



Gracanica Herald

Гласник Грачаница

Pascha—Васкрс 2017



Христос **В**оскресе!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Гласник Грачаница *Gracanica Herald*

**Saint John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
Pascha - Васкрс 2017**

Published with the Blessings of His Grace **MAXIM**
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by the Serbian Orthodox Congregation
of St. John the Baptist in San Francisco
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The Serbian Orthodox Church to her spiritual children at Pascha, 2017

+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 from the dead,
trampling down death by death,
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.”
(Paschal troparion)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Resurrection of our Lord is the
greatest Christian feast day. It is the feast day of
faith, life and of every blessing from God. Our
entire faith is in the Resurrection and the

Resurrection is in our faith. The Holy Apostle
Paul, the teacher of the nations, whom we
unreservedly can call the greatest preacher of
the Resurrection of Christ and our own, clearly
said: “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and
has become the first fruits of those who have
fallen asleep.” (I Corinthians 15:20) Faith in the
Resurrection of Christ is the essence of the
apostolic preaching and teaching, the foundation
of the Church and of her services and theology.

In the Holy Scriptures the Resurrection
is the central theme, in the Old Testament as
well as in the New Testament. The
Resurrection is spoken of in two mutually
connected meanings: as the general resurrection
of the dead at the end of the history of mankind
(cf. Isaiah 26:19), and as Christ’s Resurrection,
foretold by the Old Testament prophets (cf.
Psalm 15:10), and confirmed through the
preaching of the Holy Apostles (cf. Acts 2:23-
24).

The Old Testament, with its language
and prototypes, in many places talks about
resurrection. The prophet David speaks about it
in his Psalms (Psalm 15:9; 16:15). The greatly
suffering Job with faith in the resurrection cries
out to God: “For I know that my Redeemer lives
and that in my flesh I shall see God.” (Job 19:25
-27) The prophet Jonah is a prototype of Christ’s
three day resurrection. (cf. St. Matthew 12:40)
The most well-known vision of the resurrection
of the dead in the Old Testament is given in the
book of the prophet Ezekiel: he, inspired by the
Spirit of God, sees how the dry bones come to
life and how each one puts on human flesh. (cf.
Ezekiel 37:1-10) That vision filled the hearts of
all believing Jews of the Old Testament and it
was inseparable from the faith in the coming of
the Messiah and in His Resurrection. (cf. Isaiah
53:10)

The New Testament is, on the other
hand, entirely centered in the mystery of the
Cross and Resurrection of Christ. This is
confirmed by the Holy Evangelists’ emotive
description of the last events from Christ’s life
that happened in Jerusalem: His judgment
before Pilate, His Crucifixion, His death on the
Cross, but also His glorious Resurrection. (cf.
St. Matthew 27-28; St. Luke 23-24) The first
ones who were made worthy to become
witnesses of Christ’s Resurrection were the
myrrhbearing women (cf. St. Mark 16:1-2), and

then the Holy Apostles and the fullness of the ancient Church. They are joined with the first Christian martyrs and all later martyrs, and the new martyrs, true witnesses of Christ's Resurrection, as well as the Fathers of the Church, who through the holy councils, through the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and through their dogmatic teaching have bequeathed to us the faith in the resurrection. The Church itself is a witness that Christ is with us throughout all ages. (cf. St. Matthew 28:20) The Church witnesses to this, most especially, in the Divine Liturgy, which is celebrated in remembrance of the "death and Resurrection of Christ." In the Divine Liturgy the Resurrected Christ is given to us in Holy Communion. Let us, then, be children of the Resurrection! Let us live by the Resurrection of Christ, as the Holy Apostle Paul said, and not allow anything to separate us from His love! (Romans 8:35)

The great Russian elder, Saint Seraphim of Sarov, would greet the pilgrims who came to his monastery throughout the entire year with these words: "Christ is risen, my joy!" To reach that spiritual state, in the words of Saintly Bishop Nikolai "we must with our very life kiss Christ's Crucifixion, not out of custom, but rather as our own crucifixion, and kiss his wounds as our own wounds."

With sadness and pain in our heart we must say that today's world is not following the road of resurrection, but instead is following the road of death and hopelessness. When we say this we have in mind the fact that in Serbia every year the equivalent of a whole city dies due to the mortality rate being larger than the birth rate. This is a reason for weeping and wailing, but it is also an alarm for admonition. Something must be done to stop this way of death. "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." (St. Matthew 2:18) Abortion is always and everywhere, and even among our own people, a deadly sin which cries to heaven. We must stop killing our own children in the womb! They too have a right to life and resurrection. We ask where are those pretentious "fighters for human rights" to protect the weakest among us – unborn children in their mothers' womb. Let us, brothers and sisters, leave the country of sin and death, as the Israelites of old left Egypt, and God will bless

us with every spiritual blessing, so that we may be People of the Living God. May the joyous cry of newborn children be stronger than the helpless cries of death! May Serbia and the entire world, once again, become a great Cradle! Let us return to faith in life, let us return to the Resurrection!

Dear brothers and sisters, the Holy Orthodox Church is our spiritual Mother. She cares for her children regardless of where they live and she is crucified with her sons and daughters so that all together they may achieve the Resurrection. Let us rejoice with those who have joy and let us mourn with those who mourn, bearing one another's burdens, for in this way we will fulfill the law of Christ! (cf. Galatians 6:2) The Holy Elder Sofronios (Sakharov) said that the fulfillment of God's commandments crucifies in us the old man and resurrects the new man created according to the image of God, our Creator and Savior. In the same spirit, Saint Basil the Great also talks about the transformational meaning of fasting and said that God's angels record the names of those who keep the entire Great Lent, for by their fasting they renounce the earthly and transitory in order to gain the eternal and heavenly, and that is resurrection. By fulfilling the commandments of God, we express and confirm our love towards Christ (St. John 14:15), but also towards our neighbors. (cf. St. Matthew 22:40)

Today's world has largely adopted a different philosophy, the philosophy of the wide road that leads to destruction. (cf. St. Matthew 7:13) Attempts are being made to replace Christian virtues with a seeming humanism and the false spirituality of the Far East. All false religions and para-religions, philosophies and false philosophies, ideologies and modern mythologies are enslaved to death and are sentencing human beings to death inasmuch as they believe that man is "a being for death", and not a being meant for eternal life, especially if they encourage people to murder and kill themselves, either quickly (in wars and in bloody "peaceful" conflicts) or over time (by licentious living in every kind of vice, especially in slavery to drugs). We live in a time when some try to make evil look like good, and good evil; while sin, according to the Holy Elder Paisius the Athonite, is made out to be something modern and acceptable. Idols, anti-heroes, disobedience to parents and rejection of every authority are

being offered to our youth instead of examples of virtue and honesty. Great is the responsibility of the Church, but also of all educational institutions of this country, because it is necessary to help the youth to find the way of authentic life and resurrection. Let us teach our children to be like the young man in the Gospel who asked the Lord: "What should I do to inherit eternal life?" And this young man received from Christ this answer: "Observe the commandments!" Here is the way to salvation, here is the resurrection!

We paternally call all those who have separated themselves for any reason from the One, Holy, Catholic (Saborna) and Apostolic Church to return to her fold. The sin of schism and heresy is truly a terrible one. According to the Holy Fathers not even the martyr's blood can cleanse it. Let us forgive each other by the Resurrection and let us again be brothers in our Holy Church, the only Ship of our salvation!

We greet all of our spiritual children in our Fatherland and abroad with the Paschal salutation, and we pray that the Resurrected Lord will grant the joy of the Resurrection to all. We especially greet our faithful in the crucified Kosovo and Metohija, that inseparable part of Serbia, whose holy shrines are guardians not only of Serbian Orthodoxy but also of Christianity in Europe. Kosovo was and will remain ours, because God is found not in force but in justice, and He is able to return to us that which is being taken away from us by force.

By this feast of the Resurrection may Serbia and the entire Serbian people be resurrected, as our poets used to say. May God grant that those who lead and guard our country may be inspired with the spirit of the Resurrection and the spirit of faith in the victory of good over evil! May the Resurrected Lord, the Conqueror of death and Giver of Life, grant every good to His People, that is to say, to the entire Christian and Orthodox race, and to all people of good will, that we all may have even now a foretaste of the joy of the future age, the joy of resurrection and eternal life!

Christ is Risen!

Your intercessors before the Crucified and Resurrected Christ:

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

Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Coastlands **AMFILOHIJE**
Metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana **PORFIRIJE**

Bishop of Sabac **LAVRENTIJE**

Bishop of Srem **VASILJE**

Bishop of Banja Luka **JEFREM**

Bishop of Budim **LUKIJAN**

Bishop of Banat **NIKANOR**

Bishop of New Gracanica-Midwestern America **LONGIN**

Bishop of Canada **MITROPHAN**

Bishop of Backa **IRINEJ**

Bishop of Great Britain and Scandinavia **DOSITEJ**

Bishop of Zvornik-Tuzla **CHRYSTOSTOM**

Bishop of Osijek and Baranja **LUKIJAN**

Bishop of Western Europe **LUKA**

Bishop of Zicha **JUSTIN**

Bishop of Vranje **PAHOMIJE**

Bishop of Sumadija **JOVAN**

Bishop of Branicevo **IGNATIJE**

Bishop of Dalmatia **FOTIJE**

Bishop of Bihac and Petrovac **ATANASIJE**

Bishop of Budimlje and Niksic **JOANIKIJE**

Bishop of Zahumlje and Hercegovina **GRIGORIJE**

Bishop of Valjevo **MILUTIN**

Bishop of Ras and Prizren **TEODOSIJE**

Bishop of Western America **MAXIM**

Bishop of Gornji Karlovac **GERASIM**

Bishop of Eastern America **IRINEJ**

Bishop of Krusevac **DAVID**

Bishop of Slavonia **JOVAN**

Bishop of Austria and Switzerland **ANDREJ**

Bishop of Frankfurt and all Germany **SERGIJE**

Bishop of Timok **ILARION**

Bishop of Australia and New Zealand **SILUAN**

Vicar Bishop of Moravica **ANTONIJE**

Vicar Bishop of Toplica **ARSENIJE**

Vicar Bishop of Diokleia **KIRIL**



THE ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF OCHRID:

Archbishop of Ochrid and Metropolitan of Skoplje **JOVAN**

Bishop of Polog and Kumanovo **JOAKIM**

Bishop of Bregalnica **MARKO**

Vicar Bishop of Stobi **DAVID**

[Path of Orthodoxy translation]



**Српска Православна Црква
својој духовној деци о Васкрсу
2017. 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 из мртвих,
смрћу смрт поразивши
и онима који су у гробовима
живот даровавши
(*тропар Пасхе*).

Драга браћо и сестре,

Васкрс је највећи хришћански празник, празник вере, живота и сваког благослова Божјег. Сва наша вера је у Васкрсу и Васкрс у вери. Отуда свети апостол Павле, учитељ народа, кога слободно можемо назвати и највећим проповедником Васкрсења, Христовог и нашег, јасно каже: “Ако Христос не устаете, узалуд вера ваша”, а одмах потом додаје: “Али је Христос устао из мртвих, те постаде Првенац оних који су умрли” (I Кор. 15, 17-20). Вера у Васкрсење Христово суштина је апостолске проповеди и учења, темељ Цркве, њеног богослужења и богословља.

У Светом Писму, како Старог тако и Новог Завета, Васкрсење је централна тема. О њему се говори у два међусобно повезана смисла: као

свеопштем васкрсењу мртвих на крају људске историје (Ис. 26, 19) и Васкрсењу Христовом, предсказаном од старозаветних пророка (Пс. 15, 10), а утврђењем кроз проповед светих апостола (Дап. 2, 23-24).

Стари Завет нам на много места, својим језиком и прасликама, говори о васкрсењу. О њему сведочи пророк Давид у својим Псалмима (Пс. 15, 9; 16, 15). Многострадални Јов вапије Богу вером у васкрсење: “Знам да је жив мој Искупитељ и да ћу опет у овом телу видети Бога” (Јов 19, 25-27). Пророк Јона је праобраз тридневног Васкрсења Христовог (Мт. 12, 40). Најпознатија визија васкрсења мртвих у Старом Завету дата је у Књизи пророка Језекиља: он, надахнут Духом Божјим, види како оживљавају сухе кости и како се свака облачи у своје људско тело (Јез. 37, 1-10). То виђење је испуњавало срца свих верујућих Јудеја Старог Завета и било је неодвојиво од вере у долазак Месије и у Његово Васкрсење (Ис. 53, 10).

Нови Завет је, са друге стране, сав у тајни Крста и Васкрсења Христовог. То нам потврђују свети јеванђелисти потресним описом последњих догађаја из Христовог живота који су се збили у Јерусалиму: Његовог извођења на суд пред Пилата, Његовог Распећа, Његове смрти на крсту, али и Његовога славнога Васкрсења (Мт. 27 -28; Лк. 23-24). Прве које су се удостојиле да постану сведоци Васкрсења Христовог биле су жене мирносице (Мк. 16, 1-2), а потом свети апостоли и пуноћа ране Цркве. Њима се придружују ранохришћански мученици и сви потоњи мученици и новомученици, истински сведоци Васкрсења Христовог, као и Оци Цркве, који нам кроз свете саборе, кроз никео-цариградски Символ вере и кроз своје догматско учење оставише веру у васкрсење. Црква је сведок да је Христос са нама у векове (Мт. 28, 20). Она то посебно сведочи светом Литургијом, која се врши у спомен “смрти и Васкрсења Христовог”. У светој Литургији нам се кроз свето Причешће дарује Васкрсли Христос. Зато

будимо деца Васкрсења! Живимо Васкрсењем Христовим и не дозволимо да нас, по речима светог апостола Павла, ишта одвоји од љубави Његове (Рим. 8, 35)!

Велики руски старац, свети Серафим Саровски, током читаве године је све ходочаснике у свом манастиру поздрављао речима: “Христос васкрсе, радости моја!” Да бисмо то духовно стање достигли, по речима светог владике Николаја “морамо својим животом целивати Распеће Христово, не ради обичаја већ као своје сопствено, и ране Његове као своје ране”.

Са тугом и болом у срцу морамо рећи да данашњи свет не иде путем васкрсења већ више путем смрти и незнања. Када то кажемо, имамо на уму податак да и у Србији сваке године умире по један велики град због смртности много веће него што је рађање. Тај податак је разлог за плач и ридање, али и аларм за узбуну. Мора се нешто учинити да се тај пут смрти заустави. “Рахиља оплакује децу своју и неће се утешити, јер их нема” (Мт. 2, 18). Чедоморство је свагда и свугде, па и у нашем народу, смртни грех који вапије небу. Престанимо убијати своју сопствену децу у утроби! И она имају право на живот и на васкрсење. Питамо се где су вајни “борци за људска права” да заштите најслабије, а то су још нерођена деца у утроби својих мајки. Изиђимо, браћо и сестре, из земље греха и смрти, као старозаветни Израил из Египта, и Бог ће нас благословити сваким благословом духовним, да бисмо били Народ Бога Живога. Нека радосни плач новорођене деце надјача беспомоћне крике смрти! Нека Србија – и сав свет – поново постане велика Колевка! Вратимо се вери у живот, вратимо се Васкрсењу!

Драга браћо и сестре, света Православна Црква је наша духовна Мајка. Она брине о својој деци без обзира на то где она живе и распиње се са својим синовима и кћерима да би сви заједно достигли у Васкрсење. Радујмо се са радоснима и тугујмо са онима који тугују, носећи

бремена једни других, јер ћемо тако Господа: “Шта да радим да бих задобио испунити закон Христов (Гал. 6, 2)! Свети живот вечни?” А тај младић је од Христа старац Софроније (Сахаров) каже да добио одговор: “Држи заповести!” Ето држање заповести Божјих разапиње у пута спасења, ето васкрсења!

Очински позивамо све оне који су сазданог по лику Бога, Творца и се из неког разлога одвојили од Једне, Спаситеља нашега. Свети Василије Свете, Саборне и Апостолске Цркве да се Велики такође, у истом духу, говори о врате у њено окриље. Страшан је грех преображавајућем значају поста и каже да раскола и јереси. По светим Оцима, ни анђели Божји записују имена оних који мученичка крв га не може опрати. држе цео Велики пост јер се они тим Оппростимо једни другима ради Васкрсења постом одричу земаљског и пролазног да и поново постанимо браћа у светој Цркви, би задобили вечно и непролазно, а то је јединој Лађи спасења!

Васкршњим поздравом поздрављамо васкусење. Држећи заповести Божје, ми сву нашу духовну децу у Отаџбини и изражавамо и потврђујемо своју љубав расејању и молимо се да Васкрсли Господ према Христу (Јн. 14, 15), али и према свима дарује радост Васкрсења. (Мт. 22, 40).

Данашњи свет је увелико прихватио поздрављамо наш народ на распетом другу философију, философију широког Косову и Метохији, неодвојивом делу пута који води у пропаст (Мт. 7, 13). Србије, чије светиње су чувари не само Хришћанске врлине покушавају се српскога Православља него и заменити привидним хуманизмом и хришћанства у Европи. Косово је било и лажном духовношћу Далеког Истока. Све остаће наше јер Бог није у сили него у лажне религије и парарелигије, правди и моћан је да нам врати оно што философије и лажне философије, нам се на силу покушава одузети. идеологије и модерне митологије и саме

Нека са овим празником Васкрса робују смрти и људска бића осуђују на васкрсне и Србија, и васцели српски род, смрт уколико верују да је човек “биће за како су говорили наши народни песници. смрт”, а не биће за живот вечни, поготову Дај Боже да људи који воде и чувају пак уколико подстичу људе на убиства и државу буду надахнути духом Васкрсења и самоубиства, тренутна (у рату и у крвавим и духом вере у победу добра над злом! “мирнодопским” обрачунима) или Нека Васкрсли Господ, Победитељ смрти продужена (разузданим живљењем у и Животодавац, дарује свако добро Своме сваком пороку, особито робовањем Народу, што ће рећи свему роду дроги). Живимо у времену када се зло хришћанском и православном, и свим покушава прогласити добром, а добро људима добре воље, да би сви заједно злом, грех пак, по речима светог старца предокусили радост будућег века, радост Пајсија Светогорца, нечим модерним и васкрсења и вечнога живота! прихватљивим. Омладини се уместо

Ваше примера врлине и честитости нуде идоли и антихероји, непослушност родитељима и одбацивање сваког ауторитета. Велика Ваши молитвеници пред Распетим и је одговорност Цркве, али и свих Васкрслим Господом, просветних институција ове земље, јер Архиепископ пећки, Митрополит треба помоћи омладини да пронађе пут београдско-карловачки и Патријарх аутентичног живота и васкрсења. српски **ПРИНЕЈ** Поучавајмо децу да буду слична Митрополит црногорско-приморски јеванђелском младићу који је питао **АМФИЛОХИЈЕ**

ХРИСТОС ВАСКРСЕ!

Митрополит загребачко-љубљански
ПОРФИРИЈЕ

Епископ шабачки ЛАВРЕНТИЈЕ

Епископ сремски ВАСИЛИЈЕ

Епископ бањалучки ЈЕФРЕМ

Епископ будимски ЛУКИЈАН

Епископ банатски НИКАНОР

Епископ новограчаничко-
средњезападноамерички ЛОНГИН

Епископ канадски МИТРОФАН

Епископ бачки ИРИНЕЈ

Епископ британско-скандинавски
ДОСИТЕЈ

Епископ зворничко-тузлански
ХРИЗОСТОМ

Епископ осечкопољски и барањски
ЛУКИЈАН

Епископ западноевропски ЛУКА

Епископ жички ЈУСТИН

Епископ врањски ПАХОМИЈЕ

Епископ шумадијски ЈОВАН

Епископ браничевски ИГЊАТИЈЕ

Епископ далматински ФОТИЈЕ

Епископ бихаћко-петровачки
АТАНАСИЈЕ

Епископ будимљанско-никшићки
ЈОАНИКИЈЕ

Епископ захумско-херцеговачки
ГРИГОРИЈЕ

Епископ ваљевски МИЛУТИН

Епископ рашко-призренски ТЕОДОСИЈЕ

Епископ западноамерички МАКСИМ

Епископ горњокарловачки ГЕРАСИМ

Епископ источноамерички ИРИНЕЈ

Епископ крушевачки ДАВИД

Епископ славонски ЈОВАН

Епископ аустријско-швајцарски АНДРЕЈ

Епископ франкфуртски и све Немачке
СЕРГИЈЕ

Епископ тимочки ИЛАРИОН

Епископ аустралијско-новозеландски
СИЛУАН

Викарни Епископ моравички АНТОНИЈЕ

Викарни Епископ топлички АРСЕНИЈЕ

Викарни Епископ диоклијски КИРИЛО

ОХРИДСКА АРХИЕПИСКОПИЈА

Архиепископ охридски и Митрополит
скопски ЈОВАН

Епископ полошко-кумановски ЈОАКИМ

Епископ брегалнички МАРКО

Викарни епископ стобијски ДАВИД



Најдражи у Господу,
Срдечно Вам упућујем честитке за сверадосни Празник Васкрсења Христовога, Који чини присутним Будући живот, даривајући нам га, овде и сада, у Литургији Цркве.

Црква приноси седе чистиавом човечанству да би узвисила и обновила свеи и да би од њега начинила „нова небеса и нову земљу“ (уј. Ошкр.21,1). Сјога и јружа јеванђелско сведочанство и даје васељени силу Васкрсења и очекивање вечности. На тај начин христјоимениа јуноа Народа Божје налази у бојочовечанској заједници Цркве ејзистенцијално ујоришће и доживљава у њој васкрсну јерсијективу обожења јо блајодаши. Црква ошкрива сјасоносну истину о Бојочовеку и о Телу Њејовом као и учешће, већ овде на земљи, у живоју Васкрслоја Христја. (Из Окруже посланије

(Из Окружне посланице
Светог и Великог Сабора
Православне Цркве, Крит 2016)

**Христос Воскрсе!
Ваистину Воскрсе!**

Jeet Maksum

[illegible]

*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 Christ, Who makes present the Future Life, “of the world to come,” which is already given to us in the Liturgy of the Church.

The Church offers herself for the whole of humanity in order to raise up and renew the world into new heavens and a new earth (cf. Rev 21:1). Hence, she gives Gospel witness and distributes the power of the Resurrection and the expectation of eternal life. Thus, the fullness of the Christian people finds an existential support in the divine-human communion of the Church and experiences in this the resurrectional perspective of theosis by grace. The Church reveals the saving truth of the God-man and His body as...participation even now on earth in the life of the resurrected Christ.

(From the *Encyclical* of the Holy and Great Council
of the Orthodox Church, Crete 2016)

**Christ is Risen!
Indeed He is Risen!**

for Maxine

[illegible]

St. John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
Executive and Auditing Boards
Elected at the Annual Parish Assembly November 13, 2016



EXECUTIVE BOARD

Bob Medan, President

Stan Grgic, Vice President

Predrag Milovac, Secretary

Luka Erceg, Treasurer

George Postic, Financial Secretary

Members: Micaelee Ellswythe, Stevan Davidovich, Don Kosovac,

Jovica Maksimovic, Paul Bunjevic, Zarija Lukic,

AUDIT BOARD: John Lambright, Dushan Medan, Dan Grgich

*Ако си и у гроб сишао, Бесмртни, но разорио си
силу накла
и васкрсао си као победитељ, Христe Боже,
женама мироносицама говорећи: Радујте се!
и Својим апостолима мир дарујући,
Ти који палим смртницима дајеш Васкрсење!
(Кондак Васкрса)*

Пуноћа Божјег присуства у Његовој творевини открива се управо у тајни Христовог Васкрсења, овога светог дана у који Му појемо: *У гробу телесно, у аду с душом као Бог, у рају с разбојником, и на Престолу био си, Христe, са Оцем и Духом, све испуњавајући, Неограничени.*

Очевидно је, да се Васкрсење Христово јавља и показује не само као победа над смрћу и пролазношћу, него и као откривење пуноће Божанског промисла о свету и човеку.

Васкрсли Христос, „Који је смрћу смрт уништио и онима у гробовима живот вечни даровао,“ основа је човекове пробужености за одговорност за свако људско биће, не само у времену него и пред вечношћу. Исповедајући Васкрсење Христово и верујући у опште Васкрсење мртвих, ми исповедамо и постајемо свесни своје непролазне одговорности за светињу сваког људског бића и сваког створења, и празнујемо неуништивост вере и људске наде у вечни смисао живота, у Христу, Богу љубави, Жртваном „за живот света“.

Помолимо се Господу Васкрслome да се мир врати свуда одакле је протеран, на првом месту у наша срца и у наше домове. Чувајмо светињу хришћанскога брака, јер је она основ узвишене, здраве и честите хришћанске породице.

Нека мука и тескоба наших дана узмакне пред светлошћу и радошћу Васкрсења Христовог! И никада не заборавимо да Васкрс значи почетак, сигурни залог и темељ нашега Васкрсења.

У радости Васкрсења Христовог загрлимо једни друге и сва створења, и запевајмо свету песму вечног живота и Светлости:

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

**ХРИСТОС ВАСКРСЕ!
ВАИСТИНУ ВАСКРСЕ!**

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

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades, and didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, rejoice, and giving peace unto Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.”
(Paschal Kontakion)

The fullness of God’s presence in His creation is particularly revealed in the mystery of Christ’s Resurrection, this holy day in which we sing to Him the song: *In the tomb with the body, in hell with the soul as God, in paradise with the thief and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit, wast Thou, O boundless Christ, filling all things.*

Clearly, the Resurrection of Christ appears and presents itself not only as victory over death and mortality, but also as the revelation of the fullness of God’s providence in the world and with man.

The Resurrected Christ, “Who trampled down death by death and on those in the tombs bestowed life,” is the foundation of man’s awakening to responsibility for every human being, not only in time but also before eternity. Confessing the Resurrection of Christ and believing in the general Resurrection of the dead, we confess and become aware of our own unending responsibility for the sanctity of every human being and every creature, and we celebrate the indestructibility of faith and human hope in the eternal meaning of life in Christ, the God of love, sacrificed “for the life of the world.”

Let us pray to the Resurrected Lord that peace may return to all places from where it has been expelled, firstly to our hearts and our homes. Let us preserve the sanctity of Christian marriage, for it is the foundation of an exalted, healthy and honorable Christian family.

May the trials and anxieties of our days vanish before the light and joy of Christ’s Resurrection! And may we never forget that the Resurrection means the beginning, the sure pledge and foundation of our resurrection.

In the joy of the Resurrection of Christ, let us embrace each other and all beings, and let us sing the holy song of eternal life and Light:

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
With Cathedral Parish Board

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Christ is Risen! Hristos Vaskrse!

Dear Parishioners of St. John:

It is my pleasure to report to you, the members and parishioners of St. John's, the work that has been accomplished this past year through the good deeds and hard work of many and the upcoming projects that still require our attention.

The memorial garden that was recently completed helped transform the Church's front entry and side areas into beautiful and easily maintainable landscapes that are a pleasure to look at and use little water. Benches were also installed to provide a comfortable area to rest and contemplate.

We took the opportunity to remodel our ground floor apartment next door at 918 Baker St. The kitchen was completely remodeled and the living space was enhanced with new windows, flooring and paint. It is currently rented out and enjoyed by a new tenant.

The next project we would like to start is in conjunction with our St. Sophia Sisterhood and will include the painting of our hall kitchen, upgrading the light fixtures, installing of new stainless steel stove surrounds, and putting in a new fire suppression system. It has also been our desire to reconfigure the coatroom closet and ticket booth in the main hall into our new bookstore and display area. Our continuing saga of repairing our leaky roofs is alive and well in 2017 as it was 25 years ago. This winter has given us ample opportunity to find out where the leaks are coming from and how to fix them. With Gods help, the leaks will be a thing of the past.

We are also just beginning our investigation into repurposing the garage we control at 918 Baker St. facing St. Josephs into a new rental unit. The city of San Francisco has streamlined the process for increasing housing by being able to convert parking garages into living units. This endeavor will help to secure our future and allow us to continue serving God and our community.

We at St. John's have been blessed with many who work tirelessly on behalf of the Church, serve on our Board, attend our meetings, chair our events, and do the many things that keep the lights on and the doors open each and every Sunday with a choir ready to sing. We are thankful to those who have helped us complete our past projects through their donations and hard work and look forward to completing many more.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

CHRIST IS RISEN! HRISTOS VOSKRESE!

Sincerely,

Bob Medan

Parish Council President

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Hristos Voskrese! Christ is Risen!

As Orthodox Christians, Easter offers an opportunity to step into a spiritually refreshed world; even our contemporary and exceptionally fast paced world. One besieged with discord, disharmony, and often despair. Modern times generate unique stresses, it is our work to stay in front of those stresses and comport ourselves with a deep seated spiritual sensation of being refreshed in our daily routines. Easter also brings hope that the impossible is truly possible and as we move into the light of a renewed spiritual season, we remember that love and truth are part of our daily Orthodox Christian weave. We can be kind, we can forgive, and we can provide comfort even in the most trying circumstances.



St. Sophia Sisterhood works to enhance those areas in our Parish that need continual refreshing. We offer comfort for ailing and aged parishioners, as well as routine support for the operational needs in our Church and Social Hall. If you are seated with a member of our Sisterhood on Easter Sunday, please take a moment to tell them thank you. Thank you for the countless cookies that magically appear at events, thank you for a fully stocked kitchen each Sunday for coffee hour. Thank you for the prayers and spiritual support offered to our parishioners. Thank you for working with a shoe-string budget to enhance our Parish. We are a tiny group of strong women wide ranging in age and work status, yet we each take time to stay refreshed and focused on the work needed at St. John's. Easter Sunday is a perfect day for us to feel recharged and ready to re-engage with the needs of our Parish.

May you and your family have a blessed Easter Sunday. The great gift of hope is offered to all of us today. The Sisterhood looks forward to a new cycle of support for our church originating from a collective and refreshed sense of spiritual energy.

On behalf of the members of St. Sophia Sisterhood,
Hristos Voskrese!

Tina Milinovich

Saint Sophia Sisterhood President



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

Parish Report for Year 2015
To the Diocesan Annual Assembly – September 3, 2016

The year of our Lord 2015, at St. John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral parish was filled with the grace, mercy and love of God, with many blessed events.

Of special note for our parishioners was the honor and blessing of Patriarch Irinej's visit to the Bay Area, following the Canonization of St. Sebastian Dabovich during Diocesan Days celebration in Los Angeles in September.

Our church Board delegated Mr. Stevan Davidovich to coordinate this important event among the four Bay Area Serbian Parishes. All of the feedback we have gotten was that the event was a very successful endeavor for all. During this visit in the bay area, His Holiness, had a group of 35 people that included Bishop Longin of Midwesst and New Gracanica, Bishop Justin of Zicha, Bishop Grigoriye of Herzegovina and our Bishop Maksim. They visited the Colma Chapel and Serbian Cultural Center located at the Serbian Cemetery and operated by the First Serbian Benevolent Society, the oldest Serbian Fraternal organization in American. In addition, the group accepted an invitation by the Russian Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco to visit their Cathedral on Geary Street. While at the Cathedral the presence of St. John the Wonderworker of Shanghi and San Francisco could be felt by many. After the visit to the Russian Cathedral his Holiness and guests attended a fundraising event at the Saratoga Parish. The following day, after touring the city, our congregation was blessed by his Holiness visiting our Cathedral. Many parishioners came to greet and take blessing from his Holiness and other bishops. We provided a dinner free of charge for all attending. All expenses related to patriarchal visit were covered by our parish and various donors.

Our Parish community was also honored and privileged to host last December the 10th *Annual Four Kolos Humanitarian banquet*. It was a great success! The Four Kolos Humanitarian fund was established in order to help Serbian people in Kosovo, Serbia, Republika Srpska and Crna Gora. As of the end of 2015, they disbursed over \$300.000 over its 10 years in existence.

Our congregation has approximately 150 parishioners around the San Francisco Bay area. This number is slowly growing, since young Serbian professionals are moving to this area for work in software/computer industry.

Among our parishioners, for year of 2015 there are 56 members and 26 families as stewards (most members are stewards). The Parish council does not aggressively solicit membership or stewardship dues, but continues to encourage their active role in attending church services, participate in sacraments and support of our parish activities. The average Sunday attendance is 40-60 parishioners. The results of serving this community can be reflected in the following services:

87 Divine Liturgies,
8 baptisms,
2 weddings,
4 funerals,
26 home blessings, and
28 family slava services.

We continue to have religious education lectures once a month following Saturday vesper service. Sunday school is prepared for new school year. Sunday School is held every other Sunday, in order to have better participation, since many children have sport activities at their schools. Last year we had 15 children ages 5-10. Sunday school organizes field trips for kids, sponsored by our parish.

Right now we are completing a gardening project in the front of our Cathedral church. All plans and labor are donated. There is a strong working collaboration and relationship between the Priest and the Board in guiding and coordinating our auxiliary organizations, such as St. Sophia Sisterhood, Sunday School and St. John's Choir.

Respectfully Yours in Christ,
Fr. Djurica Gordic, Parish Priest
Stan Grgich, Parish Board President
Stevan Davidovich, Church Board member

A Note From Our New Treasurer

This year George Postich and I (Luka Erceg) undertook our new roles as Financial Treasurer and Secretary, respectively. This marked a change and transition from the diligent and tremendous work of Micaelee Elswythe and Bitsy Kosovac to a parish newcomer and a member of a long-standing family at our parish. We hope that you will please stop and thank both Micaelee and Bitsy when you see them to thank them for their many years of service and support to our parish.

Over the last several months, you have likely seen some changes at our parish. Early this year, we completed the installation of a campus wide WiFi deployment to improve internet community from our rectory, to the Church, social hall, and everything in between. While this may sound easy, it actually required nearly 1,000 feet of network cabling and 8 WiFi routers. The result is that we now have one uniform network across our entire property.

Upon completion of the network installation, we were then able to upgrade the security system in our rectory, and also upgrade our phones to a voice-over-IP technology. All told, the technology is saving us approximately \$85 per month. In the near future you will also see NEST thermostats appearing throughout our parish as we also look to engage in better energy management.

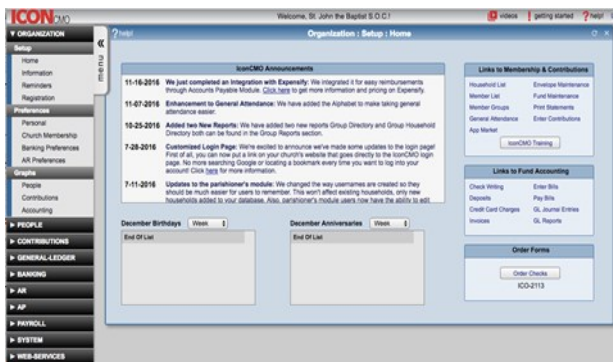
So, what does networking have to do with our treasury function? Well, I gave some of it away above discussing savings from the new phone system. In addition to cost savings, we have also implemented point-of-sale-solutions (SquareUp terminals) in our banquet hall and at the tutor station. As many of you know, this allows us to now accept credit card transactions for ticket sales, books, and tutor stand items, as well as donations. This year, you will see us using the system even more.

Last year, we inaugurated our first Serbian Food Festival – without a doubt, it was a resounding success. The parish was able to

generate approximately \$8,500 after all expenses to help us manage our ministries. We collected approximately \$13,300 in revenues, and about \$4,000 were through credit card sales using our SquareUp terminals. This year we hope to dramatically increase our income, and hope that you can assist us in the event by volunteering (and not just for eating the cevapi)!

Carrying on, our technology adoption at the parish has led us to implementing a new Church Management System (ChMS) that is known as IconCMO. This is a system that has been implemented in over 5,000 churches around the U.S.A. It was selected after a 7 month selection period and process, and we are excited to say that we have fully implemented it now.

Many of you would be justified in asking why and how much? Let's deal with the how much – it is less monthly than Quickbooks. Easy decision.



No the why. Quickbooks was not designed for non-profit entities, and has really accumulated a lot of “work-around” solutions to make it fit. The result is a shoe that is too narrow – and it created far more work for our former treasurer and financial secretary than was necessary. In the process of reviewing alternatives, we decided that it was important to spend less time on the administrative aspects of our parish so that we could spend more time on our ministries. In addition, it was also important to us to better manage the important records of our parish.

Our parish was founded 63 years ago, and we are now in many instances transitioning to our second and third generations of parishioners. Honoring the vision, commitment, and love for our parish demonstrated by founders, we decided it was time to become better stewards of our information.

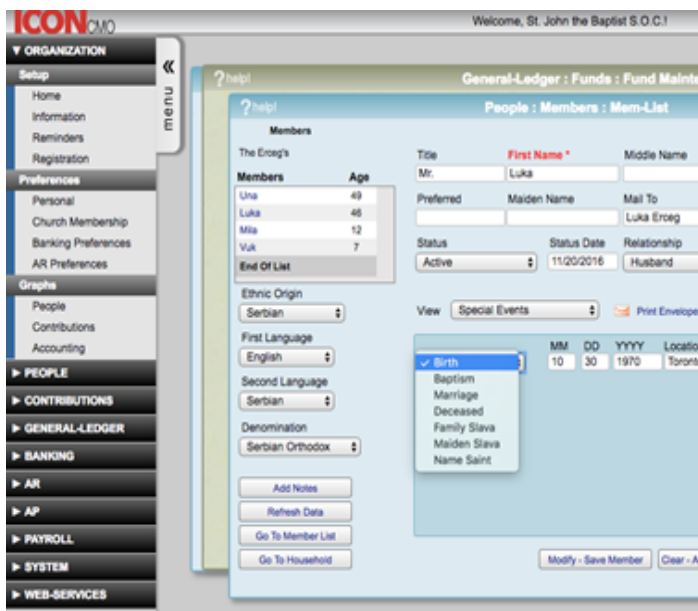
Consequently, IconCMO was selected because it will allow us to track information on parishioners that includes birth, marriage, family, baptismal, godchildren, godparents (kumovi), patron saints (Slava), and deaths. This is a step towards honoring of our founders and families that came before. This year, we will begin the process of uploading our historical archives to the system from the

first members and baptisms of our parish. Later, you will be able to have access to your own specific sacramental registry information via the system.

Another important part of the system is tightly integrated link between parishioner records and our parish financial system. Going forward, you will be able to designate all of your contributions to our parish by a unique “envelope number” assigned to your household. This means plate, and specific contributions can be tracked, and we can also closely monitor contributions made for specific causes and ministries such as Four Kolos, KSS, Sunday School, Kolo/Dance group, etc.

The system will allow you to make one time to recurring donations online using your bank, credit cards, etc. We hope that you will consider making a modest recurring donation to our parish – just click “Donate” on our home page!

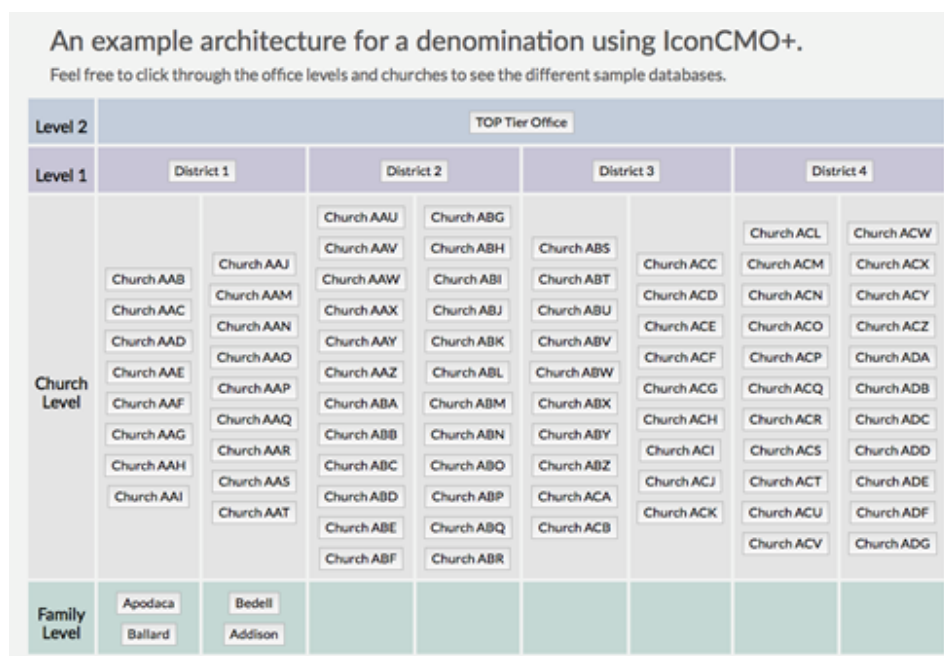
Another aspect of our new system is that we are focused on developing ministries that can be built from the time, treasure and talent of our parishioners. Thus, we will be contacting you about stewardship pledges, but also about understanding your unique skills where you might assist us without financial obligation.



With all the work we have undertaken, our parish is at the forefront of technology adoption amongst Serbian and other Orthodox parishes. In fact, this month, our Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Western America (our Diocese) has begun transitioning to IconCMO, and we have other parishes in the U.S. now filing suit. Please be proud of the fact that through the blessing of His Grace Bishop Maxim, we became a test site, and are now a model for other parishes. Once our Diocese completes its adoption, we will no longer have to submit financial reports as summary level financial data will automatically be transmitted to the Diocesan treasurer, eliminating extra work for us.

We hope that you will be excited by all the “behind-the-scenes” work we have been doing. It is truly an honor to help our parish and Church. Often we find it very easy to simply write a check, or make a cash contribution. We miss however that our Lord asks us to give when it is hardest – that does not imply money. Giving time as a tutor, or overseeing important projects is often more valuable than money. Please join us in this important mission of preserving, protecting, but also growing the ministry of St. John the Baptist in San Francisco that was entrusted to our care.

Luka Erceg
Treasurer



Dear Parishioners of St. John's Cathedral,

This is my final article "From the Treasurer's Corner". By now many of you know Bitsy Kosovac, financial secretary and I, treasurer, stepped down at the beginning of the year. It has been a pleasure and a challenge to serve the church in this capacity. Secretly I always considered the two of us as the dynamic duo!

Most importantly I want to thank Bitsy for the tremendous support as financial secretary and sounding board when I needed advice. I want to point out Bitsy is not done. You may have noticed she is now serving as Tutor, is a committed member of the St. Sophia Sisterhood, and is always willing to step in and help out if she is not traveling.

I want to welcome the new financial team, Luka Erceg, treasurer, and George Postich, financial secretary. They are the new dynamic duo leading St. John into the future. You have seen the changes concerning POS stations for events, new software that not only manages the financial records but maintains the church parish records. The future is now. Luka spent an incredible amount of time last year researching, presenting to the Board, and implementing this new system. I wish great success to Luka and George.

Hristos Voskrese!

Micaelee Ellswythe

St. Sophia Sisterhood – 2017 Events

By Tina Milinovich

Valentine's Day Luncheon

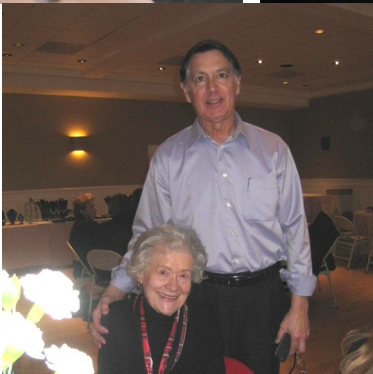
The Sisterhood kept its commitment to tradition and hosted their 45th (or so) Valentine's Day Luncheon. Members decorated, cooked and greeted guests for an afternoon in Paris! Proceeds raised from this event - \$2600 – will be earmarked for our extended Social Hall refresh effort. A heart felt thank you to all who to all that support this luncheon by attending or by donating. We are truly grateful for your support!

For fans, March is THE month for college basketball. The Sisterhood brought the first round of March Madness to St. John's on March 19th. Our 1st Annual March Madness event was met with good success. Many members attended, some even tried their luck with a friendly bracket competition. Congratulations to Lili-ana Perazich, Melody Key, Marie Derr and Francesca Milinovich for creating their brackets in this event. Sadly, most of the brackets are now red, but one of the participants will come out of it with a victory – and bragging rights for the whole year. Thank you to all who supported our effort to try something new!



Memorial Garden

The Sisterhood has a deep respect for all members, especially those who have contributed to our organization but are now watching over us from heaven. We plan to erect a garden in their memory somewhere on the property. We hope to locate an area for perpetual remembrance so we may honor them with the beauty they deserve; all selfishly giving to their parish during their time with us. Thank you to Melody Key and Liliana Perazich for working on this project.



Episcopal Visit & Tonsur of a New Reader



On November 13, 2016, His Grace Bishop Maxim served the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in our Cathedral. After the Matins, and prior to the Divine Liturgy, Luka Erceg, dedicated parishioner and church council member was honored to receive the first degree order, by being tonsured a reader (čtec) by His Grace. The tonsuring occurred following the Great Doxology. Luka was led by Father Djurica and Deacon Vladan to the center of the solea in front of the Bishop. Following three prostrations toward the Holy Altar and one prostration before His Grace Bishop Maxim. His Grace then laid his hand on Luka's head and both the Deacon and His Grace led the prayers of

the tonsuring. Luka has been assisting Fr. Djurica in the Altar since he moved to San Francisco few years ago. Many parishioners were present along with Luka's family. The ordination or tonsuring of a reader (čtec) is a first degree order. It is a commitment by the new reader to continue learning and reading of our Lord Jesus Christ with the goal of serving our Lord, His Church, and the community. It is not an accolade, rather a commitment to even more service to our Lord. The ordination may continue to further ministry, or not. As always, we seek to follow to the lessons of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this is another path.

His Grace Bishop Maxim delivered a sermon, explaining our Lord's story of the sower and the seed, from Sunday's Gospel reading according to St. Luke. It was a pleasurable day for all, and was completely unexpected as His Grace was not scheduled to be in San Francisco that day.

He said that as Orthodox we live the mystery of the new creation in a totally different way: we are in another world, a different atmosphere, and way of thinking.

Following the Divine Liturgy His Grace Bishop Maxim, along with clergy and all faithful gathered in church hall for lunch prepared by parish board president Stan Grgich. Bishop Maxim, also, thrilled and delighted the children with his famous "candy rain"!



Mladost Folklore Group of the Bay Area Serbian Orthodox Churches



During the weekend of August 5, 6, & 7, 2016, the Mladost Folklore Group of the Bay Area Serbian Orthodox Churches visited St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church in Merrillville, Indiana for their annual Serbian Festival celebration. The kids were all excited about making the trip to the Midwest. For the majority of the group, it was their first time to Indiana. On Friday, August 5th, the group was treated to a boat river cruise on the Chicago River by the St. Sava Folklore Group.

We were able to see the beautiful architecture of both old and new buildings. We even walked Navy Pier and took pictures by the Glass Bean. We also visited our monasteries in Libertyville and Gracana. The group performed for the Festival on Saturday, August 6th in front of a very large crowd. The kids did a wonderful job. We danced all afternoon and evening with our new friends from the Midwest. We attended Sunday liturgy on August 7th that was officiated by Protojerej Stavrofor Marko Matic, who was the former parish priest of St. John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco. We were treated like royalty the whole weekend. We definitely have wonderful memories of our trip and made new friends. We are planning our next trip for the summer of 2018 to Toronto, Canada.

Pavle Bunjevic





Stewardship Reflection

By Very Rev. Fr Bratislav Krsic

CHRIST IS RISEN!
INDEED HE IS RISEN!

Stewardship = Trust, Not Fear; Faithfulness, Not Success

**The Gospel According to
St. Matthew 25:14-30**

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction

I'd like us to remember something that all of us forget: that what God requires of us is not success, but faithfulness.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Gospel we just heard (Matthew 25:14-30) is known as the Parable of the Talents. That word "talent" has a double meaning. Its original meaning in the Greek of the New Testament refers to a huge sum of money. In the ancient world, a talent was worth what an ordinary laborer earned over the course of fifteen years. Thus, giving each of his servants one or more talents, the master in this story is entrusting them with a fortune.

The second meaning of the word "talent" results from one interpretation of this very story. As the master entrusts his servants with talents, so God entrusts each of us with abilities. Talent has thus come to mean ability or skill. We say that someone has a talent for teaching or music or cooking or business.

This parable is about trust

But the Parable of the Talents isn't really about money or ability. It's about something even more important. The Parable of the Talents is about trust.

The story opens with an act of trust. The master is about to leave town on a journey. He entrusts his wealth to three servants. Each is given a different sum of money. Yet each is given a big amount -- one talent or two or five. It's clear that the master trusts each of his servants. He even hands over the money without any instructions.

After a long time, the master returns and calls

in his three servants. Two of them have doubled their money. The third has made nothing at all; he returns to his master exactly what he received. It turns out that this servant had simply buried the money in the ground, a common security measure in ancient times. He reveals the reason for his action: he was afraid of his master.

His trust in his master was zero, so he reduced his financial risk to zero. Yet he reduced the possibility of profit so that it too was zero.

Master's unconditional love; reap rewards of trust

The story as we have it leaves us with an unanswered question. How would the master have responded to the first two servants if they had not brought in a profit? What if they had put the money at risk and come back empty-handed?

I think the master would have accepted them. After all, in the parable what he commends is not their profits, but their faithfulness. He does not commend the servant who produced five talents more than the one who produced two. Each receives the same commendation: "Well done, good and trustworthy servant." Each receives the same invitation: "You have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master."

And in responding to the third servant, the master makes it clear that he would have accepted anything -- even rock-bottom savings account interest -- that was motivated by faith rather than fear.

Moreover, it's notable that the servant who is given five talents makes five talents more, and the one who receives two makes two more. This doubling in each case suggests that the growth is automatic. It's not the cleverness of the servants that produces results so much as their willingness to act out of trust.

Master is interested in us

The parable is not about money or ability so much as it is about trust. The master trusts his servants and acts on this trust. The servants -- or rather two of them -- return the favor by acting out of trust rather than fear, and they come back to their master with one fortune stacked on top of another.

The third servant paints an ugly picture of a grasping master who demands success. What this servant gets for his trouble is exactly the rejection he fears. He's a small-minded man who insists that his master is just as small-minded.

The other two servants however, recognize generosity when they see it. The piles of money thrust their way reveal a guy who's pretty generous, who takes a risk, who accepts them-even honors them. Finding themselves at the receiving end of such outrageous trust, they feel empowered, and are willing to take risks of their own. The love their master has shown them overcomes their fear of failure. They realize that any master who treats his money managers in this open-handed way is more interested in them than in turning a profit.

The Master is not who we thought He was

This brief story about a master and his three servants turns upside down the standards of the world. It announces that the worst thing that can happen to us is not failure. The worst thing that can happen is that we make God out to be a horrible old grouch who rejects us when we fail. The story tells us that the worst thing is not losing out. The worst thing is never risking. In the eyes of God, the fear that keeps a treasure in the ground is an act of atheism. The freedom that puts that treasure at risk-and may even result in its loss-requires an act of faith.

How do we apply this Gospel lesson into our life and our community?

We can learn from our failures, and often it is failure that provides the most indelible lessons. But fear teaches us nothing -- until we leave it behind.

The gospel stage is crowded with people who are there to shock us into the recognition that it is stupid and ugly not to trust God. There's the snide elder brother who refuses to welcome home the prodigal son; the all-day workers who demand that late arrivals receive less than the daily wage; the Pharisee who tries to talk God into accepting him because he's kept the rules, not because God is merciful. All these live in a gray, fearful world, where grace is absent and slackers get thrown to the wolves.

We understand these pathetic people because we too are given to burying our talent out of fear. We're made anxious by the ogre idol of our

imagination. We know what it's like to misperceive and mistrust God.

What if the true, living, and only God has no interest in keeping score? What if God's concern is simply that we all get up and take a turn at bat?

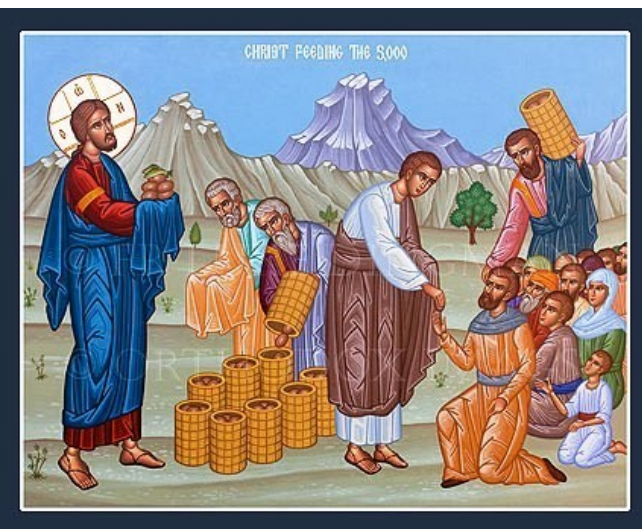
The Gospel (The Good News) of Jesus Christ gives new meaning to success (faithfulness) and security (is only in God). Success is found, not in accumulating more than we can ever use, but in our willingness to risk in response to God's invitation. Security is found, not in keeping pace with our rising paranoia, but in the utterly reliable God who trusts us before we trust ourselves, who risks, and asks that we risk also.

Here is the final word for us to take home

The Parable of the Talents is not really about money or abilities. It's a story about trust, a story about risk. Life's the same way. What's important is not money or abilities in themselves, but our decision to use them in ways that show our willingness to risk and to trust. The central question about life is not "What did we accomplish?" but whether we learned to obey, whether we learned to love.

Final blessing

May our loving God, holy, consubstantial, life-giving and undivided Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who desires above all else that we learn these things, have mercy upon us and grant us wisdom so that his Gospel may shine in and through our lives. Amen!



• **STEWARDSHIP 2016**

Cris and Todd Adair
Zach and Kit Antovich
Marisa and Brett Atha
Blage and Sergio Carabin
Alex Ciganovich
Rodney Ciganovich
Sasha and Olivera Djordjevic
Mira and Svetislav Djurich
Micaelee Ellswythe
Melody and Jay Key
Don and Bitsy Kosovac
Bob Lazich
John Lambright
Diane and Brian McKone
Gigi and Dushan Medan
Mara Milinic
Predrag Milovac
Ian and Aleksandra Parker
Brigita and William Perazich
Sister Seraphima
Ivana Stojanovic
Ann Tepovich
Miodrag Vujkovic
Total \$14,950.00

Time and Talents

Stan Grgich
Dusan Medan
Jovica Maksimovic
Ranko Gajic
Danilo Maksimovic
Dan Grgich

Please join our
Stewardship program!
For more information contact
Fr. Djurica Gordic faher.gordic@gmail.com
415-567-5869



**Sunday School classes are every other Sunday. Please bring your kids!
Our teachers are Aleksandra Milic and Pauna Maksimovic**



Cathedral Slava 2016

The Doctrine of Deification (Theosis): What It Tells Us About Man And Creation And The Importance Of Synergia

By: Luka Erceg, J.D., LL.M., MBA

Deification or *theosis* are two terms that refer to the same belief of the Orthodox Church that man can become a god, that is man by the grace of God is exalted and made God. *Synergia* in its literal sense refers to cooperation or working together, but in the context used herein more specifically refers to man using his own free will and using God's will can achieve union with God. Man was created for union with God, and our entire purpose in life is to achieve that union. This goal or purpose is critical and supported by Scripture through accounts of the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 17:2, Mk 9:3).

In order to achieve deification, we must acquire the Holy Spirit. Acquisition of the Holy Spirit is meant for all, and is a necessary goal for all Christians. Deification is a process, whereby as Christians we are to attend Church, receive the Sacraments, pray to God, read the Gospels and attend to the Commandments.

But, deification and union with God is not a mere process. It is an acquisition of the Holy Spirit, to become godlike, not a "religion-by-numbers" endeavor. Rather, it is lifestyle, a social process whereby we follow the Commandments (such as "love thy neighbor"), but this lifestyle is embodied by life in the Church and life in the Sacraments. Throughout the process of deification, we do not stop being aware or conscious of sin – we do not move beyond sin. It is by virtue of attending Church and partaking of the divine nature proffered to us that we are deified, but in full recognition of our sins and fall from God. To be deified, we must be proactive in achieving union with God, we do not abandon our will or calmly accept things as they are – as in the concept of quietism.

This proactive requirement of deification acknowledges that we as human persons have received the order to become a godlike – we have been instructed, implying that we must now take action. Our Lord Jesus Christ did become human, so that we might become God – showing us the way to restore our union with God by providing a path to a union with the divine energies of God. Christ was both fully god and fully human, the purpose of incarnation was to become human that we might be made god. Restoring our union with God requires a union with the divine energies of God. God's divine

energies are activities that we actualize in the real world, we experience or partake in the divine in an intellectual capacity.

Christ became human so that we might learn from him how to actualize the attainment of the divine energies, so that we could achieve union with God. We are called to live in the Trinitarian God, yet we are unable to understand the essence of God because it is beyond our ability to comprehend, and this essence cannot be experienced as the divine energies can be. We cannot seek union with the divine essence of God because we are made, while God was not created. Because we cannot comprehend the divine essence of God, we cannot understand God's true nature. Consequently, when we consider the divine essence we refer only to things manifesting about his nature and not manifestation of God's nature.

As stated previously, throughout the process of deification, we do not stop being aware or conscious of sin. The reason is, that we retain our personal integrity that is distinct from God irrespective of how closely linked to God we are. We must be distinct from God, because we are not God by nature. This is known to us because of the Incarnation of Christ, who became fully man, while being fully God. Our deification, or becoming god is a manifestation by God's grace or status.

Through Incarnation, Christ took the body of man while fully being God and because we are made in the likeness of God, we are not god yet. That is why deification involves the body – we must attain god, which is more than our physical bodies. As Orthodox, we recognize the importance of the body in the process of deification – a human person is the combination of body and soul. This is self-evident through our reverence for relics of saints where we know that the body is sanctified and transfigured together with the soul. The grace of God that is present in the saints' bodies during their lifetime continues to be active in their relics when they have died. Our belief is that God uses the relics of saints as a channel for his divine power, to be an instrument of healing. It is also important to note that few people can achieve union with God in the present life. When Christ became incarnate, He took a body (or flesh) of the material world. That action made possible the metamorphosis and redemption of all creation, including the material body and the immaterial.

That said, Deification is for all of us, and as stated earlier is the goal for every Christian. Since few of us will be deified in our present life, the remainder can only be fully deified at the Last Day. Whether we are deified or not is a question of whether we began the process in our present lives.

The process that we engage in throughout our lives is an ongoing act of repentance, it is not an esoteric or extraordinary pursuit. As stated earlier, it is a process of attending Church, receiving the Sacraments, praying to God, reading the Gospels and following the commandments.

Attending Church and following the commandments underscores the social aspect of deification – deification is not achieved in solitude. It is not possible to love God if one fails to love his fellow humans, and living in solitude by definition eliminates the possibility of loving others. This social aspect of deification requires that our attendance of Church and following commandments be as much in deed as in thought. In deed we love our neighbors, we attend Church, we partake in the Sacraments. In thought we pray to God, that through our life in the Church we can acquire the sanctifying Spirit and be transformed into god.

By being fully man and fully God, Christ established for us that both God and man have important operative roles in the process of deification. These combined or joint roles are the essence of *synergia*. God works through all of us, and we have a choice as to whether to live by the Word, or reject it – we are not passive. We must accept the instruction and commandments of God such that we strive for deification, recognizing that we will never truly comprehend God. It is important to note that the two roles are distinctly different – they represent different human energies and divine energies.

Energy is closely related to will, as in the free-will of a person. Man's human energies are expended in the form of our will and actions whereby we actively live by the Word. The divine energies represent God's will for us to become god.

God gave us His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation – a gift. Our salvation is not guaranteed; thus we must work to attain it. It is the responsibility of each person, individually, to do their best through self-discipline and avoiding indulgences synonymous with sin – leading an ascetic life. That life-long struggle is determinate of our possibility for deification. Deification is a gift from God, given only to those who have truly sought it.

Man knows that we are intended to be deified, because we were intended to be god, but for our fall. God made man according to "Our image and likeness" (Ge 1:26), an act of the all Triune God – thus man's link to creation. But the Triune God is a Trinitarian image and likeness, all three persons in the Trinity, but each is distinct. This is important because it underscores that it is up to each person to seek deification.

Being made in the "image and likeness" of

God means that we are not God, and the two terms cannot be used interchangeably. First "image", according to John of Damascus, is indicative of "rationality and freedom," while "likeness" indicates that by virtue we can acquire the characteristics of God. Thus, for each of us, at our conception we are imbued with an image that is demonstrative of the power each of us has. But, we have not yet gained the virtues that allow us to acquire the characteristics of God – we must strive to develop ourselves gradually. Despite our sins, we still maintain the image of God, and our virtues underscore our likeness which is driven by our moral choices. The better those moral choices, the more virtuous we become and the more likely we are to acquire the characteristics of God.

If we do acquire the characteristics of God and at the Last Day succeed in becoming deified, we do not cease to be human. That is because we were created and cannot become God by nature. We become a created god, but grace or status. We were not god by nature, and hence with deification cannot be god by nature. Whether by creation or deification, our image and likeness to God was a creation by God.

As stated earlier, some – such as saints – were deified in the present life (for example St. John of Kronstadt), which is the exception as opposed to the rule. This was actualized by their peace, prayer and contemplation while in this life. Those saints pursued perfection when trying to fulfill Christ's commandment for perfection (Mt. 5:48). Perfection as God can only be achieved through unity with God. This underscores that at creation man was perfect, but then fell. While we retain the image of God, our fall from grace, or fall to sin, has resulted in us losing our likeness to God. The further implication is that at creation, man was perfect, but by our own choice we fell from God and lost that perfection. Consequently, we can again choose to strive for perfection again and regain unity with God, which results in our deification.

If one was to be deified, their deification would not be fully complete until resurrection. This underscores the importance of soul and body as it pertains to humankind. At resurrection, our bodies are reunited with our souls. Salvation is the unity of body and soul, and is a gift from God. To receive the gift, we must have faith and act of our own free will to attain it. But, it is also critical to note that man's salvation has already been provided for – Christ was incarnate, died and was resurrected for our sins. Hence, to receive salvation one must personally embrace God's commandments, and in striving for unity with God – seeking deification – we are ultimately seeking and striving for salvation. Salvation is the ultimate unity with God.

10th Annual Humanitarian Banquet By Veljko Davidovich



Welcome and thank you all for coming to the 10th anniversary of the annual humanitarian banquet. The four circles (four kolos) of Serbian sisters of the San Francisco Bay Area was organized at St. John's church slava in October

of 2006 and they inaugurated the first humanitarian fundraiser banquet on December 10, 2016 at St. John the Baptist church hall in San Francisco. The four local priests and kolo presidents who were instrumental in starting this were Father Marko Matic, Father Dusan Bunjevic, Father Slobodan Jovic, Father Vasilije Cvijanovic, protinica Ljiljana Bunjevic, Dorothy Zakula Pratte, Natalie Vukmirovic-Conkle and Dragana Siljak.

For a decade now, these four woman's organizations have collaborated to help those less fortunate in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia & Hercegovina and Kosovo & Metohija. Refugees, children in orphanages, hospital patients, the sick and hungry have been the monetary recipients of the Four Kolos' hard work and determination to make difference for men, woman and children in the region. Funds are distributed in person by our Bishop, priests and parishioners to every location in need. To date, the Four Kolos have raised and distributed almost \$300.000 with NO additional expenses for the distribution of these funds. All expenses for this humanitarian fundraiser banquet are covered by each of the Four Kolos treasuries and personal donations. I think it's important to note that **ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF EVERY DOLLAR RAISED AT THIS YEARLY EVENT IS DONATED.**

The Four Kolos are proud of the funds they've raised and the impact they've made since 2006.



The philosophy of the Four Kolos in sponsoring this event, “Our Help Today is Their Better Tomorrow” speaks to the continuing needs of our fellow Serbs back in the homeland.

The Four Circles are comprised of the Woman’s Auxiliary of St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in Oakland, the St. Sophia Sisterhood of St. John the Baptist, Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco, the Woman’s Auxiliary of the St. Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church in Saratoga and the Woman of the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church in Moraga. Please join me in thanking the woman of the Four Kolos for their continuous and dedicated work in helping those in need. Puno vam hvala!

On the Feast of Entrance of the
Most Holy Theotokos, Saratoga
December 4, 2016
By Bill Davidovich

Gardening project

Special thanks to Aleksandra and Djordje Milic for donating their professional time in planning and improving our garden in front of the Cathedral



Our kitchen has fresh new look, thanks to Jovica Maksimovic, Stan Grgich and Dusan Medan

Лоза Светог Симеона

На јужној стран Саборне хиландарске цркве, сваком поклонику пада у очи високо узрасла и снажно разграната винова лоза, полегла по својој пергули. Њено стабло долази из зида на



метар и по одстојања од земље, из гроба светог Симеона (Стефана Немање) који се налази поред истог зида, са унутрашње стране храма. Хиландарско предање о тој лози каже следеће:

Кад је од смрти светог Симеона (13. фебруара 1200.) протекло седам година и кад је свети Сава дошао из Карејске

испоснице у манастир да би припремио пренос моштију светог Симеона у Србију ради мирења завађене му браће, онда су хиландарски монаси неутешно плакали. Тада се свети Симеон јави у сну игуману Методију и каже му како је потребно да његове мошти буду пренете на родну груду, али да ће за утеху хиландарском братству из празног гроба његовог изнићи лоза и докле год она буде рађала, дотле ће и благослов његов на Хиландару да почива.

Та лоза се одржала и до наших дана. Иста сваке године без изузетка богато рађа, иако јој се осим обрезивања, никаква друга нега не указује, нити се какве мере против филоксере или других болести и штеточина предузимају, што представља велико чудо Божије, и тиме велику моралну утеху и духовно ободрјење за наше Хиландарско братство, а и за све верујуће Србе.

Али, та лоза није само по томе изузетна. Она има и једно друго својство: од њеног плода разрешује се неплодност супружника који са вером и молитвом прихвате ово чудотворно средство.

Најстарије сачувано предање о овоме потиче из године 1585., када је један Турчин довео свог сина првенца да би га оставио у Хиландару на службу Богу јер га је добио, као и другу своју децу, по употреби грозђа светог Симеона.

Од онда до данас, наш свети манастир непрестано дели поклоницима или доставља поштом онима који му се писмено обрате ово чудотворно грозђе.

Некад су из Русије долазили поклоници масовно на Свету Гору и ово грозђе много тражили. Данас је потражња за њим са свих страна из Грчке, јер су нарочито у последње време резултати од његове употребе задивљујући.

О крсној слави

Првохришћанска је вера, од Бога нам дана и од Светих Апостола предана, да славимо Бога и Његове Светитеље. Слављење Бога и Божјих Угодника: Анђела, Алостола, Пророка, Мученика, Светитеља. Преподобних и свих Праведника, јесте наш хришћански православни животни став којим исповедамо веру своју и прави циљ и смисао нашег људског живота овде на земљи и у вечности. Јер ко слави Бога и Божије Светитеље, тај слави истинску и вечну славу човекову у Богу Живом и Истинитом, и тај онда неће славити никакве лажне богове и пролазне и смртне људе овога света. Ко слави Бога и Божје Свеце, као праве и истините, бесмртне људе, који из овог пролазног и смртног живота Богом Живим пређоше у живот вечни и бесмртни, тај ће се и сам славом Божјом прославити и Богу и Светима уподобити, јер ће од Бога бити заједно са Светима прослављен у вечном Царству Небеском.

Тако су Бога и Његове Свете славили хришћани још од самог почетка, и зато су многи од њих и сами Сведци постали. То нам показује и сведоче већ први хришћански Мученици, који су за славу Божју и саме своје животе положили. Тако, на пример, Свети Мученик Карп (који се слави 13. октобра), пред незнабошцима и безбожницима онога доба, није хтео да слави лажне богове, него само Христа - јединог Истинитог Бога, па је зато говорио ондашњим властодршцима: "Истинити богопоклоници, који се по божанској речи Христовој клањају Богу у духу и истини, уподобљавају се слави Божјој и постају заједно са Њим бесмртни, јер се још сада причешћују вечним животом кроз Христа Логоса, док се они који служе лажним боговима уподобљавају ннштавилу ђавола и са њиме пропадају у пакао". Стога и ми, православни хришћани, од самог Господа Христа примивши свету веру и свети завет, славимо и прослављамо Бога и Његове Свете Угоднике и Бесмртнике: Пресвету Богородицу, Свете Апостоле и Мученике, Свете Оце и праведнике, и тако овим слављењем Бога и Светитеља, које је сам Бог прославио зато што су и они Бога прослављали, и ми задобијамо вечну славу Божју и наслеђујемо живот вечни.

Ово древно хришћанско свето предање о слављењу Бога и славе Божје у Светима, примили смо и ми Православни Срби од Светих Ћирила и Методија и од Светога Саве. Зато и славимо сваке недеље и сваког празника Христа Бога и Спаситеља нашег и Његову Пресвету Богоматер, и свете Анђеле и Светитеље Божје. Славимо их најпре заједно са целом Црквом Божјом, у својој парохији и своме храму, када наша парохијска црква или наш манастир слави своју Храмовну

Славу, то јест свога Светитеља као свога Небеског Заштитника, кога истог дана славе и сви православни хришћани у свету. Отуда света **Слава**, као општехришћанско и свецрквено слављење Бога и Божјих Светаца, није само србски обичај, јер Славу славе и сви остали православни у свету. Али Свети Отац Србски, Сава Равноапостолни, дао је нама православним Србима и једну посебну србску домаћу Славу - наше Крсно Име, то јест благословио је нашу србску породичну Славу: да свака србска породица, свака кућа и домаћинство слави онога Светитеља на чији су дан наши претци и праоци примили Христову веру и крстили се у име Свете Тројице. То је, дакле наша србска Крсна Слава или Крсно Име, за које наш верни народ са правом каже: "Ко Крсно Име слави, оно му и помаже".

Наша Крсна Слава, коју славимо посебно у сваком дому и свакој породици (ако се нисмо одрекли вере Христове и имена Србиновог), молитвама **Светога** кога славимо оживљава у нама и душама нашим свету и светлу успомену на онај дан када смо се сви породично крстили и християнизовали, када смо се и наши претци и ми за њима вером и крштењем у Христа **ухристовили** и **охристовили**, кад смо се **уцрквили** и **оцрквили**, да би се **обожили** и **обесмртили**, како то лепо вели наш нови угодник Божји Отац Јустин. Славeћи нашу домаћу Славу, **ми** не престајемо славити и своју црквену, храмовну Славу заједно са својом браћом парохијанима, и то је наша заједничка света **Преслава**. А када славимо своју домаћу и породичну Славу, не славимо је опет сами у кући, нити само у кући, него најпре са осталим православним хришћанима у Цркви. на заједничкој светој **Служби**, светој Литургији, где су присутни и сви Божји Анђели и сви Свети, и где се спомињу сви наши живи и упокојени, па тек онда и у дому своме. И опет у дому не славимо је сами, него у задрузи и заједници са својом породицом, са својим ближњима и сродницима, са суседима и пријатељима, и са сваким намерником Божјим који нам тог дана дође у дом, макар био и просјак и убожјак, поготову он. Јер је и он, као и сваки човек слика Божија и брат Христов и наш. И први хришћани су на сличан начин славили Славу као што и ми данас славимо и као што наши свети Манастири и Цркве данас славе: после завршене свете Литургије у храму сви присутни иду за једну заједничку **трпезу љубави**: сви се заједно са свештеником помолe Богу, уз свету водицу, свећу и тамјан, затим се благослови свето **Жито** и преломи и прелије вином свети **Колач**, и онда се помену сви наши сродници на земљи и на небу, па се онда, уз љубљење и молитвене жеље и честитања, сви заједно утеше за општом трпезом, оним што је Бог дао и домаћин спремио. А све то се чини у **Славу Божју** и у **част Светога** чији се свети спомен тога дана слави.

Слављење Бога и Његових Светитеља, и у древној хришћанској Цркви и данас у читавом Православљу, неодвојиво је од заједничке свете Литургије у храму и од заједничарења свих верника у свему ономе што је Божје и што је од Бога благословено: у заједници у вери и истини, у благодати и љубави, у светом посту, покајању и **Причешћу**, у благослову заједничког јела и пића, у међусобном поштењу и помагању, у братској заједници са Христом и са свима Светима. Јер Црква Божја Православна и није друго до **заједница свих** у Христу Богочовеку, у Њему који је "Првенац међу многим Браћом", а Браћа су Његова пре свега Светитељи, а онда са њима и сви ми, Његови и њихови **свечари**, који смо зато и позвани од Бога да будемо света браћа и Сабраћа Христова, синови Божји по благодати у Сину Божјем по природи, како вели Свети Атанасије Велики.

Света Крсна Слава управо и има тај смисао и значај: да све нас окупи и сједини у једну праву братску Христову **заједницу**, у свету **Цркву** као **сабор** Божији, као **сабрање** деце Божије, те зато Крсно Име и славимо у славу Божију и у част Светих, на наше спасење и обожење, на очовечење и охристовљење, на богоугодно здружење и сједињење са њима, нашим **Славама**, и преко њих са Христом, нашом вечном и непролазном **Славом**.

Стога се на свакој домаћој и црквеној Слави пева ова богомдана песма Цркве наше, православна химна сваке Крсне Славе, која нам најбоље казује смисао и значај наше свете Славе: **"Данас нас благодат Светога Духа све сабра, и сви са Крстом Христовим на себи говоримо: Благословен Који долази (Христос и Светитељ) у име Господње; Слава Богу на висини!"**

Јеромонах Атанасије

Specifics of Serbian Orthodoxy

by Fr. Vojislav Dosenovich

Writing or talking of the specific traits or character concerning Church and religion one would, at the first glance think, that there is talk about the differences from other churches, in this case other Orthodox jurisdictions. This is not the case or the subject of this article, rather it is the intention to point out the positives which were developed through the history of the church, and in harmony with the teachings and dogma of the universal Orthodoxy. The organizational principle of the Orthodox Church is the one established at the First Ecumenical Council (325) at which time the church on the island of Cyprus and the church in Armenia were awarded autonomous status. This means that one ethnic group or geographical region receives the right to administer to its own needs, use its own language in worship and have its native clergy. Autonomy of the Serbian Orthodox Church was achieved in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The vernacular language and native riches of motives in church singing, chanting and customs all of this is present, yet the unity of faith is not only in fact, but it is enhanced with the riches of many and various historic, ethnic groups and nationalities. On the other side they compliment the Universal Church through their specific expression of life within the church — artistic and cultural creativity.

There are some eighteen national, ethnic and historic groups of Orthodox Church jurisdictions. Most of them have their individual history of its development, struggle, triumphs and hard times. In most cases and time periods their history is identical with the history and life of its own people. So, the history of the Serbian Church is identical with the history of the Serbian people. In fact the spiritual values of the church became the values of the people: its development, creativity and culture. In such a set-up, the movement of the Spirit “as it wills”; is alive and functioning in full.

In the case of the Serbian Orthodox Church and people this is manifested in the life, history and culture of the people itself.

So, the values of the Gospel and the Church permeates through the life of every individual, and the people in forming the character of the individual and the nation as such. Creative forces are at work in the folk epics through the national bards who are inspired with the spirit and the values of the faith and the church. In fact this becomes the basis of the formation of the individual and the character of the nation. The most significant achievements are considered to be the works depicting the struggle for preservation of the faith and the people. They are Kosovo Ciclus and Mountain Wreath of Njegos.

The Serbian People received the teaching of the Christian faith and became converted by the missionaries from Byzantium. It was St. Sava who put down the foundation of the Serbian Orthodox Church. What St. Gregory was for the Armenians, or St. Patrick for the Irish people, or St. Denis for the French, or St. Antonius was for Russia, Saint Sava was for the Serbian Orthodox Church. Because of his imprint on the Serbian Orthodox Church the church's name became synonymous with his SVETOSAVSKA CRKVA and the teaching of the church SVETOSAVLJE. It is not then out of place to hear some faithful refer to their church and religion as the “SERBIAN FAITH.” Because of this close tie to the founder of the independent Serbian Orthodox Church and the reverence for him, perhaps, many church and state heads among the Serbs followed the example of the Saint and became elevated to sainthood themselves.

It is said that God reveals himself to man in the Bible and the life of the world. So it can be said concerning man in the Orthodox Church, that man reveals himself to God through the external symbols of faith and the customs of his Church and religion. One such custom for the Serbian people is the SLAVA. This is one of the distinct religious observances for the Serbian family and the nation. The family celebrates the SLAVA, as do many cities, civil and military institutions. This is in fact an observance of the day when the first ancestors became baptized in the Orthodox faith. They took the Saint of the day as their family patron. Male members of the family will

carry the same patron Saint as they establish their own families. The most common patron Saints among the Serbs are: St. John the Baptist, St. Nicholas, St. George and many others. Among the Orthodox Christians, Serbs are the only ones who have this religious observance. One, even being a good and pious Christian, and not observing Slava as a Serb, would be looked on as an "orphan".

Then there is the BADNJAK custom. Again, this is a typical Serbian custom which takes place during the observance of Christmas, and carries a significant symbolic spiritual meaning. This is equivalent to a Christmas tree. The decorative side of the BADNJAK is not considered at any point. There are some other smaller and less important in significant customs. Yet, all of them are expressing the presence of Church in the home and the nation.

All that we have mentioned above has a direct imprint in the formation of the character of the believer. The late Bishop Nikolai in one place sketches the main components of character realized in the life of the nation as he states: "The character of the Serbian people can be seen in the love of Christ; in St. Sava; in the sweet soul of King Vladimir; in the endurance of Nemanja; in the eagerness of Milutin; in the humility of Stefan of Decani; in the humbleness of Urosh; in the sacrifice of Lazarus of Kosovo; in the gallantry of Strahinja; in the love of justice in Marko; in the Yugovich's mother's heart; in Militca's truthfulness; in Yevrosima's.

This past helps us to understand more clearly our present. The geographic position of the Balkans between East and Latin West demanded an effort from the people and the church preserve its identity as people and church. This process will be undiminished until this day. Here the church and the people will exercise a balanced approach and TOLERANCE in life with other faiths and people. This was the attitude exercised in the very beginning by its founder St. Sava. (Religious tolerance will be known in the West much later under the influence of the encyclopedic's). Today one can observe that the main preoccupation of the Serbian Orthodox Church is the preservation of its people and its unity. "In this work

the Serbian Orthodox Church was always and is now far away from any kind of sectarian hypocrisy. In this regard and in the light of its suffering in the time of the Second World War and after it until this very day, the Serbian Orthodox Church can say indeed: 'Father forgive them for they do not know what they do!'"

The progress and success in edification of human soul in faith in God and morals grounded on that faith, will justify the existence and work of church itself among its people. This element would give substance and the meaning to all other branches of human endeavor. Values of this kind are tested in the great crises of a nation we have seen in this brief sketch on the Serbian Orthodox Church. It appears that the disaster of Kosovo Polje at the end of the fourteenth century became the testing point of the Gospel's and Christian values in the history of the young Serbian Nation. So, Kosovo in religious, moral, and national sense became the great victory, which will inspire generations for centuries to come to the present day; to fight **"for the Venerable Cross and Golden Freedom"**. In the same sense and in a similar situation, during the Second World War, descendants of Kosovo would say now to the invader from the West: "better to be in the grave than to be a slave!" Even being exploited in the worst way by the international conspiracy and by many among its own people, this remains a moral axiom worthy to remember and to emulate.

In both instances we see the main point: to preserve moral values and our own soul. This is the way the people and church show how to vanquish death. The Battle of Kosovo was fought under the slogan: "for the Holy Cross and Golden Freedom!... This kind of moral strength went down into the tomb of national suffering and thus became the pledge of national resurrection". There was a main point namely: that moral values of the Gospel are put above life itself, because it will outlive life not only of our generation but many generations to come.

After Kosovo many were forced one way or another to embrace the religion of the conquerors, be it from the East or the West, but the purity of the faith, language, customs and moral values was preserved in the remote

mountainous regions and villages of the simple people. Today temperance; in Kosovka Girl's mercy; in the endurance of captive people; in the blind bard's vision; in the wisdom of the Serbian monks and priests; in the modesty of Serbian girls; in the inspiration of the poets among the people; in the talent of the craftsmen; in the grace of the embroiders and weavers; in the clearness of the sayers; in the moderation and gallantry of the Serbian peasants, and in the radiance of SLAVA of all baptized Serbs. Thus, the character of the Church and the Nation became one and the same.

We learn from history that from the time of St. Sava until the disappearance of the Serbian medieval organized state, during one and a half centuries there was accomplished even more closer merger between the Serbian people and its church. It is said that the merger between the people and the church began with St. Sava. Now it became a whole where the church will receive its full force from its people, states the historian Stanojevic.

Another all important occurrence took place, which formed a historic uniqueness. This was KOSOVO, — as the poet Isidora Sekulic would say: "Kosovo is the grave in which all of it (Serbdom) was buried, and resurrection goes again through the grave." But the KOSOVO grave is not only the grave but the promise of resurrection also. KOSOVO became that living force which did not allow a nation to die and accept the Turkish slavery...

This was the spirit of a struggle and loyalty to faith and church. This became measured more and more with contempt of physical life and readiness to die "for some distant generations". The circumstances of time and the nature of the struggle, which was imposed upon the people for its survival and for its national and religious preservation, gave to the people faith and piety and the seal of heroism. Another historian Jovan Cvijic states: that after the KOSOVO struggle there was formed a strong Serbian national conscience which will last until this day. This became sort of a school in which generations shall be educated, and in which process Serbs became inspired with a desire to revenge the old defeats and the renewal of the state. This shows us that in this process the Orthodox faith and the Serbian nationality, which merger started with St. Sava, now became ONE WHOLE at the end of the fourteenth century. The Orthodox faith among the Serbs in this process received a more and more ethnic character that the name "SERBIAN FAITH" became synonymous with the original Orthodoxy, as it was stated above in this article. This gave to the Serbian Church its specific character and identification for the time to come. Because of this fact, the historian Ivo Pilar said with full justification: that Serbdom and its Church are indestructible as long as the Serbian Orthodox Church exists. Because of this phenomenon Serbian Orthodox Church will be the object of the attack of all of its enemies through the history of her existence to this very day.

DIASPORA lives in freedom and from such a position would be called upon to help both the church and the people in the present time of their struggle, which in many instances is similar to that of the first Kosovo centuries ago. Having this in mind, the efforts of the Serbian People within the country, and those in diaspora should be directed to defend and preserve its tried and lasting spiritual and moral values in a fast changing world of ours. The loss of the specific character of Church and nation would be the loss of their existence in the future.

V. Rev. Stavrofor Vojislav Dosenovich passed away on 24 October 2008 at the age of 92. He was a Parish priest of St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church in Omaha, NE since 1948 until December of 2005. He wrote seven books. One of them, "So Help Me God," is a testimony to one of the great tragedies of a century - the genocide of the Serbs during World War II by members of the Croatian Ustashi, it is also a deeply personal accounting. Author V Rev Fr Vojislav Dosenovich was an eyewitness to the slaughter in which he lost his father, one brother, his sister, and ultimately, his homeland.

Плаштаница



Плаштаница је платно са извезеним или насликаним Христом непосредно после скидања са Крста. На плаштаници се налази представа скидања са Крста и полагања у гроб, а ту је и представа Богородице, Јосифа, Никодима и еванђелисте Јована. Плаштаница се износи у току појања стиховњих стихира на вечерњем богослужењу Великог Петка и полаже се увек заједно са Јеванђељем на средину храма на посебан сто.

Развој плаштанице је прилично сложен и доводи се у везу са развојем воздуха, великим входом и вечерњом службом Великог Петка. Воздух је платно које је символ покроба у који су Јосиф и Никодим увии тело Христово. У њега је увијано Јеванђеље и свештеник га је износио прислоњено на груди или на рамену док су се појале стиховње стихире вечерње Великог Петка и полагао га на сто у средини храма где му се народ поклањао до краја јутрења Велике Суботе.

Тада је на јутрењу Велике Суботе, на трисветом великог славословља, које се појало споро, Јеванђеље обношено у литији и полагано на свету трпезу која симболично представља гроб Господњи. Када смо говорили о воздуху, битно је рећи да су симболизми и пракса Великог Петка утицали на то да се на воздуху слика или везе тело мртвог Исуса Христа. Судећи по сликовитим представама скидања са крста и полагања у гроб, представа Исуса на воздуху све више је потискивала Јеванђеље које је *par excellence* символ Христа, да би доцније прерасла у самосталан литургијски предмет у "плаштаницу", која се додавањем Богородице, Јосифа и Никодима, јеванђелисте Јована, мироносица и анђела развила у слику "оплакивања Христа", док је воздух поново попримио своју стару, једноставну форму.

Касније је плаштаница почела да се износи у току појања стиховњих стихира на Велики Петак, увек заједно са Јеванђељем, на средину храма на посебан сто. Тамо је била предмет поклоњења и манифестовања побожности верника (цвеће, ароматична уља) до момента симболичног "полагања у гроб" после завршетка "опела", односно јутрење Велике Суботе.

Сто на који се полаже плаштаница, који је симболизовао камен на коме је тело Христово било припремљено за полагање у гроб, временом се толико развио да је добио и балдахин (киворијум), по угледу на Свету трпезу или кувуклију Светог гроба. Када се стигло до ове тачке било је онда лако да се дође до погрешног тумачења овог стола као Гроба Господњег, а полагање Јеванђеља и плаштанице се почело сматрати као полагање у гроб, и на крају да би конфузија била већа на њему је почела да се служи Литургија Велике Суботе.

Serbian Food Festival 2016

On May 21, 2016 our parish hosted our first food festival, which was a great success!

We would like to thank all volunteers who helped. Special thanks to Zeljka Maksimovic, for being the driving force in organizing this event and food preparation. We served over 500 meals!

We are grateful to Dobrila Maksimovic, Danilo and Nevenka Maksimovic, Ranko and Jasna Gajic, Sekula and Smilja Mijatovic, Dusanka and Momcilo Lazic, Rade and Bosa Milosevic, Luka Erceg, Stan Grgich, Dusan Medan, Dan Grgich, Jovan Gordic, & protinica Marija Gordic, Mirela Cukovic, George Postich, St. Sophia Sisterhood and all of you who supported the event!



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 2016

Tina Sankoff
Barbara Leach
Jerome Davidovich
Melody & Charles Key
Zoran & Sonja Kovacevic
Olga Krnich
Svetislav & Mira Djurich
Daniel Visnich
Vera Solovkov
Diane McKone
Daniel Tomasevich
Danilo & Nevenka Maksimovic
Paul & Ana Blackwell
Rodney Ciganovic
Stanislav Miskovic
Milan & Milena Stevanovic
Dobрила Josipovic
Radivoje & Bosiljka Milosevic
Marija Micic
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Rosanda Amerine
Blagoje Zoran Djordjevic
Blage & Sergio Carabarin
William & Brigita Perazich
Denise Hale
Ian & Aleksandra Parker
Micaelee Ellswythe
Millie Zakula

Total \$6,270.00

Prepared by Parish Treasurer

Easter 2016

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Bessie Popovac
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Donald Sever
B. Collis
W.L. & Rosanda Amerine
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Paul & Ana Blackwell
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Olga Krnich
Danilo & Nevenka Maksimovic
Dobрила Josipovic
Marija Gordic
Beverly & Mihajlo Petrovic
Blage & Sergio Carabarin
Barbara Petrovic
Stan Grgich
Janine & Theodore Di Marco
Millie Zakula

Total \$8,325.00

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

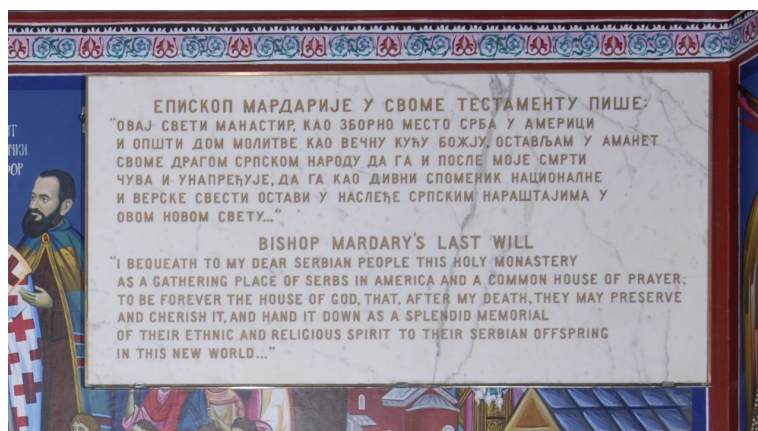
The life of St. Mardarije of Libertyville (1889-1935)

Born in village of Kornet, Ljesani County, in Montenegro, on November 2, 1889, to pious parents Petar and Jela Uskokovic, he was baptized in his village church dedicated to St. George and received his baptismal name Ivan. His mother was from the well-known Bozovic family. Both of his parents were well respected in their community holding the office of leadership and particularly his father was a captain of their clan.

Considering his parents' status, young Ivan was sent to further his education, first in Rijeka Crnojevic, Cetinje, and then in Belgrade, Serbia. While in Belgrade, young Ivan advanced his childhood desire to serve God and the Church, and so from there he headed to monastery Studenica where after a short period of novice life he gets tonsured to monasticism having received the name Mardarije. With the decision of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, now young hierodeacon Mardarije is sent to Russia where he spent twelve years (1905-1917) furthering his theological education and growing in wisdom. From there, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church sent him to the United States of America to organize the Serbian Orthodox Church. On December 1, 1923, now archimandrite Mardarije is appointed as administrator of the Serbian American-Canadian diocese with the see in Chicago and that same year he purchased around ten acres of land in Libertyville, Illinois, where later St. Sava monastery was built. He was elected by the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church as the first bishop for the newly established diocese in America on December 7, 1925, and his consecration took place on Palm Sunday, the Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, on April 25, 1926.

From then on His Grace Bishop Mardarije, the first bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, labored tirelessly in building churches, St. Sava monastery in Libertyville, sowing Christian love, spread peace, preached and witnessed the Gospel of Christ throughout his diocese. In spite of inescapable worldly trends, he lived spontaneity of truth and a provision of grace, just because Life has dawned from the Tomb, and is dawning still. Having labored as bishop for a little over nine years he died peacefully on December 12, 1935, hospitalized in Ann Arbor, Michigan, while writing his last Nativity Encyclical to his beloved flock. His earthly remains were laid to rest at St. Sava monastery in Libertyville. The Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church during its regular session held from May 14-29, 2015 brought forth a decision that his name be added to the Diptych of saints of the Holy Orthodox Church.

From the Holy Hierarch Mardarije, we see how the grace of God reaches the heart of our cities, bringing to the confusion of the world the breeze of the Spirit and the serenity of the Age to come.



Christian Apathy

By Blagoje Djordjevic

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7

Throughout our march through Great Lent and on our subsequent arrival to the victory of victories, the day on which our Lord Jesus Christ triumphs over Hades, trampling down death by death, many of us have asked ourselves how we can be better, truer Christians. Thoughts on attending church more frequently, how to fast more mindfully and authentically, how to pray more fervently have surfaced in our minds. Likewise, we ought to have asked ourselves how we could have been growing in virtue. To most, such language signals one toward the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and courage, and the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love (*1 Corinthians 13*). As the good Orthodox Christian never boxes themselves into such strict divisions and lists (or precise definitions of time, on that note), we may even find ourselves more expansive in our reckoning of virtues. One virtue which the Orthodox prize most highly, and one which may seem most farfetched to the Western mindset, is that of dispassion or *apatheia* (ἀπάθεια), whence we get the word apathy.

Apatheia, like many Greek words, has found itself restricted to a much narrower and more negative connotation in English than it does in the original language (see *Byzantine, autocrat, idiot*, etc.). To the Ancients, *apatheia*, translated dispassion or passionlessness, meant either the uprooting of the passions (negative ones such as despair and rage) or, more appropriately for us, the proper exercise of the passions with respect to their original purity. While dispassion may still sound like cold stoicism at best to the Modern ear, even in the pagan world it was considered a virtue. The paragon practitioner of stoic philosophy, the Emperor of Rome Marcus Aurelius, said himself that “a mind free of the passions is a citadel” (ἀκρόπολις ἐστὶν ἡ ἐλευθέρα παθῶν διάνοια, *Meditations*, 8.48). However, the narrower definition, the strict expulsion of the passions, of feelings and emotions, also creeps into Christian thought like it does in the pagan.

Blessed Augustine of Hippo, despite some faults in his thought, or at least the later interpretation of his theology, translates *apatheia* into Latin as *impassibilitas*, and says of the virtue: “a freedom from those emotions which are contrary to reason and disturb the mind... is a most desirable quality, but it is not one which is attainable in this life,” (*City of God*, XIV.9). His first error is to focus only on those vices that are obviously bad (rage, gluttony) but also to neglect the fact that even virtues like love can be corrupted into lust, obsession, or envy and in turn are in need of proper reorientation. This error in turn nearly leans into the compromising position of *metriopatheia*, or measured passion, which the pre-Christian Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria advocated for more often (the Christian shouldn't seek to be “moderately” virtuous, since it implies they are also seeking to be “moderately” sinful). Second, he straightaway says that dispassion is a characteristic of the perfected man in the next life when they are

no longer with sin, not of one in this life and likely not a pressing concern for him. The Orthodox understanding of dispassion is not that of the eradication of but rather the education of the passions, their proper stewardship by a heart at rest with the Lord. We need not look any farther than the life of our Lord Jesus Christ himself to show us that dispassion does not mean emotional lobotomy. Did he not overturn the tables of the money lenders in a fit of rage? (Matt. 21:12) Did he not weep over Jerusalem? (Luke 19:41) Did he not rejoice at the seventy-two disciples returning from their mission? (Luke 10:21). As we can see, Christ, a man perfect and without sin, passionately exhibited both love and fury at the ways of the world, but did so dispassionately and in complete control of his feelings, thoughts, and deeds, something we should all be striving to imitate.

One of the earlier codifiers and pillars of Orthodox theology, St. Maximus the Confessor, begins his *Four Centuries on Love* with the following three verses:

“Love is a holy state of the soul, disposing it to value knowledge of God above all created things. We cannot attain lasting possession of such love while we are still attached to anything worldly.

Dispassion engenders love, hope in God engenders dispassion, and patience and forbearance engender hope in God; these in turn are the product of complete self-control, which itself springs from fear of God. Fear of God is the result of faith in God.

If you have faith in the Lord you will fear punishment, and this fear will lead you to control the passions. Once you control the passions you will accept affliction patiently, and through such acceptance you will acquire hope in God. Hope in God separates the intellect from every worldly attachment, and when the intellect is detached in this way it will acquire love for God.”

In of itself a beautiful work, each verse almost a prayer on its own, the *Centuries* of St. Maximus present us with a divine ladder of virtues that begins and ends with love for God, unto which the final rung is the virtue of dispassion. Maximus goes on to show how we must be proper stewards of our feelings and passions, rational and disciplined charioteers of the twin steeds of our soul, irascibility (spiritedness) and concupiscence (desire). He teaches us that we must direct our passions not towards earthly cares but towards heaven, to turn them towards God.

Nevertheless, given our station in an increasingly secular country with Protestant roots, we cannot haphazardly claim to be saved just by expressing our faith “passionately,” assuming such passion must be good just because it is directed towards God (it would not behoove us to display our Serbian tempers in church). We believe the true light not to be found in passionate and charismatic evangelical rhetoric, or even in the humble and inspiring sorrow of Gospel music, but in humility, peace, and silence as we approach the chalice for communion with reverence. Salvation is found in quietude, and it is in proper adherence to our own beliefs that we can bring salvation to others, as the popular saying attributed to St. Seraphim of

Sarov goes, “acquire the spirit of peace, and thousands around you will be saved” (стяжи дух мирен, и тогда тысячи душ спасутся около тебя). In the Old Testament, the prophet Elijah meets the Lord in the whisper after the storm: “Behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; but after the fire a still small voice, and there was the Lord” (*1 Kings* 19:11-12). Where the Protestant theologian Søren Kierkegaard saw anxiety, resignation, and then fear and trembling in Abraham as he approached the mountaintop to sacrifice his only son Isaac to the Lord, the Orthodox should see in Abraham a disposition of dispassion and perfect trust in the Lord. “So long as the contest continues, a man is full of fear and trembling, wondering whether he will win today or be defeated, whether he will win tomorrow or be defeated: the struggle and stress constrict his heart. But when he has attained dispassion, the contest comes to an end: he receives the prize of victory and toils no more” (St. Isaiah the Solitary, *On Guarding the Intellect*, 18).

Whatever progress or goals we have made for ourselves during Lent to grow and improve as Christians should be carried forth throughout the rest of the year and our lives as we strive to draw closer to God. Let us strive to live out our lives with greater clarity of mind, better focus and discipline of the less virtuous aspects of our character, and with a stronger mentality of dispassion to lead us forwards. As St. Symeon the New Theologian said, dispassion “is a foretaste of heaven.” In summary let us finish with the modern theologian of the Russian emigration, Georges Florovsky, from the compilation of his works *Creation and Redemption* (Vol. III): “In general, the [*apatheia*] of the Greeks is poorly understood and interpreted. It is not an indifference, nor a cold insensibility of the heart. On the contrary, it is an active state, a state of spiritual activity, which is acquired only after struggles and ordeals. It is rather an independence from passions. Each person's own ‘I’ is finally regained, freed from a fatal bondage. But one can regain oneself only in God. True [*apatheia*] is achieved only in an encounter with the Living God. The path which leads there is the path of obedience, even of servitude to God, but this servitude engenders true freedom, a concrete freedom, the real freedom of the adopted sons of God. In evil, the human personality is absorbed by the impersonal milieu, even though the sinner may pretend to be free. In God, the personality is restored and reintegrated in the Holy Spirit.”

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
John 14:27



Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Monastery
 Serbian Orthodox Diocese
 of New Gracanica and Midwestern America
 32377 North Milwaukee Avenue, Libertyville, IL 60048

**Pan-Orthodox
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 of Saint MARDARIJE
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Save the Date
 Friday, July 14th – Sunday, July 16th, 2017

The Mladost Folklore Group of the Bay Area Serbian Orthodox Churches
(Holy Trinity, St. Archangel Michael, St. George, and St. John the Baptist)

invites you to their

Fundraiser Dance

on

Saturday, April 22, 2017

8PM to 12 Midnight

St. John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Cathedral

Social Hall

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San Francisco

**Music for the evening provided by
SRMA Orchestra with Aki Nikodijevic**

Tickets sold at the door

Adults - \$20

Children (7 to 12) - \$10

Children (6 and under) - Free

Bar and Kitchen will be open

All proceeds from this evening benefit The Mladost Folklore Group for their trip to Canada in the summer of 2018. If you are unable to attend and wish to make a donation, please make your check payable to St. John's Church and mail to Paul Bunjevic, 37 Topaz Way, San Francisco, CA 94131

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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 20, 2017



serbian festival



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

From 12:00pm until 9:00pm

FREE ADMISSION !!!

VRBICA VRBIĆA 2017

