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The Serbian Orthodox Church to her spiritual children at Pascha, 2013

IRINEJ

By the grace of God

Orthodox Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci and Serbian Patriarch, with the all the Hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church – to all the clergy, monastics, and all the sons and daughters of our Holy Church: grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, with the joyous Paschal greeting:

**CHRIST IS RISEN!
INDEED HE IS
RISEN!**

"For you will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."
(Psalm 16:10)

True, indeed, is this word of God's prophet by which he announces the radiant feast of Christ Resurrection, this feast of great Christian joy and spiritual celebration. If there is a day among all days for celebration, that is today — the day we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ our God. Thanks to this holy day, all the days of mankind — from the begin-

ning to the end of the world — receive their true meaning, and all that has happened in those days and is happening receives its proper meaning. If there is an event to which Christianity can be narrowed down, then that event truly is the Resurrection of Christ. If there is a feast to which all feasts can be narrowed down, then again, that is the Resurrection of Christ. That is why the Church calls the feast day of Christ's Resurrection the *Feast of Feasts*; and in the Church we sing: *This is the day the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it! (Psalm 118:24).*

The Resurrection of Christ is the foundation of Christianity, the foundation of the Church, because by it Christ has confirmed His entire teaching. Up until the Resurrection He taught about eternal life; with His Resurrection He has confirmed His teaching and has shown that He truly IS eternal Life. Up until the Resurrection, He taught about the unceasing love of God towards people. By the Resurrection He has proven that love, since for man's sake He has conquered the greatest enemy of mankind — death. If He had not risen from the dead, Christ would have been neither God nor Lord, neither Savior nor Redeemer, but an ordinary man. It is only in the light of His Resurrection that His life and all His works become clear and explainable. Saint Justin of Celije said concerning this: *"Take away the Resurrection from Christ, and you will have taken away His Divinity, because you will have taken from Him that which makes Him God-Man (Theanthropos), and Savior, and the Resurrected One."* Only in Christ's Resurrection did people recognize in Him the God-Man. The Christian faith would be impossible and meaningless without Christ's Resurrection, because death, the main enemy of mankind, would have remained unconquered. This truth enables the Apostle to the nations to say: *"For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen,*

your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:16-20). Christ's Resurrection gives meaning to heaven and earth, and to man and to the history of mankind. By worshipping the Living God, we worship our immortal and eternal human dignity. When Christ resurrected, the holy yeast of immortality entered into the human soul, into the human being and the human mind, and it enlightens each person so that human life receives eternal sense and eternal meaning.

The truth of the Resurrection echoes especially powerfully in our time full of tribulations and suffering — a time which, as seldom before, poses questions about the meaning and goal of life. We are witnesses to the fact that each day there are more and more lonely and forgotten people; that there are many homes without warm human words, so many children robbed of their parents' attention and love. Hospitals are filled with sufferers, those who suffer in body and soul. Phenomena such as violence, terror, robbery of others' property, a never before seen restlessness which has overtaken the souls of people throughout the world, a tendency towards crime, and the threatening of the peace and happiness of others, are the results of spiritually deserted and morally weakened souls, in most cases among young people who stray before they even find a path in their life. Today, as in days past, selfishness and dishonesty destroy every real life in community, all communal good and property. Distrust and theft, violence and robbery, violate the person and his or her security and dignity.

For mankind, there is no greater mystery and unknown than the existence of evil in the world. At times it appears that it has become

concentrated and condensed so much that we can clearly see it or even touch it. Evil appears spectacularly; it loves to expose itself and to fill all printed and electronic media with its message: 'I am unconquerable — life makes no sense because I reign in it.' This message points towards the events of Great and Holy Friday: evil not only reigns on the earth, but it appears to be stronger even than God, for Him too it can cast into the tomb — this is the message of the Evil one, not comprehending that Christ by His death conquers death.

From the moment he comes into being, a person for his entire life longs for peace, happiness and success in life. He likes to be recognized and well known, to do works that will outlive him, to leave behind a name for himself. And even the simplest of people, not only the gifted, the geniuses and those of worldly stature, enjoy it when someone praises something of theirs or admires their actions. Oftentimes in life, though, we do not succeed, we are not happy, nor do we know how to use God's gift for good. There are many more of those who leave behind themselves more days filled with pain and unrest, than of those with many days of happiness and peace.

Is this because evil is stronger than us, or because we do not know how to live? What are we missing in order that we too might become happy? The answer for Christians is well known: in the first place, it is that we learn how to truly love, and in the second, to learn to forgive more. Never can a person reach such true heights as when he loves and gives of himself out of love. Likewise, he ascends to heights when he forgives and when in forgiving he does not turn to insults. Never does a person look so much like God as when he prays to God for forgiveness and asks his brother for forgiveness. Love and forgiveness offer us unlimited joy. A person is greatest when he understands that every bad word he utters to someone else returns to him and hurts him. We cannot bring

evil to someone else without first hurting ourselves. Everything we endure and then reconcile with forgiveness gives us the strength to be victorious, whatever evil it might be. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God* — said our Savior (Matthew 5:9); and peacemakers are all people of big heart who love and who forgive.

Life is beautiful only when it is imbued with love, and it is meaningful only when we bring ourselves into the life of others with love, when we are one with the hungry and thirsty, with the poor and persecuted, and when we are in prison with those who have been convicted. Love is not just a word. Love is God's power only when it is permeated and filled with sacrifice, with giving of oneself for others, for the good of others. A life with meaning is a call to love, a call to service to God and to every human being. As long as we understand life to be self-serving, there will be conflicts, restlessness and wars in the world. When a man recognizes that he is called to give himself for the general good of all people and to multiply his talent by giving it out for the good of his neighbor, every time he does a good deed, he has a foretaste of the Heavenly Kingdom in history.

In the great and all-encompassing Mystery of Divine Love, permeated with the Resurrection of Christ, the Mystery of Christ's Church is revealed and created, to which all people and all creatures of God are called. The Precious Cross, which Saint Constantine the Equal-to-the-Apostles saw in the skies and under which sign he won in battle 1700 years ago, with its vertical and horizontal lines annihilates all barriers among people and creatures and gathers all mankind in one community, a unique living organism which is called to eternity and the unending Kingdom of God.

In this community, gathered around the Resurrected Christ, *there is neither Greek nor Jew..., slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.* (Colossians 3:11) That is why we

Orthodox Christians confess *One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church*, one People of God gathered around Christ from all corners of the earth, from all nations and from all ages.

From this it follows that it is an unforgiveable sin to attempt to lay a foundation for the Church, whether in this world or the next, whether universally or locally, on anything or anybody other than the Resurrected Christ and His Precious Cross. The Church is founded on Christ as the Cornerstone, on the Prophets, Apostles and the Holy Fathers, and she is filled with the Holy Mysteries and holy virtues. Her structure and historical order is based on this, her inner Mystery, calling all the peoples of the earth to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and to observe all that the Lord has commanded to His disciples (cf. Matthew 28:19-20). We especially emphasize that the Church is founded only on the Resurrected Savior because, unfortunately, even in our time some people — in their ignorance or evil-mindedness — try to found the Church on themselves, and in doing so they are rending apart the living organism of God's Church, leading some individuals into the destruction of "the Land of No Return". Let us guard ourselves, dear brothers and sisters and spiritual children, from all old and new idols! Let us live with the eternal truth of the Catholic Church of God, which alone gives freedom from sin, the devil and death!

Let us firmly plant our life in the Church upon love and forgiveness! Let us keep in mind that God will be the final Judge of all, and that He will measure solely according to the yardstick of good, of love for God and love for man. It is necessary to follow these values in our lives — and that means without exception, without justification and without any excuse based on the easy or hard circumstances of our life — inasmuch as we wish to be numbered among God's children.

The last word will not be man's, but God's. Never forget this teaching of our holy ancestors, dear children of Saint Sava, who are scattered willingly or unwillingly throughout all the world's meridians from Australia and America to Europe and Asia.

Calling all of you to love for God and love for man, our dear spiritual children, we call upon you to always remain with Him Who has conquered all suffering and temptations, Who in the end has conquered death as our greatest enemy; that remaining with Him, we may remain in soul and heart with our suffering people in Kosovo and Metohija, and in all earthly regions where Orthodox Christians are suffering because of their name and their faith in the Christ Who said: *"Fear not, I have overcome the world". (John 16:33)*

By His Death and Resurrection the Lord has conquered our death and gave to people an unconquerable and imperishable power, which cannot be surpassed by any power of this world. That power is not manifested as evil — with self-promotion and worldly noise. On the contrary, it is manifested in peace, endurance, and in the seeming weaknesses of the children of the Light. He Who has triumphed over the world grants power to those who are His, that they too may triumph through peace and endurance over the fear within themselves, as well as over their lack of faith; to triumph over all violence inflicted upon the children of God; to endure violence, again with peace and endurance, confident that God's power is everlasting, while human power is only temporary; that all the powers of this world have come and disappeared while God has remained, and that His Church has remained standing and unshakable. It was like that, it is like that, and it will be like that. This truth is being attested to from his prison cell by the Archbishop of Ochrid and Metropolitan of Skoplje Jovan, to whom we send our words of love, comfort, courage and hope, that the Resurrected Christ may open the eyes even of his persecutors.

Believing in the Resurrection of Christ, we believe in the unending renewal of human dignity. Believing in the Resurrection of Christ and in the general resurrection, we believe in the possibility of the resurrection of human morals, of a sense of shame, and of goodness! Only faith in the Resurrection can renew faith and faithfulness in unselfish love. Only faith in immortality can burn up with its flames selfishness as a false principle of life, revealing that the solution and our salvation from our darkness and from all of our hopelessness lies in self-sacrificial love towards God and our neighbor!

Dear brothers and sisters, our spiritual children, let us rejoice in our Resurrected Lord! By rejoicing in Him we are rejoicing in ourselves because in Him we become eternal and immortal. In worshipping Him, the Resurrected One, we worship eternal Life! By partaking of His Body and Blood in Communion, we become one with Him and we gain life eternal. In the Resur-

rected Christ we discover all of our ancestors. All that which is good in the history of the world and in the history of our people rests in Him, and it becomes eternal and indestructible. In the Resurrected Christ we are in communion with our Saints, and they with us! In the Resurrected Christ justice always triumphs! With Him and in Him it will triumph even in our days! If the Resurrected Christ is with us and we with Him, then — who will be against us? With these thoughts and wishes, we greet you with the most joyous salutation:

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Given at the Serbian Patriarchate
in Belgrade at Pascha 2013.

Your prayerful intercessors before the Risen Lord:

Archbishop of Pec,
Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci and
Serbian Patriarch IRINEJ
Bishop of Western America MAXIM
With all Serbian Orthodox Bishops

Српска Православна Црква
својој духовној деци о Васкрсу
2013. године

ИРИНЕЈ

по милости Божјој православни Архиепископ пећки, Митрополит београдско-карловачке и Патријарх српски, са свим архијерејима Српске Православне Цркве, свештенству, монаштву и свим синовима и кћерима наше свете Цркве: благодат, милост и мир од Бога Оца, и Господа нашега Исуса Христа, и Духа Светога, уз радосни васкршњи поздрав:

Христос васкрсе – Ваистину васкрсе!

*...Нећеш оставити душу моју у аду,
нити ћеш дати да Свети твој види труљење*
(Пс 15,10)

Заиста је истинита ова реч пророка Божјег којом нам благовести светли празник Христовог Васкрсења, празник велике хришћанске радости и духовног весеља. Ако постоји дан међу свим данима за радовање, то је данашњи дан – дан у који прослављамо Васкрсење Христа Бога нашега. Благодарени овом светом дану, сви дани људски – од настанка па до краја света – добијају свој прави смисао, и све оно што се у те дане догодило и догађа добија своје право значење. Ако се одиграо догађај на који се може свести Хришћанство, онда тај догађај јесте Васкрсење Христово. Ако има празника на који се могу свести сви празници, то је, опет, Васкрсење Христово. Црква зато празник Васкрсења Христовог и назива *Празником над празницима*. А у цркви појемо: *Ево дана који створи Господ! Радујмо се и веселимо се у њему!* (Пс 117,24).

Васкрсење Христово је темељ Хришћанства, темељ Цркве, јер је њиме Господ потврдио Своје целокупно учење. До Васкрсења Он је учио о вечном животу; Васкрсењем је потврдио то Своје учење и доказао да је Он заиста Живот вечни. До Васкрсења, Он је учио о непрестаној љубави Божјој према људима; Васкрсењем је посведочио ту љубав, јер је ради човека победио највећег непријатеља људског – смрт. Да није васкрсао, Христос не би био ни Бог ни Господ, ни Спаситељ ни Искупитељ, већ обичан човек. Једино у светлости Васкрсења Његовог постаје јасан и објашњив Његов живот на земљи и сва дела Његова. О томе Преподобни Јустин Ћелијски каже: „Одузмите Васкрсење Христу, одузели сте Му Божанство, јер сте Му одузели оно што Га чини Богочовеком, и

Спаситељем, и Васкрситељем.“ Тек Васкрсењем Христовим људи су стварно познали у Њему Богочовека. Без Христовог Васкрсења, вера хришћанска би била бесмислена и немогућа, јер би смрт, главни непријатељ рода људског, остала непобеђена. Ова истина омогућава Апостолу народа да каже: *...ако мртви не устају, то ни Христос није устао. А ако Христос није устао, узалуд вера ваша; још сте у гресима својим. Онда и они који уснуше у Христу, пропадоше. И ако се само у овоме животу надамо у Христа, јаднији смо од свију људи. Но заиста је Христос устао из мртвих, те постаде Првенац оних који су умрли* (1. Кор 15,16-20). Христово Васкрсење даје смисао и небу и земљи, и човеку и људској историји. Клањајући се Живоме Богу, ми се клањамо и свом бесмртном, непролазном људском достојанству. Када је Христос васкрсао, свети квасац бесмртности ушао је у људску душу, у људско биће и у људски ум, и обасјава човека да би људски живот задобио вечни смисао и вечно значење.

Истина Васкрсења посебно снажно одјекује у нашем времену, препуном патњи и страдања – времену у којем се, као ретко када раније, поставља питање смисла и циља живота. Сведоци смо тога да је из дана у дан све више усамљених и остављених; толико је домова без топле људске речи, толико је деце лишено родитељске пажње и љубави. Пуне су болнице страдалника, оних који болују телом и душом. Појаве као што су насиље, терор, пљачка туђе имовине, невиђен немир који је данас завладао у душама људи широм света, склоност криминалу, угрожавање мира и среће других, произилазе из духовно опустелих и морално ослабљених душа, и то најчешће код младих људи који се губе пре него ли и нађу неки пут у живот. Себичност и непоштење и данас, као и јуче, уништавају сваки прави живот у заједници, заједничко добро и имовину. Неповерење и грамзивост, насиље и отимање туђег, угрожавају личност и њену сигурност и достојанство.

За човека нема веће тајне и непознанице од постојања зла у свету. Понекад нам се чини да се оно толико склупчало и згуснуло да га можемо сасвим јасно видети, готово опипати. Зло наступа спектакуларно, оно воли да се експонира и да напуни све штампане и електронске медије поруком: ја сам непобедиво – живот је бесмислен јер у њему ја владам. Оваква порука указује на догађаје Великог Петка: зло не влада само земљом, већ је јаче и од Бога, јер и Њега Самог може да отера у гроб – поручује нечастиви, не схватајући да Христос

смрћу Својом побеђује смрт.

Од када постоји, човек читавог живота жуди за миром, срећом и успехом у животу. Воли да буде признат и познат, да чини дела која ће га надживети, да иза себе остави своје име. И крајње обичан човек, а не само обдарени, геније и светска величина, ужива када неко хвали нешто његово, или се диви његовом поступку. Врло често, међутим, у животу не успевамо, нисмо срећни, нити унемо дар Божји до краја да употребимо на добро. Многобројнији су они који иза себе остављају више дана са мукама и немирима, него ли они са много дана среће и спокојства.

Да ли је то тако због тога што је зло јаче од нас, или зато што не унемо да живимо? Шта нам недостаје да бисмо и ми били срећни? Одговор је Хришћанима познат: на првом месту је да научимо истински волети, а на другом, да научимо довољно праштати. Никада човек не може досегнути истинску висину као када воли и из љубави даје себе. Такође, висини стреми и када прашта и када се у праштању не осврће на увреду. Никада човек не личи толико на Бога као када моли Бога за опроштај, и брата да му опрости. Љубав и праштање пружају човеку неизмерну радост. Човек је највећи када схвати да се свака рђава реч коју упуту другоме враћа њему и повређује га. Не можемо другом да нанесемо зло, а да пре тога не повредимо себе. Све што отрпимо и праштањем поравнамо даје нам снагу да победимо, било шта да је у питању. *Блажени миротворци, јер ће се синови Божји назвати* – рекао је Спаситељ наш (Мт 5,9); а миротворци су сви људи великог срца који воле и који праштају.

Живот је леп само када је прожет љубављу, а осмишљен је само онда када се са љубављу

уносимо у туђи живот, када смо заједно са гладнима и жеднима, са сиромашнима и прогнанима, када смо и у тамници са осуђеницима. Љубав није само огољена реч. Љубав је сила Божја само када је прожета и испуњена жртвом, давањем себе за другог, за добро другог. Живот са смислом је позив на љубав, на служење Богу и сваком човеку. Докле год живот будемо схватили као служење себи, у свету ће владати сукоби, немири и ратови. Када човек прихвати да је позван да себе даје за опште добро свих људи, и да свој таленат умножава тиме што га раздаје за добро ближњег, и сваки пут када учини добро дело, он предокуша Царство Небеско у историји.

У великој и свеобухватној Тајни Божанске Љубави, прожете Васкрсењем Христовим, открива се и остварује Тајна Цркве Христове, у коју су позвани сви људи и сва створења Божја. Часни Крст, који је Равноапостолни Цар Константин видео на небу и под чијим знаком је пре 1700 година победио, својом вертикалом и хоризонталом укида све преграде међу људима и створењима, и сабира све човечанство у једну заједницу, јединствени живи организам који је призван на вечност и непролазност Царства Божјега.

У тој заједници, сабраној око Васкрслог Христа, *нема Јелина ни Јудејина ..., роба ни слободњака, него је све и у свему Христос* (Кол 3,11). Зат о ми православни Хришћани исповедамо *Једну, Свету, Саборну и Апостолску Цркву*, један Божји Народ сабран око Христа са свих крајева земље, из свих народа у свим временима.

Из овог произилази да је неопростив грех темељити Цркву, у овом и у оном свету, било васељенску било помесну, на било чему или било коме

другом, изузев на Васкрслом Христу и Његовом Часном Крсту. Црква је утемељена на Христу као крајеугаоном Камену, на Пророцима, Апостолима и Светим Оцима, и испуњена је светим Тајнама и светим врлинама. Своје устројство и историјски поредак заснива на тој својој унутарњој Тајни, призивајући свеземаљске народе да се крсте у име Оца, Сина и Светог Духа, и да држе све што је Господ заповедио Својим ученицима (Мт 28,19-20). Посебно наглашавамо да се Црква темељи само на Васкрслом Спаситељу; јер, нажалост, и у наше време поједини људи – у незнању или у злоумљу – покушавају да утемеље Цркву на себи, а тако разарају живи организам Цркве Божје, одводећи појединце у пропаст „Земље недођије“. Чувајмо се, браћо и сестре и децо духовна, старих и нових идола! Живимо вечном истином Саборне Цркве Божје, која једина даје слободу од греха, ђавола и смрти!

Утврдимо свој живот у Цркви на љубави и праштању! Имајмо на уму да ће Бог свима бити последњи Судија, и да ће Он мерити искључиво по мерилима добра, Богољубља и човекољубља. Ове вредности је неопходно следити у нашим животима – и то без изузетка, без оправдања и без изговора на лаке или тешке животне околности – уколико желимо да се сврстамо међу децу Божју. Последња реч неће бити људска, већ Божја. Овај наука наших светих предака никада не заборавите ни ви, децо Светог Саве, који сте расејани вољно и невољно по свим меридијанима, од Аустралије и Америке до Европе и Азије.

Позивајући вас све на Богољубље и човекољубље, децо наша духовна, позивамо вас и да свагда останете уз Онога Који је победио сва страдања и

искушења, Који је на крају победио смрт као нашег највећег непријатеља; да, остајући уз Њега, останемо душом и срцем и уз наш страдални народ на Косову и Метохији, и у свим крајевима земаљским где православни страдају због свог имена и своје вере у Христа, Који је рекао: *Не бојте се, Ја сам победио свет* (Јн 16,33).

Смрћу и Васкрсењем Господ је победио нашу смрт и подарио је људима непобедиву и неуништиву снагу, којој не могу одолети никакве силе овог света. Та се снага не испољава као зло – саморекламом и светском буком. Напротив, она се пројављује у миру, трпљењу, у привидним слабостима деце светлости. Он Који је победио свет дарује снагу онима који су Његови, да и они побеђују миром и трпљењем страх у себи, као и своје неверје и маловерје; да побеђују сва насиља која се врше над децом Божјом; да одолевају насиљу, опет миром и трпљењем, сигурни да је Божја сила свевремена, а људска привремена; да су све силе овога света долазиле и пролазиле док је Бог остајао, и светиња Његова остајала, усправно и непоколебиво. Тако је било, тако јесте, и тако ће бити. Ову истину из тамнице сведочи и Архиепископ охридски и Митрополит скопски Господин Јован, коме упућујемо речи љубави, утехе, охрабрења и наде да ће Васкрсли Христос отворити очи и његовим прогонитељима.

Верујући у Васкрсење Христово, ми верујемо у непрекидно обнављање људског достојанства. Верујући у Васкрсење Христово и уопште васкрсење, ми верујемо у могућност васкрсења људског морала, стида и доброте! Само вера у Васкрсење може обновити веру и верност несебичној љубави. Само вера у бесмртност спаљује својим пламеном саможивост као лажно начело живота, откривајући да је у саможртвеној љубави према Богу и ближњем излаз и спас из наше таме и свих наших безизлаза!

Браћо и сестре, децо наша духовна, радујмо се Васкрсломе Господу! Радујући се Њему, ми се радујемо самима себи јер постајемо вечни и бесмртни. Клањајући се Њему Васкрсломе, ми се клањамо вечном животу! Причешћујући се Телом и Крвљу Његовом, постајемо једно са Њим и задобијамо живот вечни. У Васкрсломе Христу откривамо све наше претке. Све што је добро у историји света и у историји нашега рода налази се у Њему, и постаје непролазно и неуништиво. У Васкрсломе Христу ми смо у заједници са нашим Светима и они су са нама! У Васкрсломе Христу правда увек побеђује! Њиме и у Њему она ће победити и у наше дане! Ако је Васкрсли Христос са нама и ми са Њим, онда – ко ће против нас? Са овим мислима и

жељама, ми вас поздрављамо најрадоснијим поздравом:

Христос Васкрсе – Ваистину Васкрсе!

Дано у Патријаршији српској у Београду, о Васкрсу 2013. године.

Ваши молитвеници пред Васкрслим Христом:

**АРХИЕПИСКОП ПЕЋКИ,
МИТРОПОЛИТ БЕОГРАДСКО-
КАРЛОВАЧКИ
И ПАТРИЈАРХ СРПСКИ ИРИНЕЈ**
Епископ западноамерички **МАКСИМ**
Са свим архијерејима
Српске Православе Цркве





Драга браћо и сестре,
ХРИСТОС ВАСКРСЕ!

Ево нас још једном заједно прослављајући празник над празницима! Када је Спаситељ наш Господ Исус Христос васкрсао и јавио се Својим апостолима и мироносицама поздравио их је говорећи **РАДУЈТЕ СЕ!** Када се касније јавио својим ученицима, прве речи су му биле **МИР СВИМА!**, мир, јер су били збуњени знајући да је Учитељ разапет и да је умро.

На богослужењима Велике недеље подсећамо се највећег догађаја из људске историје, Христовог распећа и смрти, празног гроба и Васкрсења. Када су жене мироносице дошле на гроб Христов да помажу његово тело мирисима, чуле су анђела који је рекао **НЕ БОЈТЕ СЕ!** Те речи нису биле упућене само њима, већ и свима нама који следимо Христову победоносну науку. Христос је својим Васкрсењем победио смрт, заменио је страх својим обећањем вечног живота. Више немамо разлога да се бојимо, јер је Спаситељ својом смрћу победио смрт, као што се и пева у Тропару Вакрсења.

Радујмо се Васкрсењу Христовом и помолимо се Спаситељу да нам подари снаге да издржимо и победимо сва искушења која нас свакодневно сусрећу. Наша Света православна црква нам је одредила време поста и покајања, како би се што достојније припремили и радосно дочекали Васкрс. Надам се да овај Васкрс дочекујемо ојачани у вери и жељи да наставимо путем спасења.

Поклонимо се, дакле, браћо и сестре, Њему, Господару живота и смрти, Господу Васкрслом и Васкрситељу свеколике творевине, Који је „Хлеб живота“ што „сиђе с неба“ и даје се „за живот света“ (Јов. 6, 48 – 51)! Запевајмо сви, једним устима и једним срцем, радосну песму Пасхе:

***Христос васкрсе из мртвих,
смрћу смрт победивши
и онима у гробовима живот даровавши.***

**ХРИСТОС ВАСКРСЕ!
ВАИСТИНУ ВАСКРСЕ!**

Ваш молитвеник пред Васкрслим Господом,
Протојереј Ђурица Гордић
Са Управом Саборног Храма

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Christ is risen!**

When Christ first rose from the tomb and appeared to His disciples and the myrrh-bearing women, He greeted them with the word "Rejoice!". And then later when He appeared to the Apostles His first words were "Peace be unto you!"; peace, because their confusion was very great - the Lord had died. It seemed as though all hope had perished for the victory of God over human wickedness, for the victory of good over evil. It would seem that life itself had been slain and light had faded. All that remained for the disciples who had believed in Christ, in life, in love, was to go on existing, for they could no longer live. Having tasted eternal life they were now condemned to expect cruel persecution and death at the hands of Christ's enemies. "Peace be unto you", proclaimed Christ. "I have arisen, I am alive, I am with you, and henceforth nothing - neither death nor persecution - will ever separate us or deprive you of eternal life, the victory of God". And then, having convinced them of His physical resurrection, having restored their peace and an unshakable certainty of faith, Christ uttered words which may in the present age sound menacing and frightening to many, "As the Father sent Me, so I send you". Only a few hours after Christ's death on the cross, not long after the fearful night in Gethsemane, the betrayal by Judas when Christ had been taken by His enemies, condemned to death, led out beyond the city walls and died on the cross, these words sounded menacing. And it was only faith, the conquering certainty that Christ had risen, that God had conquered, that the Church had become an invincible force that transformed these words into words of hope and triumphant God-speed.

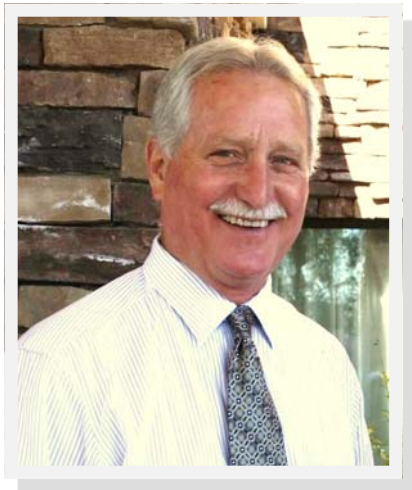


And the disciples went out to preach; nothing could stop them. Twelve men confronted the Roman empire. Twelve defenseless men, twelve men without legal rights were out to preach the simplest message, that divine love had entered the world and that they were willing to give their lives for the sake of this love, in order that others might believe and come to life, and that a new life might begin for others through their death. [I Cor. IV :9-13]

This preaching changed the attitude of man to man; every person became precious in the eyes of another. The destiny of the world was widened and deepened; it burst the bounds of earth and united earth to heaven. And now we Christians, in the words of a western preacher, in the person of Jesus Christ, have become the people to whom God has committed the care of other people; that they should believe in themselves because God believes in us; that they should hope for all things because God puts His hope in us; that they should be able to carry our victorious faith through the furnace of horror, trials, hatred and persecution - that faith which has already conquered the world, in the faith in Christ, God crucified and risen.

So let us also stand up for this faith. Let us proclaim it fearlessly, let us teach it to our children, let us bring them to the sacraments of the Church which, even before they can understand it, unite them with God and plant eternal life in them.

All of us, sooner or later, will stand before the judgment of God and will have to answer whether we were able to love the whole world - believers and unbelievers, the good and the bad - with the sacrificial, crucified, all-conquering love with which God loves us. May the Lord give us invincible courage, triumphant faith, joyful love in order that the kingdom for which God became man should be established, that we should truly become godly, that our earth should indeed become heaven where love, triumphant love lives and reigns. **Christ is risen!**



**Saint John the Baptist
Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
Parish Board President's Message**

**CHRIST IS RISEN!
INDEED HE IS RISEN!
ХРИСТОС ВАСКРЕ!
ВАЊСТИНУ ВАСКРЕ!**

Dear brothers and sisters,

Let us rejoice for Christ has risen! Easter is the time when we come together to celebrate Christ's triumph over death and the promise of eternal life. While reflecting on Christ's life, death and resurrection during this Holy Week, we are reminded of friends and family that are not with us to celebrate this holy season. Loss of life, however it comes, has a way of making most of us re-prioritize what we feel strongly about and where we choose to devote our energy, attention and emotion. Headlines outlining recent tragic events make all of us step back a moment, take a deep breath, and re-evaluate what's really important in our lives. Now more than ever we are mindful of how precious life is.

But Easter is the season of hope. We know that after darkness comes light, after winter comes spring, after the crucifixion came the resurrection so after death we have eternal life. The promise of Easter is renewal. Let us renew ourselves in our faith during this season when good prevails over evil, love will triumph over hate and courage will conquer fear.

Blessings to each of you and your families as you experience the peace of the risen Christ in your hearts and homes.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Stan Grgich

**St. Sophia's Sisterhood
President's Message**

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**Dear Brothers and Sisters
in Christ,
Hristos Voskrese!
Christ is Risen!**



During this most Holy time, I reflect upon my life in and outside the church. I give thanks for my family and friends. I send sincere wishes to you all for a joyous Easter Celebration. The St. Sophia Sisterhood continues to focus on our future and we need growth in membership. The Sisterhood has always supported the church financially, spiritually and physically. The women of our church guide our future, our children.

We are always interested in looking at ways that we can preserve our traditions and pass down our teachings. The Sisterhood is looking at starting up cooking classes and putting together a recipe book with traditional foods from the old country that we all so enjoy. If you are interested in sending a recipe or leading a cooking class, please contact me at our email: sfkss@yahoo.com or call me at 415-297-0125.

This year our parish suffered the loss of our founding fathers and dedicated parishioners (Miro Medan, Petar Lucich and Milan Popovich). For those who walked before us we thank you for your teachings, guidance, devotion and life lessons. For those that come behind us we can only hope that we are able to lead and guide you half as well as our parents or grandparents ahead of us have done.

Reflection and Being a Christian.....The great poet, Dr. Maya Angelou said "Just when you think the rain will never stop, God sends a rainbow through the clouds." God can show up in all kinds of different ways in our lives, even peeking through and giving us hope during the darkest periods of our lives. She says that she is often leery when someone comes up to her and boldly pronounces, "I am a Christian!" She says that she thinks to herself, "already?" Being a Christian is a lifelong journey Angelou says. Instead of saying she has arrived at being Christian, Dr. Angelou often tells people she is "working at being a Christian."

I think working at being a Christian is an accurate description of what we are all trying to do as we seek to follow Christ in this world. May we continue to work together at becoming Christians. Amen and Amen.

With Sisterly Love, Yours in Christ,
Liliana Perazich
SF KSS President, St. Sophia Sisterhood.

Homily on Sunday of Orthodoxy 2013
Delivered at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church in San Francisco
By Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Western American Diocese MAXIM

The Resurrection of Christ Event as the Foremost Context for each Epoch

“The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.” Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”
“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.
“Come and see,” said Philip.
When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”
“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.
Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”
Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, *you are the Son of God*; you are the king of Israel.”
Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. *You will see greater things than that.*”
He then added, “Very truly I tell you, *you will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.*” (John 1, 43-51)

These words has chosen our Holy Church so that in the Eucharistic gathering and solemn celebration the Sunday of Orthodoxy be celebrated. And these words of an invitation (“Come and see”) and of a confession (“You are the Son of God”) summarize the character and nature of the Orthodox Church and are fitting to this gathering most especially. These Gospel words are the most appropriate words that the holy Ambon of this Church has to expose for a pious reflection and spiritual benefit on this day of the “triumph of Orthodoxy.”

Your Eminences, Reverend Clergy, brothers and sisters,
The most pious fullness of the Church,

If there is a moment when space and time lose their attribute of dividing and they become bearers of the communion of the living and the dead, those nearby and those afar, the Local and Universal Church, history and the Kingdom, then all this in a unique way has taken place here this evening—thanks to the commemoration of the unforgettable Fathers of the Council of Constantinople 843 and the restoration of icon veneration. The city of San Francisco today becomes the little *universe* (ecumene) thanks to the presence of the representatives—bishops, priests, faithful—of the most holy local Orthodox Churches.



The responsibility of the Church in our time and time to come is to give an answer to the above Nathanael’s dilemma. If today people say: “*Orthodox Church!*

Can anything good come from there?” we will always tell them: “*Come and see!*” For this question is not just for Nathanael to ask, this is the question for every generation and age.

But what will they see?

1. First of all, they will see the Divine Mystagogy in which everything is sacredly celebrated in a manner fitting to God. “Here we are not listening to lessons on theology and history. We are taking part in the *drama* of human history; but it is not the same as classical tragedy in which *human* genius and artistry are at work. Here the Lord, the God-man, is made known as the One ‘who offers and is offered’ ‘for the life of the world and its salvation’.” This is what Sunday of Orthodoxy proclaims: the Church as a *communion* of the Holy Spirit. That is what the Church celebrates today, and that is the issue of interest that we need to address at the outset, related to the survival of Christianity as a civilizational phenomenon. In the modern age of individualism when it seems that more people are returning to religious atavism, the *communal* character of the Church can regain the relevance to Christianity.

But that brings us to the next important question: how does a particular generation (and its culture) recognizes Christ as *their* Savior? What is it that makes Him unique in all times, the only *new* thing that has ever appeared under the Sun? It is *the mystery of the God-Man*. Even though the ancient world knew of the immortality of the soul, the beauty (κάλλος), the angels, “sons of God”, “redeemers”, and so on, it has no precedent whatsoever for the mystery of the God-Man – the mystery that connects the history with the eternity and *immortalizes* not just His human nature, but also the entire universe and every individual being. That is why St. John of Damascus said that Christ is “the only new thing under the sun.”

*

As Christ Himself asked His disciples an existential question: “*Whom say the people that I am*” (τίνα με

λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι) so also we are asked the same question by Him. From the response of the Apostles, we see that the Person of Jesus Christ seems to have generated an important question of His identity among the contemporaries: *Who is He?* However, despite the potential “contextual” responses (e.g., a prophet, John the Baptist, and similar, all these terms imply a moral teacher), the response of the Apostle Peter and Nathanael—you are the Son of the Living God—does not come based on the context (“for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee”), but comes “from above” (“but my Father which is in heaven”). Christ is the Son of the Living God, the one who is able to *destroy death* and *judge the world*, and therefore the Savior of the world.

According to the faith of the Church, the God-Man Christ is **the answer** to the expectations of every (human) being. “Everyone who lives and suffers is looking for an answer to the problems of their life and their pain.” Each epoch does *not* begin its search for God from some eternal principle (which it tries to understand or interpret), but from *the thirst for the resurrected life*.

In this light, Christ is the truth not because He is the epistemological principle that explains the universe, but because He is the Life and the Resurrection and because the entire world finds its purpose in the incorruptible existence of Christ Who, in Himself, *recapitulates* the whole creation and history over again.

Thus the preaching of the Resurrection became the nucleus of every dogma. “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised” (1 Cor. 15:16). “Christ is Risen” is the message for all people. The Incarnate Christ overcame death thus showing the correlation between truth and existence, something that would be recognized by the Apostles only after the Resurrection, not before. In His Personality the created lives forever, of which the Holy Eucharist is a guarantor as the Resurrectional Event *par excellence*. But the point is that this truth is not merely proclaimed by the Orthodox but lived in the faith, and our being then resounds as it shouts: “Christ is risen”! For Christ not only solves the problem of a simple being (and its ethical-aesthetic or juridical dilemma), but gives an *eternal well-being*, because He is the bearer of immortality, incorruption, and the perpetuation of existence.

That is why for the Orthodox Church the context of the experience of this fact is the Divine Eucharist as the *good news* of triumph over death. It is there that Christians come to know God by fostering a *relationship* with Him and not by grasping the meanings of some unalterable, abstract, divine concepts. Here we have reached an important point: Christ cannot be separated from his Church. The essence of Christology is not in itself, but in its existential “transformation” and “topos”, which is *the Church*. In “itself”, without ecclesiological realization, Christology is simply a “dogma” without existential significance: it explains something that is applicable to Jesus Christ (for example, the Incarnation), but not to all of us. When looked from without the communal experience of the Church it is an “illogical” dogma out of context. Even for a believing Christian, separated from the Church’s community, a dogma is a “supralogical” proposition which is believed without argument solely because it is a “dogma”.

*

2. However, this triumph is recognized and lived as a theological *trial*, which leads to experience and consciousness of the presence of the Risen One as “God with us.” “When I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor 12:10). And when we collapse, we get back on our feet. The Sunday of Orthodoxy—being placed at the beginning of Great Lent—clearly demonstrates that any *dogmatic “gigantomachia”* (struggle) does not simply end in the *agreement* of words and formulas, but in *reality* of the Mystery, recognized in the Image of the Crucified and Resurrected Christ. Then by His ethos the Church can daringly struggle in history and, although realistically weak, be victorious; being defeated, crushed, humiliated, she is able to encourage the defeated, and to resurrect the dead, and in the arena of history appear “in another form” (Mark 16:12), and exist even where she phenomenologically “is not”. About this and such a victory of dogmas testify—martyria—the Church Fathers of this Feast. They bear that name exactly because they are helping us to be *born again* to the community of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, in the Orthodox Church. “you are astounded at the insistence of Divine providence to working at your benefit.”

This Feast of Orthodoxy invites us to see the Resurrection of Christ Event as the foundation of all *ortho-doxia* (=true faith) or dogmas, and no dogma can be understood or explained *in itself*, outside this *event* and its relation to *it*. Christology is existentially irrelevant if death, as the basic problem of the creation, is not *overcome*. Christology is about the following question: Who is Jesus Christ not only for the Apostolic Age but for every particular existential condition, for each epoch?

The answer to this question is not possible on the basis of ephemeral human desires and opinions. It requires an *event* that ontologically joins the created with the Uncreated, an *event* which in all creation breeds hope for overcoming death, the longing for true life. This is exactly what happens in the case of our Orthodox **Icons**. Their inspired images and landscapes are a consolation that speaks of the Resurrection, a call to life for people of all generations. When the first Christian accepted the Resurrection of Christ Event and linked Christ with their relevant, essential issues, then their art and culture inevitably manifested the resurrected ethos, just as - following the logic of the Resurrection—the Christian *iconography* from the beginning painted a *risen* man, adding a crown of light as a sign of adoption and the Resurrectional relationship with the transcendent God.

*

Dear brothers and sisters, I wanted to share these thoughts with you today because I believe that the question

of



man's **eternal survival** is the subject that interests and occupies us all.

Today we have general confusion. Ideological disorientation. A weakening economy. But at the heart of a world which is withering away (and many from East and West want to exploit this fall and decay), there is a sacred asset, indestructible and incorruptible, which is "not of this world" (cf. Jn 18:36). And it saves the world in East and West. A power that is "made perfect in weakness" (see 2Cor 12:9). This power, as love incarnate, has transfigured life and liturgically given beauty to death, because it has abolished it.

However, the Sunday of Orthodoxy teaches us one more point that is often overlooked. It is the need to belong to a community, that is, to such a body that generates new relationships that are not simply cultural and contextual, but are the fruit of the Spirit, "the community of the Holy Spirit". Hence the exclusivity of the Church community - and her right to ex-communicate, exclude those who do not know God the way the Son knows Him, and those adopted by Him. Only to the community of the "little" is fully revealed what is hidden from the "wise" and "prudent" (Matthew 11: 25); the truth about God as the Father. Accordingly, a non-Christian context cannot give the knowledge of the Father, and the proof is that the spiritual experiences similar to those of the people in ancient Greece, medieval China or South America in the 21st century, do not necessarily lead to the Christian faith. What is necessary is *baptism* and **belonging** to the local community in which God reveals Himself as the Father.

Your Eminency, dear brothers and sisters,

I tried to remind you how hard it is to preserve the doctrine of the Resurrection in the center of theology, how much effort, struggle, vigilance it takes lest we be misled by other "contextual" solutions. The Fathers of the Church gave their life for this Truth.

Today's Feast announces that the mission and the calling of the Church is to foster precisely the hermeneutics of the Resurrection as something that speaks to all people and all contexts. Our theology, as Eucharistic vision of the world, has preserved and upheld this truth throughout history and will continue to do so into the future, in our millennium, bringing hope

and life to the world. In that perspective, eternal truths of the Church experiences come to us revived with a new infusion of creativity. The way is new, but not the content; we are not talking about new things, but about the same, in a new—a different way. Christ asks us again: "But whom say ye that I am?" The answer cannot but read exactly like the one Peter and Nathanael offered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

The Holy Fathers speak to us and the world today in the 21st century and say: Come and see! Be patient where you are. Carry with patient endurance the cross that the Lord has permitted you to carry. And Grace will come into you. Then you will see things invisible. And you will move from mimicking the tradition and "recycling" the theology (a mere repetition of accepted definitions) to opening your ears so that you may hear "what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 2:7) and receive from Him the yeast that "leavens" the whole history. And things past speech will be given you, as an abundance of eternal life and unity, by the God of love: to whom is due all glory, honor and worship unto the ages of ages.

Finally, from this Holy Ambon we extend our wholehearted 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 our people.

Orthodox Christianity in San Francisco

By Stevan Davidovich



On a Saturday evening, the 21st of March 2013, I attended a unique and informative gathering of Orthodox Christians in the San Francisco Bay Area. As a prelude to the Sunday of Orthodoxy, four bishops, all from different Dioceses, came together at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church to conduct vespers in a pan-orthodox union that is inspiring to see. St. Nicholas is located in Diamond Heights. With the Bishops came one of the largest gatherings of priests and deacons I have ever witnessed. While I don't have an exact number, I would estimate the size of the clergy to be about 40. The four bishops were His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos from the Greek Diocese, His Eminence Bishop Joseph from the Antiochian Diocese, His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin from the Orthodox Church in America and from our Western American Diocese His Grace Bishop Maxim.

The evening started at 6pm with the conduct of Vespers. The church attendees filled up about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the church and had a very large number of youth in attendance. One large gathering of youth turned out to be an assembly of Antiochian teenagers who traveled from southern California by bus to San Francisco to visit the site of the Saint John the Wonderworker, who is located at the Russian Cathedral on Geary Street. I was impressed by the polite nature of the youth and their serious participation in the activities of the evening. The evening started at 6pm with Vespers. At 7pm it proceeded with a one-hour question and answer session of the Bishops who sat on the altar.

While there is not enough space to write about all of the topics discussed I do want to highlight the nature of some of the questions that caught my attention and the associated responses. I did notice an interesting pattern. There appeared to be about an equal number of questions from the youth vs. the elder attendees. One question from a teenager caught my attention and showed the depth of thought from our youth. He asked the Bishops to distinguish between the meanings of "to proceed from the father" vs. "begotten from the father". It took me a moment to realize that he was asking this question as a direct result of his reading of the Nicene Creed, where our Lord Jesus Christ is begotten of the Father, while the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. I have never realized this difference and was struck by the deep yearning of this young man to fully understand and embrace his faith.

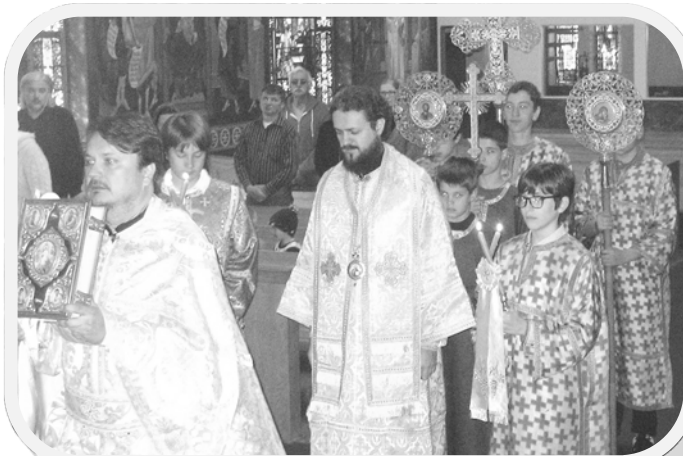
Other questions of note were in regard to the current state of the church in regard to issues of jurisdictions and any efforts in the reunification of the church with the Roman Catholic Church. This topic was addressed by all of the Bishops in various ways and properly included short historical summaries of the founding of the church. It was pointed out that discussions with the Roman Church have been occurring for over the last 50 years. It was noted that the new Pope addressed himself as the Bishop of Rome, which is the correct Orthodox title and a most of the Orthodox Churches sent senior representatives to attend the installment of Pope Francis.



One area that did bring up a debate among the Bishops was the response to a question of the role of the Internet in relationship to the church. A woman asked a question if she could find on the Internet a recommended site by the clergy that contained approved references for study. She brought up the great point that there is much to read, but she is not always sure if what she is reading is spiritually or canonically correct. The Bishops started to debate among them and reflected both the positive and negative roles of the Internet. While they all agree that the Internet has an important role in helping us learn about our faith and extend the reach of the Church a concern was raised that providing an approved list could weaken one's search for answers. It was actually Bishop Maxim, the youngest, in the group who brought up the dangers of the Internet. He articulated that the Internet needs to be viewed as one of many means to gain insight into our spiritual journey.



Following an hour of questions and debate the attendees, both clergy and lay proceeded downstairs to the Church hall for a nicely prepared Lenten dinner. It was nice to see and be a part of an Orthodox community that prays together and seeks to understand our Church in ways that are intended to enhance our spiritual journey. As I departed the hall to go home I realized that what I had attended was the largest Bible study I have ever been at. I hope that this type of gathering can be arranged again, and that we at St. John's can host the event.



His Grace Bishop Maxim with our Altar boys on Theodor's Saturday March 23, 2013

From left to right: Zoran Kovacevic, Slavo Riginich, Nikola Kovacevic, Jovan & Petar Gordic, Serge Riginich, Simon Votaw, Richard Votaw, Nemanja Kovacevic, Ranko & Slavko Gajic, Fr. Djurica & Strahinja Kovacevic



At the Diamond Peak Ski Resort



Fr. Djurica & Altar boys with Richie Votaw at Alpine Meadows

Altar Boys Ski Trip

On March 16th, 2013 our Altar Boys went to Lake Tahoe on an exclusive ski trip. Going together was a great experience. Our group arrived at Incline Village where Mr. Serge Rgisich provided us a beautiful apartment for our stay. Saturday morning, our group went to Rookies Sports Bar (owned by Mr. Rgisich) for breakfast. While there, we had a chance to meet and talk with his father Slavo Rgisich, who is a World War II veteran and he was a marine of the elite Carlson's Raiders. It was very interesting and a great honor to talk with him.

After breakfast, we went to Mount Rose, a massive resort which you can ski on both sides of the mountain. Imagine skiing on a peak as high as 10,776 feet! That's what we did. We went on mostly blue ski trails that led to the bottom of the mountain and back on to ski lifts that led to the top.

By the end of the day, we were exhausted. That evening back in Incline Village, we met Mr. Richard Votaw, another Serb living at Lake Tahoe. He invited our group to ski at Alpine Meadows on Sunday. We were excited to go to another ski resort that we haven't been to.

On Sunday morning, after prayer and breakfast, we left our apartment and set off to Alpine Meadows. When we arrived, we went to the trails and started skiing. Mr. Votaw's sons, Nick and Simon, showed us the trails and were basically our "tour" guide. Nick gave us tips and lessons to improve our skiing abilities.

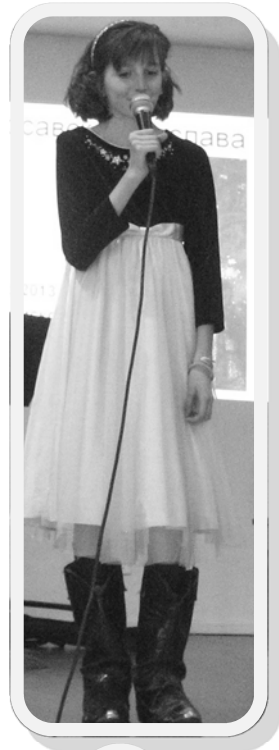
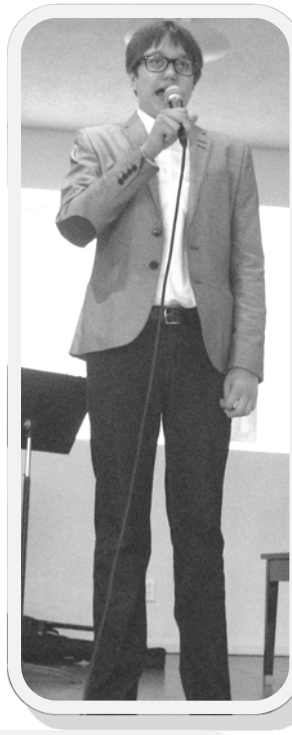
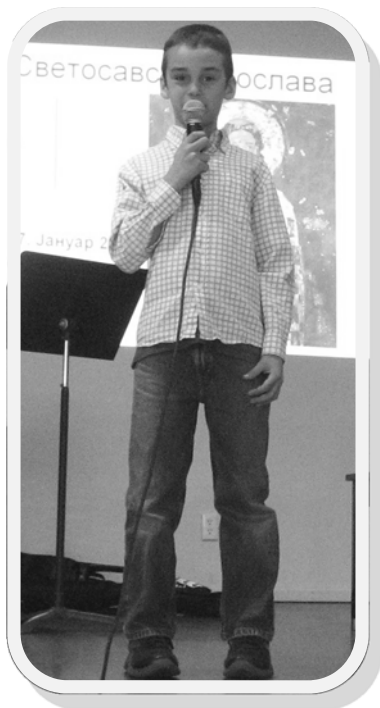
We had a wonderful time at Lake Tahoe, and we greatly appreciate Serge's and Richie's hospitality. We hope to see them again next year.

I would like to invite all boys in our parish to join us on Sundays to help Father Djurica in the altar.

Petar Gordic

**St. Sava
Celebration
2013
Светосавска
прослава**





Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Hristos Voskrese!



I was thinking about what I should write in the treasurer's report. I could write, all is well, the bills are paid, and life continues. End of story. Then I thought about the Gracanica Herald. I look forward to reading the articles, hoping to glean a little patristic wisdom, and I check to see if my picture is in it. Usually it's not. I believe there is at least one issue with my photo but I honestly I can't recall which one. Now it would be strange if there were no pictures of Father Djurica, the Opstina president, or the Sisterhood president as these individuals are the movers, the ones that ask others to perform a service for our church and in Father's case to serve the liturgy and shepherd the sheep into the

fold.

You may ask, "What is the point of this article?" I ask you to bear with me a little longer while I ramble on. Okay, my picture is not in the Gracanica Herald but there is something greater about this booklet. This book is a window into a tiny portion of the events that occur at St. John's Cathedral. It reminds me of every time I entered the church, the large hall, or the office I have entered God's house. I am reminded of conversations with people I see every Sunday and of others I see occasionally. This little report on the status of the church makes me realize I do not know even one percent of all the people involved in the dreaming, the planning, even the construction of our beautiful church. Most of those folks don't have their picture in the Gracanica Herald either.

Here is the point. It takes a lot of people working behind the scenes to keep our church alive and well. It takes altar boys serving with Father, it takes the members of the Sisterhood to sustain the kitchen, to raise funds to support people in need, and provide lovely lunches after Sunday worship (to name a few activities), it takes members of the congregation to paint, repair, rewire, replace, and install things in the church and parish house, it takes moms and dads bringing their children to Sunday School, to kolo practice, to learn poems for Savin Dan, it takes people to be a tutor on Sunday mornings, have candles available, sell the icons, books, and calendars, be a welcoming face to a first time visitor, it takes members of Opstina to take care of the business side of keeping a church alive and well. Guess what? Most of those people will probably not have their picture in the Gracanica Herald.

I am aware of the contributions of a few people but I also know there are many who have quietly done what was necessary and I don't know about it. To those folks I thank you from the bottom of my heart. When you look around St. John's Cathedral think about what you can do. It doesn't have to be a big Hollywood production. It may be as simple as taking the trash out or cleaning the wax out of the sand, or welcoming a visitor to our church. It is the small things in life that add up to big things. We are all part of this Orthodox Christian community.

St. John's is not only my church, it is your church, it is our church, and most importantly it is God's church.

As treasurer of the Opstina I invite you to come and see what I do. I would like you to see what Bitsy, our Financial Secretary does. What we do with the church finances is not a secret and our books are open. If you have a little extra time, come join the Opstina. We could use a little help. You might discover you have something to contribute but hadn't realized it. Let me clue you in...you might not get your picture in the Gracana Herald but the pizza is good at the meetings.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article. Below is my treasurer's report. If there is something you do not understand I am happy to talk to you about it.

You sister in Christ,

Micaelee Ellswythe, Treasurer

2012 Actuals	Expense Category	2013 Budget
\$54,169	Clergy	\$55,638
\$9,130	Church Worship	\$6,700
\$77,365	Buildings & Grounds	\$56,700
\$12,146	Office Administra- tion	\$8,650
\$13,960	Diocese Support	\$13,830
\$508	Religious Education	\$1,050
\$1,575	Misc	\$5,500
<u>\$168,853</u>		<u>\$148,068</u>

About Stewardship in the Orthodox Church

Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed.

An Orthodox Christian Steward is an active participant in the life of the Church. The parish encourages all who accept the Orthodox Faith to become practicing Stewards. Each year the Steward is expected to carefully review his or her personal circumstances and make a commitment of time, talent, and treasure to support the Parish and her Ministries.

Father Djurica sent out the 2013 Stewardship Pledge mailing in early February. There has been a good response, especially from our Stewards who participated in the past years. At this writing, there are 24 Stewards giving their gifts and talents for \$7,629. Thanks so much to all the 2013 Stewards. We are well on our way. Last year we had 37 Stewards giving their gifts and talents for \$20,694. I hope everyone will look in their hearts and wallets and become a Steward at any level. The Stewardship Program has been very essential in balancing St. John's annual budget. If you did not receive the mailing or misplaced yours, please let me know and I'll get a new one to you. They are also available at the Tutor station.

Bitsy Kosovac, Financial Secretary



STEWARDSHIP 2012

- Cris & Todd Adair
- Marisa & Brett Atha
- Luka & Anne Marie Bodrozc
- B.P. & Marie Bowman
- Father Dusan Bunjevic
- Alex Davidovich
- Jerome Davidovich
- Philip Davidovich
- Stepanie Davidovich
- Stevan Davidovich
- Aleksandar & Olivera Djordjevic
- Svetislav & Mira Djurich
- Micaelee Ellswythe
- Ranko Gajic (Time & Talent)
- Miko & Teresa Golubovich
- Danny Grgich (Time & Talent)
- Stan Grgich (Gift-In-Kind / Talent)
- Denise Hale
- Melody and Jay Key
- Don & Bitsy Kosovac
- John Lambright
- Bob Lazich
- Danilo Maksimovic (Time & Talent)
- Jovica Maksimovic (Time & Talent)
- Diane & Brian McKone
- Dusan & Gigi Medan (Gift-In-Kind / Talent)
- Predrag Milovac
- Tihomir & Mima Novakov
- Brigita & William Perazich
- Barbara Petrovic
- Dimitrije-Mita Postich
- Ana & Vladimir Rajkovic
- Sister Seraphima
- Don Sever
- Ann Tepovich



Christian Stewardship of the Gift of Time

The Stewardship of the Gift of Time is one that many of us take rather lightly in the twenty-first century. And yet, this Gift is above all, directly connected with our gift of Life.

“My days are like an evening shadow, I wither away like grass” (Psalms 102:11).

Our very lives on this earth are limited—which means that our time on this earth is limited. The limitation of the Gift of Time allows us to appreciate joyful events even more through anticipation and expectation. The Gift of Time allows us to heal from the sadness and grief of loss. The Gift of Time allows us to appreciate and love our families in different ways as we all grow together.

The Gift of Time allows us to have the opportunity to partake of this life, so that we may know what it means to partake in God. As the writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us, *“For everything there is a season; a time for every matter under heaven”* (Ecclesiasticus 3:1).

What do we do with this Gift? Often, we take it for granted. We act as if this time in this life is our own—that we can do with it as we please. We act as if we were the ones who bestowed this gift of time—but as Christ said, *“And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?”* Matthew 6:27. Neither anxiety, nor any other means at our disposal can create more time for us. So why do we spend this, our most valuable asset in connection with our lives, so frivolously? Why do we dedicate more of this gift to money, to soccer practice, watching television, and any other possible pursuit, than to God? Why do we refuse to turn to God giving thanks for our time by offering it back to Him?

It isn’t until we are faced with some sort of turmoil or tribulation that we turn to God, calling to mind the words of the psalmist, *“The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble”* (Psalms 9:9). Yes, He is a stronghold, a refuge and a haven, but He has also called us to “bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

God has graciously bestowed upon us the entirety of our lives. But for many of us, taking such a macro-level understanding of time is difficult. So let us break it down: He has blessed us with 168 hours per week (or roughly a little more than 10,000 minutes/week). How many of these 168 hours do we offer to Him? Including our drive to and from Church, I am willing to bet that our weekly offering of our time to God barely even comes to seven hours! Does this

mean that we are not thankful for the Gift of Time which He has given us so freely? I cannot know.

What I can know is that our actions certainly do not reflect a thankful attitude. Now is the time for us to dedicate our actions to reflect our thankfulness! Now is the time to review and revisit our priorities as a family and as a Church community so that they reflect our attitude and awareness toward God. Now is the time to come to Church ON TIME and show God that we do not disrespect Him. Now is the time to participate not just in the Sunday Liturgy, but in the services throughout the week. (How many of us take time off from work to go to a doctor’s appointment, but refuse to do so for one of the Twelve Great Feast Days?) Now is the time to join in our Parish and continue our study of the Lord. Now is the time to begin reading the Holy Scriptures on a regular basis. Now is the time to show God by our actions that we are truly grateful for the Grace-filled Gift of His time.

“He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man’s mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end” (Ecclesiasticus 3:11). He has placed within us a hint of eternity—and not the full ability to understand it—so that we might be able to grasp in some fashion what it means to be with Him in worshipful Joy. Let us take the remaining time we have in this world so that we might be prepared for the Awe-inspiring and Loving Joy that we encounter in His Kingdom!

=== FROM THE CHOIR ===

The Saint John Serbian Choir has a history which dates back to at least 1954. Since then, several conductors have lead the Choir, each contributing to the choir's musical heritage.

In particular, Vojislav "Voy" Cheyovich served as director and cantor for more than half of the Choir's history, until his retirement in 2001, and built a substantial library of liturgical music and Serbian folk music. The Choir library has continued to expand since then.

The choir regularly sings responses at the Sunday Divine Liturgies, the major liturgical holidays (especially Easter and Christmas), and the annual Slava of the First Serbian Benevolent Society (FSBS) celebrated at the Serbian Cemetery in Colma each August.

In addition to the annual liturgical cycle, we frequently participate in a variety of special events. When one or more visiting bishops officiate—Serbian, Greek, or other Orthodox - we sing a Pontifical Liturgy. The Choir has been invited to sing at other Serbian Orthodox churches, and has participated several times in the annual festival of the Serbian Orthodox Choral Association (SOCA). Our participation at weddings and funerals is particularly important, because those events happen once in a lifetime, and are long remembered by the families and friends.

The Choir is sometimes small, but is always flexible. We usually sing responses with all four voice parts (SATB) but, when necessary, we can sing with three, two, or even one voice part. Perhaps you have noticed this as a different "sound" on some Sundays. No matter what our size, however, it is most important that the congregation always experiences the liturgy as it has been celebrated for ages.

The choir welcomes new members—both young and old, Serbian and non-Serbian. We generally have rehearsals starting at 9:00 or 9:30 am on Sundays, preceding the 10:30 am liturgy. If you have thought about singing with the choir, but do not feel experienced enough, the rehearsals are a good place to get "caught up".

All of our music is printed neatly and is easy to read.

If you become a regular singer, we will give you
your own music book.

Bob Fowler, Choir Director



**Orthodox Christmas Concert
Featuring
Slavyanka Men's and Women's Mixed Chorus**

On Saturday evening, January 5th at St. John's, Slavyanka turned the page and performed for us for the first time with their new artistic director, Irina Shachneva, and with women singers augmenting the men for over one third of the program. Director Shachneva's influence over the program and the incorporation of women's voices truly added a special element to this concert. Christmas hymns covered the spectrum of Eastern Orthodox churches to include selections from Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Greek, Russia and, of course Serbia. But nothing topped the evening's musical offerings as much as the last portion of the concert when the women's voices joined with the men. It's fair to say that a spark was



ignited for the rest of the performance.

In typical traditional fashion following this, the third concert of its kind held at St. John's, it was a sell out and featured a reception in our Social Hall afterwards. Thanks to Danica Medan and Bitsy Kosovac we were able to serve our concert goers Serbian hor'd oeuvres: potato pita, bakalar, ljuta paprika followed by vruca rakija complements of Predrag Milovac.

Events such as this concert can have an uplifting effect on all of us, especially when coupled with the celebration of our own Christmas....

January 6th, Sunday's Holy Liturgy, the evening Badnje Vece Vesper service and Pot Luck, then Christmas Day itself on Monday, January 7th and luncheon. God indeed smiled upon us this Holiday Season. Hristos Se Rodi!



Valentine's Luncheon

In a wonderful annual tradition, the St. Sophia Sisterhood hosted the much enjoyed Valentine Luncheon on February 9th. Over 75 attendees from across the four Bay Area parishes gathered to "Celebrate Love" and raise money for many of the causes supported by the Sisterhood. Friends old and new arrived to a beautifully decorated ballroom awash in pink and red, mingled during cocktail hour with signature Manhattans shaken up by bartending brothers Stan and Dan Grgich, and enjoyed bites of apps with a modern flair crafted by our very own Stephanie Davidovich. With her budding personal chef and catering business, the Executive Committee Co-Chairwomen were thrilled that Stephanie was available to sharing her culinary talents to whip up a delectable 3-course menu complete with Spring Mix & Arugula salad, Pork Medallions with Champagne & Wild Mushrooms, and Roasted Herb Potatoes and Balsamic-Glazed Carrots. If anyone is interested in contacting Stephanie, her website is www.kitchenheartbeets.com

While many look forward to this day to connect with friends, this event also serves to showcase opportunities to fundraise. The Bake Sale is always popular, and Liliana Perazich deftly managed selecting and packaging the yummy treats. Many thanks to all of the sisters who donated time to bake their tried and true recipes! A big thank you to Marie Derr who coordinated the generous donations for the Silent auction – many top bidders took home wonderful gift packages of wine. Back by popular demand, the Chance Raffle had young and old determined to pull lucky numbers from the glass bowl for a chance to win fun prizes. Stylish Stella & Dot hostesses were on hand to display the baubles from their new spring line.

No event is successful without the many behind-the-scenes folks who help pull it all together. Ann Tepovich greeted all with a smile as she managed the reservations and bar tickets. It is with much gratitude to Tomislav Medan and his crew for seamless service & Marina Medan for donating her baking and decorating expertise to round out dessert with homemade cupcakes. Danica Medan was on hand to help wrap many of the raffle gifts, even when many of them were oddly shaped or sized.

The KSS Co-Chairs greatly enjoyed working together to plan the event, and we are always looking for ideas for future luncheons. Do you wish to donate time, goods or services to next year's event? Contact any Sisterhood member or email the Sisterhood at SFKSS@yahoo.com The success of this event rests solely with the personal donations from parishioners. The Sisterhood seeks your creative input as a means to increase their continual support of St. John's.

Mira Guzijan-Blendstrup



Беседа Његове Светости Патријарха српског г.
Иринеја на свечаности отварања године
Миланског едикта
- Ниш, 17. јануар 2013. године -

Прошло је 1700 година од доношења Миланског едикта, којим је Свети Цар Константин Хришћанима гарантовао право да Господа Исуса Христа слободно прослављају. Пред нама је велики догађај, али и прилика да се после много векова упитамо: шта је тај акт значио за Цркву Христову, после три века прогона хришћана у Римској империји због тога што су проповедали Благу вест Светог Јеванђеља и сведочили Христа Васкрслога и што се нису уклапали у слику и поредак обоготворених императора.

Стога су хришћани били стављени ван закона као људи који проповедају „недозвољену веру“. Многи мученици из тог времена чијем се храбром сведочењу Истине дивимо, међу којима су и ранохришћански мученици са ових наших простора (Свети Флор и Лавр из Улпинане (данашњи Липљан), Свети Емил и Стратоник (Београд), Свети Ерасмо Охридски, Светих 150 мученика сирмијских (Сремска Митровица), испуњавају календар Свете Цркве Христове. Заслугом Светог Цара Константина хришћани су постали слободни. Постали су део друштва са правима која су имали и људи других религија, са имовином и слободом рада и деловања. Тим едиктом је Цркви гарантована слобода, по речима царским: „да дозволимо и хришћанима и свима другима слободу избора и да следеју вери коју би желели, као и било којој божанској или небеској ствари, да би могли и ми и сви који су под нашом влашћу добар и миран живот водити“.

Ова 2013. година је прилика да сагледамо колико је Хришћанство заслужно за преображај који је учинило у незнабожачком и идолопоклоничком античком свету. Зато је овај јубилеј велики дар који нам Бог дарује, дар који подразумева одговорност: да видимо колико смо Христови, колико је Бог са нама и ми са Њим. Не смемо се правдати временом и говорити како су у овом нашем времену скоро све вредности погажене. Ми смо ту да се у години овог великог Јубилеја покажемо способним превазићи сваку кризу; да смо спремни жртвовати се за истинску слободу и људско достојанство, за ону слободу и оно достојанство које нам је Христос даровао. Ово је тренутак, не само да се поносимо тиме што је Цар Константин „апостол међу царевима“ рођен у Нишу, већ да се угледамо на његов духовни преображај и сагледамо плодове које је тај преображај донео у уметности, култури, музици, науци, књижевности – једном речју, колико је допринео људском животу уопште.

Овај Равноапостолни Цар, који је владао по Божјим законима на корист и добробит заједнице, био је духовни узор потоњим владарима, а нарочито онима из нашег рода. О томе сведоче споменици средњовековне књижевности, у којима су српски владари приказани на „подобје Константиново“, као „Нови Константин“. Владари из Немањине лозе су често поређени са Царем Константином. Архиепископ Данило II, говорећи о победама Светог краља Милутина, сматра да је он „сличан славном Константину“, док се Свети Стефан Првовеначани, у своме Житију Светом Симеону, моли да крст буде симбол и средство благословене победе, и да помаже његовом оцу „као древноме Цару Константину“. У Краљевој задужбини, манастиру Светог Николе Дабарског, постоји монументална композиција Константинове победе над Максенцијем, коју истраживачи упоређују са Краљевом победом на Велбужду. Цар Душан, такође, доноси свој Законик, тражи историјски основ у Константиновој личности и делу. У пропратној повељи каже се: „Бог по својој милости... мене премести од краљевства на православно царство. И све ми даде у руке као и великом Константину цару...“

Настојећи да буду „Константиновог рода“, наши свети преци, „честити и Богу приступачни“, остварили су и оставили нам велика дела на пољу науке, политике, културе, цивилизације... Зато је Србија била, али и данас јесте, органски део Европског континента, оне Европе која се поноси хришћанским наслеђем, слободом и високим културним достигнућима.

Ово славље вечерас у Нишу, и сва друга која ће бити у овом граду, али и у Београду и другим местима у току године, помоћиће нам да се речи Миланског едикта и данас, након 1700 година, чују и зазвуче савремено; јер су, нажалост, савремени и прогони и страдања широм света, у нашем суседству, па и код нас, а нарочито на Косову и Метохији.

Милански едикт је општељудска и општецивилизацијска тековина актуелна у сваком времену, па и у овом нашем. Колико ћемо ми принети плодова и оставити својим потомцима зависи од нас – колико смо спремни да, попут Светог Константина Великог и његове мајке Свете Царице Јелене, лично доживимо непоновљиву и јединствену личност Господа Исуса Христа, да се у Њему огледамо, и да као плод тог чудесног и тајанственог сусрета остваримо апостолску мисију Цркве у свету. Зато је свечано обележавање овог Јубилеја подстрек да још истрајније сведочимо Господа Христа да би и други, видевши наша добра дела, прославили Оца нашега Који је на небесима.

Свети Цар Константин је својим едиктом омогућио слободно исповедање Хришћанства у мору паганског света. Протекло време од 1700 година је гаранција да нико данас не треба да се плаши наше Свете Цркве, јер је она управо надахнута едиктом, истрајна у неугрожавању било чије слободе вере и савести. Таквим односом према другима на најбољи начин сведочимо снагу и љубав којом нас Христос и Свети Цар Константин уче и данас.

Овом вечерашњом свечаношћу проглашавамо 2013. годину, годином Миланског едикта.



Споменик Св. Цару Константину Великому у Нишу

Да ли је и колико је наша представа Бога зависна од нашег детињства?

Следећи истраживања савремене психологије која су и емпиријски потврђена, а која нас све више уверавају у значај раног детињства при образовању будућег карактера неког човека, и примењујући ова истраживања на развој религијске представе о Богу код детета, на ово питање могао бих да потврдно одговорим. Прве представе о Богу код малог детета строго су антропоморфне и изграђују се на основу ликова присутних родитеља или одгајивача. Муж и жена који живе у релативно складном браку и воле своју децу, при том су и религиозни људи (у српској средини најчешће православно религиозни), могу са доста вероватноће да очекују да ће њихова деца постати такође религиозна, и што је важније, у представи Бога сагледаће доброту, милосрђе, правду и љубав. Када деца из оваквих бракова одрасту, неће имати тешкоће око веровања, и биће на добром путу даљег усавршавања своје вере. У психологији и педагогији се сматра да је овакав позитиван исход психолошког и религијског развоја у породици резултат осећања прихваћености детета од родитеља, које води онда осећању поверења и у Бога. У већини других породица, нажалост, не протиче овако развој детета у првим, за развој будућег карактера одлучујућим годинама. Неслагање родитеља, растава брака, њихов амбивалентан или превасходно негативан однос према деци, праћен некад и злостављањем деце (укључујући и сексуално злостављање), довољно су негативни чиниоци који ће изазвати не само страх од родитеља, већ и осећање одбачености, али онда и осећање одбачености од Бога.

Уколико овакви родитељи нису били верници, скоро је сигурно да ће и деца, када одрасту, бити неверници, или атеистички богоборци, који борећи се против Бога (идејама које заступају, рђаво вођеним личним животом или неким другим начином) исказују, увек изнова, свој бунт, пркос, чак и мржњу према сопственим родитељима.

У случајевима када се родитељи не слажу, или су и на многе друге начине лоши родитељи, а и када припадају цркви као активни њени чланови, може се догодити да њихова деца, када одрасту, покажу, или збуњеност или равнодушност у односу на религију, мада се често догађа да задрже веру у Бога, али у Бога гнева и љутине, Бога који плаши и кажњава, који прети пакленим мукама после смрти. Представе пакла у хришћанској цркви, веома сликовите и веома разноврсне (неупоредиво разноврсније од представа раја), као да, најчешће, одговарају пакленом животу какав су имали ови људи као деца, у својим несрећним породицама, а и несрећним државама, у којима у прошлости није било генерације која није запамтила бар два рата.

Нешто друго, међутим, ваља истаћи. И поред трагичних збивања у хришћанској историји у току две хиљаде година, пре свега ратних збивања, затим епидемија разних заразних болести, као и природних катастрофа – трагична збивања која су се морала одразити и на породични живот људи, као и на њихов однос према деци – хришћанска вера се одржала у свету захваљујући, не само познатим хришћанским светитељима, већ и мноштву непознатих непоколебљивих праведника који су увек изнова разгоревали у народу ослабљену или поколебану хришћанску веру. Добро је познато, кроз истините биографије светитеља, да је живот њихов, посебно у детињству, адолесцентном добу, а и касније, био испуњен несрећама, прогонима и мржњом, болестима – неки од њих су релативно дуго живели као тешки грешници – а да се онда десило чудо преображења. Управо оваква чуда која су се дешавала са хришћанима кроз векове, али чуда, ово је значајно нагласити, слична или истоветна, која се и данас дешавају људима за које поуздано знамо да су имали паклено детињство, а касније, или много касније, постали узорни хришћани (у нашој средини, православни хришћани) доводе у сумњу неке теорије, махом детерминистичке (психоаналитичке) о пресудном и трајном утицају раног детињства и детињства (најчешће до седме године живота) на будући карактер индивидуе.

Када је реч о негативном утицају раног детињства, ове теорије не одричу и могућ негативан утицај рђаве генетике на образовање будуће личности (позитиван генетски утицај, с друге стране, може да ублажи рђава искуства детета са породичном средином).

Прави хришћанин никад не губи наду, ни када је у додиру с најгорим људима. Слика покајаног разбојника на Голготи – у Талмуду се каже: "Покај се чак и један дан пре смрти" – увек лебди хришћанину пред очима, било када сам почне да очајава због својих поновљених грехова, било када живи са неким злочином за кога други мисле да му "нема спаса". Чуда се у свету непрестано догађају; неко је давно рекао: "Сунце никад не изађе и никад не зађе а да се не догоди неко чудо."

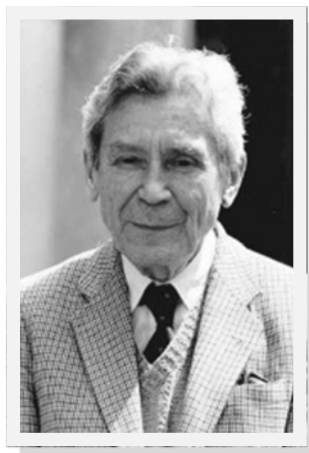
Једно од најдраматичнијих и најрадоснијих чуда која се догоде, јесу чуда покајања и преображења. Велики хришћански лекар, Парацелзус, на прелазу векова, написао је дивне речи које ће бити потребне човеку у свим временима: "Не дозволите да са очајним Сатаном кажете: то је немогуће!"

И поред тога што сваки човек има у себи религиозну клицу, шта је основни разлог да та клица проклија?

У први мах се чини да је лако одговорити на Ваше питање, уз навођење, сигурно и Вама познатих чинилаца који могу позитивно да утичу на проклијавање "религиозне клице" у човеку, по Јунгу назване "архетипски религиозан човек". Мада постоје подстрекачки чиниоци који помажу развоју човекове религиозности, не би требало да занемаримо и следеће чиниоце: искрено религиозни родитељи, или бар један од њих који ће умети да створи истинску религиозну "атмосферу" у породици; повољан ток адолесценције у којој се природно буди радозналост за религију; нека књига или сусрет са неком особом, дубоковерујућом; озбиљна болест, нека спољашња несрећа, унутрашња душевна криза блиска "граничној ситуацији" која захтева ново одлучивање, итд.

Све ово јесу "окидачи" за оживљавање homo religiosus-а у нама, али сви ови чиниоци (и други овде непоменути) не морају да буду делотворни у подстицању "религиозне клице" да изникне и донесе плод. Мора да постоји још неки, и то одлучујући, тајанствени чинилац од кога зависи да ли ћемо постати веродостојно религиозни. Према уверењу и искуству хришћанских светитеља, пресудни моменат када неко постаје за цео живот прави хришћанин, јесте онај трен када му голуб Духа Светог слети на раме и шапне му Божију поруку. Овако су постајали религиозни и светитељски религиозни и они људи (о којима до сада овде није било речи) који у своме животу, од рођења, нису имали ниједан од малочас поменутих, покретачких чинилаца, који природно, буде у човеку, урођену му, религиозну клицу. Напротив. Многим људима, у њиховом протеклом животу, до оног изненадног просветљења Духом Светим, дешавале су се несреће које су од њих чиниле лопове и убице, блуднике и очајнике а због којих нико од њих није више ништа добро очекивао. А десило се чудо, необјашњиво и за најпааметнијег психолога!

За крај одговора оставио бих мало места и за хришћанског психолога, рекавши да као што клица нашег ја, вероватно и над-ја, иако урођена, није код свих људи истог квалитета, таква је, различитог квалитета, и религиозна клица у свима нама. Стога су и спољашњи повољни или неповољни услови за развој, релативни. А држим се још једног, овог пута субјективног уверења, позивајући се на Христове речи из Беседе на гори: Благо чистима срцем јер ће Бога видети! Нека је и најмањи део човековог срца остао неокаљан гресима, биће довољно да из тога сачуваног чистог дела срца, човек само једном искрено завапи Богу – Бог ће му се одазвати, и замрла "религиозна клица" проклијаће.



Владета Јеротић је рођен 1924. године у Београду у коме је завршио гимназију и медицински факултет. Специјализирао је неуропсихијатрију, а у Швајцарској, Немачкој и Француској психотерапију. Радио је више деценија као шеф Психотерапеутског одељења болнице "Др Драгиша Мишовић". Од 1985. као професор по позиву предаје Пастирску психологију и медицину на Теолошком факултету у Београду. Јеротић је развио обимну и плодну публицистичку делатност из граничних области религије и психотерапије и философије и психијатрије. Такође је одржао предавања из психијатрије, религије и књижевности у готово свим већим градовима Југославије. Од 1984. године Владета Јеротић је члан Удружења књижевника Србије, а редован је члан Медицинске академије и дописни члан Српске академије наука.

Gone But Not Forgotten

2012/13

"You are the resurrection, the life and the repose of Your servants who have fallen asleep, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen."

God's mercy is infinite and His goodness is beyond measure. This is what our Holy Church has always maintained, and thus believes and hopes that the loving Lord will be merciful even to the deceased. For this reason the hymnographers of the Orthodox Church have composed a most moving Funeral Service that is virtually a treasure-house of profound spiritual thoughts. From the earliest Christian times, psalms and hymns were sung to our life-giving God when a believer died. But the basic parts of the Funeral Service in use today can be traced mainly to the fifth century. With the passage of time the Service has been enriched with psalms and hymns so that it has become one of the most versatile, dramatic and impassionate services of our Church.

The Funeral Service of the Orthodox Church is an example of how Orthodox theology influences the formation of a healthy understanding of the true nature of life and death. The Service accomplishes the following: a) utilizes the occasion of death to help us develop a more profound understanding of the meaning and purpose of life; b) helps us to deal with the emotions we have at the time of death and as time passes after the death; c) emphasizes the fact that death for the Christian is not the end, and affirms our hope in salvation and eternal life; d) recognizes the existence of the emotions of grief caused by the separation from a loved one, and encourages their expression.

In the readings, prayers, and hymns of the Funeral Service a dramatic dialogue takes place between the faithful and God and the deceased and God. The Service acknowledges the reality of human existence—the frailty of life and the vanity of worldly things—and directs our minds and hearts to contemplate the incomparable value of the eternal blessings of God's kingdom. At the same time with a contrite spirit, the priests and people invoke the infinite mercy of the Almighty God for the departed.

Anyone who attentively follows the hymns and prayers of the Funeral Service will be edified and consoled in many ways. The Service is not only an opportunity to express our love for our loved one who has fallen asleep; it is also a sacred time, a marvelous opportunity for reflection and inner meditation on our own relationship with God and on the orientation of our lives. When we reflect on the sublime thoughts of the Funeral Service our souls becomes contrite, our hearts are softened, and we pray fervently for the forgiveness and the repose of the person who has been transferred to the life beyond the grave. Also, we who are still alive are beckoned to live the rest of our lives in repentance and in full dedication to Christ.

In a blessed falling asleep, grant, O Lord, eternal rest unto Your departed servants and make their memory to be eternal!



Miroslav "Miro" Medan
March 11, 1917 - August 27, 2012



Milan "Mike" Popovich
October 5, 1924 - November 17, 2012



Petar Lucich
August 12, 1913 - February 27, 2013



Dimitrije "Mita" Postich
July 15, 1932 - April 27, 2013

HOLY WEEK—From Saturday of Lazarus to Easter



SATURDAY OF LAZARUS An interlude between Great Lent and Holy Week, the Church names this day the “Saturday of Lazarus” in remembrance of the resurrection of Lazarus told in the Gospel of John (11:1-45) and its promise of universal resurrection for all men. The Church connects this celebration, by anticipation, with the Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem.

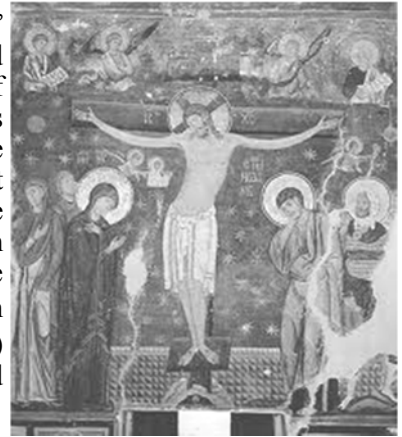
PALM SUNDAY Palm Sunday celebrates the glorious and brilliant feast of the Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (John 12:1-18). Zechariah had prophesied the entrance of the Messiah into Jerusalem, saying: “Rejoice greatly ... O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, the King comes unto Thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass”, Zech. 9:9. The contemporary Jews associated this prophecy with the expected Messiah. This action of Christ testifies to His nature as Messiah, but with the definite declaration that His Kingdom was not of this world. The main road leading to Jerusalem was covered with palm trees. The multitudes, with palm branches in their hands, spread their cloaks on the road as a show of respect, crying out “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.” A custom of distributing branches of palms to the people in the Church prevails to this day. During the remainder of Holy Week, the Church advances its liturgical life by about twelve hours, celebrating morning services the night before, and evening services in the morning. On Palm Sunday evening, the Church celebrates the Orthros (Matins) of Holy Monday, in the first of four “Bridegroom Services.” Christ is called the Bridegroom” because in His Passion, He gives His life for His Bride, the people of God, the Church, just as a husband will sacrifice everything for his wife and family. From Holy Monday to Holy Wednesday, some parishes will celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts in the morning. This very ancient Divine Liturgy is a Vespers Service, with the Holy Communion given from the sanctified gifts from the Liturgy on the previous Sunday. This Liturgy is very solemn, and reflects the grandeur and simplicity of the early Church. In the Orthros of Holy Monday, the Church remembers the blessed and noble Joseph and the fig tree which was cursed and withered by the Lord. In the Orthros of Holy Tuesday, celebrated Holy Monday evening, the Church remembers the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), who were waiting for the arrival of the Bridegroom at a wedding feast. In the Orthros of Holy Wednesday, the Church remembers the anointing of Christ with myrrh by the woman in the house of Simon, the leper, in Bethany. This woman demonstrated her repentance and her warm faith toward our Lord. On this evening we hear the beautiful “Hymn of Kassiane, which is a hymnological reflection on the repentance of this woman.

HOLY WEDNESDAY The Sacrament of Holy Unction takes place on Holy Wednesday. The Sacrament is for the healing of body and soul. In Orthodox thought, healing is connected to repentance, confession, and the remission of sins by the Lord. Holy Unction is the for cleansing sins and renewing the body and the spirit of the faithful. Holy Unction is one of the seven Sacraments of the Church, and it has its origin in the practice of the early Church as recorded in the Epistle of James (5:14-15). At the end of the service, the priest anoints the people with Holy Oil. In the Orthros of Holy Thursday, the Church remembers the washing of the disciples’ feet, the institution of the Holy Eucharist, the Prayer of Christ at the Last Supper as recorded in the Gospel of John, and the betrayal.” Some parishes will not celebrate this service, and replace it with the Sacrament of Holy Unction.

HOLY THURSDAY In the morning, the Vespereal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated. At this Divine Liturgy, the Church commemorates the institution of the Holy Eucharist by the Lord at His Last Supper with His disciples. Here, Christ presented bread and wine as His body and blood, which form the core of the new covenant between God and His people, the Church. In the evening, in the Orthros of Holy Friday, the Church recalls the Passion of the Lord, from His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, His agony and arrest at Gethsemane, His trial by Jewish religious leaders and Roman authorities, His beatings and mocking, and crucifixion and death on the Cross. This service is long, with twelve readings from the Gospels recounting the events, but its content is dramatic and moving. After the reading of the fifth Gospel comes the procession with the icon of the Crucified Christ around the church.



HOLY OR “GOOD” FRIDAY In the morning, the four “Royal Hours” are read. These services consist of hymns, psalms, and readings from the Old and New Testaments, all related prophetically and ethically to the Person of Christ. Usually in mid-afternoon, Great Vespers is chanted. During this service, we hear the story of the Crucifixion, but with attention paid to the death of Christ, the work of Joseph of Arimathea to secure the body of Christ from Pilate, His removal from the cross, and His burial. At one point in the reading, the Body of Christ is removed from the cross, wrapped in a white cloth and is brought into the sanctuary. Following the reading, the priest carries the icon of the Epitaphios (The word **Epitáphios** is composite, from the Greek *επί*, *epí*, "on" or "upon", and *τάφος*, *táphos*, "grave" or "tomb") through the church and places it in the Sepulchre which has been decorated with flowers.



GOOD FRIDAY EVENING - THE LAMENTATIONS On Holy Friday evening, we sing the Orthros of Holy Saturday, consisting of psalms, hymns and readings, dealing with the death of Christ. During the Orthros, the congregation will join in chanting the Lamentations, hymns of praise to the Lord and relating His ultimate triumph over death. During this service the Epitaphios icon is carried in procession around the church. In some parishes the entire lower-bedecked Sepulcher, symbolizing the Tomb, is carried in the procession.



GREAT HOLY SATURDAY MORNING On Holy Saturday morning, the Vespersal Divine Liturgy is celebrated. In this Liturgy, the Resurrection of Christ is celebrated and the triumph over death is proclaimed in the hymns and the readings from the Old and New Testament. There is a strong theme of baptism in this liturgy, because in the ancient Church, the catechumens would be baptized in this evening vigil of Pascha. At midnight Saturday, the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is celebrated. Before midnight, the Odes of Lamentation of the previous day are repeated. The Orthros of the Resurrection begins in complete darkness. The priest takes light from the vigil light and gives it to the faithful, who are holding candles. The priest sings, “Come, receive light from the unwaning light, and glorify Christ, who arose from the dead.” Just a short while later, the priest reads the resurrection story from the Gospel of Mark (16:1-8) and leads the congregation in singing the Resurrection Hymn, Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and to those in the tombs bestowing life.” Following, the Orthros service continues and leads into the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

THE AGAPE VESPERS At some point on Sunday afternoon the faithful gather once more for Great Vespers. With lighted candles they sing, “Christ is risen.” The people greet one another with the salutation, “Christ is Risen”, which is answered, “Truly He is Risen”. In the Great Vespers, the Gospel according to John (20:19-25) is read in various languages, proclaiming the Good News of Resurrection all over the universe without discrimination. The fruit of faith in the Resurrection of the Lord is love in His Name; therefore, this day is called “Sunday of Agape.” For the next forty days, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Resurrection of Christ.





Renovations and improvements...

At the urging and encouragement of the St. Sophia Sisterhood, three years ago the Opstina agreed and voted to renovate the kitchen space by improving the food preparation area and storage areas. While the idea was embraced by church members and expanding to the furnace room was the obvious option, the size of the original furnaces was a major obstacle. Jovica Maksimovic, board member and heating contrac-

tor, solved the dilemma by taking advantage of overhead space by moving one to the attic and building a loft for the other.

The original footprint of the kitchen remained unchanged however, after the furnace was moved to free up floor space, a new door between the kitchen and furnace room allowed us to reconfigure and expand the useable space. First, most of the aging and unsafe pipes and water heater were replaced with updated materials. A new doorway between the two spaces improved flow between the kitchen with more functional prep space – and a new mop sink for easier cleanup – along with a furnace room freshly outfitted with extensive shelving for supplies and equipment.

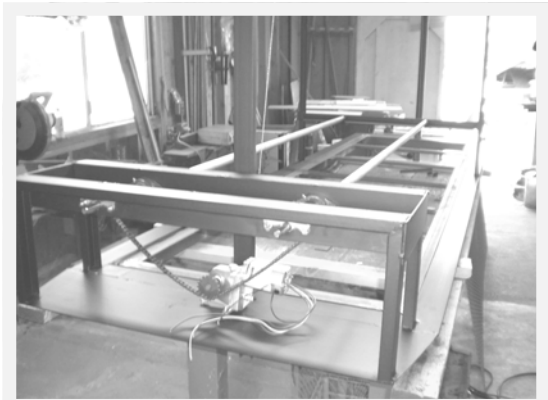
Church members who contributed expertise and professional services to the project include Jovica Maksimovic, Dushan Medan, Dan Grgich and Stan Grgich.



Again, we, the members of the kitchen committee, want to thank you all for your support and ideas as this project was underway. As an aging facility, we hope to continue to upgrade and improve our church and ask each of you to help us meet the financial responsibility to achieve these necessary and long awaited goals for the church.

We look forward to sharing many delicious meals and great memories with you in our social hall that have been prepared in our new kitchen.





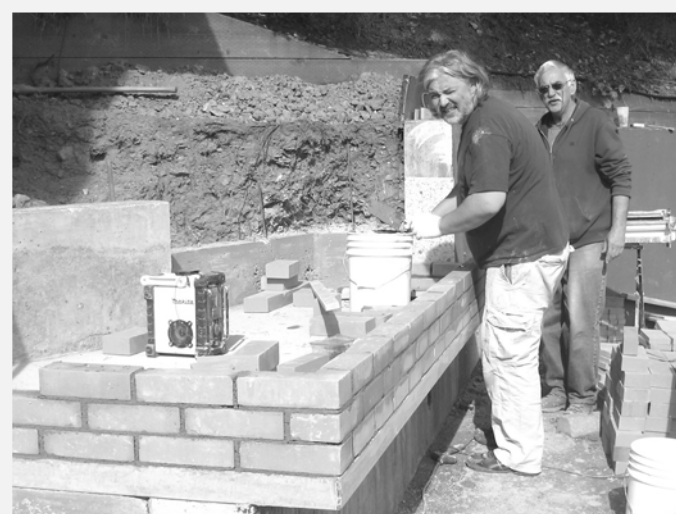
Not many committee chairmen make dinner
AND build the equipment to do it!

As usual, Stan Grgich has been incredibly resourceful in dealing with the limitations of equipment and space required to host the annual Easter dinner for St. John's Cathedral parish. This new barbecue will make a huge difference in the efficiency and speed with which he is able to prepare the Easter lamb feast as he has done for over 15 years.

We are blessed to realize progress with this upgrade project, and very grateful to Stan and others who gave their time and expertise to the project.

Here are some photos showing the process.

It's a great addition and an enduring gift for our church community.



St. John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral Board would like to express gratefulness for your donations, which enable our Church to successfully continue the mission of spreading the Word of God unto the salvation of the faithful and parishioners!

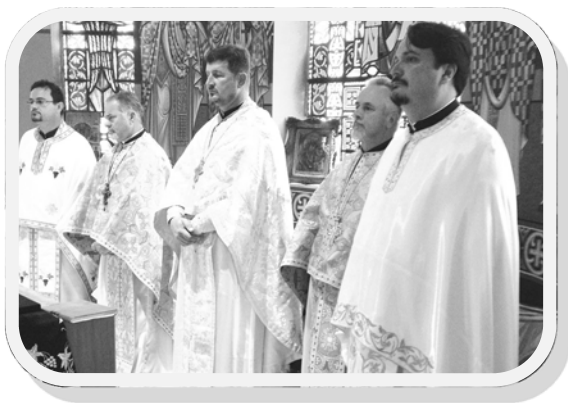
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PHOTO ALBUM FROM OUR PARISH LIFE

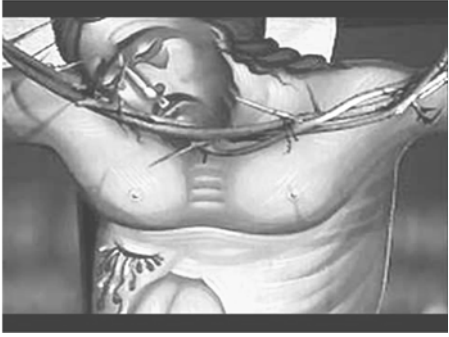
Cathedral Slava—Храмовна слава



ИГРАНКЕ И ЗАБАВЕ-SOCIAL EVENTS AND DANCES



ВЕЛИКО ХВАЛА ДАНИЛУ И НЕВЕНКИ МАКСИМОВИЋ, ДОБРИЛИ ЈОСИПОВИЋ, РАНКУ И ЈАСНИ
ГАЈИЋ И СВИМА КОЈИ СУ РАДИЛИ НА ЗАБАВАМА У ПРОШЛОЈ ГОДИНИ!



Suffering and the Crucified Christ

Fr. Emmanuel Clapsis

Suffering is an inescapable aspect of human life in the present world. Suffering, affliction and tragic experiences disclose the vulnerable nature of human life; it enables us to recognize our limitations as human beings and our dependence upon others and upon God for sustenance in life. Suffering has the potential to lead human beings either to despair, misery and self enclosure or to transcendence through hope and faith, trusting the benevolence of God and His covenant relationship with His people.

There is a strong instinct in humans to seek reason(s) for their suffering. Why? Why me? These questions emerge from every human experience of suffering. The need to search for the causes of suffering is deeply engrained in us. Sometimes we find the answer and modify our behavior in the light of bad experiences. But, sometimes the causes are beyond our knowledge or control, and the search leads to increased frustration, misplaced guilt or blaming others. Yet, we find it hard to accept that we may never know the real reason for our suffering. We resent the inexplicable mystery, especially when we feel helpless and numb in the face of meaningless suffering. Thus, our search for meaning and explanations employs all our rational capacities to find intelligible causes for the inexplicable.

Every act and any reflection on suffering and death must begin by doing justice to actual human experience. Not all suffering is meaningless. Suffering can be an opportunity for maturation; an occasion to direct one's life to the essential. Nevertheless, the suffering which one most often encounters is deadening, barbaric, and meaningless. The concrete experience of human suffering continues to call for a response, continues to raise the issue of its meaningfulness or, alternately, its meaninglessness. Suffering can never be kept at a distance: I am always involved in it; I share in it, either personally or insofar as I share in the lives of the others.

Undeserved suffering makes suffering intolerable in a world which is not ruled by irrational fate but by the just and powerful God. In Scripture, we find multiple responses and interpretations of what suffering means in a theocentric structure of reality. All of them, however, are worth understanding and may help in dealing with our own suffering and that of others. Yet, none of these approaches is fully satisfactory taken on its own. Each one of them is a helpful resource to cope with suffering since escape from suffering as long as we live in history is impossible.

Suffering is not a *problem*, but an unfathomable, theoretically incomprehensible *mystery*. We should not try to explain suffering or construct theories about the reasons for suffering in the world and systematic explanations that seek to reconcile innocent suffering with belief in a good and all powerful God. The pervading

presence of senseless suffering in the world falls outside the bounds of every rational system. Remember how Dostoyevsky in his book *Brothers Karamazov* was seized with horror in contemplating the picture of suffering throughout the world, especially the suffering of the innocent and of the little children. The only answer, which Aliosha (representing Dostoyevsky's own faith and attitude) can give is the image of the Crucified: He can pardon all; He can reconcile all, for He has measured the depth of our afflictions, of our loneliness, and of our pain. In the Crucified Christ, God does not remain a distant spectator of the undeserving suffering of the innocent but He participates in their suffering through the Cross and plants hope in the life of all afflicted persons through the Resurrection. When faced with the mystery of evil and suffering, the story of Jesus as the story of God is the only adequate response. The human quest for meaning and hope in tragic situations of affliction, draw from Christ's death and Resurrection the power of life needed for sustenance. Thus, as Christians we do not *argue* against suffering, but tell a *story*.

The Suffering of Jesus

The suffering and death of Jesus were the outcome of his public ministry, his preaching and making present the reign of God. The death of Jesus cannot be an isolated act of redemption detached from what transpired in His life. The crucifixion of Jesus was the intrinsic historical consequence of both His message and His lifestyle. The cross is salvific only in light of what God has accomplished in the Resurrection. The Crucifixion of Jesus should be envisioned as the ultimate expression of human rejection of salvation-from-God offered in Jesus. God, who according to Leviticus 'abominates human sacrifices' (Lev. 18:21–30; 20:1–5), did not put Jesus on the Cross. Human beings did that. Although God always comes in power, divine power knows no use of force, not even against those who had crucified Christ. But the kingdom of God still comes, despite human misuse of power and human rejection of God's love.

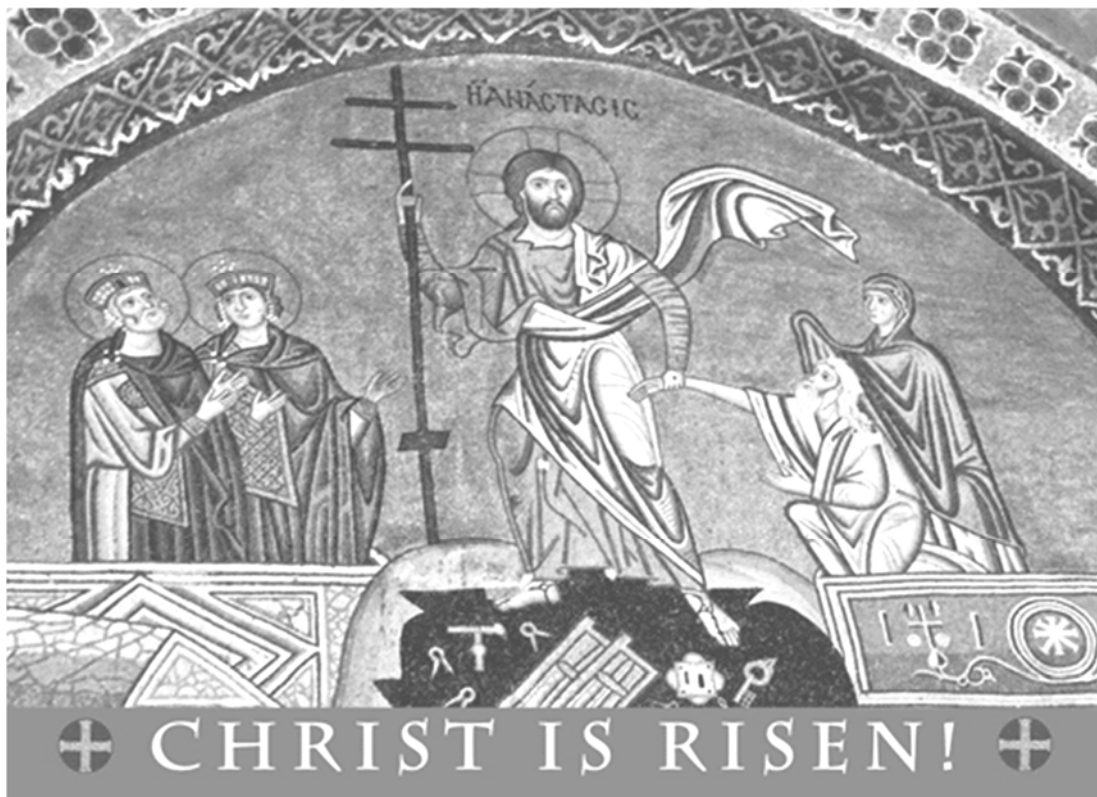
The fact that Jesus in the last supper with His disciples offered the cup to His disciples for one last time, with the trust that He will drink it anew in the reign of God (Mk. 14:25), indicates Jesus' trust that His communion with God and with His disciples was stronger than death. Jesus' cry of abandonment: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," taken from the opening line of Psalm 22, should be interpreted in light of the entire psalm. Read as a whole, this psalm is a prayer of anguish but also a confession of trust in God. And it concludes with an expression of praise and thanksgiving for deliverance by God. These words reflect Jesus' persistent trust in God even amidst the experience of darkness and the apparent failure of His mission.

God does not intervene to save Jesus, but neither does God abandon Jesus. Jesus' life ends with an open question to God, "God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" God answers to the crucified Jesus by raising Him from the dead and glorifying Him. The resurrection signifies that God is present in the suffering of Jesus and of every human person. If we speak of Jesus' real abandonment by God at Calvary, this could lead to the mistaken impression that suffering human beings are also forsaken by God. Instead, we must speak of God as silently present to Jesus at this terrifying moment, just as God is silently present to all those who suffer. This silent presence of God to Jesus becomes manifest in the Resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus confirms and completes all that Jesus was about in His life. The bottom line of the Christian faith is that God will be victorious over evil and suffering, as exhibited and effected in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

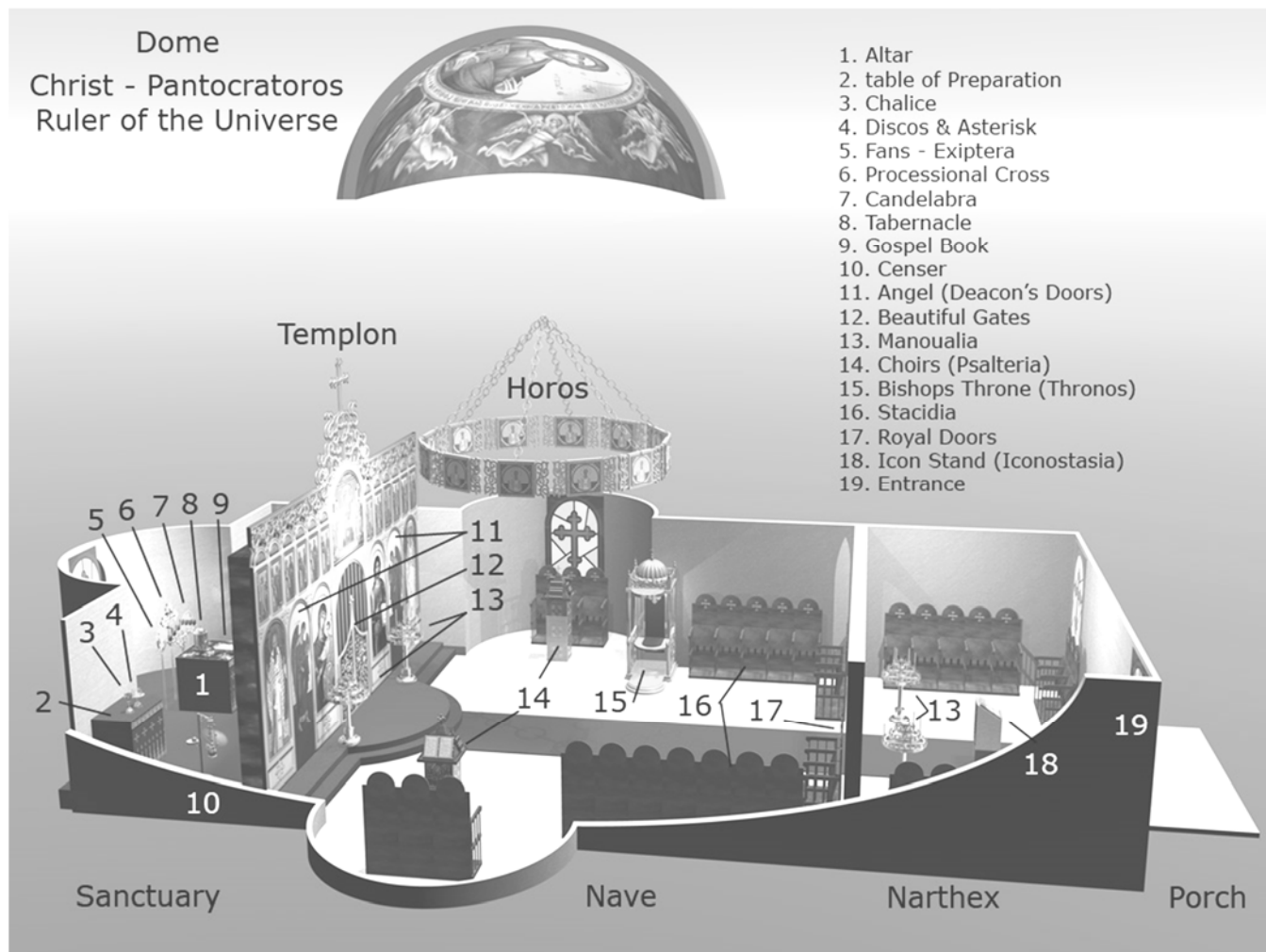
God's relation to suffering has practical consequences for Christian life. It means that Christians are called to be people of memory and action. First, believers in Christ keep the memory of human suffering – the memory of the ongoing passion of humanity. Christians are summoned to live in solidarity with suffering people and to enable suppressed stories of suffering to be told, whether they be the stories of individuals in pain or stories of peoples who are victims of systematic oppression. Christians also keep the memory of another story– the story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. It is this story, remembered and lived out, that speaks to us about the God of the kingdom who overcame the death of Jesus in the resurrection and who is on the move to overcome all evil and suffering. The story of Jesus assures us that entering into communion with suffering people and acting to bring life out of death is what God is doing for all people. Being attentive and hearing the stories of the afflicted and oppressed people and responding to their needs with compassion, care, and love and actively working against the causes of suffering provide opportunities to participate in God's mercy and become true icons of His presence in the world. As Christians, we see the presence of the suffering Christ in our suffering brethren

+ + +

Fr. Emmanuel Clapsis has taught at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology since 1985 specializing in Dogmatic Theology and also teaching courses that relate Orthodox theology to modern and post modern sensibilities. He became tenured professor of Systematic Theology in 2003 and was appointed the Archbishop Iakovos Professor of Orthodox Theology in 2010.



ORTHODOX CHURCH INTERIOR-УНУТРАШЊОСТ ПРАВОСЛАВНОГ ХРАМА



Baptisms—Крштења

2012/2013

New members of our Holy Orthodox Church are the following who have received the Holy Sacrament of Baptism and Chrismation:

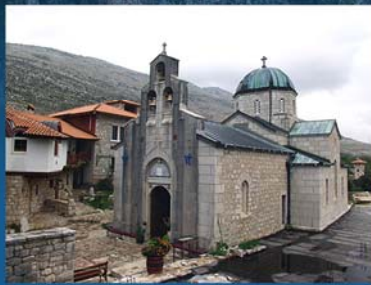
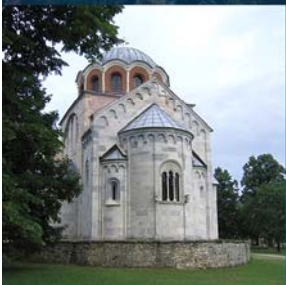
Marko Blagojevic

Sara Axtell
Andrea Medakovic
James Cordell
Zander Petrovic
August Antovich
Steven Miloseski
Jolie Atha
Tatiana Minosjan
Natalia Chawla
Nikola Daily

PILGRIMAGE TO MOUNT ATHOS, GREECE, SERBIA, MONTENEGRO & HERZEGOVINA

June 24th to July 8th 2013

Join His Grace Bishop Maxim, Bishop of Western America and Fr. Blasko Paraklis of Orange County, CA on a fascinating guided tour of famed Mt. Athos in Greece, and Serbia, including Kosovo, Montenegro and Hercegovina. The tour will include many beautiful Orthodox churches and monasteries, overnight stays at various monasteries, veneration of holy relics, an audience with His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and visits to major attractions in Thessaloniki and Belgrade. Men will spend four days on Mount Athos, while the women take a cruise around Mount Athos and enjoy 4 days in a beautiful resort near the city of Uranopolis.



June 24th, DAY 1. Depart USA on an overnight flight to Thessaloniki, Greece.

June 25th, DAY 2. THESSALONIKI – Arrival in Thessaloniki and stay overnight.

June 26th, DAY 3. THESSALONIKI – Following breakfast at the hotel, we will visit Church of Saint Demetrius, Zejtinlik Serbian cemetery from WWI, and other highlights on the Thessaloniki city tour. In the afternoon, departure for Uranopolis and stay overnight near Uranopolis.

June 27th, DAYS 4, 5, 6. Men will leave for Mount Athos to visit Monastery Hilandar and some other monasteries, while the women stay in a lovely seaside resort near Uranopolis.

June 30th, DAY 7. Leave Mount Athos and depart from Uranopolis in the afternoon to Thessaloniki for overnight stay.

July 1st, DAY 8. Early morning departure for Belgrade, and check-in at hotel for overnight stay. Afternoon visit to Kalemegdan, Knez Mihailova street and Skadarlija.

July 2nd, DAY 9. Following breakfast at the hotel, there will be an audience with His Holiness Patriarch Irinej, and departure for monasteries Zicha and Studenica, with overnight stay in Studenica.

July 3rd, DAY 19. Following Divine Liturgy and breakfast at Studenica, departure for monastery Sopocani, and arrival in Kosovo. We will visit the Serbian Sacred Land of Kosovo and the Monastery of Gracanica, Patriarchate of Pec, with overnight stay in Decani or Pec monasteries.

July 4th, DAY 11. Visit at Prizren, then travel to Montenegro, where we will stay for 1 night at the Monastery of Ostrog. In the morning, we will celebrate Divine Liturgy and view and venerate the remarkably intact body of Saint Basil, as we visit both the Upper and the Lower Basilicas.

July 5th, Day 12. The following morning, after the Divine Liturgy and breakfast at Monastery Ostrog, we depart for Trebinje and visit the Tvrdoš monastery. Overnight stay will be in Tvrdoš monastery or at Trebinje.

July 6th, Day 13. A relaxing day, as we are only a short drive from the Adriatic sea and the incredibly beautiful cities of Herceg Novi, Kotor, Budva and Dubrovnik. The group can decide which cities to visit, enjoy a swim in the sea and some relaxation time on the coast. Overnight in Trebinje.

July 7th, DAY 14. We depart for Serbia and the long journey to Belgrade. Overnight in Belgrade.

July 8th, DAY 15. Departure for USA.