

An abstract painting with a textured, layered appearance. It features a large, dark, brownish shape on the left, a prominent red diagonal band, and a cluster of blue and white swirling forms with red centers on the right. The background is a mix of light and dark tones, suggesting a sky or water scene.

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„A toată făptura Ziditorule, Cel Ce timpurile și anii ai pus întru puterea Ta, binecuvintează cununa anului bunătății Tale!” (din Troparul Indictionului)

“Creator of the universe, setting times and seasons by Your sole authority, bless the cycle of the year of Your grace!” (from the Troparion of the Indiction)

Removing barriers for would-be seminarians: Archbishop Nathaniel's generosity



Scholarships are one of the ways St. Vladimir's Seminary supports seminarians who are preparing to serve the Church through a variety of callings—whether ordained ministry, chaplaincy, scholarship, teaching, sacred arts, or a variety of other vocations. Last year alone, the Seminary awarded \$400,000 in scholarships from its endowments to aid seminarians. Additionally, the Seminary's Tuition-Free Initiative allows future Church leaders to attend St. Vladimir's free of tuition expenses. Saint Vladimir's strongly believes servants of the Church should not be saddled with tuition debt from their theological education as they go forth to serve Christ.

Some years ago, **Protobresbyter Thomas Hopko** (+2015), dean at the time of St. Vladimir's Seminary, was invited to speak at a meeting of the **Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America**.

When asked about seminarians, Fr. Thomas reported that seminarians rarely came from the older, established Orthodox parishes in North America. Most, he said, were converts.

"I thought, 'my goodness, why is it from our own parishes we don't have more vocations?'" said **His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel (Popp)** of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate.

From that moment, His Eminence thought about what he could do to help.

"Maybe there is a financial problem among homes and families, certainly if you think about a young married person who *would* come to seminary but doesn't want to cut off their family from the income they were making. I thought maybe something I could offer might help them out."

Archbishop Nathaniel set out building up an endowed scholarship fund to help Eastern Orthodox men in North America pay for theological education at either St. Vladimir's, St. Tikhon's, or Holy Cross Orthodox seminaries. In 2018, with a generous gift from His Eminence, The Joseph and Vera (née Boitor) Popp Scholarship Endowment was launched, named in honor of Archbishop Nathaniel's parents. The scholarship awards \$5,000 to one seminarian each year.



"For a bishop of His Eminence's stature in the Church to have taken such a lead in helping address the shortage of clergy shows great leadership and is an example to us all," said Ted Bazil, St. Vladimir's Planned Gift Officer. "It brings to mind the generosity of another hierarch, Archbishop Kyrill [Yonchev], who helped set up a scholarship fund in the 1980s for seminarians preparing for priesthood."

The Archbishop Kyrill (Yonchev) Theological Scholarship Fund is still among the many endowed and annual scholarship funds managed by St. Vladimir's Seminary, along with Archbishop Nathaniel's newer scholarship.

The first seminarian to benefit from Archbishop Nathaniel's generosity and vision was Philip McClanahan, who has since graduated from St. Vladimir's ('21) and is preparing for service in the Church, particularly in the mission field.

"One thing needed in Orthodox missions is more Orthodox clergy," said McClanahan, who added that getting a solid grounding in liturgics and patristics were some of the motivating factors that led him to St. Vladimir's. "...And that has been very wonderfully fulfilled here at seminary. There's been so much here that's been helpful."

May God grant His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel—and all whose generosity and giving has helped support men and women serving the Church—many years!



Eliminarea barierelor pentru potențialii seminariști: Generozitatea Arhiepiscopului Nathaniel



Bursele reprezintă una dintre modalitățile prin care Seminarul Sfântul Vladimir sprijină seminariștii care se pregătesc să slujească Biserica printr-o varietate de vocații - fie prin slujire preoțească sau ca preoție militară, cercetare, predare, arte sacre sau printr-o altă varietate de vocații. Numai anul trecut, Seminarul a acordat burse în valoare de 400.000 de dolari din fondurile sale pentru a ajuta seminariștii. În plus, inițiativa „fără taxă” a Seminarului permite viitorilor preoți ai Bisericii să beneficieze gratuit de școlarizare. Seminarul Sfântul Vladimir consideră cu tărie că slujitorii Bisericii nu ar trebui să fie împovărați cu datoriile de școlarizare din timpul educației lor teologice în timp ce-L vor sluji pe Hristos.

Cu câțiva ani în urmă, Preacucernicul Părinte Thomas Hopko (+2015), decan la acea vreme la Seminarul Sfântul Vladimir, a fost invitat să vorbească la o întâlnire a Sfântului Sinod al Episcopilor Bisericii Ortodoxe din America.

Când a fost întrebat despre seminariști, Părintele Thomas a răspuns că seminariștii proveneau rar din parohiile ortodoxe vechi, înființate cu mult timp în urmă în America de Nord. Cei mai mulți, a spus el, erau convertiți.

„M-am gândit: «Cum este posibil ca din propriile noastre parohii să nu avem mai multe vocații?»”, a spus Preasfințitul Părinte Arhiepiscop Nathaniel (Popp) de Detroit și al Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române.

Din acel moment, Înaltpreasfinția Sa s-a gândit la ceea ce ar putea face pentru a ajuta.

„Poate că există o problemă financiară în rândul căsniciilor și al familiilor, cu siguranță, dacă te gândești la o persoană tânără, căsătorită, care ar veni la seminar, dar nu dorește să-și priveze familia de veniturile pe care le avea. M-am gândit că poate, ceva ce le-aș putea oferi eu, i-ar putea ajuta”.



Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel a înființat un fond de burse pentru a ajuta persoanele din America de Nord care doresc să urmeze o educație teologică să-și plătească studiile la seminariile Sfântul Vladimir, Sfântul Tihon sau Sfânta Cruce. În anul 2018, cu ajutorul unui dar generos din partea Înaltpreasfinției Sale, a fost lansat Fondul de burse Joseph și Vera Popp (Boitor), denumirea fiind în cinstea părinților Arhiepiscopului Nathaniel. Bursa acordă 5.000 de dolari unui seminarist în fiecare an.

„Decizia unui episcop de statura Înaltpreasfinției Sale de a lua o astfel de inițiativă pentru a ajuta la rezolvarea problemei deficitului de preoți, denotă un spirit de leadership excelent și reprezintă un exemplu pentru noi toți”, a afirmat Ted

Bazil, persoana responsabilă cu acordarea de gratuități din cadrul Seminarului Sfântul Vladimir. „Îmi aduce în minte generozitatea altui ierarh, Arhiepiscopul Kyrill [Yonchev], care a ajutat la înființarea unui fond de burse în anii 1980 pentru seminariștii care se pregăteau pentru preoție”.

Fondul de burse pentru studii teologice Arhiepiscopul Kyrill (Yonchev) încă face parte din numeroasele fonduri de burse anuale administrate de către Seminarul Sfântul Vladimir, alături de noua înființată bursă a Arhiepiscopului Nathaniel.

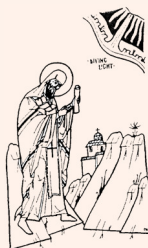
Primul seminarist care a beneficiat de generozitatea și viziunea arhiepiscopului Nathaniel a fost Philip McClanahan, care a absolvit deja Sfântul Vladimir ('21) și se pregătește pentru slujirea în cadrul Bisericii, în special în domeniul misiunii.

„Un lucru necesar în misiunile ortodoxe este un număr mai mare de preoți ortodocși”, a spus McClanahan, care a adăugat că obținerea unei baze solide în liturgică și patristică a fost unul dintre factorii motivanți care l-au determinat să meargă la Sfântul Vladimir. „...Iar acest lucru s-a împlinit cu desăvârșire aici, la seminar. Au fost atât de multe lucruri aici atât de benefice”.

Dumnezeu să-i dăruiască Înaltpreasfinției Sale, Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel - și tuturor celor care, cu atâta generozitate și dăruire, au sprijinit persoane care slujesc Biserica - mulți ani!

Învățăturile Sfinților Părinți

Și dacă „cinstită este moartea cuvioșilor și pomenirea dreptului cu laudă” (Ps 115,6) oare cu cât mai mult se cuvine să facem, cu cele mai înalte cuvinte de laudă, pomenirea Adormirii pururea Fecioarei și Maicii Domnului, Sfânta Sfințelor, din care purcede toată sfințirea către sfinți? Precum și facem, când o prăznuim, astăzi fiind Sfânta Adormire și mutare la viață a Maicii Domnului. [...] Cine poate să scrie un cuvânt despre frumusețea ta cea plină de strălucire, Maica lui Dumnezeu, Fecioară, căci nu este cu puțință să afle hotar cunoștința ta prin cugete sau cuvinte, fiindcă toate covârșesc și cuget și cuvânt. Este doar îngăduit să te cântăm pe tine cea care ne primești cu iubire de oameni. Căci tu ești lăcaș a toate harurile și plinirea a toată bunătatea și toată frumusețea, chip și icoană însuflețită a tot binele și a toată bunătatea, ca una care singură te-ai învrednicit a primi întru tine harurile Duhului Sfânt. Și avându-L sălășluit în pânțelele tău în chip de negrăit pe Cel întru care se află comorile tuturor harurilor, pentru El te-ai făcut cort în chip de neînțeles. Iar acum de aici te-ai sălășluit de la moarte la nemurire. Și pe drept te-ai mutat de la pământ la cer ca să fii împreună cu El sălășluită în corturile cele supracerești. Și acolo rămânând la moștenirea ta și prin rugăciunile cele neadormite, pururea ceri milă de la El pentru toți. [...] O, Fecioară dumnezeiască și de-acum cerească, cum voi mărturisi toate câte le ai? Cum te voi preaslăvi cu laudă pe tine care ești vistierie a slavei? Și numai pomenirea ta îl sfințește pe cel aflat în nevoi, și numai cea mai mică tindere spre tine face mai strălucitoare mintea, ridicând-o către înălțimea cea dumnezeiască. Prin tine se limpezește ochiul minții; prin tine se luminează duhul nostru, la venirea Sfântului Duh. Căci te-ai făcut vistiernică și cuprindere a tot harul, dar nu ca să le ai la tine, ci pentru ca pe toate să le umpli de harul tău. Căci ești vistieria nesecată a atâtor comori pe care le păstrezi doar pentru ca să le împarți. Căci pentru ce oare ar fereca cineva o fericire ce niciodată nu se împuținează?



Omilia 37 a Sfântului Grigorie Palama la preacuvioasa Adormire a Preacuratei Stăpânei noastre de Dumnezeu Născătoare și Pururea Fecioarei Maria.

Pentru a citi întreaga omilie, accesați:

<https://tinyurl.com/omilia37>

De asemenea, pentru o colecție a canoanelor Maicii Domnului, compusă de către Sfântul Nicodim Aghioritul, accesați:

<https://tinyurl.com/theotokarion>

The Wondrous Gift of the Human Face

V. Rev. Fr. David T. Wey

From a talk given in the early part of 2021 at Sts. Constantine & Helen Parish, Indianapolis.

The theme we have chosen for this year's Vespers series is "I am the Vine, you are the branches" – to thus contemplate the importance of being connected, and the challenges and difficulties we have all struggled with in the last thirteen or so months. So today, I would like to offer some reflections about the experience we've had with the element of the face mask. Surely, every one of us has had to wrestle with that element one way or another, and if you're at all attentive, you've seen a spectrum of data, research, and opinion running through our society. It is not at all my desire or intention to advocate either "for" or "against" the mask mandate (I have my own opinions that I've formed over these months, and if I can allow some level of wisdom to rule, I'll try to keep mostly quiet about those, and only share guardedly in private conversations.)

Rather, this evening, I'd like to ask that we spend a moment to consider the human face – an aspect of our humanity that I have realized I have taken largely for granted until we were forced to begin to cover our faces. As I reflect on this, I hope you will keep in mind the icons, especially the one of our Lord Jesus Christ; fix your eyes on that if you will, and let that be a focal point as we think about the mystery and the wonder of the human face. For truly, as the Psalmist says, we were "fearfully and wonderfully made"; but the face is especially something of a gift – especially a mystery, and especially a treasure that the Lord has imparted to us.

There is a Greek word that gets translated into English as "face" which I want to share with you (some of you have heard it, some need to learn it, but it's a good one to know): "prosopon." It is the Greek word that is used both in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament and in all the writings of the New Testament – when you see the word "face," it is likely to be "prosopon." That's very significant. *Prosopon* in Greek was originally a term that was used for the mask that was worn by a person in the theatre to display, to show forth, some character, or some identity; but the holy Fathers took that word and connected it to the idea of the face showing forth the identity of the person. So, there is a deep and wonderful connection between "face" and "person." Because our faces were made by God so that we could express our persons, our personalities are best seen through our faces.

So, think about the elements of the face. We have eyes: what are they made for, what are they given to us for? We have a nose: what is it there for? Is it random? Is it just so we can breathe? We have a mouth: we have this ability to speak. We have ears: why are they there? We have a wholeness and a connection of all of these elements into one countenance.

As Christians, we are taught and we are returning to the purpose of the face, and the purpose of all of these elements. So, we should say that the eyes were made to *behold* glory, and to wonder and to bring in the glory that

God has imbued in all of creation. The nostrils – very, very important – were made to *breathe in* the Spirit (we’ll talk about that more in just a second). The mouth was made to *speak*: but to speak blessing; and, it was also made to praise, and to speak truth ... and even more mysterious, the mouth was given to us so that we can *kiss*, an expression not only of affection but of honor and veneration. That is why we kiss icons. We have ears so that we can *listen* for the Word of God, and the Spirit of God whispering to us – so that we may obey him. And the countenance, the wholeness of our face, is given to us so that it can *reflect* the glory of God.

So, this is the gift and the mystery of our human face; and I have been inclined to think about it afresh in these days and months, in the context of having to cover our faces.

So, think about the first man, the forming of the first man: in English, it says, “The Lord God formed Man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Man became a living being.” (There’s that connection to the nose.) But in the Greek, it says he breathed into his *prosopon*: God breathed into the face of Man – the face, the whole face became a receptacle of the Spirit of God for Man. St. Gregory Palamas says of this: “Man was capable of knowing God, as well as receiving Him and declaring Him ... he had paradise for his home ... There it was his lot to have sight of God, speak to Him face to face ...” (*Homily Six, “To Encourage Fasting”*).

Then it goes on to say that Adam saw his wife, once she was created, and he said, “This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.” There is thus a connection of *prosopon* to relationship so that this idea of seeing one another “face to face” speaks to us of our relationships. That is why the icons are so important (keep in mind the icons). They speak to us of these things, of relationships, of seeing the face of another and then knowing that person.

There are several examples in the Old Testament of how people realized that they were looking upon the “face of God” – that’s a very mysterious thing. Jacob first had a taste of encountering the presence of God, when he had his dream about the ladder ascending to heaven (we hear our Lord Jesus refer to this vision in John’s gospel). When he awoke and pondered the wonder of the vision which he had seen in the night, he said, “Oh, how awesome is this place ... for this is the house of God, this is the gate of heaven.”

And in another connection, which is also wonderful and rather mysterious, if you remember the story about Jacob and his brother Esau – they didn’t get along very well. Esau was very, very passionate (as we sang in the Canon of Andrew this past week); and Jacob was cunning (along with the help of his mother ... so mothers, be careful how you teach your children to be cunning) ... so Jacob stole the birthright and the blessing from Esau. Esau hated him and wanted to kill him, and Jacob had to flee from him. Then the whole story of Jacob unfolds: how he wins his two wives, how he has his twelve children; and then the Lord tells him, “Go back

to the home which I am giving to you as I gave to your father Isaac and to Abraham, his father before him.” And so, he goes back, and he knows he has to meet Esau.

On the eve of Jacob’s encounter with his estranged brother, he wrestles with God, (chew on *that* for a second!), and it seems Jacob has the upper hand; at least, he says to the One with whom he wrestles, “I will not let you go unless you bless me!” He gets the divine blessing at a cost: his hip is put out of its socket, and he walks with a limp for the rest of his days. But the next detail is fascinating: Genesis 32:30 says, “So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: ‘For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.’” “Peniel” means, “the face of God” ... “I have seen God face to face” – the Septuagint Greek reads, *prosopon pros prosopon*.

This sets up the aforementioned encounter with Esau. Jacob is worried about it – “Esau probably still hates me and probably still wants to kill me ...”. Yet there was a miraculous change that had happened, and when they met on the plain, Esau bowed down to him, and embraced him; and Jacob said this very interesting thing: “I have seen your face as if I had seen the face of God!” I have seen *your* face as if I had seen the face of God – he understood that a restored relationship was something divine: it was a way for us to *see* the face of God. The icons say this to us, all of the icons.

There is also Gideon, who entertained the Angel of the Lord, and he was in dread fear, and said, “Woe is me! For I have seen the face of the Angel of the Lord!” (*cf. Judges 6:22-23*).

Probably the most concentrated and wonderful example in the Old Testament about seeing God face to face is that of Moses. When Moses beheld God in the burning bush, it says in Exodus, “The Lord spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” (*Exodus 33:11, 20*). So we get that deepening of the idea of what it means to see “face to face.” Just nine verses later, he says, “No one can see my face and live.” So, we must take it seriously – there is something there. But then after Moses had led the people out of Egypt, led them to Mt. Sinai and gone up onto the mountain, he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He came down, and it says, “Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai ... that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So, when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him ... And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face [I guess we’re not the first ones to use masks] ... And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone [which happened every time he went into the tabernacle and spoke with the Lord], then Moses would put the veil on his face again until he went in to speak with [God]” (*Exodus 34:29-35*).

Mysterious things, these faces that we have! These are given to us for high and glorious things. This is where the icons really begin to speak theology to us: something about the face has been fulfilled now for us. The Lord Jesus

Christ, the One who fashioned us in his Image, has taken on our nature; and God has a human face! A face that we depict, a face that we gaze upon in the icon, a face that we can kiss (at least, below the face – it is a matter of proper honor not to kiss right on the face, but below – but still we kiss the icon), because we look at the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, and at his glory reflected in all of his saints.

St. Paul tells us a wonderful thing about this fulfillment. In 2 Corinthians he says, “But we all, with unveiled face (*prosopon*), beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). The Spirit that breathed into the face of Man is the one that is shining forth from the face of our Lord Jesus Christ and of all his saints. It is the glory of God that we are supposed to reflect. It is our faces that are supposed to show forth the glory of the face of God to one another. So, Paul also says, “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face (*prosopon*) of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

The face of our Lord Jesus Christ is given to us to teach us who we are. As we venerate the icons and as we embrace the theology behind them, we can never exhaust the truth that is underneath them. As we live with this truth, as we ponder it, we listen for the Holy Spirit with our ears; As we kiss with our lips, as we speak the truth, as we breathe in the breath of life (which is an image to us of the Holy Spirit himself), as we gaze upon the glory that is shown in the icons, we see the glory reflected back to us in our own faces. And hopefully, we come to say of one another, as Jacob said of Esau, “I have seen your face, as if I had seen the face of God!”

So brothers and sisters, let us rejoice in the face! Let us never think that it is “normal” for us to cover our faces from one another – it’s not normal! The human being was meant to be in relationship “face to face” with one another, and with our Lord God. To behold; to breathe in (and to exhale, it’s own meaningful act); to hear and to listen; to speak, to kiss, to smile; to have a “shining countenance” – this is the wondrous gift of the human face, made in the image of him who made us, so that we might know deeply what a relationship can be. The Psalms are abundant with the prayer, “Let your face shine on us, so that we may be saved!” The face, rather than a mere technical part of the body, is part and parcel of our very salvation, and a mysterious sign of the redemption that is in Christ.

And here’s one more thought for the rest of Great Lent: The Psalmist says, “When you said, ‘Seek my face,’ my heart said to you, ‘Your face (your *prosopon*), O Lord, I will seek.’” (Psalm 26:8) Let us seek to know Christ, and to be transformed as we gaze into the eyes of the icons – including the icons that we are to each other – so that we may go “from glory to glory” and receive that shining countenance as the grace of God shines upon us in his great love for us. This is our heritage, this is the gift, this is the mystery of the face; this is what is given to us here in the Church of Christ, for the eternal, for our salvation.

To him be glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

From Parishes and Monasteries...



The retirement of Fr. Ioan Mihut and the installation of Fr. Stefan Vlad at the Descent of the Holy Spirit Parish in Warren, MI (July 18, 2021).

Pensionarea Pr. Ioan Mihuț și instalarea Pr. Ștefan Vlad în Parohia Pogorârea Duhului Sfânt din Warren, MI (18 iulie, 2021).

Bishop Andrei at the installation of Fr. Alin Munteanu at the Falling Asleep of the Ever-Virgin Mary Parish in Anaheim, CA (April 11, 2021).

Preasfințitul Episcop Andrei la instalarea Pr. Alin Munteanu în Parohia Adormirea Maicii Domnului din Anaheim, CA (11 aprilie 2021).





The pastoral visit of Archbishop Nathaniel at the Descent of the Holy Spirit Parish
Merrillville, IN (August 15, 2021).

Vizita pastorală a Înaltpreasfințitului Nathaniel la Parohia Pogorârea Duhului Sfânt
din Merrillville, IN (15 august, 2021).

The Nativity of the
Mother of God
Feast in the Chapel
at Vatra
Romaneasca.
(September 8,
2021)

Praznicul Nașterii
Maicii Domnului
la Paraclisul de la
Vatra Românească.
(8 Septembrie,
2021)



RUGAȚI-VĂ ȘI LUCRAȚI PENTRU UNITATE ORTODOXĂ ÎN AMERICA DE NORD 13

Cuvânt la Nașterea Preasfintei Născătoare de Dumnezeu Sfântul Ioan Maximovici



Cât s-au mărit lucrurile Tale, Doamne, toate cu înțelepciune le-ai făcut! (Ps. 103, 25) exclama încă în vechime Psalmistul. Ce este, așadar, acea înțelepciune (sau, pe grecește, sophia), prin care s-au făcut toate? În alt psalm se spune: Cu cuvântul Domnului cerurile s-au întărit și cu duhul gurii Lui toată puterea lor (Ps. 32, 6). Iar Sfântul Evanghelist Ioan Teologul glăsuiește: La început era Cuvântul și Cuvântul era la Dumnezeu și Dumnezeu era Cuvântul. Acesta era întru început la Dumnezeu. Toate prin El s-au făcut; și fără El nimic nu s-a făcut din ce s-a făcut (In. 1, 1-3).

Isus Hristos, Logos Creator

Înțelepciunea lui Dumnezeu sau Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu, prin care toate s-au făcut de Dumnezeu nu este doar un concept abstract al unei însușiri a lui Dumnezeu. Același evanghelist glăsuiește mai departe: Și Cuvântul S-a făcut trup și S-a sălăsluit între noi și am văzut slava Lui, slavă ca a Unuia-Născut din Tatăl (In. 1, 14). Așadar, Cuvântul prin Care toate s-au făcut este Unul-Născut, Fiul lui Dumnezeu, a doua Persoană a Sfintei Treimi. El se mai numește și „înțelepciunea lui Dumnezeu”, așa cum spune în epistola sa Sfântul Apostol Pavel: Fiindcă și iudeii cer semne, iar elinii caută înțelepciune, însă noi propovăduim pe Hristos cel răstignit... puterea lui Dumnezeu și înțelepciunea lui Dumnezeu (I Cor. 1, 22-24).

Fiul lui Dumnezeu Se numește Cuvântul și înțelepciunea lui Dumnezeu pentru că Dumnezeu-Tatăl pe toate le săvârșește prin Fiul Său. În acest fel, prin Fiul lui Dumnezeu, Tatăl ni Se vestește prin faptele Sale și prin El [Fiul] s-a arătat în diversitatea ei înțelepciunea lui Dumnezeu.

Înțelepciunea lui Dumnezeu s-a manifestat prima oară la crearea lumii văzute și nevăzute. Noi vedem acum lumea ajunsă la starea păcătoasă, după ce și-a pierdut bunătatea dintru început, dar lumea este minunată, chiar și stricată de păcat și răsfrânge în ea înalta înțelepciune a Creatorului. Dacă vom privi cerul, vom vedea mișcările armonioase ale luminătorilor cerești, totul se mișcă după legi veșnice, date naturii de Ziditor, la facerea ei. Dacă vom privi în jurul nostru, în fiecare plantă, în fiecare animal, chiar și în oricare pietricică vom vedea înțelepciunea Celui ce le-a zidit!

Fiecare vietate, până la cele mai mici insecte, este înzestrată cu toate însușirile necesare pentru supraviețuirea, apărarea și dezvoltarea vieții sale și pentru înmulțirea speciei. Fiecare corp însuflețit și neînsuflețit din natură este compus din particule minuscule, distribuite armonios, care alcătuiesc o zidire minunată, o țesătură grațioasă a Marelui Artist și Ziditor. Să ne uităm în noi înșine, ce combinație minunată și înțeleaptă a nevăzutului cu văzutul alcătuim! Prin trupul nostru aparținând lumii zidite, noi alcătuim cea mai meșteșugită zidire, în care fiecare celulă își are menirea ei. Cu cât știința pătrunde mai adânc în tainele naturii, cu atât devine mai evident că natura este zidirea unei preamărețe înțelepciuni și cu atât mai sus se înalță ochiul minții noastre, în cunoașterea Creatorului său. Despre înalta înțelepciune a lui

Dumnezeu mărturisește cu deosebire duhul nostru cel după asemănarea lui Dumnezeu, care-l înalță pe om deasupra pământului și a mării vieții acesteia și ne dă puțința să ne împărtășim chiar și în viața aceasta de puterile înaltului.

Isus Hristos, Logos Mântuitor

Toate acestea le avem chiar și acum, în starea noastră păcătoasă, a omului căzut, supusă stricăciunii naturii. Cum a fost, dar, frumusețea și bunătatea lumii la zidirea ei! Încântat de propria frumusețe, primul dintre îngeri, Luceafărul de dimineață, s-a mândrit și, dorind să se facă deopotrivă cu Cel Preaînalt, a căzut de la Dumnezeu. Alungat din cer, el l-a pizmuit pe omul creat și l-a ademenit să încalce porunca lui Dumnezeu.

Păcătuiind Adam, cel întâi zidit, o dată cu el întreaga omenire s-a lipsit de slava și de cinstea ei cea dintru început. Minte omului s-a întunecat, voința i-a slăbit, simțurile i s-au întinat. Omul s-a lipsit de comuniunea harică cu Dumnezeu, Izvorul vieții, și a devenit muritor.

Pierzând omul cununa zidirii, s-a produs o schimbare în întreaga lume, căci urmările păcatului s-au simțit peste tot. Întreaga lume a devenit stricăcioasă și păcătoasă. Natura, începând cu animalele, a început să-i facă rău omului, iar omul, înlăuntrul său, era chinuit de despărțirea de Dumnezeu.

Însă Preaînțeleptul Dumnezeu, încă înainte de zidirea lumii, nu numai că a prevăzut căderea omului pe care urma să-l zidească, dar a și hotărât dinainte cum să-l îndrepteze. înainte ca lumea să fie zidită. În Sfatul Sfintei Treimi a fost dinainte rânduit că a doua Persoană a Sfintei Treimi, Fiul lui Dumnezeu, va deveni om și va lua asupra Lui păcatele lumii, îndreptând greșeala lui Adam.

Nimănui nu i-a fost dezvăluit leacul pregătit pentru boala omenească; hotărârea Sfatului Sfintei Treimi a rămas o taină pentru întreaga lume zidită. Trebuia pregătit pe pământ un adăpost vrednic să-L primească pe Fiul lui Dumnezeu, Cel ce urma să Se întrupeze. În neamul omenesc stricat de păcat trebuia găsit un vas nepângărit, în care să Se coboare Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu, Cel Care pe toate le-a zidit și, cu trupul primit, să Se sălășluiască printre oameni, El însuși devenind om. De multe veacuri a fost nevoie ca să se pregătească împlinirea preaînțeleptei chivernisiri a lui Dumnezeu. Și a apărut o Fecioară Curată, vrednică a deveni Maica după trup a Aceluia prin Care s-au făcut cerul și pământul și prin Care urmau să se îplinească cele dinainte hotărâte de Preaînțeleapta Treime, pentru mântuirea lumii.

„Și Cuvântul S-a făcut trup...” (In. 1, 14)

Când a venit plinirea vremii (Gal. 4, 4) și a venit sorocul ca să Se întrupeze Fiul lui Dumnezeu pe pământ, taina minunatului Sfât al Sfintei Treimi a fost dezvăluită de Dumnezeu Arhanghelului Gavriil, care a fost trimis în Nazaret să-i binevestească Precuratei Fecioare Maria despre nașterea Mântuitorului lumii, ce avea să se petreacă de la ea.

„Sfatul cel mai dinainte de veci descoperindu-l Pruncei, Gavriil se înfățișă” Precuratei, vestindu-i: Bucură-te, ceea ce ești plină de har, Domnul este cu tine. Binecuvântată ești tu între femei. Vei naște Fiu și vei chema numele lui Isus. Acesta va fi mare și Fiul Celui Preaînalt se va chema (Lc. 1, 28-32). S-a

tulburat smerita copilă auzind această prevestire. De la vârsta de trei ani ea se afla la templu, fiind dată de părinți și petrecând neconținut în rugăciune, a fost crescută în Sfânta Sfințelor, unde a auzit glasurile locuitorilor cerești, dar cu toate acestea n-ar fi putut gândi să devină Maica Răscumpărătorului, dând în același timp și făgăduința de a rămâne Fecioară.

„Duhul Sfânt Se va pogori peste tine și puterea Celui Preaînalt te va umbri; pentru aceea și Sfântul care Se va naște din tine, Fiul lui Dumnezeu se va chema” – rosti îngerul, răspunzându-i la întrebarea: „Cum va fi aceasta, de vreme ce eu nu știu de bărbat? „„Iată roaba Domnului. Fie mie după cuvântul tău!” – răspunse Maria cu smerenie și cu supunere față de voia lui Dumnezeu (Lc. 1, 35-38). Atunci Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu, Fiul Cel UnulNăscut al lui Dumnezeu Se sălășlui în Maria. Cel pe Care cerul și cerurile cerurilor nu-L încap (III Regi 8, 27; II Paralipomena 6, 18), Căruia Cerul îi este scaun și pământul așternut picioarelor (Isaia 66, Fapt. 7, 49), Și-a ales ca sălaş o Fecioară, din pântecul (vintrele) ei făcându-Și Prestol și pântecul ei mai mult decât cerurile lărgindu-l. „Mai întinsă decât cerurile” s-a făcut Fecioara Maria. Peste nouă luni ea a născut un Fiu, pe Dumnezeu arătat în trup. „Taina cea ascunsă din veac și de îngeri neștiută, prin Născătoarea de Dumnezeu, Dumnezeu Se arată pe pământ, în unire neamestecată întrupat.”

Însă Fecioara Maria și întruparea, prin ea, a Fiului lui Dumnezeu au rămas o taină pentru diavol, până când Domnul nu a împlinit lucrarea mântuirii noastre. „Primind de bunăvoie pentru noi crucea asupra Sa”, suferind moarte și înviind din morți, Domnul Iisus Hristos a dăruit viață neamului omenesc și i-a deschis raiul care fusese pecetluit [pentru el]. Întrupându-se din Fecioara Născătoare de Dumnezeu, „Adam s-a chemat, Eva s-a slobozit, blestemul s-a sfârșit, moartea s-a omorât și noi am înviat”.

Iisus Hristos, restaurarea lumii

Împreună cu omul, întreaga lume este izbăvită de stricăciune, pregătindu-se de acum pentru ziua când lumea va fi curățată prin foc, când toată făptura va fi slobozită de robia stricăciunii, când cerul cel nou și pământul cel nou vor dezvălui zidirea lui Dumnezeu în toată frumusețea și bunătatea ei.

Astfel, este sfârșită uneltirea răutății diavolești și Ziditorul lumii, cu înalta Sa înțelepciune, le îndreaptă pe toate după voia Sa pentru binele întregii făpturi. Așa cum Dumnezeu a creat la început lumea prin Cuvântul Său, adică prin Fiul Său, la fel prin Fiul lui Dumnezeu lumea este renăscută după căderea în păcat. Prin Cel prin care s-a arătat înțelepciunea lui Dumnezeu în zidire, tot prin Acela s-a descoperit înțelepciunea lui Dumnezeu și în restaurarea lumii distruse de păcat și în întoarcerea bunăvoirii lui Dumnezeu asupra lumii.

De aceea, Fiul lui Dumnezeu este numit înțelepciunea lui Dumnezeu sau, în grecește, Sophia, pentru că prin El noi L-am cunoscut și Îl cunoaștem pe Preaînțeleptul Dumnezeu. Iisus Hristos pentru noi S-a făcut înțelepciune de la Dumnezeu și dreptate și sfințire și răscumpărare (I Cor. 1, 30).

Cindao, 1948

*Din „Predici și Îndrumări Duhovnicești”, Ed. Sophia, București, 2006 -
Pentru a citi continuarea articolului, accesați: <https://tinyurl.com/8septembrie>*

2021 EPISCOPATE CONGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

The 89th Annual Episcopate Congress commenced on Saturday, September 11, 2021 via the Zoom virtual meeting format at 11:15 am Eastern time. His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel opened the meeting with the Invocation to the Holy Spirit. With the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Protopresbyter Laurence Lazar commemorated the known Orthodox victims by name.

The quorum for the meeting was exceeded with 152 delegates present. The appointed presidium included: *Chairmen Pro Tempore*: Protopresbyter Laurence Lazar and V. Rev. Fr. Ian Pac-Urar, PhD; *Recording Secretaries*: V. Rev. Dr. David Subu and Rev. Fr. Sabin Pop; *Tellers*: Ioan Haba and Patricia Bratulescu; *Parliamentarian*: Rev. Fr. Wayne Paul Wright. Technical support during the meeting was provided by Alex Ionescu, Dr. Florin Ristache and Richard Grabowski. The agenda revised by the Episcopate Council and the minutes of the 88th Episcopate Congress were approved by the delegates. Archbishop Nathaniel presented his Address to the delegates. The Episcopate provided all delegates with the Congress Report ahead of time via mail and email; therefore, the chair, Fr. Ian Pac-Urar, invited questions on each of the narrative, departmental reports.

External Affairs

Very Rev. Fr. Remus Grama highlighted an aspect of his report on External Affairs regarding canonical anomalies with respect to St. Nicholas Parish, Troy, MI. In the context of the parish's engagement in civil litigation with the Episcopate, Metropolitan Iosif (Pop) of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Western and Southern Europe, sent and assigned clergy from outside the United States to serve at the parish, ignoring the protests of Metropolitan Tikhon and Archbishop Nathaniel. Fr. Grama's report concludes: "The flagrant interference of a hierarch into another hierarch's territory... displays a troubling lack of conciliarity and respect for Church Canons, which is surely one of many problems resulting from the administrative disunity of the Orthodox Church in North America."

Solar Energy Project

George Cantor, chairman of the committee, reported that the contract to lease Vatra property (213 acres) for development of a larger 700+ acre, 100-megawatt solar-powered electrical generation and transmission facility was signed on March 22, 2021 by the Episcopate and NextEra Energy. During the initial option term (3-5 years), NextEra will conduct due diligence studies prior to the project's development and construction. The contract includes an easement term of 30 years with two optional extended terms of 5 years each. Annual payments would be \$850/acre/year with annual 2% cumulative

increases. The Episcopate has received an initial option payment of \$21,308 as well as reimbursement for legal/consulting fees.

Orthodox Christian Leadership Initiative (OCLI)

Following the presentation and approval of the Department of Finance Report by Treasurer Tom Rosco and Assistant Treasurer, Mark Chestnut, Ms. Hollie Benton (Executive Director of the Orthodox Christian Leadership Initiative) made a 30-minute slide presentation regarding leadership education and support programs available to parish councils and nonprofit organizations (orthodoxservantleaders.com).

Report on Legal Proceedings

Chancellor David Oancea presented written reports on three cases.

A. St. Nicholas Parish, Troy, Michigan

As of September 3, 2021, the Episcopate has a Judgment awarding title and control over the property at 5353 Livernois Rd, Troy MI (St Nicholas Parish). This case resulted from schismatic actions taken by the former parish priest, Gheorghe Carstea, and some of his supporters beginning in January 2017. The schismatic group illegally took control of the parish administration and property, which forced the Episcopate to take legal action to uphold the ROEA Constitution and By-Laws and to preserve the patrimony of the parish and Episcopate.

B. Ascension Monastery, Clinton, Michigan

After prolonged litigation, on September 23, 2020, the Washtenaw County Circuit Court in Ann Arbor, Michigan issued a judgment ordering that the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America holds absolute title to the real property situated at 15143 Sheridan Road, Clinton, Michigan, which includes Holy Ascension Romanian Orthodox Monastery. Ioan Irineu Duvlea and those with him would not leave the property. Due to COVID-19, cases were delayed in the courts. On July 2, 2021, the Episcopate received notice from Duvlea's attorney that they vacated the premises and that the Episcopate can take possession.

C. Holy Trinity Parish, Los Angeles, California

On May 13, 2021, after having studied documents and interviewed Fr. Constantin Alecse, the Episcopate Council of the ROEA decided: 1) that the sale and transfer of property by Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church (HTROC) in 2015 to Holy Trinity Romanian Church Corp. was unauthorized, illegal, fraudulent and void ab initio, and 2) that Fr Alecse and HTROC are directed to take proper action to correct the title to the property, to show continuous ownership by HTROC. Furthermore, the Episcopate Council resolved to authorize the Chancery of the ROEA: 1) to direct the Parish

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Council of HTROC to provide all documentation and reports requested; 2) to further investigate HTROC's financial activities; 3) to bring an action in the Episcopate Courts against any person or group alleged to have violated the Constitution and By-Laws of the Episcopate; 4) to engage the Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner Law Firm, if necessary, to provide legal services to the ROEA in connection with this case.

Episcopate Council Recommendations

The Congress passed two recommendations of the Episcopate Council which authorized the sale and/or lease and/or rental of the Episcopate-owned properties located at 1) Morris Drive in Grass Lake Township, Michigan; and 2) 15143 Sheridan Road, Clinton, Michigan, and directed the Episcopate Council to implement the decision.

Episcopate Budgets

Tom Rosco (Treasurer) and Mark Chestnut (Assistant Treasurer) presented the budgets. Following discussion, the delegates approved the proposed budgets for 2022.

Election of Episcopate Council and Episcopate Tribunal

Every two years, the Congress elects a new Episcopate Council and Episcopate Tribunal. The members of these bodies for 2021-2023 are:

Episcopate Council: Fr. David Subu (Falls Church, VA), Fr. Ionut Maerean (Kitchener, ON), Fr. Ian Pac-Urar (Fairlawn, OH) Fr. Remus Grama (Cleveland, OH), Fr. Laurence Lazar (Southfield, MI). *Clergy Alternates:* Fr. George Ursache (St. Mary, Chicago); Gary Danis (Southfield, MI), Stefan Russu (Kitchener, ON), John Morgavan (Merrillville, IN), Adela Price (Hermitage, PA), Louise Gibb (ARFORA), John Pop Jr. (Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL), Ioan Haba, Vasile Popovic (Anaheim, CA), Radu Chebeleu (Elkins Park, PA), Cristian Radu (St. Petersburg, FL). *Lay Alternates:* Carol Schweizer (San Diego, CA), Dorel Suboni (Hollywood, FL).

Episcopate Tribunal: Fr. Ian Pac-Urar (Fairlawn, OH, Judicial Referee), Fr. Ioan Cozma (New York, NY, President of Spiritual Consistory), Fr. Ioan Bogdan (Frederick, CO), Fr. Gabriel Agoston (Portland, OR). George Cantor (Cleveland, OH), Stephan Russu (Kitchener, ON), *Alternates:* Christian Radu (St. Petersburg, FL), Monica Armstrong (Indianapolis, IN).

Following the motion to adjourn and the Benediction by His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, the 89th Episcopate Congress ended at 3:54 pm.



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

THE 2021 GOLDY-GEMU SCHOLARSHIP (\$1,500.00)

The Dumitru Golea Goldy-Gemu Scholarship is awarded to undergraduate college students of Romanian origin. In addition to all the required documents, each applicant writes an essay on the topic: "How my Romanian Heritage Helps Make Me a Better American."



Josiah John Goga is a 3rd-year student at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor MI) where his major course of study is Biopsychology, Cognition and Neuroscience. His GPA cumulative GPA is 3.990. Josiah's parents grew up in Oradea, Romania. In his essay, Josiah writes: "It is through my Romanian heritage that I have become an American who upholds the ideal of embracing other cultures rather than opposing them. My ethnicity has also allowed me to understand myself and thus better understand others. While I still struggle with embracing both my American and Romanian identities, this struggle has allowed me not only to learn more about myself but also to become a better American." One of Josiah's

endorsing professors wrote: "I understand that Mr. Goga is studying to enter the medical profession after college, and that he is even taking extra courses so that he can graduate early with time to obtain an EMT license before enrolling in a Physician's Assistant program. This kind of dedication to others is rare, as is the alacrity shown in taking on the work that such dedication entails – it speaks very well of Mr. Goga as a person of good character, as a citizen of this country, and a citizen of the world."

Anne Elizabeth Holan is a student at the University of Houston (Houston TX) where her major course of study is Political Science and minor is Phronesis, an Honors program in politics and ethics that aims to cultivate practical intelligence. She is maintaining a 3.641 GPA. In her essay, Anne writes: "Being Romanian American has fostered within me a unique combination of values that are important in both cultures: a love of learning and the value of hard work...I believe that when I begin to work in



immigration law, I can bring that genuine love and kindness to others so that they may feel loved and at home.” One of Anne’s recommendations notes that: “As a dedicated student, Annie continues to excel at the University of Houston’s Honor College as she is studying political science in her pursuit of a law degree. Her character is exemplary and her love of her church and family is reflected in all her activities.”



Emily Maia Ripper is a student at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor MI) where she is majoring in History and minoring in Science, Technology and Society (STS). Her cumulative GPA is 3.948. In her essay, Emily writes: “My grandfather emigrated from Romania in 1965, and many of my most vivid childhood memories involve gathering around his chair with my siblings and cousins, listening to him tell of farm life in rural Strempț, his career as a professional handball player, his brushes with the communist regime, and how he escaped to the United States. This close relationship with the stories of my

heritage is largely what has inspired me to declare a history major...and to dedicate myself to uncovering and sharing the diverse stories, experiences and cultures of others.” One of Emily’s professor’s states: “Academically, Emily ... was always thoroughly prepared for each class and her homework was always complete and carefully done, demonstrating both strong analytical skills and excellent linguistic proficiency in Spanish...Emily is very mature, dedicated and focused with a well-developed sense of social responsibility about the world she lives in.”

Andreea Ursu is in her senior year at Chamberlain University (Troy, MI) where she is working toward a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, with a cumulative GPA of 3.15. In her essay, Andreea writes: “My Romanian heritage helps make me a greater American, because it made me the person I am today...Being born in Romania and raised by true Romanian parents, I have learned the value of hard work and dedication to achieve a goal or dream.” A work supervisor highly recommended her for the scholarship: “For the past year, Ms. Ursu has worked as an endoscopy technician in a fast-paced ambulatory care center that I currently manage. Ms. Ursu has all the qualities of a strong employee: timeliness, professionalism, and willingness to learn. To a greater extent, she has committed herself to engaging with the patients and providing exemplary care to those who are at their most vulnerable.”



We congratulate all of the recipients and wish them much success in the completion of their studies and furtherance in their chosen professions.

STANITZ-AROY SCHOLARSHIP (\$1,000)



Luca Nicholas Irimie graduated summa cum laude from Canton Preparatory High School, Canton, Michigan, in the Spring of 2021 with a 4.03 GPA. In addition to excelling in his academic work, Luca played varsity sports and won the Academic All-District Award three times. He also logged over 150 hours of community service. Outside of school, he has been an active member of Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Dearborn Heights, Michigan, with his family his entire life (Sunday School; Youth Group Treasurer and President; Camp Vatra). In the fall, Luca will attend the University of Michigan – Dearborn.

Jason Liu graduated from George C. Marshall High School, Falls Church, Virginia, in June 2020 with Honors and a 4.3 GPA. Jason also participated in the following activities: National Honor Society; piano (5 years); trumpet (9 years); marching band; pit orchestra; art classes (watercolor, ceramics, balloon art); theater productions. Outside of school, he is an Eagle Scout and is a member of the Order of the Arrow (Boy Scout's National Honor Society). With his family, he is an active member of St. Mary Parish, Falls Church, Virginia where he has been an altar server for over 7 years and regularly attended Church School. He is a founding member of the parish's youth group and has served as Secretary and President. Additionally, he was a Youth Equipped to Serve (YES) participant and a camper at Antiochian Village for over 6 years. Jason opted to take a gap year during the pandemic, and during that time interned with a small IT company, taught an online creative writing class, and tutored high school students in math. In the fall of 2021, he will attend Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) to major in Industrial Design.



Congratulations to all scholarship recipients!



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VICTOR POP SCHOLARSHIP (\$1,000)

Awarded to a qualified undergraduate or graduate student of Romanian ethnic descent who is in the Junior or Senior year in College or Graduate School.



Maria T. Irimie is a senior at Michigan State University majoring in Computer Science and minoring in Spanish. Her cumulative GPA is currently 3.84. She plans to graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in May 2022. Besides her academic achievements, Maria is active at Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Dearborn Heights, MI, where she participates in the Youth Group, charitable activities, Sunday School, and serving at church dinners. She also conducts the Choir.



A.R.F.O.R.A. SCHOLARSHIPS

Undergraduate Scholarship

Christina Dager, the daughter of Dennis and Corina Dager of Alliance, Ohio, is the recipient of a \$1,000 ARFORA Undergraduate Scholarship. Her parents are members of St Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church in Alliance, OH. She is attending the University of Akron, in Akron, OH, where she is majoring in Biomedical Science with a minor in Spanish. She is planning on attending medical school to become a surgeon following graduation. Christina is active in her parish and served as president of AROY for 3 years, is a cantor in both English and Romanian, and is involved in the community through participating in monthly "Feed the Hungry" dinners and volunteering as a translator at a local free migrant worker clinic. Throughout her first year of college, she participated in the Environmental Action Club, Biological Human Anatomy and Anthropology Club, and Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) in Akron.





Nadina Popoviciu, the daughter of Claudiu and Delia Popoviciu of Highland Heights, Ohio, is the recipient of a \$1,000 ARFORA Undergraduate Scholarship. She is a member of Presentation of our Lord Romanian Orthodox Church in Fairlawn, OH. She is attending Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, where she has a double major in Statistics and Decision Science with a minor in Innovation & Entrepreneurship. Nadina is active in several organizations on campus:

Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) – social chair; International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) - volunteer work in Key West, FL, for Hurricane Irma victims, and she also helped raise money for victims of the Beirut explosion; International Student Union; Romanian Students Association and Tisbert Sketch Comedy Club. Nadina spends her spare time writing. She has published a medieval fantasy novel inspired by her Romanian ancestry and is working on a sequel.

Martha Gavrila Graduate Scholarship

Julia M. Kalugar, the daughter of Michael and Laurie Kalugar of Beverly Hills, Michigan, is the recipient of a \$1,000 ARFORA Martha Gavrila Graduate Scholarship. She is a member of St. George Romanian Orthodox Cathedral in Southfield, MI. Julia attends Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, where she is completing her Master of Business Administration (MBA). Julia's vocational goal is to work in the non-profit sector as a marketing and events strategist.

Offering her time at both Saint George Cathedral as well as the Vatra camps helped her realize the true joy and satisfaction that comes with assisting communities she cares for. Julia wants to use her skills to help organizations that focus on doing good works in our communities. During her undergraduate studies at Wayne State University, she was the Vice President of Programs for Delta Zeta Sorority. Her chapter worked to raise money for their partner, the Starkey Hearing Foundation, a non-profit that helps those that have speech and hearing disabilities.



A.R.F.O.R.A. congratulates all scholarship recipients on their achievements.

What is A.R.F.O.R.A.?

A.R.F.O.R.A. is an acronym for “Asociația Reuniunilor Femeilor Ortodoxe Române din America” or “The Association of Romanian Orthodox Ladies Auxiliaries of North America”. The patron saint of A.R.F.O.R.A. is St. Parascheva. His Grace Bishop Policarp organized A.R.F.O.R.A. in 1938. In 1955, the A.R.F.O.R.A. Congress held in New York revised and approved the Constitution and By-Laws. A.R.F.O.R.A.’s motto includes: FAITH, represented by the Cross; HOPE, represented by the Anchor; CHARITY, represented by the Heart. All women should be full members of their parish as well as of the ladies auxiliary.

The main purposes of the Ladies Auxiliary of the parish include:

- Functioning as an auxiliary of the parish and actively supporting the parish in its activities;
- Initiating and promoting unity, cooperation and fellowship among its members and the congregation;
- Contributing to the preservation, strengthening and propagation of the Orthodox faith;
- Supporting the religious education of the young people in the parish;
- Attending to the housekeeping activities of the parish;
- Raising funds for religious, charitable and cultural purposes;
- Actively supporting A.R.F.O.R.A., the **national organization**, which is the oldest auxiliary of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.

Dates of Importance to the Auxiliary:

January – Annual meeting and election of the officers take place, including the election of two delegates to the ARFORA Congress (2-year term). Send names and addresses of officers and delegates to the Secretary of ARFORA. (check the Episcopate website (roea.org/arfora) for the names and addresses of the officers of ARFORA). Send membership dues (\$15 per person) to the Treasurer of ARFORA by May 1st. Dues are based on the previous year’s membership.

5th Saturday of Great Lent – Each parish or deanery sponsors a ladies auxiliary retreat/conference.

June – ARFORA Congress is held in June. The president of each auxiliary and two delegates along with the Preoteasa of the parish are required to attend.

July-August – Provide volunteer cooks, teachers, nurses for the religious education camp at Vatra. ARFORA also provides financial support for the Vatra summer camps.

September – When the Episcopate Congress is held at the Vatra, an auxiliary sponsors the coffee shop during the Congress. Please volunteer.

October 14 – St. Parascheva Mission Fund. Each auxiliary holds one function a year, and the proceeds are sent to the ARFORA Treasurer for use in support of Episcopate missions.

April, October, and December– St. Elizabeth project: ARFORA remembers widowed Preotese with small gifts at special times of the year (Easter, St. Parascheva and Christmas).

All year – Visitations of the shut-ins: Encourage members to visit the shut-ins in their parishes.

Scholarships

Martha Gavrila Graduate Scholarship – ARFORA offers a scholarship each year to women doing graduate work.

ARFORA Undergraduate Scholarship – ARFORA offers one undergraduate scholarship each year.

Helen Muntean Undergraduate Scholarship - ARFORA offers one undergraduate scholarship each year to women majoring in education.

Information about the application process is published on the Episcopate website (roea.org/arfora).

In addition, A.R.F.O.R.A. has authored, printed and distributed several publications on topics important to women. If you have any questions about ARFORA, its publications or the local Ladies Auxiliary, or if you need help to start an auxiliary, please call or write to the President or any member of the ARFORA board. You'll find their names, addresses and telephone numbers in online (roea.org/arfora). There is also an ARFORA Guide Book and the By-Laws which can help you in setting up your auxiliary. Please let us know if you need a copy. It is very important that women are organized in an auxiliary organization, thus becoming vital and active supporters of their parish and the Episcopate.

Lucy Pop, National A.R.F.O.R.A. President



Ce este A.R.F.O.R.A.?

ARFORA este un acronym pentru “Asociația Reuniunilor Femeilor Ortodoxe Române din America”. ARFORA a fost înființată în anul 1938 de către Episcopul Policarp. Sfânta ocrotitoare a organizației ARFORA este Sfânta Parascheva. În anul 1955, Congresul ARFORA, care s-a ținut la New York, a aprobat Constituția și Regulamentul de funcționare. Deviza organizației ARFORA este: CREDINȚĂ – reprezentată de o cruce; SPERANȚĂ – reprezentată de o ancoră; DRAGOSTE – reprezentată de o inimă. Ar fi bine ca toate femeile să fie atât membre ale parohiei, cât și ale organizației ARFORA.

Principalele scopuri ale grupurilor auxiliare de femei sunt:

- Să funcționeze ca o organizație auxiliară a parohiei, pe care să o sprijine în toate activitățile ei;
- Să inițieze și să promoveze unirea, cooperarea și spiritul de camaraderie, nu numai ale membrilor organizației, dar și ale întregii parohii;
- Să contribuie la păstrarea, întărirea și propagarea credinței ortodoxe;
- Să sprijine educația religioasă a copiilor și tineretului din parohie;
- Să ia parte la curățenia, înfrumusețarea și menținerea bisericii în stare bună;
- Să participe la strângerea de fonduri pentru scopuri religioase, culturale și de binefacere, care au fost determinate de parohia lor sau de Episcopie;
- Să sprijine în mod activ ARFORA, organizația națională, care este cea mai veche organizație auxiliară a Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din America.

Date importante pentru Organizația Auxiliară a Femeilor:

Ianuarie – Se ține adunarea anuală a organizației auxiliare a femeilor și se aleg oficiantele pentru noul an. De asemenea, se aleg două delegate și două suplente pentru Congresul Annual ARFORA. Delegatele sunt alese pe doi ani. Se trimite o listă cu numele, adresele și numerele de telefon ale membrilor din comitetul de conducere la secretara ARFORA.

Taxele de membraie (\$15 de persoană) se trimit la casiera ARFORA până la data de 1 mai. Taxele trebuie să reflecte numărul de membre din anul precedent.

A 5-a sâmbătă din Postul Mare – fiecare parohie sau protopopiat organizează o zi de reculegere, rugăciune și conferință pe teme religioase.

Iunie – În luna iunie are loc Congresul ARFORA. Președinta organizației auxiliare din fiecare parohie, împreună cu două delegate și preoteasa, trebuie să ia parte la lucrările congresului.

Iulie-August – Taberele de copii de la Vatra au nevoie de ajutor la bucătărie și învățători pentru educația religioasă, precum și în cadrul altor activități. De asemenea, ARFORA ajută financiar taberele de la Vatră.

Septembrie – Dacă Congresul Episcopiei este la Vatra Românească, chioscul de cafea și dulciuri este sponsorat de una din organizațiile auxiliare de femei de la o parohie. Vă rugăm să participați, pentru că întotdeauna este nevoie de voluntari.

14 Octombrie – Fondul misionar Sfânta Parascheva – Fiecare grup auxiliar organizează, o dată pe an, o activitate, iar banii rezultați sunt trimiși la casiera ARFORA și se folosesc pentru ajutorarea misiunilor Episcopiei.

Aprilie, Octombrie și Decembrie – Proiectul Sfânta Elisabeta – ARFORA trimite mici cadouri preoteselor văduve de trei ori pe an: de Paște, de ziua Sfintei Parascheva, precum și de Crăciun.

Tot anul – Vizitarea celor suferinzi și a bătrânilor din parohie.

Burse de studii:

Bursa Martha Gavrilă- În fiecare an, ARFORA oferă o bursa de studii pentru învățământul post-universitar.

Bursa ARFORA – În fiecare an, ARFORA oferă o bursă de studii pentru învățământul superior.

Bursa Helen Muntean – În fiecare an, ARFORA oferă o bursă de studii pentru învățământul superior celor care studiază să devină învățătoare.

Informații suplimentare puteți găsi pe website-ul Episcopiei, (roea.org/arfora).

De asemenea, ARFORA a scris, tipărit și distribuit mai multe broșuri cu teme importante pentru femei. Dacă aveți întrebări referitoare la ARFORA, broșurile tipărite ori doriți să începeți o organizație locală a femeilor din parohie și doriți o copie a constituției sau a ghidului de organizare a auxiliarei de femei, vă rugăm să contactați președinta ARFORA sau oricare altă membră din comitetul de conducere ARFORA. Numele și adresele pot fi găsite pe website-ul Episcopiei, (roea.org/arfora).

Lucy Pop, Președinta A.R.F.O.R.A.



BUJEA FAMILY FOUNDATION INC.

300 - 533 Victoria Avenue

Regina, SK S4N 0P8

P 306-761-7400 | C 306-536-2895 | F 306-569-8411

The Bujea Family Foundation is a charity located in Regina, Saskatchewan. One of the charity's mandates is to award scholarships to Canadian Orthodox students at university or seminary. The recipients of the 2021 scholarship awards are Joanna Vint, Michael Vint, and Brooke Gieni. These young people are studying at the University of Regina in various academic disciplines. For 2022, we hope to receive applications from students in all Canadian regions.



FINANCIAL REPORT

EPISCOPATE SUPPORTERS

Dorothy Aldea, Royal Oak, MI.....	\$100.00
Psa Eugenia Cerghizan, Vadnais Hts, MN.....	\$100.00

GENERAL DONATIONS

Lucian Pop, Farmington Hills, MI.....	\$1,000.00
(Victor Pop Scholarship)	

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St Andrew, McKees Rocks, PA	\$1,000.00
(A.C.E. Fund)	
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Merrillville, IN	\$500.00
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
National A.R.F.O.R.A.	\$500.00
(Camp Vatra)	
National A.R.F.O.R.A.	\$500.00
(Seminarian Scholarship Fund)	
Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Ellwood City, PA.....	\$350.00
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
Gheorghe & Florina Neagu, Montclair, NJ.....	\$250.00
Horea & Denisa Ilea, Wood Dale, IL.....	\$200.00
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
St Andrew, McKees Rocks, PA	\$200.00
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
St Theodora, Royal Oak, MI.....	\$115.00
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
St Mary, Chelsea, MA	\$100.00
(Congress)	
Marcella Bourean, Warren, MI.....	\$100.00
Roxana Florescu, Farmington Hills, MI.....	\$100.00
Juliana Braescu, Redford, MI	\$20.00
Thomas Turkus, St Clair Shores, MI	\$20.00
Florence Westerfield, Warren, MI	\$20.00

MEMORIAM

V Rev Fr Vasile Parau, San Diego, CA	\$500.00
(IMO Psa Maria Parau)	
Doina & Alex Vircol, Wilmette, IL	\$200.00
(IMO Parents: Zamfira & Vasile Posteuca)	
Siliva Costea, Northville, MI.....	\$100.00
(IMO: Gheordunescu, Danin & Costea Families buried at Vatra)	
Dan & Olympia Neagoe, Bloomfield, MI.....	\$100.00
(IMO Felecia Ivascu Morera de Guijarro)	
Maria Risca, Oakland Twp, MI	\$100.00
(IMO Husband & Family members)	

2021 EPISCOPATE ASSESSMENT

St Mary Cathedral, Cleveland, OH	\$14,960.00
St George Cathedral, Southfield, MI.....	\$10,700.00
St Nicholas, Montreal, QC.....	\$6,460.00
(2020 & 2021)	
St George, Toronto, ON.....	\$5,690.00
St John, Toronto, ON.....	\$5,270.00
St Nicholas, Alliance, OH.....	\$3,430.00
St Thomas, St Louis, MO	\$2,635.00
St Elias, Ellwood City, PA.....	\$2,550.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Warren, MI.....	\$2,000.00
Holy Confessors, Oakville, ON	\$1,615.00
St George Cathedral, Southfield, MI.....	\$1,600.00
St John of Suceava, Manchester, NH.....	\$1,350.00
Holy Ascension, Montreal, QC.....	\$1,300.00
Holy Resurrection, Warren, OH	\$840.00
Annunciation, Grand Rapids, MI.....	\$595.00

St Mary Magdala, Houston, TX.....	\$460.00
Sts Constantine & Helen, Atlanta, GA.....	\$255.00
St Mary, Las Vegas, NV.....	\$120.00

VATRA GENERATIONS

Mircea & Georgeta Tedorescu, Clarkston, MI.....	\$5,000.00
St Mary, Colleyville, TX.....	\$3,220.00
Anonymous	\$1,500.00
Anonymous	\$1,000.00
David & Jennifer Poroch, Dunwoody, GA	\$1,000.00
(IMO Parents: Dan & Eugenia Poroch)	
Doina Lavo-Gonci, Old Lyme, CT.....	\$500.00
Holy Cross, Phoenix, AZ.....	\$450.00
(IHO Rev Fr Wayne Wright)	
Nicki Szakach-Cole, Warren, OH.....	\$300.00
(IMO Mike Cole)	
Gary Danis, Plymouth, MI.....	\$300.00
(IHO Vicky's Birthday)	
Liviu George Constantinescu, Simi Valley, CA	\$200.00
John & Luci Pop, Northbrook, IL.....	\$200.00
M/M David Pascu, Barberton, OH.....	\$145.55
Anonymous	\$100.00
Anonymous	\$100.00
Carmen Condraschi	\$100.00
Ana Munte.....	\$100.00
Sofia Chebeleu, North Wales, PA.....	\$100.00
Rev Fr/Psa Thomas Frisby, Phoenix, AZ.....	\$97.50
V Rev Fr Alin & Psa. Sonia Munteanu, Merrillville, IN.....	\$97.50
Dave & Karen Pascu, Barberton, OH	\$96.95
Protopresbyter Mirone Klysh, Winnipeg, MB	\$76.20
(IMO Judge John J Regule)	
Kathy & Steve Miroy, Stafford, VA.....	\$75.00
Raluca Bruce	\$50.00
Anonymous	\$9.00

2021 CONGRESS DONATIONS

Holy Ascension, Montreal, QC.....	\$250.00
St Elias, Ellwood City, PA.....	\$250.00
St John the Baptist, Kitchener, ON	\$175.00



In Memoriam: Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky



On Tuesday evening, August 3, 2021, Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, longtime Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations for the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) and Rector of the Church of Our Lady of Kazan in Sea Cliff, New York since 1974, fell asleep in the Lord at Glen Cove Hospital in Glen Cove, NY at the age of 78 following a heart attack. In spite of serious health issues over

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many years, he remained in active service to the Church until his repose. Alongside his parish ministry, Father Leonid labored with faith and devotion for the Church at large, providing a strong witness for Orthodoxy on a global scale and maintained constant communication for the OCA with all the Orthodox Churches throughout the world and facilitated many meetings and dialogues. He also contributed many articles to a variety of publications.

May Father Leonid's memory be eternal!

*(For more details about Father Leonid Kishkovsky go to:
<https://www.oca.org/in-memoriam/protopresbyter-leonid-kishkovsky>)*



Christians Do Not Believe in Kismet, Fate or Destiny

Christians do not believe in kismet, fate or destiny. Even if God determines the chief line of our life, He, according to our prayers and merits, can change them.

Thus, He prolonged King Hezekiah's life for fifteen years: "Go and say to Hezekiah, thus said the Lord, the God of David your father, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears: behold I will add unto your days fifteen years" (Isaiah 38:5), and to the Venerable Diodorus (July 19) he likewise prolonged his life for fifteen years. God extended the life of St. Basil the Great, according to the prayer of the saint, for one day until he baptized the Jew, Joseph, his physician.

But, as God can, by prayer, prolong life, so He can shorten it because of sin. Emperor Anastasius adhered to the Severian heresy, so-called the Acephalites (the headless ones), who spread the foolishness that the Church does not need bishops and priests but rather that everyone unto himself is a bishop and a priest and that everyone has the right, in his own way, to interpret Holy Scripture and to teach others as he understands and believes. In vain did St. John the Patriarch counsel the emperor to return to the truth of Orthodoxy, and not only did the emperor not accept the counsel but rather ill-treated the patriarch in various ways and contemplated to have him banished. One night, the emperor saw in a dream an awesome man on an exalted throne, who held a book in his hand. This man opened the book, found the name of Emperor Anastasius and said: "I have wanted to permit you to live for a while longer but, because of your heresy, behold, I am erasing fourteen years from your life." And he erased something from the book. Terrified, the emperor jumped up from his dream and related his dream to his followers. After a few days, thunder struck the emperor's palace and killed Emperor Anastasius.

St. Nikolai Velimirovich

(from Parish Bulletin 15, Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church, Youngstown, OH)

**Vatra
Generations
Appeal**

**Goal:
\$700,000**

**\$467,701.15
Collected as of
September 20,
2021**

**VATRA
Generations
GENERAȚIILE VETREI**
The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America
Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America

**Renovations to the Main Residence continue!
More information and photos on our web page, roea.org.
Thank you for your support!**

