 2009 on the theme of a more efficient and organized mission, witness and cooperation of the local Orthodox Churches in the Diaspora and on the stand of the pan-Orthodox preparatory commission for the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, held in December of last year also in Chambésy, on the manner of proclaiming church autocephaly and autonomy. In this context, the Assembly especially analyzed the status and problems of the life of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Diaspora and made appropriate decisions.”

Moreover, on the eve of the convening of this *First Episcopal Conference of Orthodox Churches in North America*, in the spirit of Pentecost, His Holiness Serbian Patriarch Irinej sent the Serbian hierarchs in North

America his Patriarchal greeting for its successful work and for rich spiritual fruits of the descent of the Holy Spirit the Comforter to come upon all Orthodox in North America, calling them to take a part in this new Pentecostal work of historical significance. In the humble opinion of the author of this article, this conference is an excellent opportunity to clearly define a vision and establish a platform for the future of the Diaspora on a healthy theological and ecclesiastical foundation.

Here it is worthwhile to remember the visionary Saint Nicholai of Zicha and Ochrid, one of the first Serbian Orthodox laborers on the American continent. The most eloquent example of Nicholai's openness and pan-Orthodoxy is his readiness to view the Serbian Orthodox Church in America in the context of the ancient orthodox canonical tradition and the wider, contemporary Orthodox context, as most eloquently witnessed by his words: "*When, by God's providence, the time comes for the realization of unity, it will be a joy for many. Undoubtedly, the primates and hierarchs of all of our Orthodox Churches, in Europe, Asia, Africa, guided by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, will show love and understanding, and give their consent and blessing for the establishment of one new sister church in America*" (Bishop Nicholai, Collected Works XIII, page 565-572, Serbian text page 573-579).

The appearing of Episcopal Assemblies throughout the world (these gatherings have already started work in Europe) should not be understood pretentiously, nor should they be presented one-sidedly, but rather it is necessary to take into consideration the reality and need for ecclesiastical unity on a pan-Orthodox level in its totality. A correct interpretation of this ecclesiological and theologically important attempt from Chambésy to accomplish a fuller unity, cooperation and catholicity (sabornost) on the territory of the diaspora only contributes to a stronger position of the Serbian Orthodox Church and to the avoidance of her marginalization in her future ecclesiological formation on the American continent. With this, above all, we must be mindful of the *pan-Orthodox consensus* expressed in Chambésy.

Participation in the Episcopal Assembly is equally faithfulness to the Pneumatological catholic (saborna) institution of the Holy Spirit who "gathers all into the bosom of the Church" (hymn for Vespers on Pentecost). In this way we show faithfulness to the Apostolic Orthodox Faith, which obliges us to contribute "to this common work of addressing the pastoral needs of the Orthodox who live in our region." By working together through this forum our Serbian Church also has the opportunity to witness to its specific and particular place in the Orthodox family of America.

Regarding the equal dignity and particular gifts which each nation brings the Church, Archbishop Demetrios wisely said: "In Pentecost, we celebrate the call to unity for all human beings through faith and obedience to the *one* Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time, however, in Pentecost, we celebrate the refreshing reality of the *diversity*, wonderfully manifested in the extraordinary fact of the proclamation of the one Gospel in many languages as a result of the advent of the Holy Spirit." Alluding to the reality of Orthodoxy in America, he added:

"As we behold the event of Pentecost, we observe that the multiplicity of languages used by the Holy Apostle in proclaiming the single Gospel is not a cause of confusion or conflict, but a reason for thanksgiving and celebration. The one Gospel does not obliterate linguistic, ethnic, or cultural differences and particularities. The Gospel is clearly a call to unity, but as our history of 2000 years demonstrates, it does not cause an eclipse of the diversity within the Church. And this speaks directly to our case today".

The hierarchs have called the clergy and faithful to join them in these efforts "to safeguard and contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church in this region and her theological, ecclesiological, canonical, spiritual, philanthropic, educational and missionary responsibility."

The Assembly concluded its work by serving the Divine Liturgy on Friday, May 28, 2010 in the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York. During Liturgy prayers were offered for the eleven reposed victims of the ecological accident in the Gulf of Mexico, for the consolation of their families, and for all those who are afflicted by this catastrophe.

Maxim
Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Western America



Message of the Episcopal Assembly of the Canonical Orthodox Hierarchs of North and Central America May 26-28, 2010

We glorify the name of the Triune God for gathering us at this first Episcopal Assembly of this region in New York City on May 26-28, 2010 in response to the decisions of the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference held at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Switzerland, from June 6-12, 2009, at the invitation of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

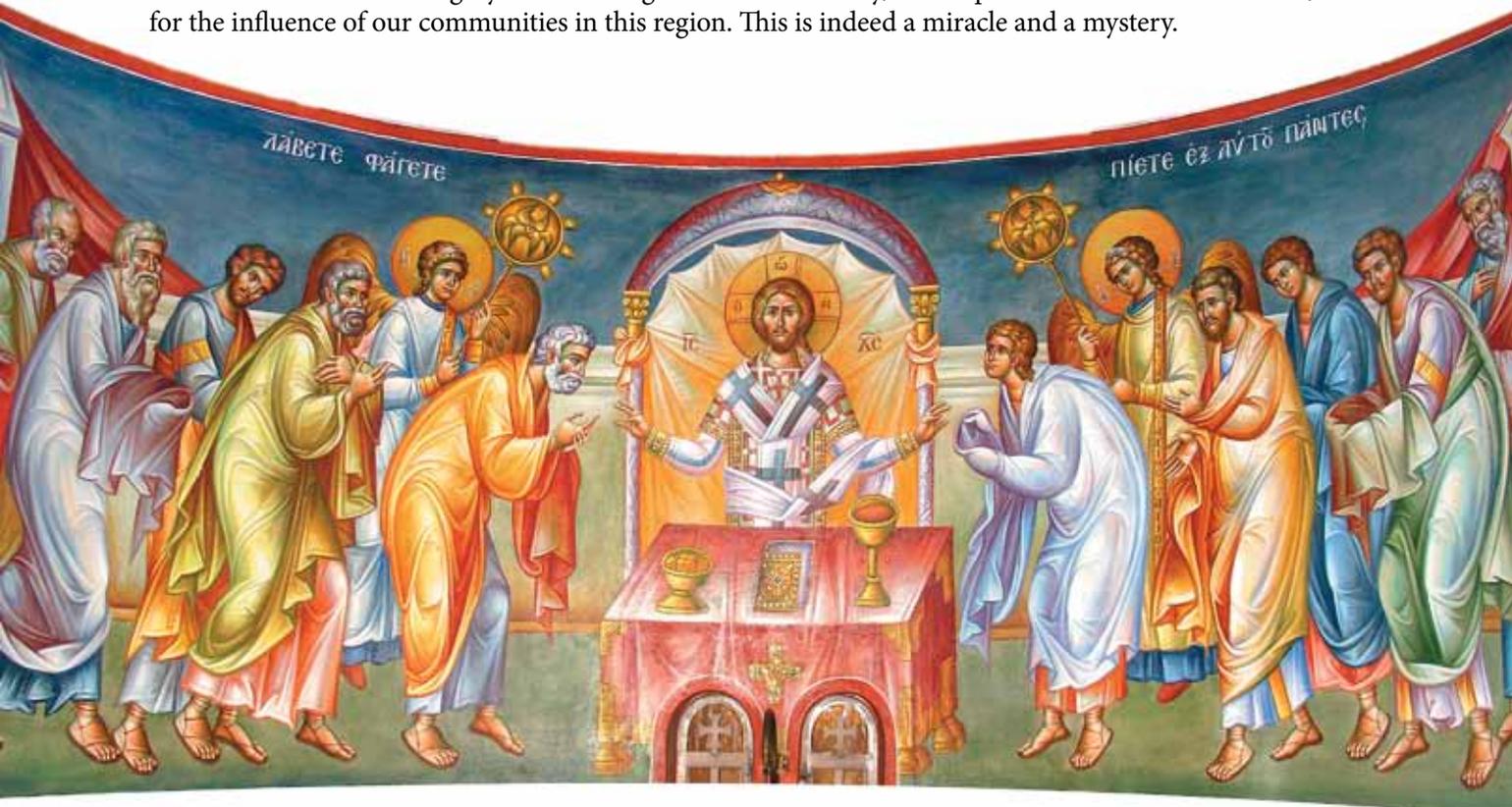
Gathered together in the joy of the Feast of Pentecost, we humbly recognize our calling, in our unworthiness, to serve as instruments and disciples of the Paraclete, who “holds together the whole institution of the Church” (Hymn of Vespers of Pentecost).

We honor and express gratitude to the Primate and Representatives of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches who assembled at the Ecumenical Patriarchate from October 10-12, 2008 to affirm their “unswerving position and obligation to safeguard the unity of the Orthodox Church” (Chambésy Rules of Operation, Article 5.1a) and emphasized their will and “desire for the swift healing of every canonical anomaly that has arisen from historical circumstances and pastoral requirements” (Message of the Primate 13.1-2)

We call to mind those who envisioned this unity in this region and strove to transcend the canonical irregularities resulting for many reasons, including geographically overlapping jurisdictions. For, just as the Lord in the Divine Eucharist is “broken and distributed, but not divided” (Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom), so also His Body comprises many members, while constituting His One Church.

We are grateful for the gift of the doctrinal and liturgical unity that we already share, and we are inspired by our leaders, the Heads of all the Orthodox Churches throughout the world, who proposed that which we painfully yearn for in this region, i.e., the “swift healing of every canonical anomaly” (Message of the Primate 13.2). We are also grateful that they established a fundamental process toward a canonical direction and resolution.

We are thankful to almighty God for the growth of Orthodoxy, for the preservation of our traditions, and for the influence of our communities in this region. This is indeed a miracle and a mystery.



During our gathering, and in accordance with the rules of operation of Episcopal Assemblies promulgated by the Fourth Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conference, we established:

1. A registry of canonical bishops (Article 6.1)
2. A committee to determine the canonical status of local communities in the region that have no reference to the Most Holy Autocephalous Churches (Article 6.2)
3. A registry of canonical clergy (Article 6.3)
4. Committees to undertake the work of the Assembly, among others including liturgical, pastoral, financial, educational, ecumenical, and legal issues (Articles 11 and 12)
5. A committee to plan for the organization of the Orthodox of the region on a canonical basis (Article 5.1).

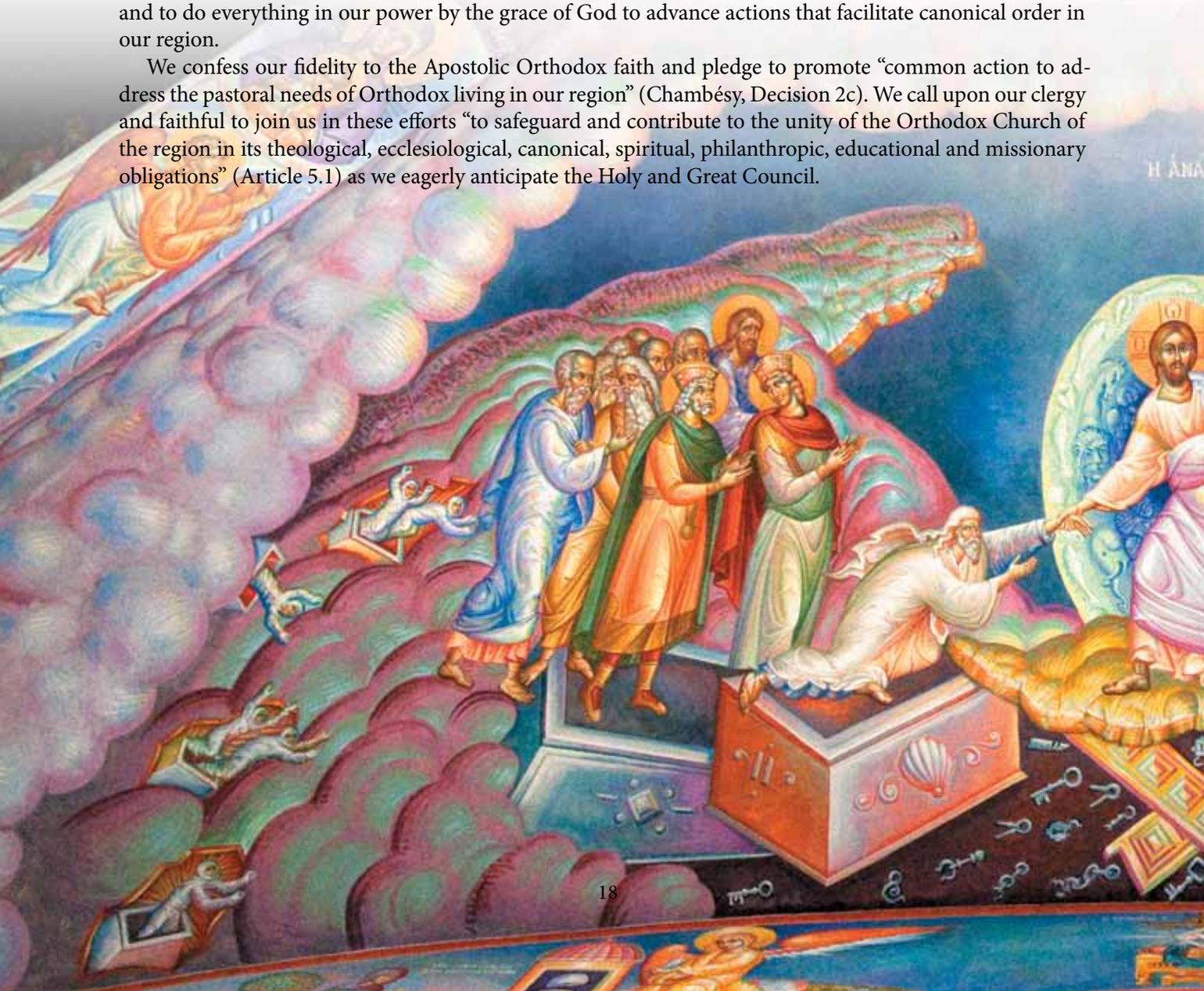
In addition to the above, we agreed that a directory would be created and maintained by the Assembly of all canonical congregations in our region.

We as Episcopal Assembly understand ourselves as being the successors of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), assuming its agencies, dialogues, and other ministries.

Moreover, at the formal request of the Hierarchs who have jurisdiction in Canada, the Assembly will submit to the Ecumenical Patriarch, in accordance with the rules of operation (Article 13), a request to partition the present region of North and Central America into two distinct regions of the United States and Canada. Additionally, at the request of the Hierarchs who have jurisdiction in Mexico and Central America, the Assembly will likewise request to merge Mexico and Central America with the Assembly of South America.

As Orthodox Hierarchs in this blessed region, we express our resolve to adhere to and adopt the regulations proposed by the Pan-Orthodox Conferences and approved by the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, and to do everything in our power by the grace of God to advance actions that facilitate canonical order in our region.

We confess our fidelity to the Apostolic Orthodox faith and pledge to promote “common action to address the pastoral needs of Orthodox living in our region” (Chambésy, Decision 2c). We call upon our clergy and faithful to join us in these efforts “to safeguard and contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church of the region in its theological, ecclesiological, canonical, spiritual, philanthropic, educational and missionary obligations” (Article 5.1) as we eagerly anticipate the Holy and Great Council.



The Assembly concluded with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Friday, May 28, 2010 at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral in New York City. During the Liturgy prayers were offered for the repose of the eleven victims of the current ecological disaster in the Gulf Coast, for the consolation of their families, for all those adversely affected by this catastrophe, as well as for all people living under conditions of war, persecution, violence, and oppression.

Of the sixty-six Hierarchs in the region, the following 55 were present at this Assembly:

Archbishop Demetrios,
Chairman
Metropolitan Philip,
Vice Chairman
Archbishop Justinian,
Vice Chairman
Bishop Basil,
Secretary
Archbishop Antony,
Treasurer
Metropolitan Iakovos
Metropolitan Constantine
Metropolitan Athenagoras
Metropolitan Methodios
Metropolitan Isaiah
Metropolitan Nicholas
Metropolitan Alexios
Metropolitan Nikitas
Metropolitan Nicholas
Metropolitan Gerasimos

Metropolitan Evangelos
Metropolitan Paisios
Archbishop Yurij
Bishop Christopher
Bishop Vikentios
Bishop Savas
Bishop Andonios
Bishop Ilia
Bishop Ilarion
Bishop Andriy
Bishop Demetrios
Bishop Daniel
Bishop Antoun
Bishop Joseph
Bishop Thomas
Bishop Mark
Bishop Alexander
Metropolitan Hilarion
Bishop Iov
Bishop Gabriel

Bishop Peter
Bishop Theodosius
Bishop George
Bishop Ieronim
Metropolitan Christopher
Bishop Maxim
Archbishop Nicolae
Bishop Ioan Casian
Metropolitan Joseph
Metropolitan Jonah
Archbishop Nathaniel
Archbishop Seraphim
Bishop Nikon
Bishop Tikhon
Bishop Benjamin
Bishop Melchisedek
Bishop Alejo
Bishop Irineu
Bishop Irinee
Bishop Michael



Tuesday, May 4, 2010

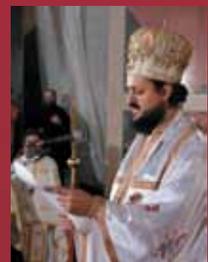
Canonization of the Two Newly Proclaimed Saints of the Church Venerable Justin of Ćelije and Symeon of Dajbabe



The formal glorification of the newly canonized Saints was completed at the Holy Hierarchical Liturgy on Sunday, May 2, 2010 at the St. Sava Temple on Vracar. The Holy Hierarchical Liturgy was officiated by His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia with the con-celebration of the Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church. “These two are our joy before the Lord, the joy of our Church and the Universal Church,” said His Eminence Metropolitan Amphilohije of Montenegro and the Coastlands in his homily.

“In the year 1937 the venerable Fr. Justin, then professor at the University, met with the elder Symeon in his catacomb, at the Monastery he, with God’s inspiration, revealed and built. He met with him and wrote: Is it possible that in our country exist such light and such a lighthouse? He wrote concerning him that he is the conscience of Montenegro. He felt before him the scent of Christ. And Fr. Justin wrote that he was caressed by the love of the elder’s humble person, consecrated by the Holy Spirit. The two Saints of God met and recognized each other, vessels of God’s grace. Fr. Justin who, just as we sing to him, had the God-man as a measure of all things and the elder Symeon, who also wrote that a pure heart sees God and that the Holy Spirit is He who sanctifies the Universe and everything and all. It was a time of crucifixion of the Church of Christ and a time when the Venerable Symeon of Dajbabe lived and a time that the Venerable Fr. Justin of Celije lived. Their names are inscribed in the Book of Life. Numbered among the Saints bless this holy church, and all of us, the people of St. Sava, all people and all nations. Through their prayers, Lord Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit, enliven us, sanctify and confirm in all our days of our life and unto the ages of ages.”

The Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church at its session on April 29th 2010 proclaimed two new saints of the Serbian Orthodox Church: the Venerable Justin of Ćelije and Symeon of Dajbabe. Venerable Justin will be venerate on June 1st/14th, and Venerable Symeon on March 19th/April 1st.



Annual Assembly of the God-Protected Western American Diocese held in Las Vegas, January 28-29, 2010

The clergy, monastics and the lay delegates of the Western American Diocese gathered this year in Las Vegas, Nevada, began their meetings on Thursday, January 28, with the clergy and the Circle of Serbian Sisters conference.

The guest speaker for the two day gathering was professor and dean of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, V. Rev. Dr. Thomas FitzGerald. Fr. Thomas was accompanied by his wife, Dr. Kyriaki FitzGerald, who co-authored the book, **Happy in the Lord: The Beatitudes for Everyday**, that serves as an introduction to Orthodox spirituality.

His first talk addressed the topic 'Healing the wounds of the heart'. Fr. Thomas outlined the pastoral approach to the healing ministry in the parish context. "Pastors are bearers of God's mercy and love", he said, and while priests minister to the faithful using their talents and the pastoral training they received, it is nonetheless, necessary to recognize their limitations and allow the Lord to complete all shortcomings.

The first day of gathering was concluded with Vespers service and the Diocesan Council meeting.

Friday morning started with the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, followed by the Invocation of the Holy Spirit and the archpastoral greeting of His Grace Bishop Maxim. He wished a warm welcome to all the participants thanking them for their love and dedication to God's ministry in the western diocese. Among his many inspiring greeting points we cite the following two:

"The year 2009 was a period marked with signs of unity and receiving. The pinnacle was the administrative reunification and redistribution of our Church in North and South America. Since our Fresno Resolution in 2007 to Bishop of the New Gracanica Metropolitanate and the Holy Assembly in Belgrade it took some two years to see our efforts bearing fruits. Thanking you all for patience I would like to ask this Assembly to join me in a warm welcome of the honorable delegates from Phoenix, Oakland, Arcadia, Saratoga & San Francisco, i.e. those five parishes that embraced us and we embraced them with the brotherly love and in doing so we continue witnessing the Gospel with our actions and words."

The year of our Lord 2009 "...was a year of the repose of our beloved patriarch Pavle, a great man of commitment, peace and justice. The ecclesiastical ethos that he cultivated in his proximity has deeply influenced so many people and thus became a lifestyle and point of reference as moral, ecclesial, and human paradigm. Through his personal example we are encouraged to face a permanent challenge: how to remain faithful to the unchangeable nature of the Church and to make an impact on the cultural environment in which we live. With





a dose of self-criticism, we must admit that we forget this indispensable mission; we tend to be an ethnocentric parish with very modest goals of preserving our folklore and ethnic identity, without paying attention to the cosmic and ecumenical perspective of Christ's Church in the world. Most of our parishes lack the missionary vision and so they deprive themselves of a greater progress in faith in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit and sacramental-eucharistic and repentant (metanoia) growth towards Fulfillment."

Fr. Thomas gave a second talk 'Ambassadors of Christ: The Witness of the Saints and Our Witness Today'. This talk, as the one given the previous day, stimulated everyone's participation and a fresh look at the ministry. "Christ is the light of the world and he calls us to be the light by sharing in his ministry. God chose us to accomplish his ministry in this world; he chose his people." We can be God's ambassadors if our heart is in the right place. Our hearts need to be permeated with the Gospel and Jesus Christ needs to be the foundation of our ministry, Fr. Thomas reiterated in his talk.

The participants spent the afternoon reviewing the ministries of our diocesan departments. They also outlined diocesan activities for the year of our Lord, 2010. During meals and breaks, the delegates continued to exchange their ministry experience and knowledge giving thanks to God for bringing them together at St. Simeon the Myrrhghuser parish. Prayers and heartfelt words of encouragement were offered by all to the hosting parish which is in the process of building the temple for the glory of God.

The host for next year annual assembly will be St. John the Baptist parish in San Francisco, California.

May the Lord bless the work of the western diocese and of all those who labor therein. Glory be to God for all things!



2010 Annual Assembly – Clergy Seminar Fr. Thomas FitzGerald, ThD.

Healing the Wounds of the Heart: Insights from St. Gregory the Theologian

On Thursday, January 28, 2010, the Western Diocese clergy luncheon and seminar took place one day before the opening of the Annual Assembly. The guest speaker was Fr. Thomas FitzGerald, ThD., Dean of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA, and Professor of Church History & Historical Theology. Fr. Thomas is the author of several articles and books including: *The Orthodox Church* (Greenwood, 1995), *The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Christian Unity* (Holy Cross Press, 1997, 2009), *The Ecumenical Movement* (Praeger, 2004).

Fr. Thomas touched on an area that parish priests always have to deal with regarding their flock but that isn't necessarily made easier over time: providing comfort during times of spiritual and emotional duress. Fr. Thomas' presentation was not only for the clergy to use for the benefit of those in the parishes but also for the clergy in attendance to use as a kind of 'self-medication,' an offering of encouragement when they meet difficult times in their ministries.

The resource for this particular presentation was Saint Gregory Nazianzen (d. 391), good friend of Saint Basil the Great. Saint Gregory composed over forty orations and many of his personal letters have also been translated, allowing the faithful throughout the centuries to be edified by the thoughts of the Saint who was designated by the Ecumenical Council at Ephesus (431) as "The Great," and is universally known as "The Theologian," a title shared only with the Apostle and Evangelist John.



When Saint Gregory of Nyssa grew tired of seeking his vocation in the Church and instead became a professor of rhetoric, family and friends grieved over his decision. Saint Gregory the Theologian wrote him a letter of remonstrance that included the following: “Since all are friends and kinsfolk who live according to God, and walk by the same Gospel, why should you not hear from me in plain words what all men are saying in whispers?... For what has happened to you, O wisest of men, and for what do you condemn yourself, that you have cast away the sacred and delightful books... and preferred to be called a professor of rhetoric rather than of Christianity?... Forgive me that my friendship for you makes me grieve and kindles me both on your behalf and on behalf of the whole priestly order, and I may add on that of all Christians.” Not long after receiving this letter, Gregory of Nyssa retired to his brother Basil’s monastery and continued his study of Holy Scripture and available commentaries.

On another occasion, the ardent Arian Emperor Valens took measures to destroy the true Nicene Faith and as part of the strategy deposed Gregory as Bishop of Nyssa. His friend Gregory the Theologian wrote thus: “Do not let your troubles distress you too much. For the less we grieve over things, the less grievous they are... [The heretics] will hide themselves again, overcome both by the truth and the times, and all the more so the more we commit the whole matter to God.”

In a third example of correspondence with Saint Basil’s brother Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory the Theologian sent condolences on the passing of the former’s wife, Theosebia. He offered in closing: “And do not wonder that I often invoke her name. For I rejoice even in the remembrance of the blessed one. Let this, a great deal in few words, be her epitaph from me, and my word of condolence for you, though you yourself are quite able to console others in this way through your philosophy in all things.”

In these examples, and in all his writings and teachings, Saint Gregory the Theologian offers healing for the heart and soul, for priest and parishioner alike, based on this understanding from one of his Easter orations: “Let us offer ourselves, the possession most precious to God, and most fitting; let us give back to the Image what is made after the Image. Let us recognize our Dignity; let us honor our Archetype; let us know the power of the Mystery, and for what Christ died.”



The Icon and the Kingdom of God

We live in times awash with man-made images, in a postmodern epoch where each person struggles to produce the most convincing image of himself and his idea, where people try to attract the most people they can through their self image in order to impress and to impose their “icon” or, better yet, their “idol,” on others (as St Andrew says : “αὐτείδωλον ἐγενόμην”, “I have become an idol to myself”; Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Ode IV). It is an era that offers falsehood, delusion, and fantasy without transcending the antinomies and limitations of history.

Your Eminence, Your Graces, beloved brothers in the Holy Spirit and co-celebrant of our Modesty, and dear pious assembly of the fullness of the Church, the living icons of God.

We live in such times; yet, this moment in time – The Sunday of Orthodoxy, the feast of the Icon – proposes an alternative image: one Divinely-revealed rather than human-made, one that is convicting rather than convincing, one that is iconic rather than idolatrous – the Icon of God.

This Icon represents humanity having received the opportunity to circumscribe and depict the Transcendent God, which only became possible once God became man, expressing his Divinity in human form, bringing the Kingdom of God into the Divine Liturgy, and demonstrating the reality of the Resurrection by asking one of His disciples to verify what he saw by touching Christ’s hands, feet, and side (Jn 20:26). Similarly, the language of the Fathers about Icons, especially that of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, has to do with both seeing and beholding the vision of God. But this language introduces significant questions: What is the real image of God? What is the real image of man? What is the real image of this world? Does the Icon depict a Platonic ideal? Or does it represent Greco-Roman art? Or does the iconic image capture the corrupted world of Pieter Brueghel or Salvador Dali? Maybe, we Christians present an image that itself can obscure the image of the Kingdom? Do we not, instead of iconizing the transfigured world of Paradise, most often represent the mere fallen world? This problem faces us in our present-day Church and it is necessary to ask ourselves: does our image of the world and the Church overshadow the true image of the Kingdom?

What is the difference between the Icon and the image, between the Divine Image and the image of this world? The two are altogether different.

The first, and significant, difference is that the Icon is not naturalistic; it does not represent something ephemeral, but rather it represents both a Person and a personal relationship. One of the most significant points to emerge from the Seventh Ecumenical Council is that one Divine Person – the Son of God – became man, demonstrating that we cannot speak about God or imagine God without the Person who revealed God to us. An image that does not refer to the Person of Christ is an image that refers to the corrupted world and thus leads to death. The Icon is not of this world; it is eschatological both in origin and in content. Not being drawn from history, we can call the Icon meta-historical.



Nevertheless, the Kingdom can only be depicted by using created means. The Icon is distinct from the truth, not because it is false, delusional, or fantastic, but because it borrows its means of expression from still-corruptible nature.

Although its means of expression derive from fallen nature, the Icon refers to inexpressible Truth by encouraging our personal relations with Truth; a proper Icon creates true personal relationships. That is why an Icon is indivisibly linked with Love: we cannot speak about Truth without Love, and we cannot speak about an Icon that does not lead us to Love.

For Orthodox Christians, this means that the Icon leads us to the Church. There we will meet the other in his or her true state. As Fr. Justin Popovich used to say, “in the Church we are taught to see (iconically) in every man our future brother/sister [as he or she is in] Paradise.” There, in the Eucharistic synaxis, we will see and meet God through our communion with others. So, the Icon gathers (*synaxis*) the community we call the Church. The Icon, then, is not only an object that we kiss and venerate, but an eternal synaxis that exists in moments, movements, and actions during the Divine Liturgy. Outside the Church, there is not the Kingdom of God; inside the Church, all is iconic.

Here we understand the next characteristic of the Icon: it refers to another, not to itself, leading us, thereby, out of solipsism. It encourages us to go out and meet the other. The Icon is person-oriented! When we venerate an Icon of Christ or a Saint, we demonstrate our victory over individualism and show that we are not self-reliant. When the Icon traces this relationship between persons (God and man) and gathers the Church, then the Church becomes a real depiction of the Kingdom of God, leading us to the Divine Eucharist, which St Maximus the Confessor described as the image or Icon of the Kingdom. In the primitive phase of the ancient Church, the Icon was closely linked with the mystery of Eucharist. The Eucharist is the celebration that makes the earthly Church what it is, namely, an *Icon* of the Kingdom.

But, there is yet one more difference between the Icon and the image. The image « fixes » reality, as opposed to the Icon which does not fix it but liberates it from natural laws. We celebrate today the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical synod who gathered to testify that the Church could not exist without Icons, without iconizing the Person of God! When an image becomes an Icon, it no longer refers to itself anymore – to its ephemeral existence; rather, it refers beyond itself: to something beyond this corrupted world. When an image becomes an Icon, it redeems a person or landscape depicted in it and situates that person or landscape in relationship to the Kingdom. In the historical life of the Church, everything is an image of the future. The Icons which depict the Saints are not photographs of their historical faces, but the images of the future they portray.

This reality of the Icon’s relationship with the Kingdom of Heaven is why the Fathers of this Synod repeated what St Basil said in the fourth century: “*the honor paid to the Icon passes on to the prototype*”! Therefore, when we venerate an Icon, that relationship goes beyond the Icon and reaches the Original source of the image, which is a Person. That is why in the Church, the Word is an Icon and an Icon is the Word! And this is something that our Church experiences throughout the ages! In our Churches, the Kingdom of God is depicted and represented through Icons, through chanting, through harmonious architecture, through all manner of aesthetic endeavors that are part of our Liturgical expression. How did the Orthodox survive under the Ottoman rule without catechism or schools? Only through this Iconic approach to embodying Truth. The pious people spoke with God through Icons (iconographic depictions) and Hymns and not through human words or rational formulations; God, in turn, revealed Himself to His people through Icons and Hymns.

This, in the final analysis, means, dear brothers and sisters, that the Divine worship in its liturgical-iconic context has saved the Orthodox Church and not the verbal descriptions and rhetoric of the homilists... such as this present one.

There will be those who assert that an iconic image conveys the Platonic idea of a shadow empty of reality. But such a position makes it difficult to speak of the Church as an Icon without falling into the realm of the imaginative or unreal. The Iconic nature of the Orthodox Church does not imply a lack of reality, although it does imply a lack of objectified and autonomous reality. As Metropolitan John of Pergamon states, “by being iconic in her existence the Church is two things: (a) she is an image of something else that transcends her—hence, again, a *relational* entity; and (b) she is in her institutions and structure so *transparent* as to allow the eschatological realities to be reflected in them all the time. This can hardly be achieved outside the context of worship, for it is there that transcendence and transparency are experienced par excellence.”

My beloved, in this society permeated with the *illusions of multimedia*, where image-pollution of all sorts has blurred our vision, we are invited to promote the true Icon of the Kingdom, we are invited to liberate our everyday life from slavery to the natural world through this iconical ethos that our Tradition bequeaths to us; an *iconological* ethos that leads to an affirmation of the other, which leads very often to “silence” and to deference before the other, who we prefer over ourselves (“Honor one another above yourselves” – Rom. 12:10).

Unfortunately, my beloved, Orthodoxy in our times tends to become an ideology, wherein slogans and accusations of betraying the faith and tradition – understood ideologically – are hurled at one another. But, significantly enough, our Orthodox Church has chosen the commemoration of the Seventh Ecumenical Council to be *the* Sunday of Orthodoxy. As is well known, this Council dealt with the issue of Icons and did not put forth any propositional definition of the faith. In declaring, “*This is the faith of the Fathers; this is the faith which has sustained the oecumene,*” the Council pointed to a form of “theology,” the Icon, which was the liturgical experience of the community and required no subscription to conceptual or ideological statements.

This declaration of the Seventh Council ended the Christological debate of words by testifying to the *reality of the Mystery* in the Icon of the Crucified and Risen Lord. This Icon removes our forgetfulness of the eschatological Coming of the Risen One, the eschatological Newness of the Living One (Apoc. 21, 5; 1, 17). Now “we call Christ’s image ‘Christ’... The Icon of Christ is nothing other than Christ, *apart, of course, from the difference in essence*” (St. Theodore the Studite).

The identification of the selfsameness of Christ with His image leads to my final point: Orthodoxy *is* the Church and *not* an ideology! It is a gathering of the people and, particularly, a Eucharistic gathering of living icons. This is what we must emphasize today! Not an Internet-online-virtual *illusion* of communication, but the Icon as the visible and true communication of the Kingdom; such *must* be the future of Orthodoxy because such is the future Christ promises His Church. In the Eucharist, we are taught not only to venerate and greet icons, but also the other members of the synaxis, not passing the living icons – people – by, but greeting and embracing them. So, the Icon is indeed the right method of looking at the world... Only this iconic approach will save Orthodoxy from becoming a secular organization conforming to *the image of the world*.

May this, our commemoration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy today in Los Angeles, serve as a source of sanctification, strength, and hope for the Orthodox faithful.

Finally, from this Holy Ambon we extend our wholehearted well-wishes to the beloved Hierarchs, to the devout clergy, and to the entire flock of the Orthodox Church of America, and we pray that God may bless our efforts and good works, to the glory of our Father Who is in Heaven and the honor of our Church and all the living icons within.



Sunday of Orthodoxy

Pan-Orthodox Celebration Saint Steven's Cathedral, Alhambra, California

Sunday, February 21, 2010



The Sunday of Orthodoxy, the Church's triumph of the restoration of the holy icons, is by no means a new innovation, as our hierarchs repeated throughout the day. We celebrate the end of the heresy that was the destruction of visions into the Heavenly Kingdom, and the pious men and women who elevated and venerated them again in the eighth and ninth centuries and onward. In southern California, however, the Sunday of Orthodoxy has taken on an enhanced celebration in recent years: the gathering of

the faithful from the various jurisdictions and their fathers-in-Christ, the bishops, who lead them in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, who said, "The honor paid to the Icon passes on to the prototype." His Grace, Bishop MAXIM of the Serbian Orthodox Christian Diocese of Western America hosted this year's highly-anticipated event on February 21 at his home parish, St. Stephen Serbian Orthodox Christian Cathedral in Alhambra, California. Joining him were His Eminence, Metropolitan GERASIMOS of the Greek Orthodox Christian Metropolis of San Francisco; His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Diocese of Los Angeles and the West; His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN of the Orthodox Church in America's Diocese of the West; along with the southern California cathedral deans including the host, V. Rev. Nikola Ceko, and several priests, deacons, subdeacons and altar servers. Vladyka MAXIM, in his homily, posed the question to the hundreds in attendance: "Does the image of our world and the Church overshadow the true image of the Kingdom?" He reminded us that these images cannot, because the real Icon is not of this world and is "eschatological both in origin and in content." Vladyka stressed that any other image does not refer to the Person of Christ, and thus leads to corruption and death. As he continued, Vladyka MAXIM said that the real Icon leads us to the Church, where we will find the "Eucharistic Synaxis" – the gathering of the clergy and faithful to meet God through our Communion with Him and each other. "The Eucharist is the celebration that makes the earthly Church what it is, namely, an Icon of the Kingdom,"

His Grace said, encouraging us to look beyond "image pollution" that blurs our vision, promote the true Icon of the Kingdom, and affirm and embrace with love the living icons – ordinary people – that walk next to us as St. Paul instructs: "Honor one another above yourself" (Romans 12:10). Following the Divine Liturgy with the Procession of the Holy Icons, the hierarchs, clergy and laity gathered for lunch in the cathedral hall. Each of the hierarchs had the opportunity to offer words of wisdom. Dhespota GERASIMOS says he looks forward to this day every year, where we call upon the Holy Spirit to bless and guide our steps in such a grand event that he calls



“unique” to the American scene. “We are away from our ancestry, but this country gives us a special connection with each other to show the unity of the Faith,” Dhespota said. “We ask the Holy Spirit to lighten us and give us a life full of the Faith so that we can bring salvation to society.” His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH was also thankful that local Orthodox Christians can get together on the Sunday of Orthodoxy – now for the third straight year – and elaborated on the theme of Orthodox Christian unity. “We are the same body of Christ, expressed in many languages and traditions, but we are the same in sacraments and substance,” Sayidna said. “On this day, we can discover ourselves and discover our unity in the body of Christ. We want God to enable us so that we can be purified to do His will.” Vladyka BENJAMIN addressed the “living icons” by reminding them about their journey through Great Lent. “In this season, find great joy in the Lord Jesus,” he said. “Don’t just go through your spiritual rubbish bin to learn how bad you are. We must remember that God loves us – He died for us so that we can live in His Kingdom. Look for the deep spiritual joy and express it to the world that desperately needs it.” The clergy and faithful were then treated to a presentation from the classic patristic work “On the Holy Icons” by St. Theodore the Studite, accompanied by a slide show of icons from all over the world. Mr. Charles Ajalat, at the invitation of Vladyka MAXIM, gave a presentation on FOCUS North America and its charitable work for the poor of this continent. Miss Elly Pettygrove and students from Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) chapters from the University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles discussed their work to keep college students in tune with the Faith during years that are often tumultuous. She quoted from St. John Chrysostom’s *On Living Simply*: “To be a disciple of Christ is not a guarantee of always remaining on the path. Rather, it is a commitment – a promise – to stay as near the path as the will allows, and to struggle back onto the path after straying.” The four bishops then met with the college students assembled that day to discuss their struggles with identity at this time in their lives. Dhespota GERASIMOS empathized with this, and promised that the hierarchs would provide them all the materials and sustenance they need to stay close to the Church. Vladyka MAXIM said that includes community with each other and communion with God to getting past all the individual struggles, so that we can focus only on obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven. Sayidna JOSEPH added that patience and obedience to the Church and what is right are also essential, and that success does not come from within, but from God. Vladyka BENJAMIN reminded the college students to rebel against the belief that “life is easy” because that mentality reflects the death of American society, and to go “be Christ” to someone in need. The hierarchs agreed that these virtues and acts are what keep disappointment and depression at bay. With these inspiring words and a day filled with the unity of the Orthodox Christian faith of people from all backgrounds and walks of life, 2010’s celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy came to a close, leaving the hierarchs, clergy and laity with a sense of high anticipation to get together again next year.

By Subdeacon Peter Samore
SOURCE: Antiochian Diocese
of Los Angeles



Annual Lenten Clergy Retreat

In our Western American Diocese our clergy gathers together three to four times a year for continuing education and fellowship. For many years we have held a Lenten Retreat and clergy confession culminating with the spiritually uplifting celebration of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

This year the Lenten Clergy Retreat on March 2 and 3, was held at St. Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church in Saratoga, CA. This was the first opportunity for many of our diocese clergy to visit St. Michael's since the administrative reunification of our church in North America in 2009. A few of the parishioners even commented that this gathering of diocesan clergy was a joyous occasion for their parish community, since they had never had such a large number of Serbian Orthodox clergy visit their parish at one time.

The retreat began at 3:00 p.m. with Confession, which was followed by dinner and a presentation by Dr. John Klentos on the history and development of the Church's Lenten worship services. Dr. Klentos is an Associate Professor of Eastern Orthodox Christian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkley and at the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute. He spoke of the history of Lenten worship and the fasting disciplines before Pascha throughout various regions of the church that eventually led to the current 40 day Fast practiced throughout the Orthodox Church.

He concluded his presentation with comments and suggestions on making the services of Lent meaningful and accessible to parishioners. His presentation was followed by a lively discussion among the clergy and Dr. Klentos.

The following day the Presanctified Liturgy was held at 9:00 a.m. concluding with a homily given by Father George Gligich on the scriptural understanding of repentance. The clergy then gathered for breakfast and concluding remarks by Bishop Maxim. His Grace thanked Father Slobodan Jović and the parishioners of St. Michael's for their gracious hospitality and generosity, which they extended to the diocesan clergy.



The Ministry of the Circle of Serbian Sisters of the Western American Diocese



The Diocesan Kolo Sestara was established on December 6, 1986. Through the hard work and efforts of the sisters, the organization has flourished to the present day.

Some of the principle goals of the Diocesan Kolo Srpskih Sestara include the following:

- To volunteer its efforts for the glory of God, for the Holy Serbian Orthodox Church, for the benefit of the people, and ultimately for the salvation of its members.
- To spread the faith and create awareness amongst the church parishes and members of the SOC in the Western American Diocese.
- In keeping with the example set by the Myrrhbearing Women, to spread the word of Orthodoxy and to care for the sick, the suffering, and the poor.
- As sisters and mothers, to nurture our children (by bringing them up in the Orthodox faith and Tradition) and to contribute to the Diocesan Summer Camp.
- To develop and advance friendships and understanding among local parish Kolos, as well as with members of the Diocesan Kolo, Executive Board Members, and the Diocesan Bishop under whose administration the Kolo exists.



- To organize special events and other Diocesan related activities for the Bishop, including the social commitments of the Diocese as requested by the Bishop, i.e., luncheons, holidays, receptions, etc.
- To work diligently for the accomplishments set forth as our mission.

It is our hope that our love of God, combined with hard work and unity in accomplishing the ministry of the Circle of the Serbian Sisters of the Western American Diocese, will strengthen our faith on our path to salvation. Who amongst us, at the dread judgment seat of Christ, would not want to hear those most cherished words from our Lord: "Well done, my good and faithful servant!"

*We thank His Grace
Bishop Maxim
for his guidance and prayers,
as a shepherd
of our God-saving Diocese!*

The Ordinations of Hierodeacons Andrew and Paisius



By the mercy of God, in 2010 His Grace Bishop Maxim ordained to the holy diaconate Monk Andrew (Wermuth) of St. Michael's Skete, Spruce, Island, Alaska, and Monk Paisius (Bjerke) of the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery, Platina, California.

Hierodeacon Andrew was born in October 1969 and grew up in rural hills of northern California. He discovered the Orthodox Church at Byzantium Bookstore next to the Holy Virgin Cathedral in San Francisco, where lay the incorrupt relics of St. John of Shanghai. After spending close to a year in the St. Herman Monastery in Platina, he was baptized on Holy Saturday in 1994. In January 1995, he was clothed as a novice in Platina and shortly thereafter sent to St. Michael's Skete in Alaska, where he has since been based. On the Feast of the Transfiguration in 2004 he was tonsured into the small schema by Abbot Gerasim on Spruce Island.

In the fall of 2007, monk Andrew began a course of theological study at St. Tikhon's Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. On February 28, 2010, the Second Sunday of Great Lent (Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas), Monk Andrew was ordained to the diaconate by His Grace Bishop Maxim at St. Andrew's Church in Redding, California. Taking part in the service were Abbot Hi-

larion, Priest Michael Boyle, and Deacon Phillip Mayer.

Hierodeacon Andrew graduated the St. Tikhon's Seminary Master of Divinity program with distinction on May 29, 2010. His Master's thesis was entitled Foundational American Values and Orthodox Christianity.

Hierodeacon Paisius was born in June 1951 and grew up in Powell, Wyoming. After two years of college in Wyoming, in 1971 he entered a non-denominational Christian brotherhood, which was later received into the Orthodox Church. Br. Christopher, as he was then known, entered the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery as a novice on in February 1988. He was tonsured into the riassa in November of that same year, on the feast of St. Paisius Velichkovsky, after whom he was named. In March 1992 he was tonsured into the



small schema. For many years he has served as the secretary of the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood.

On March 20, 2010, Akathist Saturday, Monk Paisius was ordained to the holy diaconate by His Grace Bishop Maxim at St. Sava Church in Jackson, California, where the relics of Archimandrite Sebastian Dabovic are treasured. The concelebrants were Protopresbyter Stavrophore Lazar Vasiljevic, Protopresbyter Thomas Fitzgerald, Protopresbyter Dane Popovic, Hieromonk Damascene, Priest Nectarios Rozadilla, Priest Stevan Tumbas, Priest William Weir, Priest George Elliot, and Deacon Triva Pavlov.

May our merciful Lord prosper the ministries of these two new servers at His holy altar!



First Ever Pan-Orthodox Clergy Retreat in the West

In April of 2007, His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH invited His Eminence, Metropolitan GERASIMOS, His Grace, Bishop MAXIM and His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN for the First Ever Meeting of the Canonical Hierarchs on the West Coast. During that meeting, the Hierarchs had a vision of gathering the clergy from the different jurisdictions in a retreat to get to know each other and work toward bringing unity among the Orthodox Christians in the West.

During the week of December 1-3, 2009, that vision was realized when more than 100 priests and deacons from various jurisdictions gathered together with the Canonical Bishops in the West for the First Ever Pan-Orthodox Clergy Retreat in West at St. Nicholas Ranch in Dunlap, California.

The theme for the week was “The Parish Priest as a Spiritual Father,” and the Hierarchs and Clergy listened to three excellent sessions by the Retreat Master, His Grace, Bishop ILIA of the Albanian Diocese of America. Having once been a married priest, His Grace shared with the clergy a unique perspective of one who has done the ministry both as a married priest and then as a celibate priest and bishop. His talks provided the clergy with many topics to discuss in their small groups which were each led by one of the hierarchs.

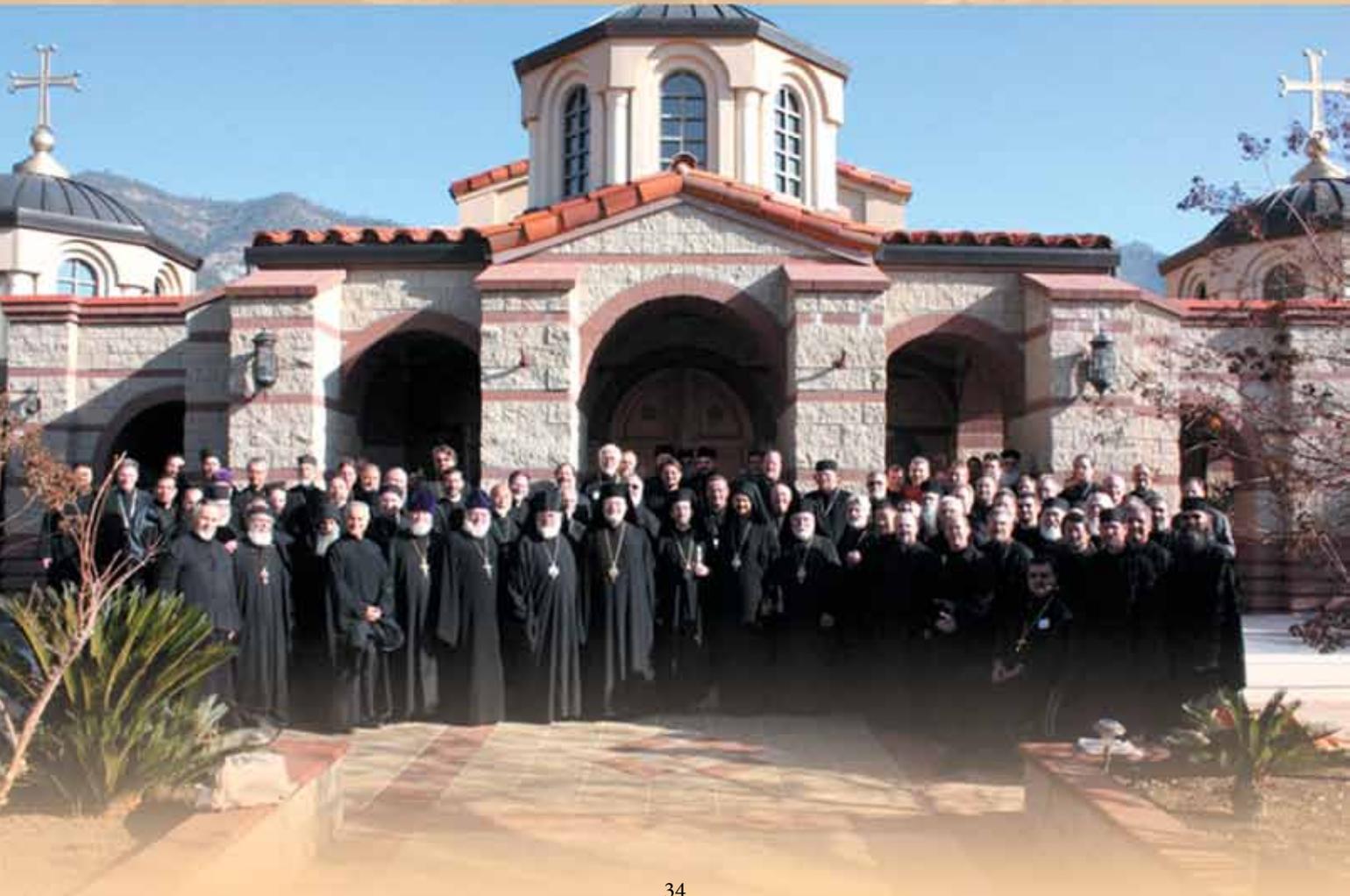




The clergy attended and served the services at the Holy Monastery of the Theotokos, Life-Giving Spring, just a short walk from the Ranch. On Tuesday evening, His Eminence, Metropolitan GERASIMOS presided over Vespers which was celebrated by a priest of the Greek Archdiocese and sung by the nuns of the Monastery. On Wednesday morning, His Grace, Bishop MAXIM, assisted by the Southern California Cathedral Deans, celebrated the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the hierarchs all celebrated a Trisagion Service for His Holiness, Patriarch PAVLE of thrice-blessed memory, who fell asleep in the Lord on November 15, 2009. On Wednesday evening, His Grace, Bishop

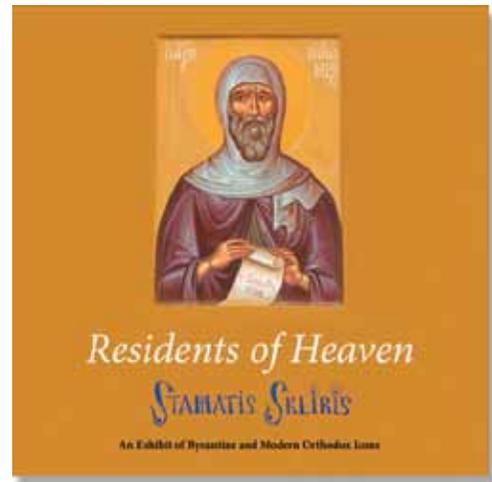
JOSEPH presided over Vespers which was celebrated by a priest and sung by clergy from the Antiochian Archdiocese. On Thursday morning, His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN presided over Orthros which was celebrated by a priest and sung by clergy from the Orthodox Church in America.

During the closing remarks, many of the clergy expressed their appreciation to the hierarchs for their vision, leadership and for making this retreat possible. The clergy expressed their desire that this retreat not be a historical event because it happened only once, but that it be historic in that it will be the first of many such retreats!

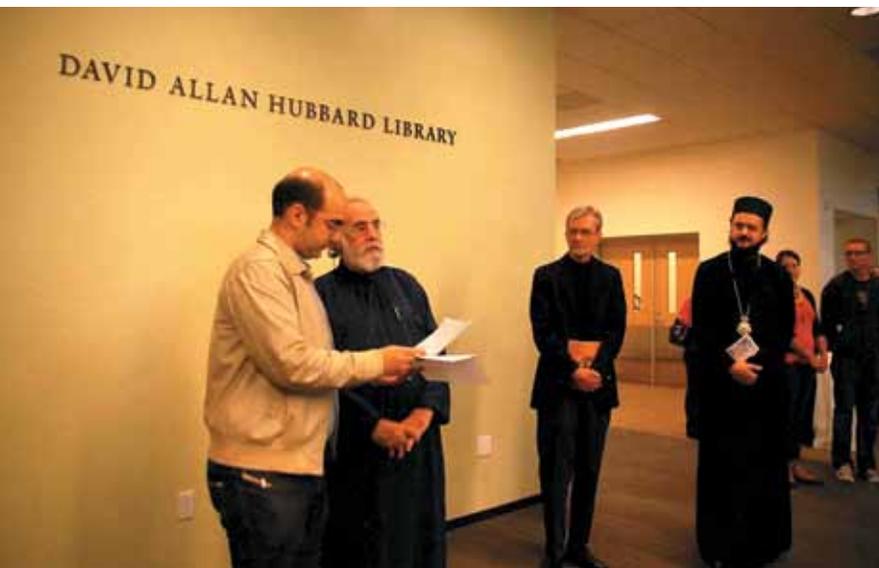


First Ever Orthodox Icon Exhibit in Pasadena

On June 10, 2010, Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, CA) hosted an event entitled, “Residents of Heaven: An Exhibit of Byzantine and Modern Orthodox Icons.” This special event featured several profound icons which were crafted by the renowned iconographer, the Very Reverend Stamatis Skliris. The event commenced within the David Allan Hubbard Library, and was sponsored by Theodoros Veniamis, of the Western American Serbian Diocese. With the Fuller pre-graduation ceremony taking place the very next day and new students roaming throughout the library anticipating their upcoming summer session, this exhibit brought a sense of serenity for many. Lynn Reynolds, who helped organize the event, stated that “it was so wonderful for the students to come down the stairs [inside the library] from the weariness of their day and



see the walls adorned in beauty.” Indeed, the beauty adorned upon the walls is a reflection of Fr. Stamatis’s love and zeal for Theology and Art, which has defined him as one of the most knowledgeable Orthodox iconographers. Saint Justin of Chelije similarly added that “brother Stamatis has long ago taken place on iconostas of Christ-like iconography and Christ-centered iconology of Orthodoxy”. Succinctly put, whether on paper, canvas, wood, wall, stone, or metal, Fr. Stamatis’s icons are a living testimony to the reality that God became man and dwelt among us (John 1:14-16). This foundational reality of Christianity attracted an audience of those both old and new to the faith. As



the crowd began to mount around the icons which were precisely mounted by Jimmy Gabriele, Lynn Reynolds and the staff of the Fuller Library, Dr. William Dyrness (Director of the Visual Faith Institute, Brehm Center for Worship, Fuller Seminary) began his opening address. Dr. Dyrness respectfully introduced Fr. Stamatis, as well as the main guest speaker, His Grace, The Right Reverend Bishop Maxim of the Western American Serbian Diocese. Bishop Maxim focused his discussion upon (1) the existential relationship of icons to the modern world and (2) the twelve special characteristics that characterize Fr. Stamatis’s icons. In the first address, Bp. Maxim spoke about the ‘otherness’ of icons. That is, an icon represents both a Person and a personal relationship. He went on to say that “one of the most significant points to emerge from the Seventh Ecumenical Council is that one Divine Person – the Son of God – became man, demonstrating that we cannot speak about God or imagine God without the Person who revealed God to us. An image that does not refer to the Person of Christ is an image that refers to the corrupted world and thus leads to death. The Icon is not of this world; it is eschatological both in origin and in content. Not being drawn from history, we can call the Icon meta-historical.” Quoting Saint Basil, His Grace pointed out further that “the honor paid to the



Icon passes on to the prototype!” Secondly, Bp. Maxim emphasized how Fr. Stamatis is authentically post-modern. He explained that Fr. Stamatis employs purely artistic criteria; he does not adopt ready-made solutions from the iconographic past; he researches everything anew, and he combines strictly traditional elements with those that are modern; e.g., The Mighty Protectress (Theotokos) is strongly traditional, but Christ has the movement, the colors, and brush deposits of

modern, expressionist art. Fr. Stamatis uses clear and strong colors, while a Byzantine lighting plays the most significant role. Fr. Stamatis looks at it in a neo-impressionist manner, i.e., he captures Byzantine light with brush strokes that emphasize dominant points in an impressionist manner. Furthermore, the look in the eyes of Fr. Stamatis’s icons are not only transcendent, as is the case with old icons, but they also have some special features which are applicable to modern man: (1) an intense look; (2) a look which creates a relationship with the observer-pilgrim; (3) a psychological look; (4) a look that thinks and examines. After Bp. Maxim’s introduction, Fr. Stamatis individually described the symbolism in several of his works. Highlights included his 1997 wooden icon, “Christ: the Same throughout the Ages” as well as an icon of St Mary of Egypt and Saint Zosimas, which was made in 2004. The presentation was followed by refreshments and informal dialogue.

Father Stamatis Skliris was born in Piraeus, the port of Athens, in 1946. At his baptism he was named after Holy New Martyr Stamatios from the island of Hydras. From the early childhood, he showed the artistic gifts and through his elementary and high school education, he began to paint and write church poems. Initially he completed the Medical faculty (1971), and then Theology (1976) at the University of Athens. He continues his studies in Belgrade at the Theological and Philosophical Faculty, attending lectures in Theology and Art History. His love and zeal for Theology and Art, defined him as one of the most knowledgeable Orthodox iconologos, iconographer and technotrope (designer and stylist) of icons, as well as of the ancient, medieval and modern art. If we could try to express in short the chief characteristic of Father Stamatis Skliris as iconographer, then we would use the words of Abba Justin of blessed memory (to whom Fr. Stamatis painted recently a beautiful icon-portrait): “brother Stamatis has long ago taken place on iconostas of Christ-like iconography and Christ-centered iconology of Orthodoxy”. All his artistic, iconographic talent and activity of sacred art, of Incarnated God, man, God-created creation, which Father Stamatis based and developed on the Mystery of Christ – Son of God, Who is the Icon of Invisible God (Col. 1,15), Who became Son of Man through Incarnation, and thus appeared visible, describable, featured with colors and most particularly with the light – on a matter: paper, canvas, wood, wall, stone, metal. Christ’s Incarnation is the foundation and the key of Father Stamatis’ Orthodox iconography and paintings.



The Consecration of the St. Herman Monastery Catholicon

On November 21/December 4, 2009, the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple, the catholicon of the St. Herman of Alaska Serbian Orthodox Monastery in Platina, California, was consecrated by His Grace Bishop Mitrophan of the Eastern American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church and His Grace Bishop Maxim of the Western American Diocese. On the eve of the Feast, an All-night Vigil service was held in the catholicon, attended by Bishop Maxim, the monastery's diocesan hierarch. In the morning, Bishop Mitrophan with many clergymen and faithful came for the consecration. In addition to the bishops, thirteen members of the clergy served in the altar: Abbot Hiliarion (the abbot of the monastery), Protopresbyter Stavrophores Lazar Vasilievic (the father of Bishop Maxim) and Petar Jovanovich, Hieromonks Jovan and Damascene, Priest Stevan Kovacevic and Deacon Daniel Mackay, all of the Serbian Orthodox Church; Hieromonk Ioane of the Georgian Orthodox Church; Priest Philip Tolbert of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church; Priest Andre Kovalev and Subdeacon Martinian Prince of the Russian Orthodox Church; and Priest Nectarios Rozadilla of the Albanian Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America. Also present for the service were Monk Silouan and Riassa-monk Timofei of the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco in Manton, California. About eighty-five people filled the monastery church. The services began with the Lesser Blessing of Water, celebrated by Priest Nectarios. Bishop Mitrophan was then greeted at the doors of the church by all the clergy, and the service of consecration began, with Bishop Mitrophan as the main celebrant and Bishop Maxim as concelebrant. In accordance with the rite of consecration, the holy table was washed with wine and rose water, and a procession around the church followed. Bishop Mitrophan then placed holy relics of St. Herman of Alaska and St. Anthony the Great inside the holy table, sealing them with wax mastic and covering them with stone. The Holy Table was then "baptized" and anointed with Holy Chrism, and the walls of the church were chrismated as well. After the service of consecration, the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy commenced. There were many communicants. At the end of the Liturgy, Bishop Maxim greeted Abbot Hilarion and the assembled faithful with the joyous event of the church's consecration.



He said that everything that can be said on this occasion has already been said in the prayers of supplication which had been raised to God during the consecration service, and that now all that is left for us to do is to offer heartfelt thanksgiving to God. Being on the holy mountain where the monastery was located, he said, brought to mind the Holy Prophet Moses the God-seer and other Old Testament prophets who experienced God on a mountain. As Bishop Maxim pointed out, this day on which the catholicon St. Herman Monastery was consecrated was also the patronal feast of the great Serbian Orthodox Monastery of Hilandar on Mount Athos. In honor of this providential connection, Bishop Maxim gave to Abbot Hilarion and brothers a large reproduction of the well-known icon of Christ Pantocrator from Hilandar. Bishop Mitrophan then spoke about his happiness in being able to take part in the consecration of the monastery church. He said he had known about the monastery for many years and had for a long time wanted to visit it, having been greatly assisted by the monastery's former abbot, Fr. Gerasim, in ministering to the Serbian Orthodox parishes and missions in South America that are under his omophorion. Now, having come to the monastery from the



other side of the country, Bishop Mitrophan pointed out how important it is for those in the church to visit one another, in order to know each other better. He brought to mind the visitation of the Most Holy Theotokos to Righteous Elizabeth, and how, through this visit, more was revealed about her Divine Son. The feast being celebrated that day, the Entry of the Theotokos, was very dear to Bishop Mitrophan's heart. He said that on the eve of this feast, thirty-nine years ago, he had been tonsured a monk. On the feast day itself, he had been ordained as a hierodeacon; and then, four years later, he had been ordained to the priesthood on the same feast. Thus, it was especially meaningful for him to consecrate the monastery church on this holy day of the Mother of God, and he called upon her heavenly intercessions for the monastery brotherhood and pilgrims. Abbot Hilarion then thanked Bishops Maxim and Mitrophan, as well as everyone else who had gathered, and said that the monastic brotherhood had been waiting a long time for this blessed day. After commemorative icons had been handed out to the pilgrims, a meal was served in the refectory. At the conclusion of the meal, Bishop Maxim spoke about the pan-Orthodox clergy retreat that he had just attended at St. Nicholas Ranch in Dunlap, California. He said that such a retreat, which lasted for three days and was attended by priests from several Orthodox jurisdictions, was the first of its kind in America, and that he hoped that it would be repeated in future years. After everyone returned in procession to the newly consecrated church, the Bishops handed out pieces of the white linen garments they had worn during the consecration, with a commemorative stamp imprinted on each piece. The whole day was filled with a tangible sense of God's grace and mercy. By God's providence, it was an unusually warm, clear and sunny December day in the monastery, enabling the pilgrims to spend the rest of the day outdoors. Pannikhidas were celebrated in the monastery cemetery for the reposed loved ones of some of the pilgrims. The faithful returned to their homes filled with inspiration from the Divine services, and the monastic brotherhood was filled with gratitude for the blessings bestowed on the monastery by God through the Church's bishops, clergy and faithful.



Women's Retreat 2010

Seeking "Life in Abundance" with St. Mary of Egypt

Dr. Kyriaki FitzGerald speaks at the at Annual Lenten Women's Retreat

With the blessings of His Grace Bishop Maxim, the Diocesan Circle of Serbian Sisters (Kolo Srpskih Sestara) held its annual Women's Retreat on Friday and Saturday, March 19 and 20, 2010. This marks the 13th year that the women have gathered during the week-end of the 5th Sunday of Great Lent (St. Mary of Egypt) at St. Sava Mission and Retreat Center in Jackson, California.

The guest speaker this year was Presbytera Kyriaki Karidoyanes FitzGerald, and her topic was "Seeking 'Life in Abundance' with St. Mary of Egypt," a most intriguing title. Presbytera Kyriaki, who holds both an M.Div. and PhD degrees, has completed theological studies at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and Boston University, as well as the School of Theology of the University of Thessaloniki, Greece. She consults as a theologian, licensed psychologist, and educator.

In addition, Presbytera is an author and the Founder and Project Coordinator of St. Catherine's Vision, a group of women writers whose first book, *Encountering Women of Faith: The St. Catherine's Vision Collection, Volume I*, was published in 2005 by InterOrthodox Press of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute (Berkeley, CA). Twelve women collaborated and contributed to this work, each offering not only the life of a saint, but also a reflection on how this saint influenced her life. Presbytera, who also serves as editor, devoted her chapter to St. Catherine.

Presbytera began her Saturday presentation by announcing that Volume II of the series is due to come out this summer, and that her talk on St. Mary of Egypt is going to be effectively her chapter of this volume.





She has been working on it for over twenty years; this is her fourth and final version. Due to the upcoming publication, Presbytera requested that the participants keep this talk confidential.

She cautioned that at one point in her narrative, she was going to change from the third to the first person (she had to repeat this disclaimer for a somewhat startled late arrival), although her version was “less graphic than what is read in church.” She was presenting St. Mary “as if she entered my office.”

For the next hour the silence in the room was absolute. Due to the confidentiality she requested, that is all that can be said about her talk: those who did not hear her speak will have to wait for the publication of Volume II.

A question and answer session followed Presbytera’s talk; many women opened up and shared very personal concerns. How does one “cultivate a merciful heart”? We hear of so many who, like St. Mary of Egypt, led a sinful and suffering life, then turned in total repentance to God; how do we “open our heart to God” if we haven’t had such a

suffering life? Presbytera said that the study of psychology has helped her go deeper into Orthodox theology. She pointed out that people suffer trauma not just from physical abuse, but also abandonment, or feeling invisible. She strongly recommended the book *Wounded by Love* by Elder Porphyrios.

As always, the week-end was full of joyous liturgical worship, beginning with Friday’s Akathist Service to the Mother of God. During the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning, the retreat participants were blessed to witness the ordination to the diaconate of Fr. Paisius of St. Herman Monastery. Saturday evening Great Vespers was served, and those women who stayed over were able to attend Divine Liturgy on Sunday with the parishioners of St. Sava. All services were held in the beautiful little church of St. Sava, and responses throughout the weekend were sung by the combined choirs of St. Peter (Fresno) and St. Sava (Jackson).

Over 40 women joined us this year, representing the following parishes:

St. Sava-Jackson (12) St. Peter (11), St. Steven (9), and the remainder from St. Michael, St. John the Baptist-Reno, St. John the Baptist-San Francisco, and St. Sava-San Gabriel.

Many thanks to the parish members of St. Sava-Jackson who prepared Friday’s dinner, and to Roy Ratkovich who served as Saturday’s chef de cuisine, with the able assistance of Lazar Skundric. A special thank-you to His Grace, our Bishop Maxim, who blessed this yearly Diocesan KSS retreat, for inviting such a compassionate and inspiring speaker.

Centennial Celebration at Sv. Vasilije of Ostrog

Angels Camp, California

Sunday, May 15, 2010

Visions from the Day

It was a glorious spring morning: clear blue sky, cool air gradually warming yet comfortable. The faithful, who had traveled from not only the San Francisco Bay area, but also from as far away as Los Angeles and Reno, Nevada, came early to the picturesque white church with the blue cupola in Angels Camp. Even His Grace, Bishop Maxim arrived very early. Rather than wait for the appointed time to begin the Divine Liturgy, His Grace spontaneously led those assembled in the Matins service. The choir from St. Sava Church in Jackson, the visiting clergy and all those present joined in and took everything in stride.



Matins led naturally to the vesting of the bishop in the presence of the people. He was surrounded by eleven priests, two deacons and a reader. As the Divine Liturgy began at 10:00 am, more and more people arrived, overflowing the temple. After the reading of the Gospel (Jn 14: 10-20) His Grace reflected on the scripture and the life and work of St. Vasilije, "He who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do..." The innumerable signs and miracles associated with St. Vasilije of Ostrog continue to this day.

After the close of the Divine Liturgy, His Grace led the clergy and the faithful to the nearby historic cemetery, where many of those Orthodox immigrants from the Gold Rush days, as well as their descendants are buried. His Grace chanted the memorial service while walking among the graves, censing them as he went. Meanwhile, the assisting priests blessed each and every grave with prayers and a sprinkling of wine. The ceremony culminated at the entrance the graveyard where a new monument was consecrated. The marker commemorates the cemetery as the resting place of Orthodox Christians who emigrated to Calaveras county from the Balkan lands of Serbia, Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro.



From the cemetery, everyone traveled to the next town of San Andreas for lunch. His Grace blessed the zito and prayed for the souls of all those departed founders, benefactors and members of the St. Vasilije parish. Then, the slavski kolach was cut and turned to the singing of the troparions. His Grace moved with the kolach throughout the tables, enabling many of those who were present to participate in the celebration. He finished by breaking the kolach with members of the parish board and clergy, who all proclaimed, “Christ is in our midst.”

The rest of the afternoon was spent in fellowship over a delicious lunch paired with local wines from the Sierra Foothills. As we ate, we were entertained by Braca, a traditional, local tambura band. Saint Vasilije of Ostrog must have been smiling as he looked down on us. We pray to him to intercede for us before our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Saint Vasilije (Basil) of Ostrog Serbian Orthodox Church at Angels Camp, California was founded in 1910. There were an estimated 40 Serbian families living in the area during that time. The town of Angels Camp was the principal town in Calaveras County, California at that time, and exploded in population due to gold mining. Many Orthodox Christian Serbs were among the immigrants who came to America during this time period of industrial expansion.



The Church was built in close proximity to the Utica Mine. It would have been immediately visible to the miners upon exiting the mine after a hard days work. In those early days, Archimandrite Sebastian Dabovich was the Presbyter ministering to the faithful in these parts of California. During the early years Father Jovan Ducic arrived from Hercegovina. Some time after Father Jovan served the parish came Proto George Uvalic. Sadly world war one started in 1914 during the beginning years of the Parish. Life in Angels Camp during that era was a life of very hard and dangerous work in the mines. The Serbs of Angels Camp established a Benevolent society (Srpsko Dobrotvorno Drustvo Broj 1) in 1893 to help families who's men suffered loss of life or injuries from

hard rock mining. The “heyday” of hard rock mining was waning after the end of WWI, and by the early 1920’s, times had changed in America with the onset of the Great Depression. The local Orthodox Christian Serbs remained in the area, but not in as great numbers as during the gold rush years. The Serbian Cemetery in Altaville, a few miles from the church, is the resting place for many of these pioneer Serbs who came to America. A new Cemetery Monument was unveiled and blessed by his grace Bishop Maxim during his Episcopal visit on May 15, 2010 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Saint Vasilije of Ostrog Serbian Orthodox Church 1910-2010.

Photographer: Larry Angier



St. Sava Children's Summer Camp – Jackson, CA

The 2009 Summer Camp at St. Sava Mission in Jackson will be remembered as a time of dramatic growth. We saw the number of campers increase by twenty percent over the 2008 season. Moreover, attendance grew in each of the three weeks of camp. We also enjoyed the assistance of more volunteers, clergy and counselors. We are confident that the new camp scholarship program, made possible by the Friends of St. Sava Camp stewards, will continue to help build our camp program in the years to come as it did last year.

We would like to thank each volunteer and clergy member who contributed to last year's successful season. While there are too many to acknowledge by name, we should give credit to each week's leaders: the clergy and the lay directors as well as the kitchen managers.

During the first week, Proto Dusan Bunjevic led the program assisted by his son Paul. Gigi Medan took charge of the kitchen. Proto Petar Jovanovich led the second week, assisted by Alex Petakovich and Milena Glusac as lay directors. Mira Babich headed the kitchen crew. In the third week Proto George Gligich directed, aided by the lay team of Nick and Marc Salata. Simona Trifunovic led the kitchen team. Also, we are thankful for the donations from alumni, friends and families that helped offset a number of expenses, such as excursion costs, arts and crafts materials and evening activities. This enabled us to enhance our program at a minimum rate, or no cost at all.

As this Annual is going to print, we are preparing for the 2010 camp season. Our improved web-site (www.campstsa.org) now includes both online registration and online payment. The site has information about our facility, its history and the camp program with photos of camp activities and more. The website has helped us to reach out to more families and campers. We now appear to be on track to exceed last year in both the number of campers and the number of volunteers.

With a generous donation from the Western Region Kolo of the former New Gracanica Metropolitanate, and the contributions in 2009 of the Friends of St. Sava Camp, we were able to recover the floor of the main dining hall in new, decorative vinyl tile. Our stewardship program raised over \$32,000 in its first year. The funds are being used to maintain and improve the facility, to offer scholarships to campers and to establish a perpetual endowment fund.

Finally, the Diocese, with the cooperation and financial support of the St. Sava Mission Foundation, created a sand volleyball court behind the boy's dormitory. The small playground was relocated near the

shallow end of the pool. We hope that these two collaborative projects, sponsored together by the Diocese and the Mission Foundation, will be the beginning of many more.

Respectfully submitted,
Reverend Stephen Tumbas, Camp Director
Danica Paul, Facility Manager



25th Anniversary the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church

Saturday, October 30th, 2009

Glory Be To God For All Things!

25th Anniversary of the Consecration of the Assumption Parish in Fair Oaks

It is only by the Grace of God and His many blessings to us that we were able to celebrate our 25th Anniversary of the Consecration of our beloved Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Serbian Orthodox Church. Just as the Blessed Virgin Protects us (witness the beautiful full length fresco of her with her arms outstretched which is in the Sanctuary), her Son, Jesus, allows each of us the ability to come to Church and to worship Him. On this weekend many of us came together in love and respect for God and for each other as we humbly thanked Him for the opportunity to pray together one more time. For those of us who stood within these walls 25 years ago, tears came to our eyes as we remembered others who have gone to their heavenly reward and been reunited with our God. For those of us arriving here during the last 25 years, we stood offering thanks that we have become part of the living family in such a beautiful House of God. For those of us still to come (and yes, there were Mothers-to-be in the audience), we pray that in the next 25 years, the next generation will love our Church as we do.

Much work went into this event. Hours of research went into this event. Many people are to be thanked – more than we will be able to mention in this brief article. Please know that God knows all the names of each person who assisted – your name is written in His Book of Everlasting Life. Please know that if you were not acknowledged during the event, you have not been forgotten by our Heavenly Father. It is we the weak mortals who forget, overlook (not intentionally), or never knew what someone had done in the past. Remember, God is the only omniscient One. He sees all. He knows all. He understands all. He remembers all. Be gentle with your heart and your hurts.

The Friday evening Vespers were offered quietly and prayerfully. Bishop Maxim had arrived earlier in the day and was in attendance. Approximately 30 of us prayed together and then met at the hall for a lovely seafood dinner prepared by Nevenka Kordic.

Bright and early on Saturday morning, long before the Divine Liturgy began at 10:30 a.m., people began gathering at the Church. Unbeknownst to anyone, Bishop Maxim and the other 8 priests in attendance decided to offer a Matins service since they all got there early! It was truly wonderful! By 9 a.m. as all of us started arriving for what we thought was going to be a 10:30 a.m. service, we found a service in progress! How peaceful and how beautiful – this is what we read happens at our Monasteries. Services are always happening and seamless from the beginning of the day to the end of the day – and this is the gift that was given to us on Saturday!

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, more than 200 people made their way to our Serbian Cultural Hall. There were hugs, laughter and smiles all around as we greeted each other in love. The hall had been decorated with fresh bouquets of flowers on each table and in the entrance way. All was quite festive. In the kitchen, Boris Seljak and his kitchen crew worked tirelessly. They produced a delicious meal that was relished by all.

After the food was blessed by Bishop Maxim, the young people of our parish stepped forth and became our waiters and waitresses. What a wonderful group of teen-agers and young adults we have! God has richly blessed us. Each teen and young adult who was approached to offer assistance did so immediately – no hesitation from any of them!

The afternoon program began with our children presenting a program



for our enjoyment. Program varied in content (singing, dancing, musical instrument playing & poems recited).

Stanley Mojsich was our Master of Ceremonies as well as the General Chairperson for the 25th Consecration Celebration. Stan thanked many individuals for stepping forth and offering assistance to make our celebration a truly remarkable event to remember. For each person he mentioned, an icon of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was presented to them. Stan acknowl-

edged the fact that there were 2-3 times more people who could not be mentioned due to time constraints, however, we all know that an event of this magnitude cannot be undertaken by a few individuals. The Clergy, The Circle of Serbian Sisters, the Commemoration booklet, the video crew, the entertainment crew, the set up crew, the cleanup crew, the bar crew, the advertising crew, the planning crew – each group was in the background each step of the way. HUNDREDS of hands offered assistance to make this event possible. Stan was our figurehead for the day, but we each stood at his side assisting him.



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For those individuals who were unable to attend due to illness, you were remembered.

For those individuals who have left our earthly home in these past 25 year, you were remembered.

For those individuals who were unable to attend due to work and life commitments, you were remembered.

For those of us who were able to attend, we thank each person who assisted to make our 25th Com-

memoration of our Beloved Church's Consecration a wonderful lifetime event. We are thankful to Kumovi of this celebration Nikola and Zorka Tica. We especially thank Father Dane Popovic and Father William Weir for their guidance. We thank Stan Mojsich for his leadership. We thank V. Rev. Protopresbyter Stavrophor Miladin Garic and his wife, Protinica Nina Garic, for guiding our Church during the years of our Church building and Consecration 25 years ago. We thank our Circle of Serbian Sisters for their lifelong dedication to our Church. Finally, we pray for each of our deceased members for their legacy to us – our Beloved Serbian Orthodox Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Fair Oaks, CA.

God Grant Each of Us Many Years – for those of us living.

Memory Eternal – for those who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

“Everything we have is by His Grace! Only by the Grace of God! In spite of our sins. It is by His Grace that we are as we are. Through the Blood of Christ's Sacrifice.”

Mother Gavriila, Greek Orthodox nun – 10.2.1897 – 3.28.1992 from The Ascetic of Love



Missionary Parishes 2010

The most joyous news this year is that St. Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Missionary Parish in Salt Lake City has achieved the status of a regular Church School Congregation with a full time parish priest.

Most members of the Salt Lake parish are refugees who fled the war and persecution in former Yugoslavia. They arrived in Salt Lake City with nothing during the past 20 years.

During those initial years, the faithful tried to make concrete progress by building or buying a church. Even though initially they were unsuccessful, they were willing to keep trying,

In the past several years, the community in Salt Lake City has produced positive results in several ways. First, church attendance is about 70 to 100 souls at Divine Liturgies. In addition, through stewardship and fundraisers, they collected more than \$200,000.00 for the building fund and bought a church facility near downtown Salt Lake City. Their love and efforts were rewarded by Sophia Piedmont, an American born Serb, who generously willed enough money to pay off the church.



For ten years, the parish struggled and grew. Yet through all of the changes and through all the challenges, we saw one constant--love of God. A church is a place where love is made real because it is the place where true love is celebrated. Every Liturgy, every prayer, every counsel, every confession, every sacrament makes God's eternal and divine Love real. His Love transcends every emotion and every problem.

As we celebrate this momentum, we, of course, look back. We look back to those who bought the facility and transformed it into a spiritual oasis for Orthodox Christians in the Salt Lake area. Some of the original parishioners have moved to other places

and are no longer in SLC. We remember them as well as those who stayed; we remember their vision and their work. We look back on all that has been accomplished and thank God for His Divine Mercy. We look back and realize that while the path may have been hard, it was well worth walking.

But this is also an occasion to look forward. By seeing how far we have progressed, we can look ahead to yet more and greater achievements. We see that we have so much more to accomplish in every missionary parish. We recognize that the vision that brought success to the Salt Lake Mission Parish, binds its Faithful together now and in the future. We must always look to the next step. As Proverbs 29:18 states, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." So we must always have a vision before us that lights the path we all walk together.



One of the biggest challenges in every parish, especially in a mission parish, is the development and maintenance of a vision that includes building a sense of community. Initially the majority of people are filled with enthusiasm, and they work hard to accomplish shared goals. Also from the beginning, there are those who are very hesitant and tentative because the challenge before them appears to be overwhelming. If the people who have a vision see concrete results from their efforts, they build the church; the



church, in turn, builds the community, and the ideal goal of continued spiritual enrichment can be met.

The Missionary Parish of St. John the Baptist in Denver, Colorado followed the example of the Salt Lake City community. The parishioners in Denver bought a property with an existing church which they are remodeling and preparing for consecration.

We need to view these successes from yet other perspectives. Where are we now? Are we all living the Faith? Are we loving one another as commanded by Christ? Are we working together to build up the Church of Christ? Have we committed ourselves to one another so that with one mind we may confess the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit? Do we love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our mind and all our soul? This is ultimately the standard by which we judge what we have done--where we are now and where we are going.



St. Sava Church and Parish of Los Angeles – San Gabriel, California to Celebrate its 100th Anniversary

on October 1, 2 & 3, 2010

This year 2010 has a very special meaning for St. Sava parish of Los Angeles – San Gabriel. It marks 100th anniversary. As we at St. Sava take steps to prepare the celebration for this great Jubilee, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Grace Bishop Dr. Maxim of our Serbian Western American Diocese for His contribution, generous assistance and moral support.

The history of the early parish years can be written today based mainly on what has been said and published in previous Anniversary parish books, Diocesan publications and Church bulletins. Some important historical facts of St. Sava Church can also be found in the “History of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America and Canada,” published by the Bishop of Sumadija, Dr. Sava Vukovic and in the “History of the Serbian Orthodox Church,” published by Prof. Stanimir Spasovic. There are also several published books about prominent community individuals that can be of interest for St. Sava church history.

I. St. Sava Church, Los Angeles

St. Sava parish has two churches: the St. Sava Church of Los Angeles, and the St. Sava Church of San Gabriel. Church records show that early settlers of Los Angeles emigrated primarily from Serbian lands of Boka, Hercegovina, Montenegro and Vojvodina. The long and storied history of St. Sava parish begins with the St. Sava Church of Los Angeles. According to early pioneers Todor Colich, Risto Kilibarda, Todor Batinich, Danilo Dakovich, Todor Polich, and Jovo Kujundzic, the history of St. Sava dates back to the formation of the Serbian Benevolent Society “Jedinstvo” organized in May of 1903. They purchased the property for cemeteries located at 2nd and Humphrey St. in East Los Angeles. The land was consecrated in the year 1908 by Father Sebastian Dabovich of San Francisco. The occasion turned out to be a great celebration rich in Serbian tradition consisting of barbequed lamb, kolo, gusle and songs. One of the members watching this celebration joyfully made a comment: “Blessed be the one, who will be the first to be buried in this cemetery.” Within a short period of time he became ill and died. He was the first to be buried in this cemetery in 1909. Petar Bakoc’s gravestone can still be found in the left East corner of the cemetery.

After the land for the Cemetery was purchased, the pioneers started plans for building a Church. In 1909, a special committee of well-known people was selected to collect donations. The members of this committee were: Gilgo Dabovich of Trebinje, Dusan Cerovina of Ljubinje, Milivoje Pekich of Drobnjak, Jovo Ukropina of Trebinje, Lazar Simovich of Niksic, Stanko Kilibarda of Banjani, Petar Janicic of Banjani, Danilo Dakovich of Grahovo, Sako Zarubica of Drobnjak, Krsto Kisich of Bilece, and Mihailo Budincich of Ljubinje. The time to have a church was appropriate. The Serbian community grew to a larger number of people. According to Bishop Sava, Serbian colonies and churches in America were visited in 1910 by a prominent Serbian Stevan Karamata. He was the director of the Serbian bank of Budapest and was sent by Patriarch Lukian to find out how many Serbian emigrants live in America. In his list of Serbian churches and colonies he found that 2,000 Serbians settled mainly around the newly built church of St. Sava in Los Angeles. However, these immigrants did not have money. They worked hard jobs as common laborers for very small wages. As they helped to buy the cemetery property, they did not have money to purchase extra land for the church. The selected committee asked the lodge ‘Jedinstvo’ for help and a piece of the cemetery land was donated for the church. The church was built and consecrated by a great missionary Very Rev. Fr. Sebastian Dabovich of San Francisco in 1910. Fr. Dabovich was the first Serbian priest born in America. In 1894 he organized and erected the first Serbian church in America at Jackson. St. Sava church of Los Angeles was the first Orthodox Church built in Southern California.

Being far away from the Diocesan center in Libertyville, Illinois, it took several years for St. Sava parish to leave the Russian Church and join the Serbian American—Canadian Diocese that was organized on November 1, 1921. St. Sava Church officially joined the Serbian Diocese in February 1927 at the meeting of the Congregation at which Bishop Mardarie Uskokovich was personally present.

The priests that have served the St. Sava Church of Los Angeles are: Father Sebastian Dabovich, Fr. Nikodim Stojakovich, Fr. Jakov Hodzich, Fr. George Milosavljevich, Fr. George Hodzich, Fr. Vojislav Gaciovich, Fr. Mirko Vujisich, Fr. Dimitrije Balach, Fr. Marko Malovrazich, Fr. Bozidar Draskovich, Fr. Jovan Kovacevich, Fr. Lazar Kostur, Fr. Paul Poznanov, and Fr. Petar Jovanovic who has been serving the parish since January 1980.

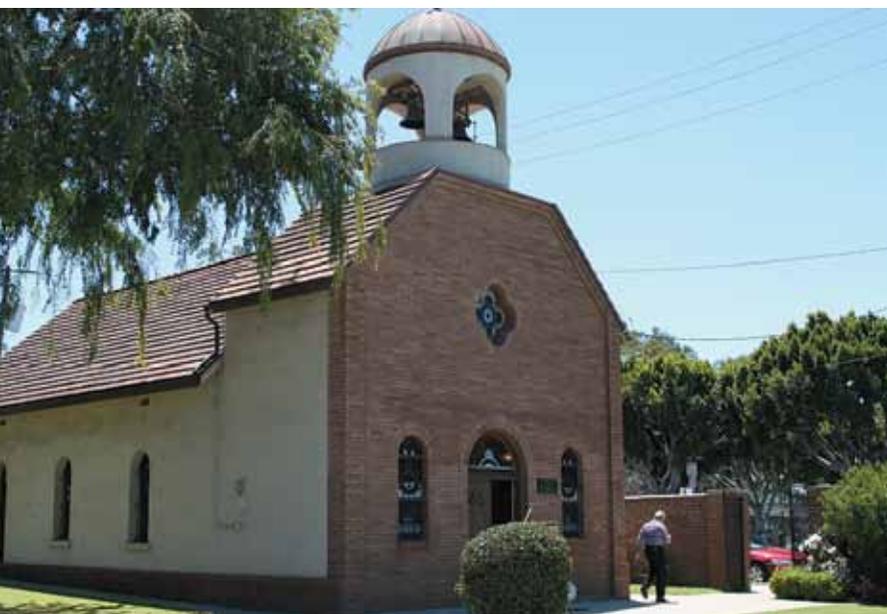
II. St. Sava Church of San Gabriel

Many Serbian Churches and monasteries are influenced to be built in a certain place by the donator. That was also the reason why the new St. Sava church was built in San Gabriel. In 1956, St. Sava Church member Charles S. Barzut donated a house with a large lot adjoining. In 1962, the parish started to make preparations to build St. Sava Church hall at 1640 S. San Gabriel Boulevard in San Gabriel. The Church Hall was completed and consecrated in May 1963 by Rt. Rev. Bishop Dionisije and parish priest Fr. Marko Malovrazich. This was the last building blessed by Bishop Dionisije before the division happened in the Serbian Orthodox Church.

I was included in the history of the St. Sava Church at the beginning of 1980. I joined the Western-American Diocese coming from the parish of Milwaukee's St. Sava Cathedral of Mid- Western Diocese where I was an associate priest with Fr. Milan Markovina. When I arrived the Liturgical services were conducted in a chapel on the second floor with adjacent rooms for Sunday school at the South side of the Church Hall. Also, services were held every last Sunday of the month at the Old St. Sava Church of Los Angeles. I remember Bozo Milinovic, a longtime church member and church cantor telling me: "Father, your challenge will be to build a new church next to our church hall. I know it will not be easy, but with God's help, the dream of so many people will become a reality." And the first important step was made. On April 12, 1981, a Construction Committee was elected to build the new church. This committee consisted of Petar Kujundzich, the Chair Person, and members: John Pecel, William Radulovich, Nick Kavic, Stanley Vukoje, George Gustovich, and Nick Pekovich. Later, Mike Perko took Nick Pekovich's place due to Nick's having to leave town for business. When Mike Perko left, Daniel Pavich joined the Committee. Construction for the new St. Sava Church in San Gabriel began on May 20, 1981.



On October 28, 1984, with God's will, the new St. Sava Church was consecrated by His Grace Rt. Rev. Bishop Gregory with the participation of all the Bishops from the United States and Canada, and Metropolitan Jovan of Zagreb Diocese, who was representing Serbian Patriarch German. The parish priest personally brought the Holy Relics of the Great Martyr Prince Lazar for the Church dedication. The consecration of the Church was a very joyous event. The Choir led by then Choir Director Milos Raicevic, son of the well-known Serbian poet Stevan Raicevic responded very professionally. The Sunday School presented a beautiful program. The Kolo Group under the supervision of their teacher Pat Ducich made an excellent presentation. President of the Executive Board George Vukazich praised the dedication of Church members with the words "Pregaocima Bog daje mahove – God helps those who are dedicated in their endeavors." The Chairman of the Construction committee Petar Kujundzich was specially praised by the priest for his hard work during the time of the Church construction. In his speech, the priest emphasized the importance of God's House. He reminded people that through the services in God's house we build the architectural construction of our souls.



One year later, in March 1986, St. Sava Parish hired Sirio Tonelli, a high class artist to create and install the mosaic iconography in the St. Sava Church interior. He was born in Florence, Italy and comes from the place of famous Renaissance painters. The mosaic was made in Florence before it was installed in the Church. It was created in Byzantine tradition touched with Renaissance spirit displaying beauty and grace. Judging by what has been done so far; the Church looks majestic and makes a very spiritual impression on every visitor, and especially on the faithful of the congregation. Looking at this masterpiece of art, one must agree with the 12th century observer of intrinsic beauty Abbot Suger who said:

"It is only through symbols of beauty that our poor spirits can raise themselves from things temporal to things eternal." (The Creators p. 233) by Daniel J. Boorstein. Being of such splendor, the St. Sava Church through the attention of the media was featured in KCTV popular program "Visiting with Huell Howser." The producer promised to make another show in honor of 100 years of St. Sava parish history.

There is no doubt that there have been difficult days during these 100 years of St. Sava Parish history of Los Angeles and San Gabriel as well. However, regardless of what disappointments people were challenged with, they always had a clear vision of how to advance towards a better future. I have been personally blessed by God with good health, courage and conviction to continue my pastoral work for the last 30 years at St. Sava Parish. As we mark this year our 100th Anniversary my pastoral message to the parishioners is to stay committed to our Orthodox faith. This means to stay committed to the Kingdom of God which starts with the beginning of Divine Liturgy. I hope that our two St. Sava Churches will serve that purpose. For Orthodox Christians, where there is Divine Liturgy, there is the Church.

It is important for St. Sava parish to also preserve the cultural tradition and heritage accumulated for centuries by the rich Serbian history molded by Orthodox faith. Nothing would be more tragic for the Orthodox people than the loss of its rich tradition. The feeling of that cultural tradition and heritage was ever present in the souls of our first immigrants who built St. Sava Church of Los Angeles. Our generation now at St. Sava Church is entrusted to carry on that spirit.

We would cordially like to invite all who can make it to join us at this important Centennial celebration. If you would like to attend and you are not on our mailing list, please e-mail us your address at:

stsava@sbcglobal.net and we will send you an official invitation with the program.

V. Rev. Stavr. Petar Jovanovic

SEBASTIAN PRESS

of the Western American Diocese

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In today's electronic age one would think that books would be superseded, but not so according to the recent finding. Great titles are still selling and people are still reading. With books, as with almost everything in today's market, we face many choices. Some people read for entertainment, some to quench the thirst for knowledge, while others read for spiritual growth. The latter readers are certainly aided by the publishing activity of the Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Sebastian Press is the name given to their publishing department that in a short time has added a few new titles.

Energetic and missionary and an astute bishop of this diocese, His Grace Dr. Maxim believes that the written word is one of the ways to reach out to people, to teach them, and bring them closer to Christ.

"As Saint Basil the Great once observed: "Words by their nature fly; therefore, the writer needs letters to catch them before they fly away". We as Orthodox are obliged to record those significant theological and spiritual words and works of our modern times. Our publishing activity aims at the inculturation of the Orthodox ethos and mentality within modernity and vice versa, focusing on existential human needs in the light of Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection. We need a successful interpretative transmission of the tradition by Church Fathers which can be achieved through a process of explicating the old concepts into contemporary concepts, among others – through written books", said his Grace Dr. Maxim.

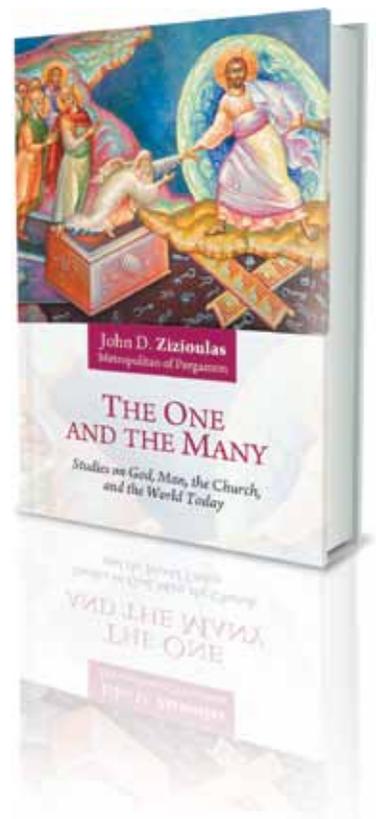
His Grace wants to continue the publishing activity in his Diocese making new titles available to children, young adults, families, and all those eager to dive into reflective pastoral and theological thoughts

of contemporary theologians and pastors, as well as of those of the Church's antiquity.

Here we present a few titles of Sebastian Press that can easily be viewed at <http://www.westsrbdio.org/>.

"**The One and the Many**" – John D. Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamon

This volume offers a collection of Zizioulas articles which have appeared mostly in English, and which present his trinitarian doctrine of God, as well as his theological account of the Church as the place in which freedom and communion are actualized. The title, *The One and the Many*, suggests the idea of a profound relationship that exists between the Persons in the Holy Trinity, between Christ and the Church, between one Catholic Church and many catholic Churches. On each of these levels of communion, each one is called to receive from one another and indeed to receive one another. And while this is understandable at the Triadological and Christological levels, it raises all sorts of fundamental ecclesiological questions, since the highest point of unity in this context is both the mutual ecclesial-eucharistic recognition and agreement on doctrine and canonical-ecclesiological organization. The book has the Preface written by Bishop



Athanasius Yevtich, and an extensive and valuable Introduction (pp. xi-xxi) written by Paul Mc Partlan.

“The title, “The One and the Many” suggests the idea of a profound relationship that exists between the Persons in the Holy Trinity, between Christ and the Church, between one Church and many churches... On each of these levels of communion, each one is called to receive from one another and indeed to receive one another. Trinitarian theology in Metropolitan John’s profound works does justice to the Church by defining it as a unity of the One and the Many at the same time, allowing a full relationship between unity and diversity. The very identity of the Church is relational; it cannot exist without reference to the Holy Trinity.”

- from the Foreword
by Right Rev. Athanasius Yevtich

Sailors of the Sky, by Fr. Radovan Bigovic

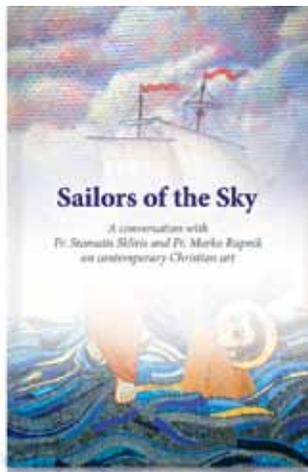
A conversation with Fr. Stamatis Skliris and Fr. Marko Rupnik on contemporary Christian art

In these timely conversations led by Fr. Radovan Bigovic, many issues are introduced that enable the contemporary reader to deepen and expand his or her understanding of the role of art in the life of the Church. Here we find

answers to questions on the crisis of contemporary ecclesiastical art in West and East; the impact of Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Surrealism and Abstract painting on contemporary ecclesiastical painting; and a consideration of the main distinction between iconography and secular painting.

The dialogue, while resolving some doubts about the difference between iconography, religious painting, and painting in general, reconciles the requirement to obey iconographic canons with the freedom essential to artistic creativity, demonstrating that obedience to the canons is not a threat to the vitality of iconography. Both artists illumine the role of prayer and asceticism in the art of iconography. They also mention crucial differences between iconography in the Orthodox Church and in Roman Catholicism.

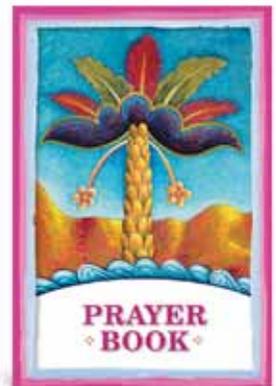
How important these distinctions are when exploring the relationship between contemporary theology and art!



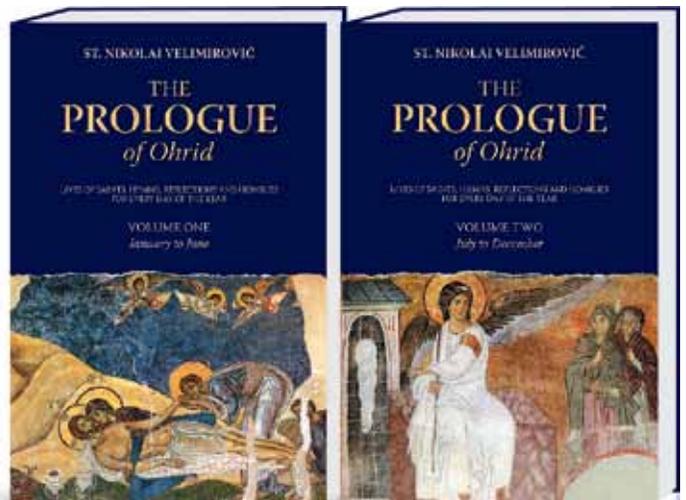
In a time when postmodern “metaphysics” relativizes every concept, these masters still believe that, to some extent,

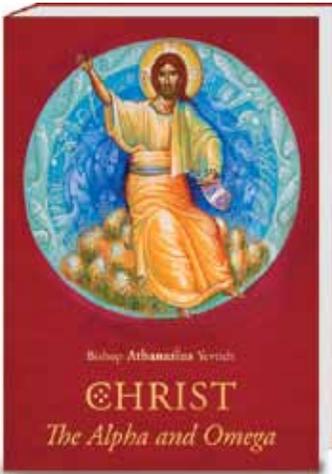
Post-Modernism adds to the revitalization of Christian art, stimulating questions about “artistic inspiration” and the essential aesthetic categories of Christian painting. Their exceptionally wide, yet nonetheless deep, expertise assists their not-so-everyday connections between theology, art, and modern issues concerning society: “society” taken in its broader meaning as “civilization.” Finally, the entire artistic project of Stamatis and Rupnik has important ecumenical implications that answer a genuine longing for unity in the Christian world.

Prayer Book, is a beautiful pocket-size, full-color English-language prayer book; it contains prayers commonly used by Orthodox Christians, lists of Scriptural Commandments, brief articles on the precepts of Faith, proper conduct in church, and the meaning and practice of prayer. It is adorned with striking icons and illustrations by Fr. Stamatis Skliris, a parish priest in Athens who is a renowned iconographer and a writer and lecturer on Byzantine iconography.



The Prologue of Ohrid, by Saint Nikolai of Zica, is a complete and unabridged English translation of St. Nikolai’s Prologue which has become a much loved spiritual classic for Orthodox Christians worldwide. An inspirational source-book of the Orthodox Faith, it contains within its pages a summation of the Church’s wisdom and Her experience of sanctity through the Grace of Jesus Christ. The lives of Saints, Hymns, Reflections, and Homilies are presented for every day of the year.

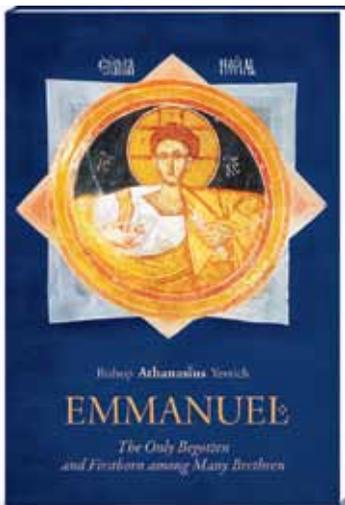




Christ, The Alpha and Omega is an anthology of Bishop Athanasius' articles which have appeared in Serbian, Greek, French, English and Russian. Focusing on themes central to Christian patristic Triadology, Ecclesiology and Anthropology, the book reveals the ultimate purpose of man and the universe, and speaks of how each of us can realize this

purpose within the divine-human community of the Orthodox Church. Bishop Athanasius' (1938) thought combines adherence to the teaching of the Church Fathers with a vibrant faith and a profound experience of Christ in the Church. He is one of the most renowned and respected theologians in the Orthodox Church today.

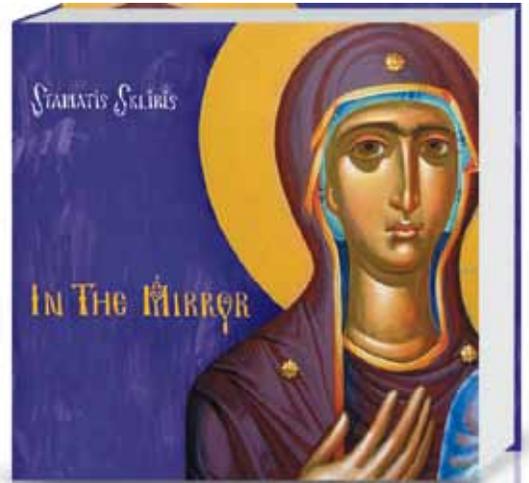
In **Emmanuel**, the second anthology of Bishop Athanasius' articles to appear in English, His Grace explores themes of Orthodox Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Gnoseology. How can we know Who God is? How can we know who we are, as human persons created in His image and likeness? How can we become one with Him? Bishop Athanasius examines these and other foundational questions in depth in this volume, drawing from a wealth of Scriptural and patristic sources. In discussing diverse theological subjects, he always returns to his overarching theme: the communion that man can have with God through Jesus Christ the God-man, within Christ's Church and above all in the Holy Eucharist. His exquisite and unique way of engaging the reader in mutual dialogue, with the living Eucharistic experience permeating his every thought, instills in the reader a burning desire for that communion.



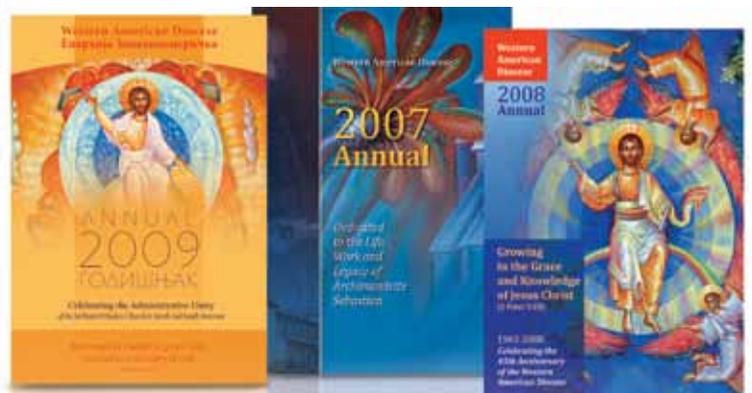
In **the Mirror**, A Collection of Iconographic Essays and Illustrations by Fr. Stamatis Skliris. In

the **Mirror** is an anthology of his articles, now translated into English, in which he combines adherence to the teachings of the Church Fathers with a vibrant expression of faith through

the experience of Christ in the Church. The book is adorned with more than 200 of his striking icons and illustrations. Fr Stamatis is one example of an synthetical Neopatristic approach in the arts. He articulates a dialogue with modern art by evaluating the brush strokes of Van Gogh Cézanne, Monet's colors, Matisse's forms, Picasso's Cubism, and Post-modernism. Stamatis reminds us of the times when Church had the ability to shape the culture. He is authentically postmodern, because he employs purely artistic criteria; he does not ready-made solutions from the iconographic past; he researches everything anew; a strong experimental sense is at his disposal, and he combines strictly traditional elements with those that are modern; e.g., The Mighty Protectress (Theotokos) is strongly traditional, but Christ has the movement, the colors, and brush deposits of modern, expressionist art. Although he basically employs a dark Byzantine under-painting, adding to it light "accents" (illuminations), he still plays with colors in such an impressionist manner that his work gains a "non-determinism of color"; he leaves sections of his painting uncolored and then treats these sections in an unpredictable manner with an eagerness to play and not to make use of the calligraphy that is usual in iconography.

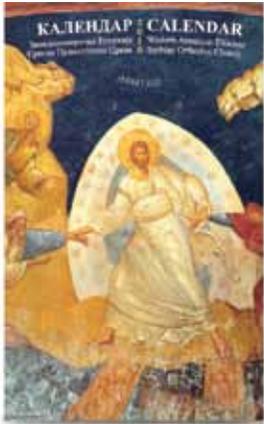


2009 Annual, Dedicated to the celebration of the Administrative unity of Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, this Annual highlights



the Diocesan Days and the life of the Western American Diocese. It includes the report on 30th anniversary of the Repose of Fr Justin Popovic, as well as numerous articles and relevant writings on missions, ordinations, consecrations, monastic life, new releases in the Western American Diocese, including the directory of parishes and diocesan ministry departments.

whom all the fullness of Godhead lives.”; “The God-man” – The foundation of the Truth of Orthodoxy – Ava Justinian language of love in Christ-centered reflections of Truth; “The Supreme Value and Infallible Criterion”- contemporary philosophical reflections on visible and invisible realities; “Sentenced to Immortality” - a homily on the Resurrection or Our Lord Jesus Christ; “Humanistic and Theanthropic Culture”-criticism of European anti-Christian culture; “Humanistic and Theanthropic Education” – indicative pondering of consequences of education without God; “The Theory of Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian” – Faith, prayer, love, humility, grace and freedom, the purification of the intellect, mystery of knowledge; “A Deer in a Lost Paradise” – Ava’s renowned poetic essay, a confession, and deepest longing for all-sweetest Jesus...



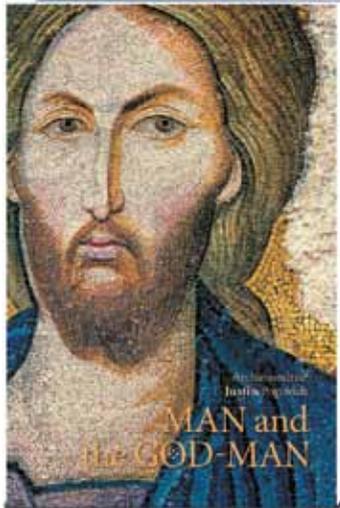
A New Illustrated, full-color 2011 pocket size **CALENDAR**

This high quality, bilingual (English and Serbian) pocket size 2010 calendar with exceptional graphic design is profusely illustrated, with daily and special prayers, a directory of the Western American Diocese of the SOC, a schedule of events, and space for personal notes

throughout, is indispensable for an organized Christian living.

Man and the God-Man by Archimandrite Justin Popovich

“Father Justin Popovich, pan-orthodox witness to the God-revealed and Christ-given Eternal Truth, whose testimony can be even seen within this collection of his articles – that “the mystery of Truth is not in material things, not in ideas, not in symbols, but in Personhood, namely the Theanthropic Person of the Lord Christ, Who said: I am the Truth (John 14:6), Truth perfect, never diminished, always one and the same in its complete fullness – yesterday, today, and forever (Heb.13:8).”

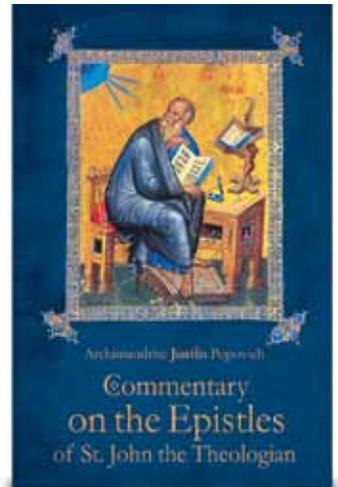


The treasure to be found in this anthology of neopatristic syntheses consists of: “Perfect God and perfect man” – Nativity Epistle, where Fr Justin boldly exclaim that “man is only a true man when he is completely united with God, only and solely in God is man a man, true man, perfect man, a man in

Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian by Archimandrite Justin Popovich

This Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian – published now, three years after the blessed repose of Venerable Fr. Justin (on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1979) – was written by the tireless Messenger of Christ forty years ago, in circumstances similar to those in which Christ’s Holy Evangelist John wrote his sacred Epistles.

The text of this 93-page soft-bound book has been translated from the Serbian by Radomir M. Plavsic. Published by Sebastian Press, Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Contemporary Christian Thought Series, number 5, First Edition.



Western American Diocese

Our Liturgical Wine

At the Annual Diocesan Days celebration in September of 2005, during his inaugural visit to the historic St. Sava Church in Jackson, California, the first Serbian Orthodox Church in the Western hemisphere, His Grace Bishop Maxim tasted some of the renowned Amador County wines and promptly suggested that the Western American Diocese produce its own wine for liturgical use. He stated that this wine should be full-bodied, yet mellow and aromatic and slightly sweet to the taste.

Wine grapes were introduced to this part of the Sierra Nevada foothills (45 miles Southeast of Sacramento and 90 miles Southwest of Lake Tahoe) during the 1850s Gold Rush, when fortune-seeking prospectors brought rootstock with them from their Mediterranean homelands. Some of the vineyards planted during that time have survived to the present day. The region is well known for its French Syrah and Italian Barbera wine grapes and internationally recognized for its Zinfandel. For years, the Zinfandel variety was believed to be native to America; however, recent DNA studies have revealed its origin to be the Dalmatian Coast!

Fr. Stephen Tumbas, parish priest of St. Sava Church in Jackson and a winemaker himself (Tumbas Vineyards, Shenandoah Valley), offered his God-given talents back to our Lord and His Holy Church in an invaluable example of stewardship. Fr. Stephen explained: "Not knowing exactly what would be involved, I agreed to take on the project. The first batch of wine was produced in 2006 from aromatic Black Muscat and Zinfandel grapes that

were harvested late to obtain higher sugar content. The 2007 vintage will be a combination of Syrah and Black Muscat grapes."

Sebastian Wine was first offered at the Divine Liturgy during Diocesan Days in Jackson in September 2007. This soft, sweet and well-perfumed wine has been distributed throughout the Western American Diocese. It is believed that this is the first time in the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America that it is producing its own wine for celebration of the Eucharist.

Sebastian Wine: The Second Vintage

This year's liturgical wine will be slightly different from the last. In response to requests from several priests and parishes, we are adding a little more fruit sugar concentrate to the blend before bottling. This will make the wine sweeter to the taste. We are also changing the base of the blend from Zinfandel to Syrah. We believe that this will make the wine a bit more full-bodied. Finally, our wine will bear a new label created by Fr. Stamatis, the Greek priest and iconographer, whose work can be seen throughout this Annual and on most of the communiqués from the Western American Diocese.

Bottled in July we plan to have the wine ready for distribution by the late fall. Our production total is the same as last year: two sixty-gallon barrels that will yield 120 cases of 375 ml bottles. At the present time, this is sufficient wine for the entire year for our diocese, as well as for a few churches in other dioceses.

This wine is offered to all parishes throughout the country.
If you are interested in a sample, please contact the Diocese office at 626-289-9061
or email westdiocese@earthlink.net

Podcast Ministry

The Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church began broadcasting a Radio Program on Pentecost, June 14, 1997. This program offers spiritual, cultural, and educational information to people of Western Serbian Diocese.

In February of 2009 the Diocesan Assembly made a decision to continue the broadcast of our program only via internet at <http://westsrbdio.org/podcastgen1.2/> on our Diocesan website. We have changed the name of the Radio Program to Podcast, and after the first year of internet broadcasting it appears that the decision was sound. We are pleased to state that now we have a great many listeners from Western Europe, Australia, Canada and Serbia. Many of them have subscribed to our Podcast Program and we encourage you to do so.

We are also pleased to say that we have continued the project with the highly acclaimed actress Mirjana Jokovic. Right now we are recording Homilies of Saint Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic, and it is our hope to publish it on a CD in the future.

In addition to our regular format we also broadcast special shows. This year we had a lectures and homilies from our Bishop Maxim, Bishop Atanasije Jeftic, Bishop Irinej of Backa, and Bishop Ignjatije, and Bishop Porfirije. We also broadcasted the lectures of Bishop Justin from Timok. Some of the programs also featured lectures by recognized Orthodox theologian professors of St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary, Protopresbyter Paul Nadim Tarazi and Fr Thomas Hopko, to mention a few. After the decision to broadcast programs only over the internet, we are much more focused on diocesan live events: Sunday of Orthodoxy, Diocesan Days, Diocesan Assembly, all kinds of lectures and readings, especially in English. One of the most interesting shows was a lecture given by Hieromonk Damascene, from Saint Herman Monastery, Platina, about our new saints, Justin of Celije, and Simeon of Dajbabe.

We would also like to encourage all of you to contribute with your ideas and suggestions to make this program even more successful and informative for our audience. If you have any materials for the program, please feel free to forward it to our diocesan e-mail address westdiocese@earthlink.net.

Finally, we would like to use this opportunity to thank all of you who supported our radio program.



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Deacon Ozren Todorovic, Parish Deacon

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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

SERBIAN ORTHODOX MISSION PARISH

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Physical Address: 3835 Glen Street, Reno, NV 89502

Phone: (775) 786-7328

Rev. James Barfield, Parish Priest

E-mail: frjames_barfield@yahoo.com

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Rev. Nikola Todorovic, Parish Priest

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E-mail: svsteniktodorovic@yahoo.com

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ST. JOHN OF THE WONDERWORKER

SERBIAN ORTHODOX PARISH

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Church address

Email: dlubliner@msn.com

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1075 Cheshire Ave, Eugene, OR 97402

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THE DALLES

THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS

SERBIAN ORTHODOX MISSION PARISH

1520 Weber St., The Dalles, OR 97058

www.dormitionorthodoxchurch.org

Rev. Luke Hartung, Parish Priest

Phone: (541) 288-1781

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WASHINGTON

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www.stsavachurch-nw.org

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V. Rev. Ilija Balach, Parish Priest

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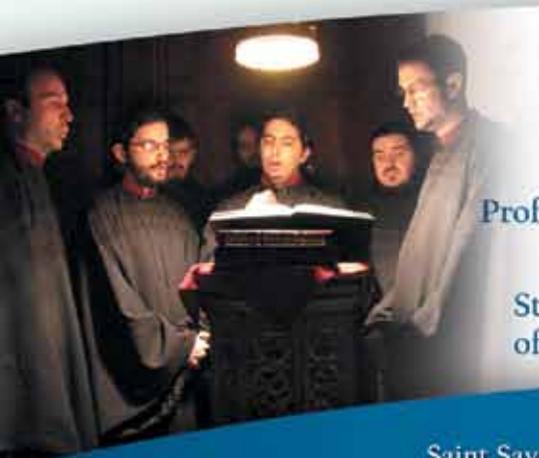
Diocesan Days 2010

The Church and the Challenges of Contemporary Life

His Grace, Bishop MAXIM cordially invites you to the

14th Annual Diocesan Days gathering

Come and spend a Weekend of spiritual and social activities
for all ages with the Clergy, Monastics and Faithful from
all of the Parishes and Monasteries throughout our Western Diocese.



Guest Speakers

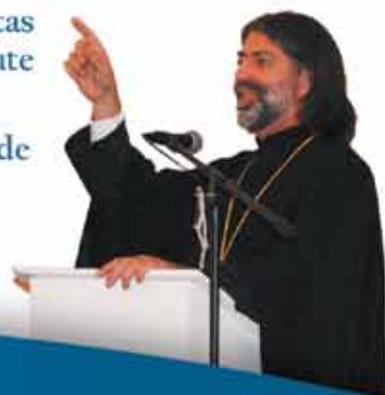
His Eminence, Metropolitan Nikitas
Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute

Rev. Dr. Andrew Cuneo

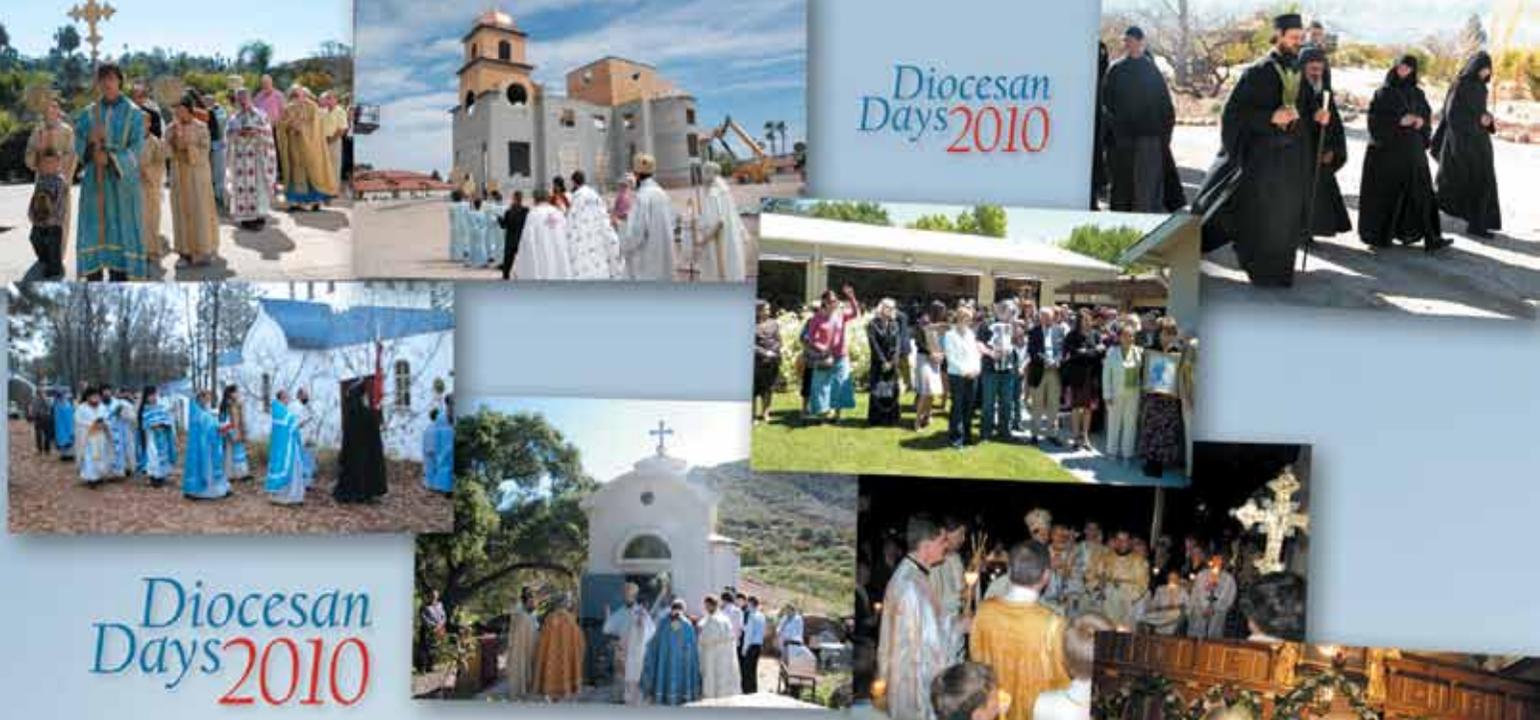
Prof. Dr. Nenad Milosevic, University of Belgrade

Other Guests

Student Choir from the School
of Theology of the University in Belgrade



Saint Sava Mission, Jackson, Ca ✦ September 3-5, 2010



Diocesan
Days 2010

Diocesan
Days 2010

Schedule for Diocesan Days 2010

Friday, September 3rd, 2010

- 1:00 PM Clergy Luncheon and Conference with Prof. Dr. Nenad Milosevic
- 6:00 PM Vespers at the St. Sava Mission
- 7:00 PM Dinner with an Interactive Discussion with Metropolitan Nikitas and Rev. Dr. Andrew Cuneo
- 8:00-10:00 PM Evening Program and Fellowship

Saturday, September 4th, 2010

- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy at the Mission
- 11:00 AM Memorial Service at St. Sava Church
- 12:00 AM Barbeque Lunch, Picnic with live music from Orchestra Srma
- 12:30-2:00 PM "God and Modern Culture" – A presentation by Rev. Dr. Andrew Cuneo
- 12:30-5:30 PM Open Swimming
- 2:00 PM KSS semi-annual meeting
- 4:30-5:30 PM Youth Rally for Teens
- 6:00 PM Great Vespers at the Mission
- 7:00 PM Dinner with live music and dancing
- 10:30 PM Closing

Sunday, September 5th, 2010

- 9:00 AM Resurrection Matins at the Mission
- 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy at the Mission
- 12:30 AM Banquet in the St Sava Mission Hall
- Keynote Address: His Eminence, Metropolitan Nikitas
- 2:00-5:00 PM Open Swimming
- 2:30-5:00 PM Live Music and Dancing
- 5:00 PM Closing

Hotel information:

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