



Gracanica Herald

Гласник Грачаница

Pascha—Васкрс 2016



Христосъ Воскресе!

CHRIST IS RISEN!



Protopresbyter Djurica Gordic - Cathedral Dean, Parish Priest

The Gracanica Herald is regular publication of Saint John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco, California. The purpose of the **Herald** is to educate faithful members and parishioners in the teaching of the Orthodox Faith and Tradition in order to assist in their commitment to Christ and His Church. In addition, the **Herald** keeps our parishioners informed as to the activities taking place at the parish and other news of interest to our community.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members and parishioners for their help and support of **Saint John's Cathedral**.

If any parishioner or member has news of either religious or social interest that they would like to have published in the Gracanica Herald please mail it to: 900 Baker Street San Francisco, California, 94115 or e-mail to ***stjohnsoc@yahoo.com***

TASTE - DISCOVER - EXPERIENCE

Saturday, May 21, 2016



serbian festival



Hosted by St. John the Baptist
Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
900 Baker Street, San Francisco

From 12:00pm until 8:00pm

FREE ADMISSION !!!

VRBICA VRBIČA 2016



Гласник Грачаница *Gracanica Herald*

**Saint John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
Pascha - Васкрс 2016**

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Српска Православна Црква својој
духовној деци о Васкрсу 2016. године

ИРИНЕЈ

по милости Божјој

Православни Архиепископ пећки,
Митрополит београдско-карловачки 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!

„Христос васкрсе, смрт поразивши, и
мртве подигавши. Народи, веселите се!”
(канон Пасхе, 9. песма).

Прославимо данас, драга браћо и сестре,
Господа Бога нашега, „Који походи и
избави народ Свој” (Лк 1,68) и светлошћу
Васкрсења Свога просветли сву васељену!
Прославимо Господа „Који би предан за
грехе наше и устаде за оправдање

наше” (Рим 4,25)! Прославимо Господа
Који, поставши човек нас ради, претрпе
смрт да би нам Васкрсењем Својим
отворио двери новог живота! Јер, сви
који се у Христа крстисмо, у Христу
умресмо старом човеку, да бисмо
васкрснути, препорођени, обновљени у
Њему, и живели са Њим заувек (Рим
6,8). Христос устаде из мртвих и постаде
Првенац од уснулих (1. Кор 15,20), те и
ми који умиремо у Адаму, бивамо
оживљени у Христу, постајући нова твар.

Зато у овај светли Дан појемо победне
песме Ономе Који победи силу смрти,
Ономе Који порази привидну мудрост
мудраца овога света и својим Васкрсењем
спасе оне који у Њега верују (1. Кор 1,21).
Видесмо испуњење речи пророчких и
заједно с Апостолом Павлом кличемо:
„Познасмо љубав Христову која
превазилази разум и испунисмо се
пуноћом Божјом” (Еф 3, 19). Јер, као што
сила смрти, после пада прародитеља
рода људског у грех, уђе у овај свет, тако
Господ Христос, као Нови Адам, прими
на Себе ране настале због греха, вољно,
нас ради, претрпе смрт, уништи њену
силу и врати човеку његову првобитну
красоту. Зато кроз Васкрсење познајемо
смисао и циљ Божјег стварања, јер
Господ приведе све из небића у биће да
би вечно и непропадљиво живело у
Христу, Јединородном Сину Његовом.
Свети Максим Исповедник нас
богонадахнуто учи да се телесним
рођењем родисмо, у крштењу се
препородисмо, а Васкрсењем се вечно
рађамо у Христу, Који, као Прворођени
из мртвих, обнавља васцелу твар и дарује
јој непропадљивост. Васкрсењем Својим
Христос сједињује овај свет и рај, а у рај
пре свих других прима покајаног
разбојника, дајући свима нама наду да
наше живљење у покајању није узалудно.
Славећи Васкрсење Христово, славимо и
певамо чудесну Тајну Бога Који нас је
створио да у Сину Његовом,
Оваплоћеном, Распетом и Васкрслем

Христу Спаситељу, вечно будемо причасници божанске природе, односно божанског живота (ср. 2. Пет 1,4).

До Христовог Васкрсења, сви су после смрти одлазили у мрачне просторе ада, у коме нема никога да Бога слави, и тако бесмисао смрти држаше у оковима сву творевину (ср. Пс 6,6; Ис 38,18). Христос Бог силази у дубине ада и вериге вечне које су држале тамо свезане, бивају скршене (ирмос 6. песме канона). Ад бива испражњен, а Господ наш изводи прародитеље и праведнике у светлост новог живота. Смрт је од тада само сан. Она више не означава крај већ врата вечног живота у Христу. Зато и Апостол Павле одважно кличе: „Мени је Христос живот, а смрт добитак” (Фил 1, 21).

Очистивши чула светим постом, угледајмо неприступну светлост Васкрсења, угледајмо Христа Који блиста у нашим срцима! Опростивши све једни другима, обновимо се Васкрсењем у нови живот! Заживимо Васкрслим Христом да бисмо сви, већ у овоме животу, доживели себе и друге као Једно Тело, Једну Цркву Божју! Иако живимо у тешком времену, пуном неизвесности и трагедија, не смемо, угледајући се на древне хришћане, да престанемо да се радујемо и Христовом љубављу волимо, и то не само једни друге већ и непријатеље наше, да нас ништа не би одвукло са пута живота који нам је Христос даровао. Ако једни другима не опростимо, неће се ни нама опростити, а ако осуђујемо, већ смо ми сами осуђени, учи нас Господ. Без праштања и сагледавања сопствених сагрешења према ближњима, пријатељима и непријатељима, нећемо моћи да у своја срца примимо светлост Васкрсења нити да постанемо баштиници наде на вечност у којој нема ни страха, ни уздаха, ни туге. Не бојмо се, дакле, овога света, браћо и сестре, јер је Христос победио свет! Бојмо се само одласка из светлости у таму, из радости Царства Божјега, којим треба да

заживимо већ! Ми хришћани се не бојимо смрти. Дубоко верујемо да нисмо од овога света иако у њему живимо. Христос, Вечна Пасха, отворио нам је двери Царства Божјег. Оно је наша истинска отаџбина, а ми смо у овоме свету само путници који проходе кроз време и простор, сведочећи Христа својим животом. Немојмо, зато, никада заборавити у Кога смо крштени и за Кога живимо, да наша животна трка не би била узалудна и да наша нада не буде нада у празне и сујетне идоле овога света и века (ср. Гал 2,2)!

Децо наша духовна, не занемаримо љубав! Јер, управо по нашој међусобној љубави сви ће нас препознати као Христове ученике (Јн 13,35). Будимо сапатници онима који страдају, плачимо са онима који плачу и тешимо их надом у Господа! Нека наше служење Богу не буде ново издање фарисејске спољашње побожности! Какву ћемо онда награду примити? Жртвујмо се за ближње! Дајмо ономе ко нема! Смирено славимо Бога речима покајаног цариника који тако нађе оправдање! Народ Божји је данас расут по читавом свету, али оно што нас сједињује и чини Једном Црквом нису пролазне идеологије овога света, већ дубока свест о томе да смо сједињени у Христу у Кога смо крштени и Којим се причешћујемо. Потрудимо се зато да они који нису упознали светлост Христовог учења виде у нама пут и у нама препознају истинске наследнике апостолâ и светитеља Христових! Цео род српски се, у том духу, угледа на Светога Саву, који нам је непогрешиво указао на пут Христов као на једини пут живота. Немањићке светиње вековима сијају као светионици у магли наше историје, указујући нам на свеобухватне духовне хоризонте Царства Божјег које није од овога света. Зато нас никаква страдања и неправде овосветских моћника не могу и не смеју поделити и завадити.

На овај светли Празник нарочито се молитвено сећамо свих прогнаних Срба, који већ две деценије не могу да се врате у своје домове, али и оних који су остали да живе на прадедовским огњиштима и да, заједно са својим духовним пастирима, трпе претње и притиске само зато што су православни Срби.

Посебно саосећамо са нашом браћом и сестрама на Косову и Метохији. Они, живећи и Бога славећи на исконској српској земљи, настављају да сведоче тајну Христовог страдања и Васкрсења. Светолазаревско Косово увек је било у знаку Крста и Васкрсења. Колико је само пута наш народ страдао, али опет се, Божјом силом, усправљао и обнављао, настављајући да ходи путем Христовим! Томе нас најбоље уче наши свети и наше косовске и метохијске светиње, у којима почивају свете мошти многих угодника Божјих и на којима је као печатом утиснута крстоваскрсна тајна Христова. Страдали су вековима наше цркве и манастири, наша села и градови, али смо их опет обнављали, обнављајући тиме и сами себе, као живу Цркву Божју. Зато, уместо плача и ридања певајмо победну песму, јер у светлости Васкрсења, крст који носимо није символ понижења и срамоте, већ новог достојанства и славе. Косово и Метохија, за нас Србе и за све православне хришћане, није само географски појам већ, изнад свега, духовни простор који нас све повезује, ма где живели. Следујући косовском завету Светога кнеза Лазара, никад не смемо заборавити да је Царство небеско врхунски идеал и вечни циљ, а све земаљско је трулежно и пролазно.

Данас хришћани страдају широм света, посебно на Блиском Истоку и у Украјини. Пример њихове вере и

њиховог трпљења нека и нама буде охрабрење и јемство да Господ никада неће оставити Своју Цркву и да се благодат Божја умножава управо онде где се умножило страдање! Не смемо заборавити да је Сâм Господ Христос са Пресветом Дјевом и Праведним Јосифом избегао у Египат, како би се склонио од насиља Иродовог и на тај начин нам показао да смо сви странци у свету који у злу лежи.

Много је, драга браћо и сестре, горчине и туге у нашем народу после свих тешких година искушења кроз која смо прошли и пролазимо. Ипак, нипошто не смемо пасти у очајање. Јер, када страда хришћанин се још више каје пред Богом, а истовремено се и радује јер зна да Господ неће презрети срце испуњено надом. Стога се молимо Богу, драга наша децо духовна, да нас сачува од мржње и злих дела, а да нас научи љубави којом је Он заволео овај свет. Ако будемо у стању да препознамо бол и патњу ближњег и покајемо се за грехе своје, наш труд неће бити узалудан него ће нам бити на спасење и на живот вечни.

Молитвено поздрављамо и нашу браћу и сестре који живе свуда по свету и позивамо их да у братској љубави и јединству буду окренути једни другима, сабрани под окриљем своје Цркве, и да тако наставе да достојно сведоче ко су и којој вери и којем роду припадају.

Чувајмо светињу брака и породице васпитавајући децу у вери, страху Божјем и чистоти, не заборављајући да је породица „домаћа Црква” и темељ хришћанске заједнице! Редовно учествујмо у евхаристијским сабрањима причешћујући се Телом и Крвљу Христовом и тако сви постајући Једно Тело, Тело Христово, Народ изабрани,

Црква Бога Живогa! Не заборављајмо да се ова чудесна Тајна наставља вером и љубављу које смо позвани да делатно сведочимо у дому, на послу, пред онима који нас воле, као и пред онима који нас мрзе, укратко – свуда и свагда. За хришћанина цео живот јесте литургијска пасхална радост. Ко њоме заживи неће у другом човеку гледати странца: у сваком ће препознавати лик Господа нашегa, Који жели да се сви људи спасу. Сведочење Радосне Вести да је Христос ваистину васкрсао наша је свакодневна обавеза јер нас Господ Духом Светим позива да се не затварамо у себе већ да и друге уводимо у ту радост и указујемо им на једини пут спасења. Христос Васкрсли нас позива да будемо светлост свету, а не саблазан. Када смо спремни да признамо своја сагрешења и да се исправљамо у смирењу, ми се тиме не понижавамо већ показујемо да у нама заиста обитава Дух Божји.

Посебно вам благовестимо да је за празник Силаска Светога Духа, завршнице Христовог подвига спасења света и човека, у јуну ове године на апостолском острву Криту сазван Свети и Велики Сабор Православне Цркве. Сви смо дужни да се молимо Господу да овај изузетни духовни и светодуховски догађај буде речита потврда неразоривог јединства свете Православне Цркве у вери свим истинским хришћанима, да буде позив свима који у Христа верују да буду једно у једином Спаситељу и Господу нашем.

Не заборавимо, драга браћо и сестре, да смо призвани и да где год се налазили и шта год радили будемо миротворци на тај начин сведочећи Бога, Који нам мир даје и јесте Мир наш. Иако смо сви различити, не смемо никада да превидимо да смо сви створени по лику

Божјем и позвани да будемо једно у Христу. Зато онеме ко посрне треба пружити руку, а не гурати га у још дубљу пропаст; болесног треба посетити и неговати, а залуталог упутити на прави пут. Чинећи тако учинићемо да се у нашим делима пројављује Господ, Који нам је рекао да треба да будемо светлост свету. А изнад свега, децо наша духовна, нека живот наш буде стално благодарење Богу на свему и за све! Јер, шта бисмо друго и веће могли да принесемо Васкрсломе Христу Који нас из таме преведе у светлост познања и из смрти у живот вечни? Зато заједно са анђелима и са свима светима на небу, а уједно и са браћом својом и сестрама својим на земљи, запевајмо победну песму и у празничној радости поздравимо једни друге поздравом:

ХРИСТОС ВАСКРЕСЕ!

Дано у Патријаршији српској у Београду, о Васкрсу 2016. године.

Ваши молитвеници пред Васкрслим Христом:

Архиепископ пећки,
Митрополит београдско-карловачки
и Патријарх српски **ИРИНЕЈ**



The Serbian Orthodox Church to her spiritual children at Pascha, 2016

+IRINEJ

By the Grace of God

Orthodox Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade Karlovci and Serbian Patriarch, with 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!

“Christ is risen, trampling down death and raising the dead. Rejoice, all you people!”

(Paschal Canon, Ode 9)

Let us celebrate today, dear brothers and sisters, our Lord God, “For He has visited and redeemed His people” (St. Luke 1:68) and with the light of His Resurrection He enlightens the entire universe! Let us glorify our Lord “who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised for our justification”. (Romans 4:25) Let us glorify our Lord Who, having become a man for us, has died so that by His Resurrection he could open to us doors of new life! For all of us who have been baptized into Christ, in Christ we have died to the old man, so that resurrected, reborn, renewed in Him, we can live with Him forever. (cf. Romans 6:8) Christ is risen from the dead and has become the Firstborn of the dead (cf. I Corinthians 15:20), so that we too who have died in Adam, may be made alive in Christ, becoming a new creation.

That is why we, on this bright Day, sing the song of victory to Him Who has conquered the power of death, to Him Who has conquered the seeming wisdom of the wise men of this world and by His Resurrection has saved those who believe in Him. (cf. I Corinthians 1:21) We

have seen the fulfillment of the words of the prophets and together with the Apostle Paul we say: “We have come to know the love of Christ which surpasses understanding and have been filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:19) For just as the power of death, after the Fall of the first parents of mankind into sin, entered into this world, so likewise Christ the Lord, as the New Adam, has received the wounds of sin upon Himself, voluntarily, and died for us and destroyed the power of death and has returned man to his original glory. That is why we through the Resurrection learn the meaning and goal of God’s creation, for the Lord has brought everything from non-existence into existence so that it could eternally and without corruption live in Christ, His Only-begotten Son. Saint Maxim the Confessor being inspired by God teaches that we are born into the body, by baptism we are reborn, and by the Resurrection we are eternally born in Christ Who, as the First-Born of the dead, renews the entire creation and bestows upon it immortality. By His Resurrection Christ unites this world with paradise, and in paradise He receives before everyone else the repentant thief, giving us all hope that our living in repentance is not in vain. In celebrating the resurrection of Christ, we are celebrating and singing the miraculous Mystery of God Who created us to be eternal partakers of the Divine nature, that is, of Divine life, in His Son, the Incarnate, Crucified and Resurrected Christ the Lord. (cf. II Peter 1:4)

Before Christ’s Resurrection, all went after death into the dark regions of hades, where there is no one to glorify God, and in that way the senselessness of death kept all of creation in chains. (cf. Psalm 6:6; Isaiah 38:18) Christ God descends into the lower regions of hades and destroys the eternal chains that kept everything locked up. (Paschal Canon, Ode 6) Hades was emptied, and our Lord brings our forebears and the righteous ones out into the light of new life. Since then death is only a dream. It no longer signifies the end, but rather the door into eternal life in Christ. That is why the Apostle Paul boldly exclaims: “For me

to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21)

Having purified all our senses with fasting, let us look at the unapproachable light of the Resurrection; let us look at Christ Who shines in our hearts! Forgiving each other of everything, let us be renewed by the Resurrection into the new life! Let us live with the Resurrected Christ so that we already in this life may experience others and ourselves as One Body, One Church of God! Even though we live in a difficult time, full of unforeseen events and tragedies, we must not, following the example of the ancient Christians, stop rejoicing, and with Christ’s love we must love not only each other, but our enemies also, so that nothing separates us from the way of life which was granted to us by Christ Himself. Our Lord teaches us that if we do not forgive each other, we will not be forgiven, and if we judge, we are already judged. Without forgiving and without seeing our own transgressions towards our neighbors, friends and enemies, we will not be able to receive the light of the Resurrection, nor will we become the recipients of the hope of eternal life where there is no fear, sighing nor sadness. Let us not fear this world, brothers and sisters, for Christ has conquered this world! Let us fear only leaving the light for darkness, and leaving the joy of God’s Kingdom, by which we should live here and now, for the maze of worldly ideologies, bitterness, disunity, hatred and violence! We Christians are not afraid of death; rather we bless those who persecute us. We deeply believe that we are not of this world even though we live in it. Christ, the Eternal Pascha, has opened to us the doors of God’s Kingdom, which is our true fatherland, and we in this world are only passengers who are traveling through time and space, witnessing to Christ with our life. Let us, therefore, never forget in Whom we are baptized and for Whom we live, so that our life’s race is not futile and that our hope is not placed in empty and vain idols of this world and age. (cf. Galatians 2:2)

Our dear spiritual children let us not neglect love! For precisely according to our mutual love everyone will recognize us as Christ’s disciples. (cf. St. John 13:35) Let us be co-sufferers with those who suffer, let us weep with those who are weeping and let us comfort them with hope in the Lord! Let not our service to God be as a new edition of pharisaic external faith in God! For what reward will we receive? Let us sacrifice for our neighbor! Let us give to those in need! Let us glorify God with humility and with the words of the repentant publican who was forgiven and justified! The people of God today are dispersed throughout the world, but that which unites us and makes us One Church is not a transient ideology of this world, but a deep consciousness that we are united in Christ, in Whom we are baptized and of Whom we partake in the Eucharist, Holy Communion. Let us therefore make every effort that those who have not come to know the light of Christ’s teaching may see in us the way and recognize in us true successors of the apostles and saints of Christ! The entire Serbian people looks in this spirit to St. Sava, who unmistakably has shown us the way of Christ as the only way of life. The shrines of the Nemanjic’s have shone for centuries as lighthouses in the fog of our history, directing us to the all-encompassing spiritual horizons of God’s Kingdom, which is not of this world. That is why no suffering and no injustice of this world’s mighty ones can or should disunite us or set us against each other.

On this bright Feast Day, with our prayers we most especially remember all persecuted Serbs, who already for two decades have not been able to go back to their homes, but also those who remain living on their ancestral homesteads, who together with their shepherds are enduring threats and pressure just because they are Serbs.

We are especially concerned about our brothers and sisters in Kosovo and Metohija. They live and glorify God on Serbian land,

from time immemorial, and continue to witness the mystery of Christ's suffering and Resurrection. How many times have our people suffered, but again with God's power, have risen and renewed, continuing to walk on the path of Christ! Our holy shrines, and in particular our Kosovo-Metohija shrines, where the holy relics of many of our God-pleasing saints rest and upon which is imprinted the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection, indeed teach us this the best. Throughout the centuries our churches, monasteries, villages and cities have suffered, but we have rebuilt them again, having rebuilt ourselves as the living Church of God. That is why instead of crying and sobbing, let us sing the song of victory, for in the light of the Resurrection the cross that we bear is not a symbol of humiliation and shame but a symbol of new dignity and glory. Kosovo and Metohija for us Serbs and for all Orthodox Christians is not only a geographical territory, but above all, it is a spiritual territory that connects us all regardless of where we might be living. Following the Kosovo testament of the Holy Prince Lazar, we cannot forget that the heavenly Kingdom is our ultimate ideal and eternal goal, while everything earthly is perishable and temporary.

Christians today suffer throughout the world, especially those in the Near East and Ukraine. May the example of their faith and their suffering be an encouragement and testimony for us that the Lord will never leave His Church and that the grace of God multiplies where suffering has increased! We cannot forget that the Lord Christ Himself together with the Most Holy Virgin and the Righteous Joseph fled to Egypt to escape Herod's violence and in this way showed us that we are strangers in this world which lies in evil.

There is, dear brothers and sisters, much bitterness and sadness among our people after all those difficult years of temptation through which we have gone and through which we

are going now. But, we in no way should fall into despair. For when he suffers the Christian repents even more before God, and at the same time he rejoices for he knows that the Lord will not overlook a heart filled with hope. That is why we pray to God, our dear spiritual children, that He save us from hatred and evil deeds, and that He may teach us to love with the love with which he has loved this world. If we are able to recognize the pain and suffering of our neighbors and repent of our sins, our efforts will not be in vain, but will be unto our salvation and eternal life.

With prayers we greet our brothers and sisters who live around the world and we call them to turn to each other, gathered under the wings of our Church and in that way to continue worthily to witness to who they are and to what faith and what people they belong.

Let us safeguard the holiness of marriage and family, raising our children in faith and fear of God and purity, without forgetting that the family is a "domestic Church" and a foundation of Christian community! Let us regularly participate in the Eucharistic gatherings, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ and in this way becoming One Body of Christ, a chosen People, the Church of the Living God! Let us not forget that it is our calling after the Holy Liturgy to witness in word and in deed to this miraculous Mystery which continues with faith and love, before all those who love us as well as before those who hate us, in short in every time and place. For the Christian our whole life is a continuing liturgical paschal joy. He who lives by it will not see in another person a stranger; instead, he will recognize in every person the image of our Lord, Who wants all to be saved. Bearing witness to the joyous news that Christ is truly risen is our daily duty for the Lord calls us by His Holy Spirit not to close ourselves in, but rather to bring others into that joy, and to show them the only way

to salvation. The Risen Christ calls us not to be a scandal but a light to the world. When we are ready to admit our sins and to correct ourselves in humility we are not being humiliated but we are showing that the Spirit of God dwells in us.

We especially wish to convey to you that on the feast day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the completion of Christ's economy of salvation of the world and mankind, in June of this year, on the Apostolic island of Crete, a Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church will be convened. It is the duty of all of us to pray that this spiritually exceptional event of the Holy Spirit will be a verbal confirmation of the unshakable unity of the Holy Orthodox Church in the faith once and for all delivered to the saints (cf. Hebrew 3), which means to all true Christians, that it may be a call to all who in believe in Christ to again be one in the only Savior and our Lord, in fulfillment of His prayer "that all may be one," in accordance with the example of the unity of the Holy Trinity, the One and Only God, that the world may believe (cf. St. John 17:18-24), that they may be witnesses to the joy of salvation through the Cross and Resurrection, the greatest gift of the God of love, before all people, all nations and every created thing, but above all that this great pan-Orthodox Council be a part of the eternal Good News of the Church about the Kingdom of God as the meaning of everything that exists – in one word, that it be to the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Living and True God.

Let us not forget, dear brothers and sisters, that we are called, wherever we may be and whatever we are doing, to be peacemakers and in so doing to witness to God Who grants us peace and is our Peace. Even though we are distinct from each other, we can never overlook the fact that we are all created in the image of God and that we are called to be one in Christ. That is why it is necessary to give a hand to him who stumbles instead of

pushing him into a deeper perdition. Likewise, we should visit the sick and care for them and to those that are lost we need to show the right path. In doing so, we will have the Lord manifested in our works, Who Himself told us to be the light of the world. But above all else our spiritual children, may our life be a constant thanksgiving to God for everything and for all! For what else and what greater offering can we offer to the Resurrected Christ, Who brings us from darkness to the light of knowledge and from death into life eternal? Therefore, together with the angels and with all the saints in heaven, and together with our brothers and sisters on earth, let us sing the victorious song and in festal joy greet each other with the greeting:

Christ is Risen!

Given at the Serbian Patriarchate in Belgrade at Pascha, 2016.

Your intercessors before the Resurrected Christ:

**Archbishop of Pec,
Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci and
Serbian Patriarch IRINEJ**

Bishop of Western America **MAXIM**

And all Serbian Bishops

***By the Grace of God Orthodox Bishop of Western America
Grace, Peace and Mercy of the Resurrected Savior Christ!***

The Most Dear Ones in the Lord,

I wholeheartedly greet you on the most and all-joyous Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, with a wish that your entire lives may be a sign of resurrectional victory and gratitude, and that on our faces the goodness of Eternal life may always shine.

In the conditions of bondage which brought us to the point of "despairing of life itself" (2 Cor 1:8), faith exists as a power of life. The Holy Pascha takes the whole of the enslaved people, initiates them into a mystery and brings them through their passion to the reality of the Resurrection. Now, everything is clothed in the modesty of compunction and the spontaneous dynamism of eternal life.

If you can, receive the message; understand the one secret, that everything is a triumph of love. Everything is brought into being and directed by the love of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

I greet you with the most joyous salutation:

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

sv. Maxim

At the Holy Pascha of our Lord, 2016.

Your Intercessor before the Resurrected Christ

***Блаіодаћу Божијом, Православни Епископ Зајадноамерички
Блаіодај, мир и милосћ од Васкрслоја Сјаса Христја!***

Најдражи у Господу,

Срдачно вам упућујем честитке за сверадосне Празнике Васкрсења Господа Бога и Спаса нашега Исуса Христа, уз жељу да Вам цео живот протекне у знаку васкрсне победе и благодарности и да на Вашим лицима свагда сија благољепије Будућег века.

У условима страдања или изгнанства, који доводе до „недоумице и за сами живот“ (2 Кор. 1, 8), вера остаје као моћ живота. Свесвета Пасха узима сав изабрани народ и уводи га у Тајну која их кроз њихово страдање доводи до реалности Васкрсења. Сада, све је одевено у чедност умиљења и изворни динамизам Вечног Живота.

Ако можеш, прими поруку, схвати једну тајну: да је све тријумф љубави. Све је приведено из небића и управља се љубављу Оца и Сина и Светога Духа.

Поздрављам вас сверадосним ускликом:

**ХРИСТОС ВАСКРСЕ!
ВАИСТИНУ ВАСКРСЕ!**

sv. Maxim

О Светој Пасхи Господњој, 2016. године

Ваш молитвеник пред Васкрслим Христом

***Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!
Christus ist auferstanden! Er ist wahrhaftig auferstanden!
Kristus het opgestaan! Hom het waarlik opgestaan!
Kristus er opstanden! Sandelig Han er Opstanden!
Christus Surrexit! Surrexit vere!
Cristo è risorto! È veramente risorto!
Le Christ est ressuscité! Vraiment Il est ressuscité!
Hristos a înviat! Adevărat a înviat!
Cristo ha resucitado! Verdaderamente, ha resucitado!
Христос Воскресе! Воистину Воскресе!
Krista uttitaha! Satvam uttitaha!***



Браћо и сестре у Господу Распетоме и Васкрсломе,

*Васкрсење Христово видевиши,
поклонимо се Светоме Господу Исусу,
Јединоме Безгреиноме,*

Као што су Му се кроз векове клањали, а и данас Му се клањају, милиони Његових ученика. По чему се ми хришћани разликујемо од других људи? Управо по томе што се Крсту Његовом клањамо и свето Васкрсење Његово прослављамо. Преко Крста Његовог и Распећа открива нам се и дарује неизрецива Тајна божанске љубави. Јавља нам се Бог као вечна истинска љубав, као љубав која се жртвује за друге, за људе и народе, за цео свет.

Зашто се ми Крсту Христовом клањамо и Васкрсење Његово прослављамо? Зато што Крст и страдање Његово постају победа над смрћу и лек бесмртности, извор васкрсења и вечног живота.

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!*

Brothers and sisters in the Crucified and Resurrected Lord,
Our dear spiritual children,

*Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ,
let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus,
the only Sinless One,*

Just as millions of His disciples have worshipped Him through the centuries, and worship Him today. What makes us Christians different from other people? Truly it is that we worship at His Cross and we glorify His Resurrection. Through His Cross and Crucifixion the unspeakable Mystery of God's love is revealed and given to us. Through them God reveals Himself to us as eternal true Love, as the Love which sacrifices itself for the other, for people and nations, and for the whole world.

Why we worship the Cross of Christ, and why we glorify His Resurrection? Because His Cross and suffering have become victory over death and the medicine of immortality, the fountain of resurrection and eternal life.

And so, brother and sisters, let us worship Him, the Lord of life and death, the Lord Who is risen and Who bestows resurrection upon all creation, Who is the “Bread of Life” Who has “come down from heaven” and Who is given “for the life of the world!” (John 6: 48-51). Let us all sing with one mouth and one heart the joyous Paschal hymn:

*Christ is risen from the dead, Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life!*

"Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!"

In humble prayer, yours in the resurrected Lord
Protopresbyter Djurica Gordic

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we observe Lent and prepare for Pascha, we are reminded of the transformative power of faith. The resurrection transforms our hearts from despair to hope and joy through the experience of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ. This transformation, this improvement of our attitudes, this moving forward spiritually, reminds me of the Serbian word **napredak** which I have heard several times over this past year. It has been used to describe the progress we've made and serves as a reminder that we must dedicate ourselves to making progress in the coming year.



Renewal during spring happens when the plants are tended throughout their growth cycle from planting to pruning through harvest. Without that care, there is no **napredak**. Without care, it will wither and die. This is a simple but profound reminder of our responsibilities in this life. During this Holy Week, while reflecting on Christ's life, death and resurrection, let us devote ourselves to the ongoing process of **napredak**.

Someone said that we have to keep moving forward, because the minute we stop moving forward will be the minute we start moving backward. This is true in all aspects of living. It is true in our spiritual life, our personal life and even in the important work of preserving, maintaining and improving our church facility to serve future generations.

As a parish community, it is important that we look to the future and plan wisely and prudently so that we can continue to maintain and preserve this sanctuary. We must also challenge ourselves not to overlook the fact that there are many needs that exist. We must commit ourselves to continue to devote resources necessary to address a variety of issues. All of us have a duty to share our resources and help however we can. If we move forward together we honor the message of Pascha.

Finally, our profound and heartfelt thanks to those of you whose help and service we've enjoyed over these years. Memory eternal for those who are not here with us to witness this continued transformation. May we all experience the peace of the risen Christ during this holy season and as we look forward to this next season of continued improvement, progress and prosperity. Blessings to each of you and your families during this holy season,

Stan Grgich

Parish Council President

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Hristos Voskrese! Christ is Risen!

Each day offers opportunity to be reminded of all that is beautiful and hopeful in our community; Spring showcases that opportunity above all other times of the year. The earth's seasonal renewal is an outward reflection of our inner, spiritual rebirth and a period of personal awakening. May this time of the year hold value in the manner we inwardly approach each day and our external opportunities. As Orthodox Christians, we follow in Christ's path of kindness, love for one another and for those less fortunate. The transition from Lent into Easter provides opportunity for a mirroring transition from a quiet period into renewed support for our faith and for one another.

St. Sophia Sisterhood is grateful to all who generously offer their time and bring their creativity to serve our community. We wish all a joyous and spiritually refreshing Easter season.

Sincerely,

Tina Milinovich

Saint Sophia Sisterhood President

St. Sophia, and her daughters Faith, Hope and Love
These Saints were from Italy and contested for the Faith about the year 126, during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. Faith was twelve years old, Hope, ten, and Love, nine; each was tormented and then beheaded, from the eldest to the youngest. Their mother Sophia mourned at their grave for three days, where she also fell asleep in peace; because of her courageous endurance in the face of her daughters' sufferings, she is also counted a martyr. The name Sophia means "wisdom" in Greek; as for her daughters' names, Faith, Hope, and Love (Charity), they are Pistis, Elpis, and Agape in Greek, and Vera, Nadezhda, and Lyubov in Russian, Vera, Nada i Ljubav in Serbian





Saint John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
Саборни Храм Светог Јована Крститеља

Parish Report for Year 2015
To the Diocesan Annual Assembly – September 4, 2015

The San Francisco Serbian Orthodox Parish community celebrated its 60th year of worship and fellowship at our 900 Baker Street location. It was in 1954 that the consecration of the Serbian Orthodox Church of St. John the Baptist was performed. It fulfilled a spiritual and patriarchal mission of its parishioners who wanted to serve God and His people in the center of the San Francisco Bay Area.

The celebration of this notable jubilee was started on Sunday, October 5, 2014 with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Of special note, during the Divine Liturgy, His Grace Bishop Maxim tonsured Darko Vujetic into the rank of Reader. Included in the celebration were more than 200 guests. Visiting clergy consisted of His Grace, Bishop Maxim, our Diocesan Bishop; His Grace Bishop Longin, our previous Diocesan Bishop; Very Reverend Dusan Bunjevic, former Parish Priest; Fr. Marko Matic, also former Parish Priest; and our Bay area clergy consisting of Fr. Slobodan Jovic from Saratoga, Fr. Vasilije Cvijanovic from Moraga, Fr. Zoran Savic from Oakland, Protodeacon Tom Paul from Jackson, and Fr. Djurica Gordic. His Excellency consul general of Greece Ambassador Dimitrios Xenitellis attended Liturgy and the banquet. Chairman for 60th Anniversary was Paul Bunjevic. His Grace Bishop Maxim distributed Episcopal Gramatas to our dedicated parishioners for their outstanding contributions and commitments.

Among our parishioners, for year of 2015 there are 51 members and 26 families are stewards (most members are stewards). Parish council do not routinely solicit their membership/stewardship dues, but continue to encourage their active role in attending church services, participate in sacraments and support of our parish activities. The results of serving this community can be reflected in the following services: 87 Divine Liturgies, 10 baptisms, 4 wedding, 4 funerals, 26 home blessings, and 28 family slava services. The average Sunday attendance is 40-60 parishioners.

For 2015 the parish had set various goals and challenges. Last year, in preparation for our 60th anniversary we completed various improvements, repairs and upgrades to the Church and buildings on our property.

There is a strong working relationship and collaboration between the Priest and the Board in guiding and coordinating our auxiliary organizations, such as the St. Sophia Circle of Serbian Sisters (KSS), St. John's Choir. Sunday School is held every other Sunday, in order to have better participation, since many children have sport activities at their schools. Children are divided in two groups, preschool and middle school age. For Vrbica celebration we had more than 30 children participating. Altar boys (about 15) assist and help in services regularly.

In conclusion, although we are not a large or financially wealthy Parish, we are blessed by being a united community that prays together and preserves our Serbian Orthodox Faith in a culturally rich and diverse city.

Respectfully Yours in Christ,
Fr. Djurica Gordic, Parish Priest

Ecclesiastes 3 – King James Version

- ¹ To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
- ² A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
- ³ A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- ⁴ A time weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- ⁵ A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;
- ⁶ A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
- ⁷ A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
- ⁸ A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
- ⁹ What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?
- ¹⁰ I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.
- ¹¹ He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.
- ¹² I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.
- ¹³ And also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.
- ¹⁴ I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him
- ¹⁵ That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.
- ¹⁶ And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.
- ¹⁷ I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.
- ¹⁸ I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.
- ¹⁹ For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.
- ²⁰ All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.
- ²¹ Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?
- ²² Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

From our treasurer's desk

Great Easter Lent always challenges me and inevitably I learn something new. My latest discovery is learning that St. Andrew of Crete in his great canon is having a conversation with his soul. Wow!

It never occurred to me to do such a thing. As I began to write this article the opening verse of Ecclesiastes 3:1 kept going through my mind "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven..." which seemed to suggest I might try having a conversation with my soul. Admittedly I did not have much success and definitely lacked the circumspection of St. Andrew but I think I am going to continue pursuing this path and see where it leads me.

I want to say you, the parishioners of St. John, are amazing people. Your generosity keeps our church alive and well. I want to acknowledge that even our personal financial lives are a continuing cycle of change that we all face. But I challenge you to ask the question, "Am I doing everything I can?" If you are, God bless you and if the answer is I can do more please inquire or think about what that might be. Maybe it is not money but time such as being available to clean the church or organize an event such as a lecture, a dance,

outreach, missionary work, adult religious education, getting-together -because-we-can, or doing something that has never been done before. Please present any and all ideas to Fr. Djurica.

On a more serious note the church's financial health is good. However, there is always room for improvement. We have an account that holds sufficient funds that would cover a years' worth of expenses. Does this mean we should become comfortable and do nothing? Absolutely not. It means we have assured the church will continue but our stewardship commitment as parishioners must persist. This requires thought, open discussion, and prayer.

The projected operating budget for **2016 is \$154,845.00.**

May you find peace and joy during this time of celebrating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hristos Voskrese!

Yours in Christ,
Micaelee Ellswythe

For decades our Sisters have hosted an annual Valentine's Luncheon; this year was no exception...

By Tina Milinovich

Beautifully decorated by Jay and Melody Key, our hall was transformed into an expression of love and fellowship. The kitchen crew (Victoria Kardum, Nicole Sise and Tina Milinovich) delivered a homemade Italian style luncheon to attendees while Blage Carabarin and Marie Derr managed the fundraising tables. Good sport, Sam Miraglia manned the busy bar and managed to keep all smiling while waiting for lunch. We are grateful to pianist and Choir Director, Bob Fowler who enhanced the atmosphere with melodies throughout social hour and lunch.



The Sisterhood is so fortunate to have many talented bakers and creative individuals involved in this event each year; a special thank you to Danica Medan and Protonica Bunjevic who provide the "Members Still Learning" with tips and tricks in creating successful events. We would be lost without you.

As always, the funds created by this event will in turn support our church operationally. The Sisterhood is grateful to all who attended or donated to ensure the success of this and all of our hosted events.

We look forward to all upcoming 2016 events and to our continued fellowship and support of St. John's.



Iz Kutka Nedeljne Skole Svetog Jovana Krstitelja u San Francisku

Dragi roditelji i draga dečice, draga braćo i sestre,

O Vaskrsu, najvećem i najradosnijem hrišćanskom prazniku, u ime Nedeljne škole Svetog Jovana Krstitelja, veselo vas pozdravljamo, radosno uzvikujući:

Hristos Vaskrse - Vaistinu Vaskrse!

Nedeljna Škola Svetog Jovana Krstitelja uz blagoslov protojereja Djurice Gordića i protinice Marije Gordić okuplja grupu dece uzrasta od jedne do šest godina koja svake ugovorene nedelje marljivo radi na jačanju poznavanja srpskog jezika, kulture i tradicije.

Deca se druže i bolje upoznaju jedni druge aktivno učestvujući u aktivnostima Nedeljne škole. Časovi počinju učenjem ćirilčnih slova kroz različite vežbe: vežbe pisanja, igre asocijacija iz svakodnevnog života, upoznavanje pojmova iz Pravoslavnog bukvara. Na taj način dečica rade na jačanju temelja srpskog jezika proširujući rečnik učenjem pojmova iz svakodnevnog života, ali i pojmova u vezi sa religijom, crkvom i srpskim običajima.

Važan deo časa posvećen je narodnoj tradiciji, kada se podsećamo događaja iz naše prošlosti, učimo o narodnim običajima i verovanjima, upoznajemo važne ličnosti iz naše istorije i tako budimo želju za otkrivanjem kulturnog i duhovnog blaga srpskog naroda. Deci se pevaju narodne pesme, pričaju priče, uče se narodnim zagonetkama, poslovicama, brzalicama...

Poslednji i podjednako važan deo časa posvećen je "Rečniku vrlina ili Vrlinoslovu koji smo počeli da stvaramo na prvom času. Cilj ovog dela koncepta rada Nedeljne škole je da deca kroz priče o vrlinama i vrednostima koji se tradicionalno vezuju za srpstvo upotpune svoje poznavanje jezika, tradicije, religije i kulture.

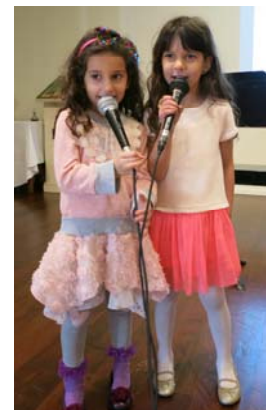
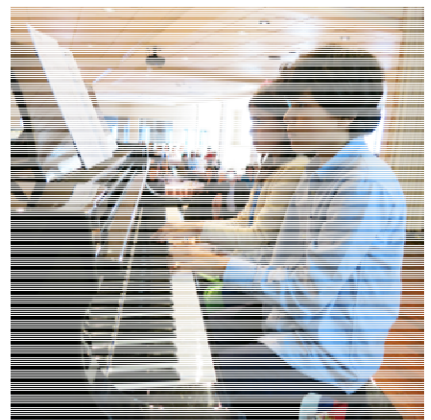
Vrlinoslovom, takođe, želimo da naučimo decu ponašanju koja će im pomoći da se izbore sa izazovima današnjeg života.

U sećanje na dan vaskrsenja Isusa Hrista i dan pobede života nad smrću, prisećamo se vrlina o kojima je propovedao Isus Hristos kao što su ljubav, pravdoljubivost i poštenje. Okupljeni oko Nedeljne škole Hrama Svetog Jovana Krstitelja vas podsećaju i na druge vrednosti kao što su: na slovo **A** - agape tj. voleti bližnjega svoga, zatim na slovo **I** - gostoljublje (posebno vezano za srpsku tradiciju), hrabrost na slovo **X** kojom su se odlikovali mnogobrojni srpski junaci i a na slovo **II** - celomudrije kao posedovanje čistote uma i duše.

Srećan Vaskrs i mnogo ljubavi žele vam, Sofija, Anja, Natalija, Nikola, Mia, Senka, Irina, Kalina i Gabrijel sa roditeljima i učiteljicom Aleksandrom Milić

SUNDAY SCHOOL FIELD TRIP TO BAY AREA DISCOVERY MUSEUM







***Saint Sava Celebration
Прослава Светог Саве***

January 31, 2016

Program:

Mila i Vuk Erceg- Iz zivota Svetog Save
Filip Rajkovic- Srpce o Svetom Savi (M. Nikolic)
Anya I Luka Perazich- Marsirala Kralja Petra garda
Silent Night
Irina Milic- Fifi (Dragan Lukic)
Marija i Marko Stojanovic –Violin Duo – Pukni zoro (*Trad.*)
Teodora Šutilović –Violoncello- March in G-major (*J.S. Bach*)
Theme from Witches’ Dance (*N. Paganini*)
Simona Ličina –Guitar- Zora je (*Dj. Novkovic*)
Anya, Natalia & Sofia Chawla – Kisa pada, trava raste
Nikola Kovačević - Slovo o Svetome Savi (*Borivoje Vukomanović*)
Mia Lukic – Mali Konjanik (*J. J. Zmaj*)
David Rajkovic- Ljudi Likujete, Narodi Cujte
Kristina Maksimovic – Piano – (Rainbow Falls (*M.Bober*)
Sonatina in C 1and 3 (*J. Bastien*)
Emilija Ličina – Flute – Vidovdan (*Trad.*)
Ivona Šutilović - Domovina se brani lepotom (*Ljubivoje Rsumovic*)



Homily on Palm Sunday

One of the most miraculous details of our Savior's life was foreseen by the Prophet Zacharias through the dark glass of time, and described thus: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; proclaim it aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, the King is coming to thee, just, and a Saviour; he is meek and riding on an ass, and a young foal* And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent

two of his disciples, saying, *Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.*(Zach. 9:9). The Apostle Luke, an eyewitness, describes this event:

And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him (Lk. 19:28–48).

This is the description of an historical event that took place twenty centuries ago, as related by an eyewitness. But this event has more than historical significance; it also has a spiritual meaning, and therefore also a moral meaning for every modern-day Christian. According to the spiritual meaning, Jerusalem signifies the human soul, and the entry of the Lord into Jerusalem signifies the entrance of God into the soul.

The multitudes of people, crowded and pushing one against another, joyfully awaiting and greeting Christ, symbolize the noble sentiments and exalted thoughts of a person who joyfully greets God, his Savior and Deliverer. The leaders of the crowd of people, who hate Christ and want to kill Him, personify the lower desires and earthbound thoughts, which take the upper hand over man's noble nature and oppress it. Now this lower human nature rebels against God's entry into the soul, for when God is enthroned there, the lower nature will inevitably be destroyed.

The Temple in Jerusalem symbolizes the holy of holies of the human soul—that sacred place where the Holy Spirit has if only a miniscule haven even in the greatest sinner. But earthly passions penetrate there also, and lower human nature has used even it to achieve its base aims.

Christ heals the soul of those sick ones who fall down before Him with faith, and this means that certain impulses of the soul, although sick, thirst for unity with God and seek for Him, the only true Doctor in the world. Christ's prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction symbolizes the destruction of any soul that God rejects, lays low, and spews forth from Himself.

No one in this world is happy unless he has opened wide the gates of his spiritual Jerusalem—his soul—and received God into himself. A godless man feels lonely to despair. The society of others does not make his loneliness go away, but only increases it. However he who has taken God into his soul will never feel lonely even in a desert. No one dies an eternal death other than one in whom God has died.

St. Nikolai Velimirovich

Bishop Maxim visits our Cathedral

On Sunday, January 17, 2016 His Grace Bishop Maxim, together with his parents, Proto Lazar and Protinica Radmila Vasiljevic, visited the St. John the Baptist Cathedral. On this day, Proto Lazar also celebrated his 50th Anniversary of his ordination into the holy priesthood.



The Daily Cycle of Prayer

by Stevan Davidovich

"He who is able to pray correctly, even if he is the poorest of all people, is essentially the richest. And he who does not have proper prayer, is the poorest of all, even if he sits on a royal throne" - St John Chrysostom

This statement raises the question of "how do I pray correctly?" Of the many aspects of prayer, in this essay I want to address the timing of prayer. 1st Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to "pray without ceasing." If one is able to achieve this, then timing no longer matters. For many of us who cannot reach that level, then timing is everything. Last summer I spent a week at the Monastery in Platina and observed the prayer cycles of the Monks. While I was aware of the nature of the daily cycle of prayer, I was curious of how it came about. As I read the Psalm's I found three places where the Psalmist talks about the timing of prayer. These are:

Psalm 55(54):17—Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.

Psalm 119:62 – At midnight I will rise to give you thanks to You, Because of Your righteous judgments.

Psalm 119:164 – Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgements.

So where did we get to the 8 prayers a day? Do I add Psalm 119:62 to 119:164 to get 8? I turned to Wikipedia and other sources. It starts with Jewish prayer. When the Jews were exiled to Babylonia, the Temple was no longer in use. This caused synagogues to be established. Services at fixed hours of the day came about where readings of the Tora, Psalms, and hymns began. This "sacrifice of praise" was a substitute for sacrifices of animals.

Now fast forward to the Roman Empire. The Jews and early Christians followed the Roman system of conducting the business day in scheduling their prayer times. In Roman cities, the bell rang at 6 am to mark the beginning of the business day. This is called Prime or the "1st hour." This was followed by ringing the bell at 9 am called Terce - the "3rd hour." Then came the bell for lunch break at noon (Sext, the "6th hour"), followed by a bell at 3pm (called None, the 9th hour) which called the people back to work again. The final bell rang at 6pm to close the business day and the time for evening prayer.

The first miracle of the Apostles, healing the crippled man on the temple steps, occurred because Peter and John went to the Temple to pray (Acts 3:1). This was at the "9th hour" of prayer (about 3 pm), the time at which the "evening" sacrifice was celebrated in the Temple in of the New Testament.

A defining moment of the early Church was when it was decided to include Gentiles among the believers and this came from a vision Peter had while praying at noon-

time (Acts 10:9–49). This was at the "6th hour," the same time as the Mussaf prayers tied to sacrifices in the Temple on special days.

As Christianity separated from Judaism, the practice of praying at fixed times continued. The early church was known to pray the Psalms (Acts 4:23–30), which has remained a part of the daily cycle of prayers (also called the canonical hours) and all Christian prayer since. By 60 AD, the Didache, the oldest known liturgical manual for Christians, recommended disciples to pray the Lord's Prayer three times a day; this practice found its way into the canonical hours as well. Pliny the Younger (63 – ca. 113), who was not a Christian himself, records fixed times of prayer by believers and specific services—other than the Eucharist—assigned to those times.

By the second and third centuries, Church Fathers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Tertullian, wrote of the practice of Morning and Evening Prayer, and of the prayers at terce, sext, and none. The prayers could be prayed individually or in groups. By the third century, the Desert Fathers (the earliest monks), began to live out St. Paul's command to "pray without ceasing" where one group of monks pray one fixed-hour prayer while having another group pray the next prayer.

By the Middle Ages the format of unbroken fixed-hour prayer developed in Christian monastic groups in both the East and West. Longer prayers soon grew, but the cycle of prayer became the norm in the daily life of monasteries. By the 4th century, the characteristics of the daily prayer cycle (or called the canonical hours) more or less took their present shape. For secular (non-monastic) clergymen and lay people, the fixed-hour prayers were by necessity much shorter. In many churches and basilicas staffed by monks, the form of the fixed-hour prayers was a hybrid of secular and monastic practice.

In the East, the development of the Divine Services shifted from Jerusalem to Constantinople. St. Theodore the Studite (ca. 758 – ca. 826) combined influences from the Byzantine court ritual with monastic practices common in Asia Minor, and added hymns composed by himself and his brother Joseph. Today we start our daily cycle of prayer at sundown with Vespers.

Psalm 141-2: "The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice"

The tradition of praying at sundown coincides with the lighting of lamps before electricity. This transition time from ancient times has been lost in our electrical world where there is no need to change what we are doing because of the setting of the sun, but before electricity, this

transition required a definite change of activity. In the Church, as the sun sets, we gather and give thanks for all the blessings our Lord has granted us this day. This prayer service begins with the psalm of creation Psalm 104(103).

The 2nd prayer that comes is called Compline. After our evening meal and before we go to sleep we say personal prayers which is how the service of compline is usually done. Here we reflect on the difficulties of the day and examine how we handled them and ask for forgiveness in our shortcomings as well as our negligence of things we did not do or we should have done. As we go to sleep we can be reminded of Psalm 4:8- "I will lie down in peace, and sleep, for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

This brings us to the 3rd prayer at Midnight prayer called out in Psalm 119:62 (noted earlier). In the monasteries the monks will rise at midnight for prayer. We know this tradition goes back at least as far as the time of David.

The 4th prayer is Matins or Orthros and is either before dawn (like 4am) in some traditions or sunrise in other traditions. It is called out by *Psalm 63:1* – "O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You;..." Also Psalm 51(50) is read as it was at Compline. If one does the prayer before dawn, then they can then go back to sleep.

The 5th prayer is called the First Hour or Prime and, as mentioned earlier, is the start of the business day. Before the use of clocks, it was probably determined by sunrise. This is usually joined with the Matins (the 4th prayer) which eliminates the need to get up at dawn and then go back to sleep. As we rise at sunrise and experience the goodness of God, we praise Him, give thanks, make petitions, and seek His blessing for the activities of the coming day. Much of Psalm 5 is read, but of note is:

Psalm 5:3 – "My voice You shall hear in the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up."

At this hour we ask God to guard us from everything that could harm us in either body or soul. As our senses are being awakened we ask for spiritual awakening through Jesus Christ who is the "true light who comes into the world." It is interesting to note that this is the time at which Christ was led into the Praetorian before Pilate.

Next comes the 6th Prayer called Trece or the 3rd Hour. This is about 9:00am and is the hour when the Holy Spirit came down upon the apostles on Pentecost. We give thanks to God for this gift and ask that He never deprive us of the fruits and graces of the Spirit. We also commemorate the condemnation of Christ by Pilate. During this Prayer we read Psalm 51(50) and 25(24) as we did at Compline. St. Basil the Great composed prayers for the 3rd hour and are found online at <http://www.saintjonah.org/services/third&sixth.htm>.

We are now at the 7th Prayer – at noon or also called the Sixth hour, the time when the divine drama of Christ began. It is when Pilate released Him to the Jews and they condemned Him and He was nailed to the Cross. We rejoice in the infinite life of God and show our gratitude, for through this event He wrought our salvation. In the Gospel of Luke he says in 23:44 – "Now it was about the 6th hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the 9th hour." This is also stated in Mark 15:33 and Matthew 27:45.

Psalm 54(53) is read. It is a prayer said in adversity, with the underlying assumption that noonday is the hour of greatest adversity as called out *Psalm 91(90) verse 6* ".....Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday."

We now move to the last prayer in the daily cycle - the 8th Prayer at the Ninth Hour, around 3pm, the time that Jesus died on the Cross. It is when he promised His kingdom to the repentant thief. We give thanks singing hymns of these saving events. The Apostle Mark says in his gospel 15:34 "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, saying 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which is translated 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" This is also called out in Matthew 27: 46. Psalm 84(83) is read during this prayer. This Psalm is of longing for the presence of the Lord in our lives. By the time we get to 6pm the day has ended and the cycle begins again with Vespers. One point of view is that we play out the crucifixion of Jesus on a daily basis.

I do struggle with the idea that Vespers is the beginning of the day. This tradition is kept alive in Mount Athos and is called Byzantine Time, even though I don't think that Byzantine can hold claim to the idea. The idea is supported by an interpretation of Genesis 1:5 where God defines a day starting with the evening and continuing with the morning as the 1st day.

For most people, who do not live a monastic life, following this routine is not easy and not always practical in a secular world. It is practical, however, to pause for a minute at these times to say a short prayer such as the Jesus Prayer or the Prayer of the Hours if you can carry them with you. If you listen to Ancient Faith radio on the internet they offer short prayers on the hours. For a pocket sized book that contains the prayers of the hours see "A Manual of the Hours of the Orthodox Church" compiled by Archimandrite Cherubim, Monastery of the Paraclete, Attica, Greece, translated and published by Community of the Holy Myrrhbearers, 1993. good book with the complete services adapted for use without a priest is "The Hours of Prayer" Published by the Orthodox Brotherhood of the Virgin Mary in Elkhorn VA.

This year we have begun meeting at least once a month for prayer and fellowship outside the normal liturgical cycle of feast days and Sunday service. Whether it be a normal Vespers service or a Lenten service of the Akathist or Presanctified Gifts, we have been following it with an evening of discussion and inspection of our Orthodox faith. The Lord has given us the great mission to go forth and “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you,” (Matt. 28:19-20). Mission can take many forms, and we should first remember our obligation to spread the Gospel by living out our lives as Christ did himself and by helping those in need. In order to be a “light of the world, a city that is set on a hill,” (Matt. 5:14) we must also heed the words of the Apostle Paul and “build up the church,” (1 Cor. 14:12). We may call this the *internal mission* of the Church, as St. Justin Popović himself said. It is through these studies that we hope to uplift our understanding of the faith and thereby better serve the Church and her bridegroom Jesus Christ.

Usually accompanied by a meal or a snack due to the graciousness of one or more of the parishioners in attendance (many thanks especially to Micaele Ellswythe and Stevan Davidovich!), we have discussed several topics of interest, usually with a small lecture prepared by one of the parishioners or Fr. Djurica. We started off our efforts with a survey of Orthodox theology as presented by Miroslav Popovic, a graduate of Theology from the University of Belgrade and a current Ph.D. candidate in Nuclear Engineering at U.C. Berkeley. Bewildering and enlightening at once, we talked about our belief in the Trinity and the Incarnation, the typology of the Old Testament, and the meaning of the Eschaton in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy as the eighth day of Creation, to mention a few of the things discussed. While perhaps a bit too ambitious and lofty to do within a one hour lecture, it was an excellent launch for our study group.

In a subsequent meeting we had Fr. Djurica explain the meaning between the various rites of what we do every Sunday and what they mean. Liturgy as we know it is actually dividing into three parts: the preparation (*proskomidia*), the liturgy of the catechumens, and the liturgy of the faithful, each composed of several additional rites. We discussed the various tools used in the service, such as the diskos, the asterix, and the spear. Father talked to us about how the Lamb is cut from the prosphora bread, the significance of the various particles

cut from the bread, and the meaning behind what is written on the prosphora seal (*pečat*). All the words and actions in liturgy are replete with meaning, yearning to be understood. In many ways liturgy is the focal point at which all aspects of our life come together. We fast Wednesday and Friday not only to remind ourselves of and relive the events of Holy Week, but also as a preparation for and extension of the liturgy. Just as an athlete must train extensively to prepare himself for the big game coming up, we must prepare ourselves individually and exhort one another to every greater virtue in preparation for the Sunday service. The work of the people, one of the literal meanings of *liturgy*, is a daily calling, not just once a week. This is just one example how study and fellowship can greatly enrich our understanding of the faith with just a little more introspection.

In the following meetings we would discuss subjects such as the meaning and importance of the rite of confession as well as significance behind the people and events of the Sundays of Great Lent, whether it be the Sunday of Orthodoxy and Iconoclasm, or the saints commemorated such as Gregory Palamas and Mary of Egypt. And of course people would take this time to ask any questions that they may have, whether it be about theology or history, practice or prayer. Future studies will be dedicated to other aspects of our Faith, whether it be something as fundamental as the meaning of Incarnation, the relationship between Faith and Science, the meaning of each verse of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, or more ordinary matters such as learning Church Slavonic and fasting practices. Of course central to all of this is Holy Tradition and Scripture, which we hope to continue exploring as well.

Sometimes we Orthodox like to say that other Christians study the Bible while we study the Fathers. Both are ultimately a product of what we call Holy Tradition, and unfortunately we do not get off so easy, we have to know both! Admittedly this is not quite a Bible Study, or at least not yet. However, this is not something to be embarrassed of. When people come into the Church as adults we call them catechumens, or people who are being taught the faith. Some of us were born into the Church and some of us came to it later. Regardless of how we became Orthodox we are all called to grow in and learn about the faith. In this way we may view this internal mission of our church as a form of catechism. Likewise, everyone is free to suggest topics for future studies or to prepare and lead a study themselves. We have a dedicated cadre of attendees but everyone is welcome, no prerequisites of any sort, just a desire to learn more about the faith, for “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,” (Proverbs 1:7).

10th Annual Humanitarian Banquet

By Pavle Bunjevic

On Sunday, December 6, 2015, the Four Circles of Serbian Sisters of the Bay Area of the Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church hosted their 10th Annual Humanitarian Banquet at St. John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco. This years event was chaired by the KSS of St. John the Baptist and St. George with their



Presidents Liliana Perazich and Carol Cuckovich and our Protinica Ljiljana Bunjevic as Honorary Chair. The wonderful members and friends of our Serbian community from around the entire Bay Area were able to make this event a great success by raising a total of \$30,605. We had approximately 130 people in attendance, who were able to hear from those that directly delivered the monetary support to those that were in need.

There are many people to thank and without their support and hard work, we would not have been able to raise such a large amount of money. First, a big thank you to our wonderful sisters of St. George, St. John the Baptist, Holy Trinity, and St. Archangel Michael. Without their dedication, hard work, and love for their church and this great cause, we would not have been able to provide the monetary support over the years to those that are less fortunate. Second, many thanks to our Bishop Maksim and clergy for their spiritual support in providing us the strength to organize this special event. Third, a special thank you to our world class chef, Zeljka Maksimovic and her staff, for making a wonderful lunch that everybody enjoyed. Fourth, a special thank you to Danka Petrovic Poore for donating all the wine. Fifth, a special thank you to Nickolas Chubrich and Bob Fowler for the wonderful recital. Sixth, a big thank you to the KSS of Moraga for the hors d'oeuvres, the KSS of Saratoga for the desserts, and the KSS of SF and Oakland for the centerpiece gift baskets. Finally, a big thank you to Steve Davidovich for his annual financial report and audit on the accounting of our

Humanitarian Fund.

We look forward to another successful event this year that will be hosted by the KSS of St. Archangel Michael on Sunday-December 4, 2016 in Saratoga. Please mark this date on your calendar and we look forward to having you join us for our 11th Annual Humanitarian Banquet and 10 full years of Humanitarian fundraising.

Once again, a big thank you to Liliana Perazich and Carol Cuckovich and all the Sisters of St. John the Baptist and St. George, along with their parish priests, Fr. Djurica and Fr. Zoran, for hosting such a wonderful event. May God always bless you and watch over you.



Stewardship Reflection

CHRIST IS RISEN!
INDEED HE IS RISEN!
The Sunday of St. Thomas

A reflection from a parishioner...

The Vine and the Branches
John 15:1-2



I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

Within the Orthodox faith, emphasis is placed on our Salvation and how we prepare. Do we bear fruit or are we considered as dead branches? Each and every day, we must focus on producing fruit from all that God provides. Through Stewardship, we can identify several opportunities for the beneficial use of our Tim, Talents and Treasures.

We bear fruit for Jesus Christ when we follow His example and love, serve and support the Church which is His Body. When we abide in Him, we express this through generosity and devotion, especially in our financial stewardship and acts of personal generosity. Bearing fruit in the world is the visible result of our abiding in Christ

Винова Лоза и Гране
ЈН 15:1-2

1. Ја сам прави чокот, и отац је мој виноградар:2. Сваку лозу на мени која не рађа рода одсећи ће је; и сваку која рађа род очистиће је да више рода роди.

У Правосавној вери акценат је стављен на Спасење и како се припремамо за то. Да ли ми доносимо плода или припадамо сувим гранама? Свакога дана ми требамо да се усредсредимо на доношење плода од свега што нам је Бог дао. Кроз Старатељство ми можемо наћи неколико начина да употребимо Време, Таленат и Новац.

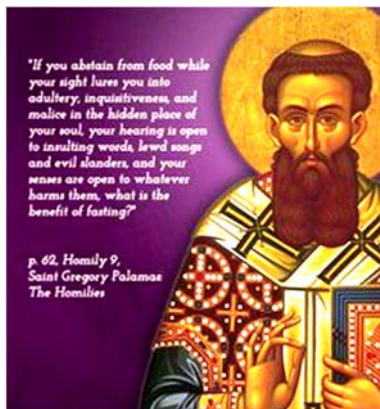
Ми доносимо плод Христу Исусу када пратимо Његов пример и волимо , помажемо Цркву која је Његово тело . Када сми ми у Њему , то се одражава кроз доброчинство и оданост , нарочито у нашем новчаном делу Старатељства и у личним примерима доброчинства. Доношење плода у свету је видљиви резултат нашег обитавања у Христу.

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St. Gregory Palamas: Light of Orthodoxy by Blagoje Djordjevic

On the early eve of the Eastern Roman Empire, a century before the fall of Constantinople, the Second Rome, to Mehmed II, Orthodoxy burned most brightly in the person of Saint Gregory of Palamas. As the frontier of the Byzantine Empire convulsed with trials of the times and

retreated to the Theodosian walls itself, Gregory proved to be the foremost champion of not only monastics but of true theology, of true prayer. His life, ever in search of greater peace and climbing ever higher towards God, was buffeted by upheaval and conflict. While miracles were attributed to him during the end of his life as Archbishop of Thessalonica, his greatest wonder was his ability to define what the grace of God really means to us and how the gates of heaven have always been open to those who in turn open their hearts to Christ. It is St. Gregory who teaches us, or rather reminds us, that we too may become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

Gregory Palamas, henceforth referred to as Palamas given the preponderance of the name Gregory at the time, was the son of a senator, born in 1296, thirty five years after the reclamation of the Capital from the conquerors of the Fourth Crusade. He was personally tutored not only by the preeminent scholars of the day but Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus himself. Instructed in the foremost education of the day, by the type of people who directly seeded the Renaissance a century later. In his studies Palamas would have engrossed himself in the works of Aristotle and other ancient philosophers as well as mathematical exercises and astronomy, all in preparation for a career as a civil servant. However, he would not complete his education and at age twenty he decided to renounce the world and take on monastic vows. He would eventually be tonsured a monk at Vatopedi Monastery on Mt. Athos, the Holy Mountain and one of the most important centers of Orthodox spirituality even to this day. A year after his vows he would be visited by St. John the Theologian in a vision and promised him spiritual protection, a most appropriate guardian for the trials he would eventually have to face. Palamas would spend many years in contemplation both in the wilderness and the world, spending time in places like the Great Lavra and the skete Glossia on Mt. Athos as well as the agora of Thessalonica in discussion with future Patriarch Isidore and his students, an ally in his coming debates. In 1331 Palamas returned to Mt. Athos where he would remain until summoned by his fellow monks to rally to their defense against the assault of Barlaam of Calabria.

An Italian-born monk who studied under Basilian monastic vows and possessed a seemingly Scholastic mind, Barlaam was a fiery defendant of what he believed to be the Orthodox faith. He dedicated himself to the services of the Emperor and Patriarch when he came to Constantinople in the 1320s. Quickly rising through the ranks and the good graces of the Imperial Court, Barlaam would serve as the official envoy to the Papal court in Avignon in pursuit of mustering another crusade. He exemplified the secular side of the Byz-

antine mind, sparing with other polymaths in mastering the stars, predicting eclipses, and geometric proofs, in the logic of Aristotle and the mysteries of Neoplatonism. His most notable intellectual rival at the time was Nikephorus Gregoras, a former fellow student of Palamas under the great scholar Thomas Metochites and noted for being an early promulgator of correcting the Julian Calendar, over 250 years before that of Pope Gregory XIII. Barlaam first disquieted Palamas with arguments against the *filioque* that the Saint deemed fundamentally agnostic in character, but it was not for a few years before they would officially begin to duel.

After one of his diplomatic missions Barlaam sought to satiate his curiosity regarding the prominence of Mt. Athos and demonstrate his supposed spiritual prowess to the monks there. Unfortunately for him he was not particularly welcome and he was continually baffled by the claims of the monks that through prayer and self-discipline they could open up their hearts to the uncreated light of God himself. Barlaam thought this was not only inconceivable but blasphemy. These men, christened *hesychasts* for their practice of *hesychasm*, the practice of achieving inner quietude, would sit in their cells with a downward gaze while coordinating their bodies with prayer, often chanting the Jesus prayer which we still recite to this day. Silence becomes the highest form of singing for them, a reminder of how God revealed himself to the prophet Elias, not in the fierce winds, not in the earthquake, not in a raging fire, but in "the voice of a gentle breeze," (1 Kings 19:11-12).

However where one might see contemplation, Barlaam saw lunacy, and he dubbed these men *omphalopsychoi*, men with souls in their navels, from where we get the word *navel-gazer*. Taking the apophatic (i.e. via negation) approach of Dionysius the Areopagite to its logical extreme, as he did with the *filioque*, Barlaam said that there was no way that what the monks saw could be the uncreated light of God himself. God in his infinitude and glory was completely beyond the comprehension of mortal men. Barlaam would go even so far to deduce that the light of Christ's transfiguration on Mt. Tabor, where "His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light," (Matt. 17:2), must also be a created phenomenon. In 1337 Palamas took up the call to defend his fellow brethren and the Orthodox faith. After several years his expositions on prayer and theology were affirmed in the *Hagoritic Tome* of the Council of 1341 under Emperor Andronicus III and his own words were compiled in his work *The Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts*.

Contrary to Barlaam's acclamation of the Greek philosophers, whom he thought to be equal to the Prophets, e.g. Plato being as full of grace as Abraham, Palamas upheld the Orthodox position that the prophets had greater knowledge of God because they received their revelations from Him directly, and not through syllogistic, i.e. philosophical/logical, means. In response to Barlaam's demand for the complete simplicity and transcendence of the divine essence, Palamas drew a distinction between God's essence (οὐσία) and His energies (ἐνέργεια) and our knowledge of them. Just as God is at the same time both one and three, with respect to the divine energies Palamas said that "the divine nature must be said to be at the same time both exclusive of, and, in some sense, open to participation. We attain to participation in the divine nature, and yet at the same time it remains totally inaccessible. We need to affirm both at the same time and to preserve the antinomy as a criterion of right devotion," (Patrologia Graeca, P.G. CL, 932). He upheld the Or-

thodox belief that God is completely and utterly unknowable in his essence, but that it is possible to know God through his energies, that is, to know God through his actions and his relationship to creation and man. We see this understanding in the ancient Biblical and Patristic traditions of Church, such as in St. Basil the Great's exposition on the casting out of demons "with the finger of God" (Luke 11:20). In another letter Basil says that, "it is by His energies that we say we know our God; we do not assert that we can come near to the essence itself, for His energies descend to us, but his essence remains unapproachable," (P.G., XXXII, 869).

In the times of the prophets God revealed himself to his people through his energies. As Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, he beheld a "bush burning with fire," whence "God called to him," (Exo. 3:2-4). In the trials of the tribes of Israel as they fled Egypt, "the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night," (Exo. 13:21). A simple but not completely incorrect way to understand the distinction of God's energies versus his essence is to comprehend His presence in the experiences of the Old Testament and the actions of His Son (as we believe the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be wholly present in the incarnation of Jesus Christ in His *essence*) and the Holy Spirit in the World as His energies. This understanding applies to us even today, where visions, miracles, and living saints are examples of God's energies working in the world. Saints themselves perform miracles because of the grace given to them. The energy within them is not their own but that of God. Creation itself is a living miracle due to the ever-interceding energy of God. In understanding the importance of people like Palamas it is important to remember God had revealed himself to mankind out of love and continues to do so to the present day; He had not terminated revelation with the coming of Christ or the Church Fathers.

In terms of what the monks saw, Palamas bases his argument on Scripture and says that when the apostles Peter, James and John witnessed the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor they were in fact seeing the uncreated light of God, not some sort of physical light. The magnanimity of this event can be seen in all Gospel accounts (Matt. 17:2, Mark 9:2-3, Luke 9:29, John 1:14). Such experiences of God are well accounted for in the Orthodox tradition, most notably by St. Symeon the New Theologian. To experience God's uncreated light in this life is almost like touching the first rung of the ladder to Heaven. Even as the Babylonians marched on the Kingdom of Judah, "His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power," (Hab. 3:3-4), an experience that must have resonated as the Turks marched on the Empire of the Romaioi. Also worthy of note, Palamas emphasizes the completeness of the human being, of the united whole of body and soul. For the Hesychasts, it is imperative that their body be incorporated into their prayer so that the whole being may be saved, an affirmation of the Orthodox belief regarding the sanctity of the body.

While Palamas was victorious in the 1341 Council against Barlaam and his blessed memory is thus honored today with his own place in the Lenten Cycle, it would be more than a decade later before he would know peace again.

After Andronicus III's untimely death the Empire was plunged into Civil War as the Empress consort Anne of Savoy, the mother of Emperor John V, and Patriarch Kalekas opposed the regency of chief minister John VI Kantakouzenos, whose rule Palamas supported. Excommunicated and imprisoned in 1344 at the behest of the Bulgarian monk Gregory Akyndinos, Palamas would be rehabilitated only at the end of the Civil War with the ascent of John VI as co-Emperor with John V and the installation of Patriarch Isidore on the throne in 1347. However, it was only after a third council in 1351 at Blachernae that his theology was affirmed, after the Nikephorus Gregoras and his partisans were denounced for their opposition to Palamite understanding of divine energy. Palamas would be appointed Archbishop of Thessalonica thereafter but the revolt of the Zealots delayed his ascension for several years. Likewise, in 1354, while on a voyage to Constantinople, Palamas' ship was captured by Turkish pirates, during which he was obliged to spend a year at the Ottoman court. Here he sparred with Jewish converts to Islam known as Chiones, an Imam from Nicaea, and the son of the Emir himself in theological debate, a remarkable example of interfaith dialogue on the part of the Orthodox even in a time of great despair.

Another reason to ponder on the life and works of Gregory Palamas is the relation of his theology to the philosophy and secular knowledge of the day. There are some historians who look at this episode in Byzantine history and exclaim that it is just another example of the supposedly anti-intellectual strain that characterized much of that "tedious and uniform tale of weakness and misery," as the British historian Edward Gibbon saw it. Both Barlaam and Nikephorus Gregoras were accomplished scholars and statesman, representing the intellectual genius of the Byzantine mind which would directly inspire the Renaissance in the West (Barlaam would teach Petrarch some Greek when he went back to Italy to become a Catholic Bishop and later personalities such as Cardinal Bessarion and Gemisthos Plethon were very much his successors). On the other hand, Palamas was a monk who cut his education short when he was a mere twenty years old and spent much of life criticizing men with far greater academic credentials. Given the "scientific" society we live in today, the Barlaamite temptation can be very real, but with a proper perspective we need not waver from the Orthodox faith. Poignantly Palamas states, "are learning and the science of discourse bad things? Of course not, since God has given us science and methodology. Therefore it is not they that are wrong, but their wrongful usage by sinners," (*Letter to Philosophers John and Theodore*, 8 ed., Christou). A proper understanding of the power and limitations of human knowledge will only give us greater comprehension of the creation we can know and the Creator we ultimately cannot. It is through humility and the fear of God that we come to greater understanding, both of the divine and the material. Palamas himself wrote a work called the *150 Chapters* in which he addressed various topics of theology, philosophy, and science in varying detail. Likewise, the intellectual life of Byzantium did not dim at all due to allegedly intolerant Orthodox traditionalists. If anything, it is truly remarkable how intellectually vibrant the Byzantines remained till the very last moment. There is no divide between science and faith, in fact science and nature ought to inform our understanding of God and His creation when employ by trustworthy, faith-

ful hands. As St. Paul said, “from the creation of the world the invisible realities of God, namely, His eternal power and divinity, may be perceived in created things by means of intellection,” (Rom. 1:20).

In 1359 Palamas reposed in the Lord, his last words being “to the heights! To the heights!” While the light of Byzantium would be snuffed out by the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, it ultimately lit many candles throughout the world that still burn today. Palamas’ efforts were encoded in the Syndicon of Orthodoxy along with other victories over heresy, as noted in the Sigillion of 1583, and is recited during the Sunday of Orthodoxy at the beginning of Lent. Palamas has a unique position as a both a bridge between the past and the present as well as someone looking back on a plenitude of Orthodox theology before him with perspective similar to our own. He served in many ways as the spark and initiation for the renewal of Orthodox theological activity and energy in the past century, most notably that of Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, and Dumitru Stăniloae as well as the scholarship of John Meyendorff and John Romanides. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware himself said that “the twentieth century will be remembered as the century of Palamas.” Let us all learn from this great saint and continue to sing prayers to him, as we do every year on the second Sunday of Great Lent in the kontakion of the day:

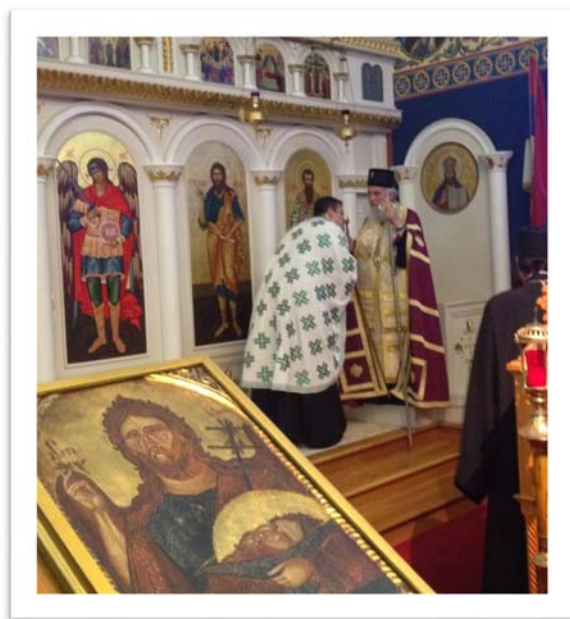
Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, / joyful trumpet of theology, / together we sing your praises, O God-inspired Gregory. / Since you now stand before the Original Mind, guide our minds to Him, O Father, / so that we may sing to you: “Rejoice, preacher of grace.”

PATRIARCHAL VISIT TO OUR CATHEDRAL

San Francisco - September 7-10, 2015 - His Holiness Patriarch IRINEJ after his visit to the Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Alhambra, California for the Canonization of St. Sebastian of San Francisco and Jackson, travelled together with His Grace Bishop Maxim, His Grace Bishop Justin, His Grace Bishop Longin, and many other guests to St. John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco where he was greeted by the Cathedral Dean, Very Rev. Djurica Gordic, and the parishioners of that parish and neighboring parishes in the area.

During the visit, His Holiness was taken to the Serbian Cultural Center and Museum of the First Serbian Benevolent Society, the Diocesan Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), the Mother of God dedicated to Her Icon “Joy of All Who Sorrow,” to venerate the honorable and miraculous relics of Holy Hierarch John of Shanghai and San Francisco the Wonderworker. His Holiness was greeted by His Eminence KYRILL Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America, diocesan clergy and faithful.

Special thanks to Stevan Davidovich, Miko Golubovich, Paul Bunjevic and First Serbian Benevolent Society for their help in organizing program of Patriarchal visit to our Cathedral and Bay Area





Baptism and its connection to the Eucharist: Is it a “private” or “ecclesial” event?

By: Luka Erceg, J.D., LL.M., M.B.A.

The term *ecclesial* refers to the entire Church, its relations, constitution of members and assembly. In contrast *private* can be defined as for the use of one person or group of persons. However, in both instances neither definition provides guidance as to whether “private” or “ecclesial” can mean more than mere attendance to the performance of the sacrament of Baptism.

Baptism clearly has an individual effect on the catechumen (person being baptized), for they are about to become another member of Christ’s Church. But that simple fact should not relegate the entire Baptismal event to being a private one – it should continue to be viewed as ecclesial. There are other individual effects from Baptism – we perish with Christ on the Cross, we are Baptized into his death, buried with Him, and then resurrected. In Chrismation, we are descended upon by the Holy Spirit who takes upon abode in us as a personal gift of Christ from God. Each of which implies a personal connection.

Baptism in the early Church was an ecclesial event. Catechumens might attend Church for two or more years preparing for their Baptism. When finally prepared, the Baptism and Chrismation would first be administered in a separate building called the “baptisterion”, not in the church or vestibule. Thereafter the anointment, neophytes would be taken to Church for the Eucharist. After anointment with Holy Chrism, the neophyte was led in circular procession around the baptismal font while the congregation sang verses from St. Paul’s Epistle to Galatians (Gal. 3:27). To this point it is evident that the assembly of the Church participated in the neophyte’s preparation and then the completion of Chrismation during the Eucharist.

The entrance of a newly baptized person into church was a true beginning for them both chronologically and spiritually. Baptism was historically connected to the Eucharistic gathering, to find fulfillment by an entrance into the Church. During the time of the early Church, it was typical for all or most baptized Christians to partake in the Eucharist. Thus, the neophyte would conclude their entry to God’s kingdom with the entire ecclesia present.

In our contemporary Church, we have seen Baptism celebrated apart from the Eucharist. From the surface this might appear that Baptism was becoming a private event, held without the assembly present. From a practical perspective, that served to reduce the length of the Eucharistic service particularly in the times of mass conversions of people to Christianity. Though, one might suggest today that Baptisms occur infrequently and they might not be a burden to the Eucharistic gathering if they were celebrated together. Even accepting now, the less public approach to Baptism held separately from the Eucharist, Baptisms still occur at the Church (except for rare circumstances) whereby the assembly of the Church can attend – or more pointedly no one is barred from attending a Baptismal service.

But, as we know from early tradition, Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist belonged together and existed in one liturgical sequence. Baptism was fulfilled by Chrismation, Chrismation fulfilled by the Eucharist. Remembering, however, that the Eucharist is a gathering of the Church herself as unity in Christ and their being mutual dependence of the celebrant of the service (priest or bishop) and the people. This would suggest that the Eucharist was an ecclesial event because of the gathering of the assembly. Thus, if Baptism existed in one liturgical sequence, and we accept that gathering or assembly was always considered the basic act of the Eucharist, then we can superimpose the nature of an ecclesial event on Baptism.

Baptism does not depend on personal faith in order to be realized. Baptism depends totally and exclusively on Christ’s faith, the gift of His faith, and its true grace. The sacrament of Baptism is the gift of Christ’s death and resurrection, which are “truly fulfilled as His Death for me, His Resurrection for me, therefore my death in Christ, and my resurrection in Him.” The references to “me” and “my” might again lead us to consider Baptism a private event, however we must remember that Christ died and was resurrected for each of us – thus again pointing to Baptism being an ecclesial event.

In the alternative, one might argue that Baptism is a private event, attended to by a small number of people or just the catechumen and sponsor (and priest). That by definition is no longer a private event, for more than one are present. Even as in the sacrament of repentance, the sinners of disclosure of sins to the priest is considered “public” and is no longer conveyed to the full assembly. It is difficult to see why the same principle could not apply to Baptism.

Continuing in the alternative, one might argue that Baptism is private because *one person* is being Baptized and is born again in the resurrection of Christ. Even when Baptism was occurring publicly amongst the many, one person at a time was Baptized.

Another consideration is the age of the person being Baptized. In the case of children, the sponsor takes the vows on their behalf. This would clearly suggest an ecclesial event, because of the involvement of others. However, in the case of adults, it is possible for the person to complete their vows on their own. This might suggest a wholly private event.

The problem with those arguments is that Baptism is our resurrection to life in Christ, and the Church. By being Baptized we are to celebrate the Eucharist with our assembly and priest-celebrant. We do not celebrate Christ individually. Further, Baptism signifies a mystical burial and resurrection with Christ – operative word being with Christ. And, since we as Orthodox reject the notion of personal prayer or relationship with God, we are again left with the understanding that Baptism is an ecclesial event.

Baptism was not meant for just one person, it was meant for all, whether performed amongst a select few or many. Even our Lord Jesus Christ was Baptized by St. John the Baptist in the river Jordan before others who were also being Baptized. Furthermore, our practice of Baptism requires a sponsor, particularly in the case of a child, in order to sponsor the person's entrance into the Church. Finally, Christ prays for all of us to be healed, all humanity, all creation – Baptism is the first step whereby we become members of Christ's Church, heirs (not *an heir*) to the Kingdom of God. By necessity then Baptism cannot be a private event because we do not enter the Church alone.

As stated previously, Baptism was historically celebrated in the context of the the Eucharistic gathering (along with the sacrament of Marriage). We know of this connection due to the existence of the doxology ("Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.") which is only found in three liturgical services: Baptism, Marriage, and Eucharist.

In Baptism, we abandon our old way of life, replete with sin and death and are resurrected into a new way of life where Christ has defeated sin and death. Upon this resurrection we become members of Christ's body – the Church, and our sins are forgiven, we have attained the image of God again, we are in unity. Thus Baptism heals us and we are now also Christ's soldiers, extending his ministry to the world. But, Baptism and Chrismation merely grant us our membership to the Church.

We realize and maintain our relationship by partaking in the sacraments of the Church. The Eucharist being *the* sacrament of sacraments. Thus, Baptism and Eucharist are intimately connected because as members of the Church, we now strive to become god. During Baptism, our whole person – body and soul are healed and prepared for membership in His Church. As we partake in the Eucharist we continue to heal ourselves as we are not without sin.

But, there is also a practical argument that the separation of Baptism from the Liturgy, or celebration of the Eucharist, is consequentially causing a transformation of Baptism in to a private event. With the ongoing Western influence clouding the members of our Church, it is easy to predict that Baptism will wholly be celebrated as a private event in the eyes and hearts of those participating, even if the Church does not espouse that position.

My own experience with the contemporary Church is that we superficially view Baptism as a private celebration. It is private from the perspective of a limited number of persons being invited to attend the Sacramental service. The real issue is that aside from clergy, I have never met anyone in all the Orthodox Churches and Baptisms I have attended that articulated the connection of Baptism to the Eucharist. Our priests remind us that the newly baptized should partake in the Eucharist on Sunday (following Saturday Baptisms) – yet how many do? We can speak of private and public Baptisms, but that distinction delves far deeper than the actual problem – ignorance, whether intentional or unintentional.

This problem is so pervasive that many "participating" in the Eucharist actually believe the priest is there to "serve" them. They do not realize that they are part of the Royal Priesthood, having been Baptized, and are there to celebrate the Eucharist with the priest and others present. Thus, the practices of all the Churches I have attended in my lifetime have failed to make clear the connection of Baptism to the Eucharist. In the course of my wife being Baptized, then children, and having been a sponsor ("Kum" or "godfather") a multitude of times, I never recognized the connection between Baptism and Chrismation. While at a superficial level I recognized the symbolic acts, I did not in any way understand the fulfillment of each in relation to the other and the Eucharist.

The time has come to espouse a better explanation of these sacraments. Baptism is an ecclesial. But, we must not reject the fact that Baptism also engages the person in a wholly private manner as well. Each of us is to be a living sacrifice to God, living personal commitments but fulfilling them through the Eucharist with the entire Church.

HOLY WEEK: An Explanation

Great Lent and Holy Week are two separate fasts, and two separate celebrations. Great Lent ends on Friday of the fifth week (the day before Lazarus Saturday). Holy Week begins immediately thereafter. Let's explore the meaning of each of the solemn days of Passion Week.

Lazarus Saturday: Lazarus Saturday is the day which begins Holy Week. It commemorates the raising of our Lord's friend Lazarus, who had been in the tomb four days. This act confirmed the universal resurrection from the dead that all of us will experience at our Lord's Second Coming. This miracle led many to faith, but it also led to the chief priest's and Pharisees' decision to kill Jesus (John 11:47-57).



Palm Sunday (The Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem): Our Lord enters Jerusalem and is proclaimed king - but in an earthly sense, as many people of His time were seeking a political Messiah. Our Lord is King, of course, but of a different type - the eternal King prophesied by Zechariah the Prophet. We use palms on this day to show that we too accept Jesus as the true King and Messiah of the Jews, Who we are willing to follow - even to the cross.

Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday: The first thing that must be said about these services, and most of the other services of Holy Week, is that they are "sung" in anticipation. Each service is rotated ahead twelve hours. The evening service, therefore, is actually the service of the next morning, while the morning services of Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday are actually the services of the coming evening.

Understanding that, let's turn to the Services of Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (celebrated Palm Sunday, Monday and Tuesday evening). The services of these days are known as the Bridegroom or Nymphios Orthros Services. At the first service of Palm Sunday evening, the priest carries the icon of Christ the Bridegroom in procession, and we sing the "Hymn of the Bridegroom." We behold Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church, bearing the marks of His suffering, yet preparing a marriage Feast for us in God's Kingdom.

Each of these Bridegroom Orthros services has a particular theme. On Holy Monday, the Blessed Joseph, the son of Jacob the Patriarch, is commemorated. Joseph is often seen as a Type of Christ. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, thrown into a pit, and sold into slavery by them. In the same way, our Lord was rejected, betrayed by His own, and sold into the slavery of death. The Gospel reading for the day is about the barren fig tree, which Christ cursed and withered because it bore no fruit. The fig tree is a parable of those who have heard God's word, but who fail to bear the fruit of obedience. Originally the withering of the fig tree was a testimony against those Jews who rejected God's word and His Messiah. However, it is also a warning to all people, in all times, of the importance of not only hearing the God's word, but putting it into action.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins is read on Holy Tuesday. It tells the story of the five virgins who filled their lamps in preparation for receiving the bridegroom while the other five allowed their lamps to go out, and hence were shut out of the marriage feast. This parable is a warning that we must always be

prepared to receive our Lord when He comes again. The theme of the day is reinforced by the expostulation hymn we sing: "I see Thy Bridal Chamber adorned, O my Savior, but have no wedding garment that I may enter. O Giver of Light, enlighten the vesture of my soul, and save me." The theme of Holy Wednesday is repentance and forgiveness. We remember the sinful woman, Kassiane, who anointed our Lord in anticipation of His death. Her repentance and love of Christ is the theme of the wonderful "Hymn of Kassiane" which is chanted on this night, reminding us one more time, before "it is too late," that we too may be forgiven if we repent.

Holy Unction: The Mystery or Sacrament of Holy Unction is celebrated on Holy Wednesday evening. Actually this service can be celebrated any time during the year, especially when one is ill. However, because of our need for forgiveness and spiritual healing, we offer this service during Holy Week for the remission of our sins. We should prepare for this service in a prayerful way, as we do for Holy Communion.

Great and Holy Thursday: On Holy Thursday we turn to the last events of our Lord and His Passion. Thursday morning begins with a Vespereal Divine Liturgy commemorating the Mystical Supper. As previously mentioned, this is actually Holy Thursday evening's service celebrated in the morning in anticipation. Everyone who is able should make an effort to receive Holy Communion at this service as it was at the Mystical Supper that our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist. At this Liturgy a second Host is consecrated and kept in the Tabernacle. It is from this Host that Holy Communion is distributed to the shut-ins and the sick throughout the coming year.

Thursday evening actually begins the services of Great and Holy Friday. The service of the Twelve Passion Gospels commemorates the solemn time of our Lord's Crucifixion. After the reading of the fifth Gospel, the holy cross is carried around the church in procession, and Christ's body is nailed to the cross in the center of the church.

Great and Holy Friday: This is a day of strict fast. As little as possible should be eaten on this day. It is the only day in the entire year that no Divine Liturgy of any kind can be celebrated. In the morning we celebrate the Royal Hours. These solemn hours are observed as we read the various accounts and hymns concerning the crucifixion. In the afternoon we celebrate the Vesper service of the taking down of Christ's body from the cross. During the Gospel reading, our Lord's body is taken off the cross and wrapped in a new, white linen sheet. This act commemorates the removal of Christ's body from the cross by Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-42). Later in the service, the Epitaphios, or winding-sheet, with Christ's body on it is carried in procession and placed in the recently decorated tomb. In the evening the Lamentations Orthros service is sung. This service begins in a solemn manner, but by the end of the service we are already anticipating the Resurrection of our Lord. Remember again, that the Holy Friday evening Orthros is actually the first service of Holy Saturday, the day in which we commemorate our Lord's body resting in the tomb while His all-pure soul descends into Hades to free the faithful of the Old Covenant.

Great and Holy Saturday: This day is a day of hope and waiting. In the morning we celebrate a Vespereal Divine Liturgy which commemorates Christ's victory over death. Bright vestments are worn as we anticipate Christ's Resurrection. Laurel leaves are strewn throughout the church during the service, because in the ancient world laurel leaves were a sign of victory. As the leaves are strewn, the choir chants "Arise O God and Judge the earth, for to Thee belong all the nations." The Old Testament story of Jonah in the belly of the whale is read at this service because Jonah is seen in the Church as a Type of Christ. As Jonah was three days in the belly of the great fish, and was then safely deposited back onto land, so our Lord was three days in the tomb before His glorious Resurrection. The Vespereal Divine Liturgy of Holy Saturday concludes the services of Holy Week, and brings us to the eve of Great and Holy Pascha.

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!

Christmas 2015

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**Special thanks to
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Easter 2015 \$10,307.00

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Prepared by Parish Treasurer

Dear Parishioners, I want to express my appreciation for your generosity in support of our Cathedral. Not only is generosity measured in terms of monetary donations, but also our members' willingness to donate their time and talent!

Fr. Djurica Gordic



A Visit to the Holy Mountain

By Petar Gordic

Over the summer, my father, my brother, and I went to Greece to visit certain areas like Thessaloniki and Khalkidhiki. But the most memorable visit from that trip was Mount Athos. It was a calm, early morning as we headed towards the ferry that is used as transport for people getting on and off the Island of Mount Athos. We boarded the ship, and the journey began.

After a while, I climbed myself onto the top, and there it was, the Holy Mountain. The view was so amazing that it took my breath. The color of the sea was turquoise blue and the nature was astonishing. I was anticipating this moment for a long time. I always wanted to visit Mount Athos, and especially, Monastery Hilandar. We arrived on the beach with other fellow pilgrims, and a bus was waiting for us. We climbed on and headed towards the monastery. The bus traveled through rough dirt roads and it sort of felt like a roller coaster. It was quite the ride.

When we finally arrived, we were awaited by a young novice who took showed us around. We were given refreshments like ratluk, water, and the adults had rakija. I had a taste, and it was really good. Anyways, we were given a room that my father, brother, and I shared. After we dropped off our items and belongings, we decided to visit another monastery by the name of Esfigmenos. It is a Greek Monastery that is the home to zealot monks. We grabbed a few bottles of water and headed out. It was a hot day, but after everything I saw and experienced that day, it was well worth the walk. We walked along a dirt road that led to the monastery. Our first landmark we visited along the way was the cross of the almighty Emperor Dusan, which was raised in 1300s, during his reign. Next to the cross was his olive tree. We continued our walk, going past old medieval towers and vineyards, when finally, we reached the top of a hill, with a beautiful view of Monastery Esfigmen. It felt like we were walking into an old medieval city, a castle, with large stone walls and towers surrounding the monastery. The scenery was stunning. After we visited the monastery, we headed back to Monastery Hilandar.



Another memory I have of my visit is the kindness, hospitality, and generosity of the monks in Hilandar. They were the nicest people I ever met. They were always filled with joy and they had a smile on their faces. They took us wine tasting and showed us their orchards and their beehives where they make their own honey.

Finally, I have to mention the monastery itself. I remember the reparations of some of the buildings, which were destroyed by fire several years ago, and it looked really nice. When I first saw the main church, it was a dream come true, and it looked a lot bigger than it does in pictures. The architecture of the church is simply amazing. Frescoes are beautiful. I had a feeling of traveling through time, thinking about St. Sava and his father St. Simeon, how they used to walk around, praying, talking to brothers and overseeing building of the monastery. Monastery church is in the middle, surrounded by buildings where monks have their cells. A very interesting place where monks eat is called a "trpezarija" which also has beautiful frescoes. During dinning everybody has to stay quiet and listen to the reading of the Holy Fathers presented by one of the monks. Monastic food is very humble, simple, yet very tasty. We had a great opportunity to see the "riznica", a place where most important icons, crosses, and liturgical artifacts are stored. It is some kind of museum. One of the brother monks showed us everything, telling us amazing historical facts connected to the artifacts.

The memory of my first visit to Mount Athos, and our Hilandar Monastery, is something I will cherish forever!



King Milutin's tower from 13th century



Esphigmenou Monastery from 10th century



"A vine sprouted from St. Simeon's (Stefan Nemanja's) tomb. It still yields fruit after 800 years. Barren women become mothers after they have tasted the grapes from the vine. This miraculous vine has brought luck to many childless married couples who now have their posterity. One can become acquainted with the contents of a great number of letters sent to the monastery by the thankful parents who consumed grapes from Nemanja's vine."



Water from St. Sava's well is always cold and refreshing!



The Entrance into the "Trpezarija" monks dining room



On the right side is reconstructed Konak, and on the left repairs are in progress

From Archimandrite Vasileios of Iveron, "The Thunderbolt of Ever-Living Fire," (Alhambra: Sebastian Press, 2014)

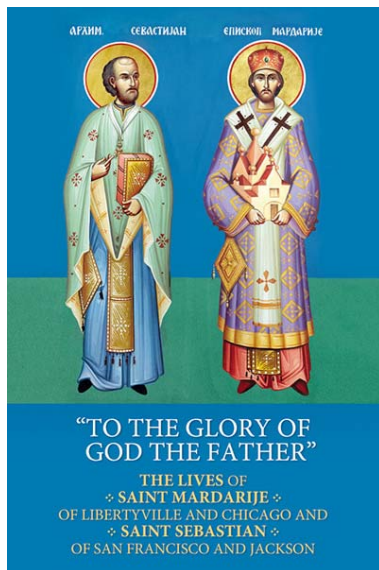
The present book consists of Elder Vasileios' talks, discussions and dialogues in various venues mostly in the United States during his visit in 2011, along with excerpts from his writings selected to complement the themes of his talks. The themes dealt with by Fr. Vasileios so eloquently in this book are extraordinarily wide-ranging; he handles complex and difficult issues in theology, spirituality, liturgics, parish life and monasticism with amazing clarity and insight. He quotes with equal facility from figures as diverse as Heraclitus, Dostoevsky, St. Isacc the Syrian, St. Maximus the Confessor, Stefan Zweig, Andrei Tarkovsky, Vladimir Lossy, Georges Florovsky and St. Nicholas Cabasilas. Above all, there is an exhilarating sense of freedom and innocence in his thought. It is the freedom and innocence of profound faith and spiritual knowledge and childlike simplicity. His wisdom is expressed via the "hyperlogic" of a hesychastic spirit, which makes for surprising connections and illuminating insights. The appearance of this new book by Archimandrite Vasileios is truly a cause for celebration.

They say that monastic life is difficult. Yes, it is, and no, it is not, because, when you love this life, you feel deprivation as a fullness and separation from others as a union with them. So whatever the Church urges us to do, it does so out of love, because the Church is our mother: she who is with us when we are small and when we are old, when we are alive and when we have died. Therefore in all things [that the Church urges us to do] we should say, "Glory to God."

I heard a sermon that I did not like. The preacher was speaking about Great Lent, about fasting. He said that God gave the commandment to fast, therefore you have to fast--as if God were some kind of tyrant who wants to make our life miserable and dark. Whereas fasting in the life of the Church is a kind of nourishment. In the *Triodion* we read that in the time of the Fast the Holy Spirit is the One Who feeds us, the Nourisher. We see that when we have food we say glory to God that He feeds us. And also during Lent, our Great Fast, we say, "Glory to God." With joy we give glory to God and in sorrow we say, "Glory to God;" because in all these things God gives us His love and helps us to progress. Therefore if someone says, "I am in the world; I am at a lower level of spiritual life; you are in the monastery on the Holy Mountain; you are on a higher level," I don't see that as being correct. We see from an Orthodox view that God judges things differently. Great is the one who is small and seemingly non-existent. Whoever is patient, suffers afflictions, and says internally "God's will be done;" the grace of God visits him, and all within him becomes a doxology to God. This person finds himself in a state of spiritual health. And I think that the one who is in spiritual health is the one who has no complaints about any person or any problem or situation in his life. So if we suffer from certain situations or certain people we say, "Glory to God."

We actually say "Glory to God" even more for those people who hurt us and those situations which can cause us suffering, because we understand, after the fact, what the Lord says: "I am the Vine, you are the branches, and My Father is the Vinedresser" (cf. John 15:1-5). Therefore all things are directed and ordered by this Divine Husbandman, the Vinedresser, Who is God, Who is all-lauded. Consequently, things are simple: God is Love; we are weak. But we have a great asset. That asset is that Someone loves us. He is the Good Shepherd, Who sacrifices His life for the rational sheep, calling the sheep by their own names, each one individually. He does not call them as a group: each one of the sheep has its own name, not its own number. Each one speaks its own language. Each one becomes a person. The Good Shepherd sacrifices His life to save all and each one individually. And a sheep can become a shepherd when out of love he learns to sacrifice his life for others. Thus, he lives the reality that death has been abolished.

Available @ Sebastian Press \$20



THE LIVES OF SAINT MARDARIJE OF LIBERTYVILLE AND SAINT SEBASTIAN OF JACKSON - And their selected writings (Available in our bookstore \$20)

This book contains the lives of the two new Saints of the Church who were granted to the North American continent through the Serbian Orthodox Church. The main incentive for publishing this hagiographical work comes from the desire to refresh the memory on these Christ-like people. Bishop Mardarije Uskokovic and Arhimandrite Sebastian Dabovich were the best examples of servant leadership (Matthew 20:27-28), in our recent history in the USA.

“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us (Acts 15:28) that at the priestly Assembly of Hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church, to the glory of God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, who is glorious in His Saints, and for the spiritual good and overall progress of our local Church and the entire One, Holy, Catholic

and Apostolic Church of Christ, to add to the Synaxis of Saints Venerable Archimandrite SEBASTIAN, who glorified God with his life and works and whom the Lord has already glorified through precious signs and the reverence of all people.

Proclaiming him a holy, Christ-bearing God-pleaser of the Orthodox Church, we pray to the Lord that his witness of the Only Lover of man, and his living example of faith and love be an invitation to us all that we follow and glorify him in Christ's Church in the divine services and through hymns of praise. This glorification bestows upon God's Church a great spiritual joy and thanksgiving to the Living Lord.

Through the prayers of our Venerable Father Sebastian, O Most Holy Trinity, our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

To the Only All-Wise God the Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, be glory and majesty, power and dominion, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.”

(From the Proclamation of the Two New Saints, by the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, May, 29/16, 2015 – AS No. 110/recording 261)

“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us (Acts 15:28) that at the priestly Assembly of Hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church, to the glory of God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, who is glorious in His Saints, and for the spiritual good and overall progress of our local Church and the entire One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, to add to the Synaxis of Saints Bishop MARDARIJE of blessed repose, who glorified God with his life and works and whom the Lord has already glorified through precious signs and the reverence of all people.

Proclaiming him a holy, Christ-bearing God-pleaser of the Orthodox Church, we pray to the Lord that his witness of the Only Lover of man, and his living example of faith and love be an invitation to us all that we follow and glorify him in Christ's Church in the divine services and through hymns of praise. This glorification bestows upon God's Church a great spiritual joy and thanksgiving to the Living Lord.

Through the prayers of our Holy Father Mardarije, O Most Holy Trinity, our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

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The life of St. Sebastian of Jackson (1863-1940)



This apostle of North America was the first American born Orthodox priest. His parents, Ilija and Jelena Dabovic, were the first recorded immigrants on the West Coast. They lived in San Francisco, operated a small shop, and were blessed with seven children. St. Sebastian was their fourth child who at baptism received name John. He was born on June 21, 1863. His ministry in the Church started at early age. After he finished high school he served his parish as a reader and teacher. Before he was sent to Russia, he spent time in Sitka, Alaska, assisted with parish ministries at St. Archangel Michael Cathedral. After three years of study at the St. Petersburg and Kiev Theological Academies, John was tonsured a monk and received monastic name Sebastian in 1887.

That same year he was ordained a hierodeacon. He served as deacon at the San Francisco Cathedral until Bishop Nicholas ordained him a priest on August 16, 1892. As newly ordained Hieromonk Fr. Sebastian tirelessly preached the Gospel, served Divine Liturgies, counseled and established many parishes throughout the country. During his life he conveyed the light of liturgical certainty and calm to a world that was spiritually hungry and suffering. Archbishop Tikhon asked Fr. Sebastian to lead a Serbian mission in the North American diocese, elevated him to archimandrite on August 15, 1905, and sent him to Chicago, Illinois, where this holy man served as parish priest. In 1910, he asked for release from the parish so that he could return to missionary work. Having spent three years at the newly opened St. Platon Seminary in Tenafly, New Jersey, he went back to Serbia to serve as a chaplain in the Serbian army in the Balkan Wars and WW I. After his brief visit to the United States of America in 1915 and 1917, the rest of his life he spent in Serbia where he peacefully reposed in monastery Zicha on November 30, 1940, having his earthly remains laid to rest there until they were exhumed and translated to Jackson, California, on September 1, 2007, at St. Sava Church, the oldest and one of many Serbian Orthodox Churches in America that he founded in 1894. Fr Sebastian built up souls, organized the Church, erected houses of prayer, and was devoted to charitable work. In addition to establishing many churches, St. Sebastian also wrote many articles and sermons. His last spoken words and wish were: The Heavenly Kingdom without end! Meaning: the kingdom of the virtues whence the miracle of eternal surprises bursts forth. The Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church during its regular session held from May 14-29, 2015 inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit decided that his name be added to the Diptych of saints of the Holy Orthodox Church. From the Holy archimandrite Sebastian Dabovich (1863-2013) we realize how historical predicaments become a starting point for knowledge of God and spontaneous praise.

From the celebration of the glorification of Sts Mardarije and Sebastian may droplets of consolation fall upon the heart of those who, living in the heart of America, seek what is fair and honest.