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ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Quotes from the Holy Fathers

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, the gift of adoption, the pledge of future inheritance, the first fruits of eternal blessings, the life-giving power, the source of sanctification.

St. Basil the Great
Holy Liturgy: Prayer

Spirit of God, direct, authoritative, the fountain of wisdom and life and holiness; God existing and addressed along with the Father and the Son: uncreated, full, creative, all-ruling, all-effecting, all-powerful, of infinite power, Lord of all creation and not subject to any lord; deifying, not deified; filling, not filled; shared in, not sharing in; sanctifying, not sanctified.

St. John of Damascus
Orthodox Faith

Men, women and children profoundly divided as to race, nation, language, manner of life, work, knowledge, honor, fortune. . . the Church recreates all of them in the Spirit. To all equally, she communicates a divine aspect. All receive from her a unique nature which cannot be broken asunder, a nature which no longer permits one henceforth to take into consideration the many and profound differences which are their lot. In that way, all are raised up and united in a manner which is truly catholic. In her, none is in the least degree separated from the community; all are grounded, so to speak, in one another by the simple and indivisible power of faith.

St. Maximus
Mysteries Interpreted

The Spirit is present with everyone who receives him as if there were just one receiver, but bestows sufficient and complete grace on all; all things that

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PENTECOST: GIFT OF RENEWAL

by Archbishop Nathaniel

“Christ is risen! Christ is ascended! Christ is returning!” These phrases explain the Christian proclamation of the Lord Jesus’ suffering for us; his lifting of our humanity to glory and the approaching return when all things will be put into order to the glory of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

There is a very definite constant movement in our beliefs, a real movement which, in fact, is the promise of unending life. Our earthly existence obviously ends at the grave, and those who have not accepted Jesus Christ and his Gospel, remain without hope and without total dedication to God. Yes, they may have some very good points and live ethical lives, but in fact, they remain based on relative, earth-defined values and experience.

Those who have been baptized and put on Christ share with him in his resurrection, glorification and eternal life. That experience, however, does not wait for the final resurrection, but is already lived “in a shadow” now. The promise motivates us and the hope sustains us that life continues, on, and on, and on.

The ascension of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, into heaven, is our own human ascension to our rightful place at the right of God the Father. In his rising to glory, we are taken up with him: *“And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet to gather his chosen from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”* (Matthew 24:30).

Looking upward, the disciples were sad to see the Lord leave them; they remained gazing, longing for him not to go. They had just asked him if the “time had come? Would the kingdom be restored to Israel?” Instead of affirming their hopes of immediate fulfillment, he let them know clearly that they must also proclaim the good news, taking part in the preaching of the kingdom by sharing the news with others and bringing all nations to the Father. *“You will be my witnesses. . . to the ends of the earth”* (Acts 1:8).

Their melancholy was of short duration, however, for while they remained at the spot of the ascension, hesitant to leave, the angels of the Lord chided them, saying: *“Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there”* (Acts 1:11).

Galilee was the crossroads of the area; peoples of various nations passed through. The followers of Jesus had themselves been born amidst strange languages, commercial movement and familiarity with the unusual. It was “in their line” to go out and meet strangers, but it was the reminder from the messengers of God that woke them up to their calling. They were chosen for the preaching of the Gospel, because they were adept at working with others.

Human courage and zeal, however, is not strong enough to stop the mouths of lions, stand before tribunals and judgments: it needs the power of God himself to proclaim his message. This is why the Lord ascended into heaven: to send down the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who fulfills all things, who is present everywhere. The Holy Spirit, who is everywhere, needs men everywhere to work with him in proclaiming and nourishing the good news.

Thus, ten days after the parting of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit came down upon the assembled disciples, filling them with courage, with joy, with hope, with divine zeal which moved them to go out into the world and make disciples of all nations. The feast of Pentecost, a Hebrew festival of first fruits of the earth, became a festival of fruits of a new harvest: souls of all nations for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It is that same indwelling of the Spirit which inspires men to overcome all difficulties, to reach out to others to draw all men in their “nets” to Jesus Christ. *“The Spirit of truth comes. . . will lead you to complete truth. . . will glorify me”* (John 16:14). It is only by the presence of the Comforter that men come to know and confess Jesus as Lord; come to knowledge of that truth and keep their eyes on the kingdom of heaven.

In the psalms, it says *“zeal for your house devours me”* (Psalm 69:9), and this was the same burning dedication that came into the followers of the Lord after the Holy Spirit flowed over them in the upper room. This is the zeal of missionaries, true hierarchs and clergy, pious faithful, and the crowned martyrs. The power of the Most High cannot be contained, but it is poured out upon those who turn to him. *“I will pour out my spirit on all mankind”* (Joel 3:1).

In America, we must test the spirit within us to be sure that it is THE SPIRIT. Sometimes, it appears that we are too ready to become “the accepted religion” instead of THE WAY. In our eagerness to bear witness to Orthodoxy, we must be certain that it is indeed, the zeal for the House of the Lord, and not for the sake of statistics, acceptability and worldly acknowledgement and recognition.

“I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you” (Ezekiel 36:26). The yeast must be active and fresh to produce movement; we must be filled with the true Spirit who will work through us. If our heart is that of this earth, our bread will not rise but remain an inert mass of tastelessness. The “old man” must truly have died and not be allowed to rise up, lest the spirit not be new and renewing, but old and destroying.

The Church in America is not cut off from the Church throughout the world; our faithful are one

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COME AND ABIDE IN US

by
Hieromonk Calinic (Berger)

Orthodox Christianity *par excellence* is a “charismatic” form of Christianity, a life in the Holy Spirit. Every single service in the Orthodox Church – both communal and private – begins with an invocation of the Holy Spirit through the prayer “O Heavenly King.” The whole Church as well as each of the faithful is called to live in a perpetual Pentecost. “Where the Church is, there is the Holy Spirit. And where the Holy Spirit is, there is the Church,” wrote St Irenaeus in the second century. The Church inhales the Spirit (through invocation) and exhales the Spirit (through its blessings) in a continual breathing of divine life. In so doing, the Church shows its realization that the Spirit *rests* in the Church but is not *possessed* by it – the Church itself needs continual renewal through an unceasing invocation of the presence of the Spirit. The same is true for each individual Christian.

The presence of the Holy Spirit gives the Orthodox Church and its divine services the simultaneous feeling of intimacy and transcendence, of local familiarity and universal vision, of a single Apostolic experience of being in the presence of Christ which transcends time and place. Indeed, an element of timelessness accompanies all authentic Orthodox worship. This is so not only through our Holy Tradition, but precisely because Tradition manifests the Spirit, who Himself is outside of time and has deigned to be present within it. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that is the ultimate criterion of Orthodoxy.

In Orthodox teaching, the Spirit is held to be never separated from the Son. Perhaps most unique about the Orthodox Church’s view of the Holy Spirit is the magnificent balance with which the Church sees (theologically) and experiences (liturgically, etc.) the simultaneous presence of the Son and the Spirit in all things. The Son and the Spirit show themselves as totally inseparable; the work of Christ is enabled by the Holy Spirit who incarnates Him, guides Him at every step of His human life and ministry, and raises Him from the dead (Rom 8:11). The Spirit is then poured out on the Church through the Son (Jn 15:26; 16:7; 20:22). This perspective is wonderfully summarized in the 13th century response of the Orthodox to the Latin proponents of the *filioque*: the Spirit proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son, and “shines forth” from the Son to the Father. The begetting of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit are not two sequential “acts” – they are simultaneous and internal to one another. Thus it is that, in Orthodox thought,

unity in the Holy Trinity is both *essential* (the Spirit being “consubstantial” with the Father and the Son) and *personal* (each of the Divine Persons knowing one another from within Himself, in an eternal mutual indwelling, or what the Fathers call “perichoresis”) simultaneously.

The beautiful balance of Orthodox Trinitarian thought has tremendous implications for the entire culture of the Orthodox Church in all of its manifestations: ecclesiological, liturgical, ascetical, artistic, etc. We remain hierarchical and charismatic simultaneously,

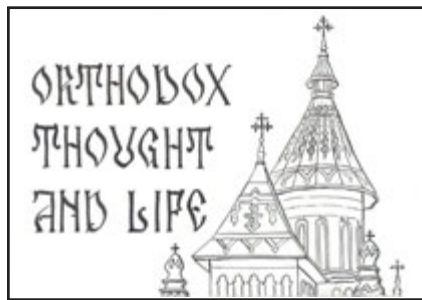
because all of our sacraments are performed by Christ Himself, through the priest accompanied by the faithful, by the invocation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit Himself is the source of both hierarchy and prophecy – and these two aspects of the Church co-exist in what could be called a Chalcedonian manner (“inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably”). Each Sunday

in the Orthodox Church is not only a commemoration of the Resurrection (a sharing of the sacrificed and glorified presence of Christ in the Eucharist), but is also a new Pentecost, the Spirit being called down not only on the gifts but on all those present.

Many images are used in the Holy Scriptures for the Holy Spirit: for example, wind, chrism, water, and fire. The Holy Spirit is a free, intimate, cleansing and transforming Divine Person. Most of all, He is “Fire issuing from Fire.” He descends in a unique, divine act on the day of Pentecost, as wind and fire, to establish the Church. Fire gives light, warmth and transforming energy. The Church and each Christian lives by this internal warmth and energy, which is the Holy Spirit. He is the source of all gifts (1 Cor 12), and by giving these gifts for us to use for each other, He “holds together the whole institution of the Church.” We are one Body – of Christ, because we have one Spirit – the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9), the Holy Spirit.

The Person of the Holy Spirit is mysterious. The Spirit reveals the Son, the Son brings us to the Father, but the Spirit Himself is never revealed. St Gregory the Theologian remarked that the Father was revealed in the Old Testament, the Son in the New, but the full revelation of the Spirit will take place only in the future age. Yet we can foretaste this now in this life. The Saints did precisely that. The Spirit “rests in the Saints” by grace as He rests in the Son by nature. Our goal as Christians is to become one with Christ and thereby also a “temple of the Holy Spirit” as St. Paul

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ONE FAMILY IN CHRIST: 100 YEARS OF CONTINUITY

by
Psa. Janene Wey



Archbishop Nathaniel and Bishop Mark together with clergy and faithful celebrating the Memorial Service following the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy on Saturday.

This past weekend, we celebrated our hundredth anniversary at Saints Constantine and Elena parish in Indianapolis, Indiana. Through the years, this parish has known times of prosperity and growth as well as times of hardship and poverty. In the last twenty five years, however, she has become a parish made up not only of Romanian Christians, but many others of diverse ethnic and spiritual backgrounds who have come to embrace the Orthodox faith. This past weekend it all came together, and as a family we CELEBRATED! Our celebration marked not only one hundred years of being, but also one hundred years of becoming ... and everyone took part.

We inaugurated the weekend with a concert on Friday night of Romanian and American music performed by our liturgical choir, our children's choir, and various individuals, from student level to concert musicians; music ranged from classical Romanian composers to American music from the 19th & 20th

centuries, to Romanian and American patriotic music. The highlight of the concert was the world premiere performance of "Five Venerations," a piece commissioned for the event, composed by one of our own parishioners [Jonathan Wey – *Editor*], and performed by our own choir – a piece based on five of the six icons on our iconostas – St. Herman of Alaska, St. Parascheva of Iasi, the most pure Birthgiver of God and Ever Virgin Mary, St. John the Forerunner, and Ss. Constantine and Elena, our patrons. (DVD recordings of the event will be made available!)

Saturday morning, after vesting His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel and His Grace Bishop Mark of Toledo and the Midwest (Antiochian Archdiocese), we celebrated a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and commemorated our founders with a memorial service. It was followed by an open house in which we partook of traditional appetizers, *sarmale*, and *mamaliga* com-

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UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY TRINITY

By Robert J. Latsko, M.Div.

Orthodox Christians believe in and worship the Holy Trinity. After receiving Holy Communion we boldly exclaim, “We have found the true Faith, worshipping the undivided Trinity, Who has saved us.”

Even though the term “Holy Trinity” is not found in the Bible, the Holy Trinity is biblical — all the books of the New Testament (and some of the books of the Old Testament) speak about the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Trinity was manifested for the first time in a clear way when Jesus Christ was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist. “And when Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3:14-15). The main hymn of the feast of Theophany explains this event: “When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan, *the worship of the Trinity was made manifest!* For the voice of the *Father* bore witness to You, calling You His beloved *Son*. And the *Spirit*, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, Who has revealed Yourself and has enlightened the world, glory to You.”

We bless ourselves with the sign of the cross saying, “Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.” The words “and to the” in this doxology are there for a reason. The Holy Trinity is a relationship between three divine Persons (the words “and to the” preserves this distinction) Who are united by divine Love. We can, in a simple way, think of the phrase, ‘and to the’ as the love that unites the three Persons. The biblical verse, “God is Love” (1 John 4:8), is very profound.

God is not a “mathematical one”—if He were, He would not be Love, but would be the opposite of love. We know this from our own human experience—when we are alone with no one to relate to, it is not good—in fact, it often is *hell*. God Himself said after creating Adam, “It is not good for Adam to be alone” (Genesis 1:26). Human beings have been created in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity. God said, “Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness (Genesis 1:26) and not “Let *me* make man in *my* image according to *my* likeness.” Since the Godhead is a plurality of divine Persons of the *same divine nature*, God has created human beings as male and female—a plurality of persons of the *same human nature*. “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created them” (Genesis 1:27).

In the Old and New Testaments, the term “God” generally refers to the Person of the Father (except in a few cases where “God” is used in the generic sense

of divinity—such is the case with John 1:1: “And the Word was God”). We can, therefore, substitute the term “Father” for most places where “God” is found in the Bible. When we do this, we can see more clearly the relationships between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For instance, we often read and hear the term “Son of God.” This term, therefore, means “Son of the Father” and clearly shows a relationship between the Father and the Son. When we read “God’s Son,” we can render it as “the Father’s Son.” When we read “God’s Spirit,” we can render it as “the Father’s Spirit.” All these terms, as well as “Spirit of the Son,” are biblical and show the relationship between the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

The term “God the Father” is biblical, but the terms “God the Son” and “God the Holy Spirit” are NOT. Many people, many of whom pride themselves on their knowledge of the Bible, use the terms “God the Father,” “God the Son,” and “God the Holy Spirit” when speaking of the Holy Trinity. This is WRONG, because the relationships between the divine Persons (which is essential in our Orthodox Christian understanding of the Holy Trinity) is destroyed, and the temptation to think of God in terms of “Modalism” becomes present. “Modalism” is the ancient heresy that said that the one God expresses Himself in three different ways. This heresy says that God the Father can shift into a different “mode” and express Himself as God the Son or God the Holy Spirit at different times.

The terms, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not terms which a patriarchal (male dominated) society has pinned on God, but rather are terms which God has given us as being most appropriate to express the reality of what is happening in the Trinitarian Godhead. We cannot substitute “inclusive language” terms such as “Mother” and “Daughter” or “Creator” [for “Father”], “Redeemer” [for “Son”], and “Sanctifier” [for “Spirit”], because these terms lead to a false understanding of the relationships between the three divine Persons.

Every action of God is a Trinitarian action. No one Person of the Trinity ever acts alone without the consent and action of the others, because they all share the self-same Divine Will. A good example of this is the creation of the universe. The Father is not the Creator alone. He creates by means of His Son (His Word) and Spirit. “In the beginning, God [the Father] created the heavens and earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God [the Holy Spirit] was moving over the face of the waters. And God said [God’s Word], ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Genesis 1:1-3). St. Paul made it clear that the

Son was involved in creation when he wrote, “All things were created through Him [the Son] and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16-17).

Although the Father is the Source (Principle or Cause) of the Son and the Holy Spirit, He alone has always been “Father.” There was never a time when the Father was “alone in His divinity” without His Son and Spirit. There was never a time when the Son was not (this is the heresy of “Arianism”), and there was never a time when the Spirit was not. The Holy Trinity simply exists and always has existed. The Old Testament name for God, “I Am,” expresses this (see Exodus 3:14). The Trinity is not the result of a process—God does not change and cannot “improve.” Human beings, on the other hand, have been created to change “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18) and to become “perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

The Holy Trinity is eternal, where “eternal” is understood to mean existence in “timelessness” and “spacelessness.” Time and space are created entities, and God does not need them to exist. Because God created time and space, He is not constrained by them. The Creator is stronger than His creation—and this is why God can see the past, present and future all at once and can be everywhere “at the same time.”

The Son of God is eternally born of the Father (we use the biblical term “begotten” to refer to this: *John 1:14*), and the Spirit eternally comes forth from the Father (we use the biblical term “proceeds” to refer to this: *John 15:26*). We cannot use the term “begotten” to refer to the manner in which the Spirit comes forth from the Father, because that would wrongly imply that the Father has two Sons.

We often hear the phrase “one in essence” in our Church. We say every Sunday when we recite/sing the Nicene Creed that the Son of God is “*of one essence with the Father*.” We also sing every Sunday the hymn, “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, *one in essence* and undivided.” This phrase, “one in essence,” is the English translation of the Greek word “*homouousios*,” which is a theological term developed by the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council (at Nicaea in 325 A.D.) to express how the Son is exactly what the Father is. The Son of God is “true God of true God” as we say in the Nicene Creed. The Son is exactly what the Father is in terms of His divine attributes and divine Nature, but He is not Him! The only difference is that the Father is the Father, and the Son is the Son, and the Spirit is the Spirit! Note that Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, is not only “*homouousios*” with the Father, but He is also “*homouousios*” with us! Jesus Christ is both fully divine and fully human (He is therefore the “God-Man”).

Because the Son of God is “of one essence with the Father,” Jesus Christ can say, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30) and “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). All the attributes relative to

the Father’s being belong also to the Son. Jesus Christ “is the likeness of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4), and we can see “the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). The Son is the radiance of the Father’s glory. The Son is God’s perfect self-expression—God’s Life, God’s Power, God’s Word, God’s Wisdom, etc. “Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24).

We often refer to Jesus Christ as “Lord.” We hear in the Liturgy, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.” “Lord” is a term that was used in the Old Testament to refer to God. We can also refer to the Holy Spirit as “Lord,” because the Holy Spirit is also “God” in a generic sense (“And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the *Lord* and Giver of Life”: *Nicene Creed*).

St. Paul also refers to Jesus Christ as “the Rock” (“and the Rock was Christ: *1 Corinthians 10:4*) knowing that the Rock of Israel, according to the Old Testament, was Yahweh. St. Paul, therefore, identifies the pre-existent Christ with Yahweh—with God. It is for this reason that the words “I AM” are written in the halo of every icon of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the “I AM” Who spoke to Moses from the burning bush. “I AM” is the literal translation of the Hebrew word, “Yahweh.” One of the reasons that the Jews sought to kill Jesus was, in fact, because He said that He is the I AM. “‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, *I am*.’ So they took up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple” (St. John 5:58-59). The Orthodox Church makes it very clear to all that we believe Jesus Christ to be more than simply a “good man,” an “inspired teacher,” (a “rabbi”), or “a prophet”—He is the Son of God Who became a man to die on a cross and to rise again for our salvation.

The Son of God relates to God the Father by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (cf. John 15:26) and eternally radiates from the Son, enabling the Son’s eternal relationship with the Father. This same Holy Spirit has been sent to us so that we may also have the same type of relationship with the Father as does the Son. The Son’s relationship with the Father, however, is by nature, and our relationship with the Father is by grace (God’s *power*). Before His Ascension into heaven, Jesus said, “you shall receive *power* when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit’s mission in us is to empower us, to enlighten us, and to inspire in us a relationship with the Father through the Son. The words of St. Paul confirm what Jesus promised, “If the Spirit of Him [God the Father] Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give **life** to your mortal bodies also through the Spirit which dwells in you” (Romans 8:11). The understanding that we are to have a relationship with the Father is shown clearly by the

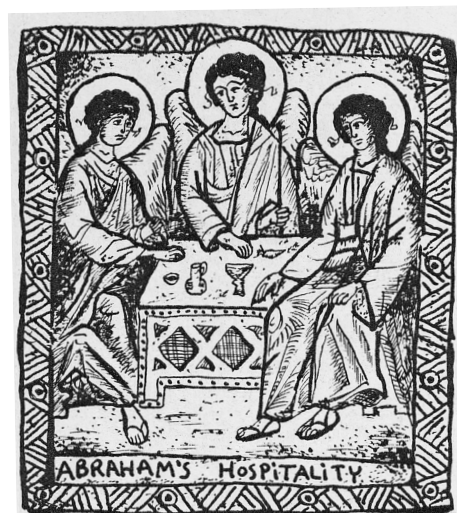
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fact that **the** ‘prayer of all prayers,’ which Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate, has given us is “Our Father Who art in heaven...”.

There is only one uncreated Son of God (“Begotten of the Father before all ages”: *Nicene Creed*), but as a result of the action of the Persons of the Holy Trinity toward man, there is now a possibility that there can be many created sons of God. We all have the opportunity to be sons of God by adoption. “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Romans 8:14) ... “and because you are sons, God [referring to the Father] has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, Abba! Father!” (Galatians 4:6) We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at the time of our baptism (cf. Luke 3:16, Romans 6:3). Baptism with the Holy Spirit (“... you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit”—*Acts 1:5*) is the way we unite ourselves to Christ and the way we become members of His Body, the Church. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). It is the one and same Holy Spirit who sanctifies and illumines all people of all times and places. The ultimate source of the Holy Spirit’s actions is God the Father. “He [God the Father] is the source of your life in Christ Jesus” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Without the Holy Spirit dwelling in us (“... your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God” - *1 Corinthians 6:19*), we could not call God “our Father” and we could not say “Jesus is Lord.” No one can say “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). The way to divine knowledge ascends from the one Spirit, through the one Son, to the one Father, which conceptualizes how God communicates to man and how man communicates with God. It is for this reason that St. Basil the Great, a great theologian of the Church, approves of the doxology, “Glory to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit,” as well as the more common, “Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.”

We say “Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,” and not “Glory to the Son and the Holy Spirit and to the Father,” or “Glory to the Holy Spirit and to the Father and to the Son” (or any other order), because there is a hierarchy within the order of the Trinitarian Godhead. The Father is the “First Person” of the Holy Trinity; the Son is the “Second Person” of the Holy Trinity; and the Holy Spirit is the “Third Person” of the Holy Trinity. The Father is the “First Person,” because He is the Begetter of the Son and the Source of the Holy Spirit. We know from Scripture that the Father is the “First Person,” because Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate, said: “The Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). This hierarchy, however, does not imply any “subordinationism” (an ancient heresy which said that the Son and the Spirit do not have the same degree of divinity as the Father), or “domination” by any one Person of the Holy Trinity. There is always a perfect relationship of Love between the Persons of the Trinity.



We can pray to the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit “individually,” or we can pray to the Holy Trinity “together.” Examples of these types of prayers are the “Our Father,” the “Jesus Prayer” (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”), “O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth...” and “All-Holy Trinity have mercy upon us...”. We can pray to any one Person of the Trinity, however, only by involving the other two—because of the Unity of the Holy Trinity. Orthodox Christian prayer is always Trinitarian, whether we realize it or not. Whenever we pray to the Father, it is only through the Son (Jesus Christ), by means of the Holy Spirit. Whenever we pray to the Son, Jesus Christ, we are praying to the Person Who, in His resurrected body, radiates the Holy Spirit which comes forth from the Father. Whenever we pray to the Holy Spirit, it is only because the Son has sent Him to us and continually sends Him to us from the Father.

The Holy Trinity is a communion of divine Persons in Love, and the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit want us to share this love. Jesus prayed, “Holy Father, keep them in my name, which You have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:11).

About the author: Robert Joseph Latsko is a tonsured Reader and a graduate of St. Vladimir’s Seminary with a M.Div. (Masters of Divinity) degree. He also has a Bachelors of Science in Engineering from Michigan State University and a second Bachelors and Masters degrees in Architecture from the University of Michigan. His specialty is Orthodox Church architecture, where he combines his knowledge of Orthodox theology and of architecture to design Orthodox churches that fully reflect Orthodox teachings and tradition. His expertise includes a very advanced level of three-dimensional computer architectural design. One of his Orthodox church designs, Holy Resurrection Antiochian Orthodox Church, is presently (Spring 2010) being built in Tucson, AZ. He has been a member of St. Innocent Church in Redford for about ten years, where he sings in the choir and chants.

NO MILITARY DISPENSATION NECESSARY

By Fr. Jerome Cwiklinski



Fr. Jerome Cwiklinski with Archon Nicholas Royce – Memorial Day 2009

Since 11 September 2001, hosts of Orthodox Americans have enlisted or been commissioned in our nation's armed forces. Some have since paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives, all in order to protect our freedoms, among which is the free exercise of religion. This freedom is not confined to *Hometown USA* but is upheld even in a war zone. Such places are far beyond the reach of parish clergy, yet our Orthodox warriors need fortification that only our Church can provide against the dangers of battle and spiritual warfare.

Orthodox Chaplains bring Orthodox worship, sacraments, and spiritual counsel to a widely-scattered flock, often reaching out to solitary Orthodox Christians – a true *diaspora*. When deployed, they ride a circuit to offer the liturgy at a different camp, perhaps on different days of the week, to those who can't come to a central location. They do so in convoys or aircraft vulnerable to attack, risking their own lives to make our people ready to face the possibility of death and to help them lead better Christian lives.

Celebrating the Divine Liturgy in a field environment may reduce some of its pageantry, but not people's expectations. Our faithful in uniform desire the fullness of worship even though it may take place inside a tent on an altar made of ration cases. The grandeur of the Blessed Kingdom is made present despite challenges – a real "Table in the presence" of enemies – where it is not uncommon for vestments to be worn over body armor, or for *Lord, have mercy* to be accompanied by the not-so-distant thud of explosions.

Ministry as a Chaplain does imply a certain degree of *oikonomia*, but Orthodox Christians in the armed forces, who take their faith seriously, do not seek personal dispensations. They want to conform to the standards of the Church: Confession; keeping the fasts

despite limited menu choices and high heat conditions; preparing properly for the Sacraments – that's because they are accustomed to discipline as a routine way of life.

There are still many Orthodox military people who aren't aware that Orthodox Chaplains exist and are therefore predisposed not to look for Orthodox Services – most frustrating when they go an entire deployment without the Sacraments, only to learn that an Orthodox priest was within easy reach. "Why didn't the Orthodox Chaplain look for them?" seems a fair question to ask, and they can if you match their efforts as follows:

Orthodox service members – Insist your religious preference is correct in your military records. There is an established code for Orthodox Christians (see last paragraph on Nicholas Royce). Be visible. Make the Sign of the Cross. Do not attend non-Orthodox services – there is no substitute for Orthodox worship or Orthodox sacraments! Non-Orthodox Chaplains *can* help you by placing you in contact with an Orthodox Chaplain. Use your chain-of-command to ensure that happens.

Orthodox parish priests – Contact an Orthodox Chaplain and give him the names of the sons and daughters of your parish who have entered the armed forces. The St. George Orthodox Military Association (www.orthodoxmilitary.org ; email – StGeorgeOMA@gmail.com) is the best go-to resource to find Orthodox Chaplains or to help Orthodox military personnel find one another.

Orthodox parents – Bug your kids! Ask them when was the last time they attended an Orthodox service? Send them an icon and prayer book. Encourage them to remain active in the faith, even while serving in remote locations. Send their email or mailing address to an Orthodox Chaplain. Tell them the non-Orthodox chaplain assigned to their unit is obliged to find them an Orthodox priest. Write to your Representative if necessary.

Everyone – pray to our intercessors among our Orthodox military saints that those who serve will remain steadfast in the Orthodox Christian faith.

The following Orthodox Chaplains served in the Middle East through Holy Week and Pascha: Navy Chaplain Fr. David Alexander and Fr. Philip Pelikan with Marine forces in Afghanistan; Army Chaplain Fr. Alexander Webster in Afghanistan, and Air Force Chaplain Fr. Matthew Street in Iraq. In addition, Air Force Chaplain Fr. Eugene Lahue, and Army Chaplains Fr. Peter Baktis and George Hill are in Germany, and Navy Chaplain Fr. Christopher Allen is on Okinawa. Do not let their branch of service deter you from making a request. The best thing about

Orthodox military ministry is that it is Joint and it is Pan-Orthodox – meaning every Liturgy is a triumph of Orthodoxy!

[Editor's note: Fr. Georgel Oanca of the Episcopate's parish in St. Paul, MN, is currently deployed as a military chaplain.]

Did you know . . . "Orthodox" was not among the choices for dog tags in WWII and until the 1950s? Our very first Chaplains were forced to choose from "C," "P," "J" or "No Pref." World War II veteran and later Archon Nicholas Royce set in motion a letter-writing campaign that finally allowed "Eastern Orthodox" to be recognized and included. With the Orthodox Church breaking the old paradigm, every faith qualified to be listed as a specific religious preference. This just goes to show that breakthroughs in our Orthodox Christian faith are not solely dependent on the actions of clergy.

Fr. Jerome Cwiklinski, a priest of the Orthodox Church in America, is an Orthodox Chaplain in the United States Navy which also provides Chaplains to the Marine Corps and Coast Guard. He is currently Command Chaplain for I Marine Expeditionary Force and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command.

One Family ... *Cont. from page 5*

plete with Romanian wine, all lovingly prepared and served. Saturday evening, we had Great Vespers and Litia with a candlelight wine and cheese reception afterwards. Sunday morning, the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was served by the Bishops with Archimandrite Joseph, one of our past priests, and Fr. John Schmidt, former deacon and son of the parish, concelebrating. The weekend concluded with a festive banquet at the Indiana Historical Society on the canal, just steps away from the site of the original church building.

In reflection, the weekend-long event brought together and solidified us as a family in Christ. Everyone had a part in making it a success – from our children who performed on Friday night, seated our guests at the banquet, and then performed traditional Romanian dances in traditional Romanian garb – to our families more recently immigrated from Romania who prepared the wonderful food for the Saturday lunch and open house (Maria is in her 80's and prepared the 400+ *sarmale* for us, and they were delicious!). An image of our community: one of the event co-chairs was fourth generation of a founding family, and the other co-chair was chrismated in 2003.

We are a family united by our faith in Christ and our love for one another. This past weekend, we were, all of us together, as one parishioner so aptly stated it, "wrapped in the omophorion of the Church and lifted up into the heavens." And just as our Saints, Constantine and his mother Elena, labored in their day to establish, unite, and beautify the church of God, our little parish shone with the beauty bestowed on it by so many talents and gifts among us. May God receive!

CLERGY CHANGES

DEPOSED

VASILESCU, Rev. Fr. Eugene was permanently deposed from all sacred functions of the Priesthood, effective 31 March 2010, by the Holy Synod of Bishops. The Holy Synod took this action with great sadness and with the assurance of its prayers on behalf of Mr. Eugene Vasilescu.

ORDAINED

TRIF, Rev. Deacon Vasile was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Nathaniel on 18 April 2010 at St. George Church, Toronto, ON, and temporarily assigned Parish Priest of St. Panteleimon Mission, Terrebonne, QC, effective 2 May 2010.

VASIU, Rev. Deacon Mircea was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Nathaniel on 8 November 2009 at Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Dearborn Heights, MI and attached to St. Mary Chapel, Grass Lake, MI. Effective 17 January 2010, he is temporarily assigned to St. Mary Church, St. Paul, MN, to serve in place of Rev. Fr. Georgel Oanca during his service as a Military Chaplain overseas during 2010.

ASSIGNED

BERTEA, Hieromonk Chesarie is assigned Parish Priest of Sts. Constantine & Helen Church, Lilburn, GA, effective 1 March 2010.

STOLERU, Rev. Fr. Stefan Florin is assigned Parish Priest of St. Anne Church, Jacksonville, FL, effective 1 April 2010.

RELEASED

CAPSA, Rev. Fr. Constantin Iustin is released from his duties as Parish Priest of Holy Cross Mission, San Diego, CA, effective 1 May 2010. He remains unassigned.

BLAGA, Rev. Fr. Octavian is released from his duties as Parish Priest of St. Panteleimon Mission, Terrebonne, QC, effective 1 May 2010, so that he may return to Romania.

AWARDS

The following clergy received Synodal Awards based on their years of service during the Holy Synod meeting in March 2010:

Archpriest: Priests Virgil Anton, Liviu Alexandrescu, Viorel Dumitrescu, Daniel Ghica, Ioan Iancu, Marian Manolache, Alin Munteanu, Danut Palanceanu, Liviu Popa, Ion Proteasa, Georgel Oanca, Cezar Vasiliu.

Protopresbyter: Archpriests Vasile Barsan, Romulus Barr, John Mihut, Simion Pavel, Victor Runcanu, Dimitru Viorel Sasu, Panteleimon Stanciu.

Looking back, it is confirmation once again, of the goodness of God poured out upon His people in every age. And it is a living manifestation and testament of the unity of the church working together in faith and love. We look to the future with great hope in the Risen Christ!

WORLD CHURCH NEWS

Archbishop Demetrios to Chair First Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Hierarchs in North and Central America . NEW YORK (May 14, 2010) [GOA]

– More than 50 hierarchs will take part in the first Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central America, to be convened by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America in New York City, May 26-28. This Assembly is the result of the decision of the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, which met in *Chambésy* Switzerland in June of 2009, after the extraordinary *Synaxis* of all the Heads of the Autocephalous Churches convened by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. This Assembly, one of twelve that will be convened around the world in regions where there is no single Orthodox presence, will consist of the active canonical bishops who reside in the region designated as North and Central America. In every Assembly, the chairman will be the senior bishop of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Assembly will convene at the Helmsley Park Lane Hotel, where accommodations and arrangements have been coordinated by the staff of the Archbishop. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, through the *Leadership 100* grant to the Office of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, is underwriting much of the expense, with other funds coming from a variety of Pan-Orthodox sources. In discussing the Assembly at the May 7 meeting of the Archdiocesan Council in Atlanta, Archbishop Demetrios explained that the nature of the assembly is as “a temporary, not a permanent institution. It is simply preparatory to facilitate the process of an ecumenical council (in the future) that will decide the final form of the existence of the Church in a particular country.” His Eminence further explained that the assembly is to meet annually and is not a continuation of SCOBA. Rather, it works to “prepare a plan for dealing with anomalies, such as more than one bishop in a given locale and other things that interfere with the life of the Church.” It is also designed “to project a unified witness of the faith.” As such, the Archbishop called the work of the Assembly “tremendously important. The function and outcome of this first meeting will determine how it continues in the future.” The Archbishop also said the following: “The leadership of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in convening the Heads of world Orthodoxy is truly visionary. This vision of the unity of the Church has been confirmed from ages past, and with the Ecumenical Patriarchate leading the way, we will aspire to manifesting our unity in Christ based on the greatest commandment of all: to love one another.”

Archimandrite Michael consecrated as Bishop of New York and New Jersey - JERSEY CITY, NJ (May 8, 2010) [OCA] - On Saturday, May 8, 2010,

Archimandrite Michael [Dahulich] was consecrated as Bishop of New York and New Jersey at Saints Peter and Paul Church here. Presiding at the consecration Divine Liturgy was His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, and other members of the Holy Synod of Bishops. On the evening of May 7, Great Vespers with Bishop-elect Michael's formal Nomination was celebrated. Over 600 attended Saturday's consecration banquet. On Sunday, Bishop Michael celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York, NY. May God grant Bishop Michael many years of fruitful archpastoral ministry!

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Issues Message on Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill - ISTANBUL [CONSTANTINOPLE], Turkey (May 10, 2010) [GOA]

- His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew issued the following message regarding the massive oil spill from the Deepwater Horizon wellhead in the Gulf of Mexico: **Sins Against Nature and God: We Are All Accountable for Ignoring the Global Consequences of Environmental Exploitation.** Once again, in a matter only of a few years, the eyes of the world are turned with suspense toward the Gulf Coast. Sadly, the oil spill is following a path similar to Hurricane Katrina and threatening the coast of Louisiana as well as neighboring states. As citizens of God's creation, we perceive this monumental spill of crude oil in the oceans of our planet as a sign of how far we have moved from the purpose of God's creation. Our immediate reaction is to pray fervently for the urgent and efficient response to the current crisis, to mourn painfully for the sacrifice of human life as well as for the loss of marine life and wildlife, and to support the people and communities of the region, whose livelihood directly depends on the fisheries of the Gulf. But as the first bishop of the world's second-largest Christian Church, we also have a responsibility not only to pray, but also to declare that to mistreat the natural environment is to sin against humanity, against all living things, and against our creator God. All of us — individuals, institutions, and industries alike — bear responsibility; all of us are accountable for ignoring the global consequences of environmental exploitation. Katrina — we knew — was a natural calamity. This time — we know — it is a man-made disaster. One deepwater pipe will impact millions of lives in several states as well as countless businesses and industries. Therefore, we must use every resource at our disposal to contain this disaster. But we must also use every resource to determine liability for the fact that 11 people have died and 5,000 barrels of oil are flowing daily into the delicate ecology of the Gulf of Mexico. In exchange for the benefits and wealth generated by deep underwater drilling, individuals, institutions, and industries assume responsibility for pro-

protecting the earth and its creatures from the well-known potential hazards. In this instance, they have clearly failed in those responsibilities; that failure must be acknowledged and strong measures taken to avert future catastrophes. Although we are halfway around the world from this incident, our interest in it is deeply personal. We visited Louisiana and its bayous only four months after its devastation by Hurricane Katrina and we returned there just last October to convene our Eighth Religion, Science, and the Environment Symposium, "Restoring Balance: The Great Mississippi," in New Orleans. At that time, we noted: Although the time we have been on the planet is insignificant in the context of the life of the planet itself, we have reached a defining moment in our story. Let us remember that, whoever we are, we all have our part to play, our sacred responsibility to the future. And let us remember that our responsibility grows alongside our privileges; we are more accountable the higher we stand on the scale of leadership. Our successes or failures, personal and collective, determine the lives of billions. Our decisions, personal and collective, determine the future of the planet. In the spirit of responsibility, the White House and certain Congressional leaders have declared that, before beginning new offshore drilling for oil, there must be greater understanding of the environmental impact and responsibility for such endeavors. We support this approach. For, as confident as interested parties were that a disaster like this could not occur because of watertight controls and fail-safe mechanisms installed, those controls and mechanisms failed, with the horrific results we witness unfolding each day. Until such understanding and responsibility have been determined, may God grant us all the strength to curtail the spill, the resources to support the region, and the courage to make the necessary changes so that similar tragedies may be avoided in the future.

Orthodox Christian web site keeps memory of veterans alive. WASHINGTON, DC [OCA] (May 4, 2010) — Saint Nicholas Cathedral here invites all Orthodox parishes in the US to add the names, ranks, and photographs of their US military veterans to the newly-established Orthodox Veterans Memorial web page, a 21st century extension of the cathedral's continuing commitment to praying for our Orthodox fallen. "Our chaplains serve Orthodox of all jurisdictions and, as such, our War Memorial will honor all Orthodox Christians whose names have been submitted to be honored," wrote His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, in a letter to the faithful and friends of Saint Nicholas Cathedral. "We must never forget their sacrifice and those who have, as Abraham Lincoln so eloquently stated in his Gettysburg Address, 'given their last full measure of devotion.'" The Orthodox Church has a longstanding tradition of dedicating churches to the memory of Orthodox Christians who have fought and died in defense of Church and country. Saint Nicholas

Cathedral, modeled after the 12th century Church of Saint Dmitri in Vladimir, Russia, was built in the early 1960s as the National War Memorial Shrine. A decade-long effort to raise funds for the cathedral's construction had been blessed by the Holy Synod of Bishops in 1949. The cathedral was dedicated in 1963 to the memory of Orthodox Christians who died fighting for freedom in the Russian Revolution, World Wars I and II, and the Korean War. A bronze dedicatory tablet hangs at the entrance of the cathedral, and a book listing the names of the fallen, collected from parishes across the nation, is kept in the altar. Each year, on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend, these names are read aloud during the Divine Liturgy. The cathedral's new Veterans Memorial web page features a growing list of Orthodox veterans by jurisdiction and parish. On-line visitors can find the webpage by clicking the tab labeled "Veterans" on the navigation section of the cathedral's website, www.stnicholasdc.org. A link from the OCA website, www.oca.org, to the webpage of the Veterans Memorial will be available shortly. New names and photographs will be added as they are received. Additions to the web site should be submitted by e-mail to veterans@stnicholasdc.org. Please include the word "VETERANS" in the subject line of all emails. Names should be submitted in the following format: *** *Jurisdiction, Name of Home Parish, Location of Home Parish (e.g., GOARCH, Hagia Sophia Cathedral, Washington, DC).* *** *Full Name of Veteran, Rank, Branch of Service, Years of Service, Wartime Service, Awards for Valor, Active/Retired/Deceased/KIA/MIA. (e.g., Pappas, George J., COL, US Army, 1948-1978, Korea, Vietnam, Silver Star, Retired.)* Please address all hardcopy correspondence concerning the Veterans Memorial to: Veterans Memorial Coordinator, Saint Nicholas Cathedral, 3500 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20007. Names of service members killed in action (KIA) or are missing in action (MIA) not already included on the cathedral's listing of the fallen will be added and duly commemorated in the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend.

Oriente Lumen conferences to feature OCA speakers. WASHINGTON, DC (April 30, 2010) [OCA] - His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, will address participants at the Oriente Lumen XIV Conference at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center here June 21-24, 2010. Similar conferences will be held at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ June 7-10 and in Constantinople [Istanbul], Turkey July 5-8. The theme of all three conferences is "The Councils of the Church." Each speaker will discuss the theme from the perspective of his or her own tradition and expertise and review the history, context, major results, and other important aspects of Church Councils over the centuries. Sponsored by the Eastern Churches Journal, East-

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FINANCIAL REPORT

EPISCOPATE SUPPORTERS

M/M Constantin Ardeleanu, Valparaiso, IN	\$100.00
Rev Fr & Psa Andrew Lesko, Redlands, CA	\$100.00
Virginia Precop, St Clair Shores, MI	\$80.00
George & Nancy Ittu, Cleveland, OH	\$50.00
Elena Gavrilesco, Skokie, IL	\$25.00
M/M George Oancea, Louisville, OH	\$25.00
Helen Ungham, Ellwood City, PA	\$25.00

GENERAL DONATIONS

Holy Trinity, Miramar, FL	\$1,000.00
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
Estate of Marina Ficken, McLean, VA	\$539.60
Felix Codat & Stefania Pop, Kitchener, ON	\$500.00
St Dumitru, New York, NY	\$500.00
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
St Joseph of Maramures, Hazleton, PA	\$500.00
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
Stephen & Katherine Miroy, Stafford, VA	\$470.00
(Camp Vatra)	
St Andrew Mission, Houston, TX	\$330.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Elkins Park, PA	\$200.00
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
St Joseph of Maramures, Hazleton, PA	\$109.89
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
St Elias, Ellwood City, PA	\$100.00
(Episcopate Sunday)	
Rev Fr & Psa Cosmin Sicoe, Regina, SK	\$95.43
John Toana, Indianapolis, IN	\$50.00
Florence & Bobby Westerfield, Warren, MI	\$30.00
Nicholas Savliuk, Calgary, AB	\$25.00
Mary Jane Quinn, Bloomfield Hills, MI	\$15.00
Maria Huncuag, Center Line, MI	\$5.00
M/M Mircea Subu, Bloomfield Hills, MI	\$5.00
Nicholas Vasu, Southfield, MI	\$5.00
M/M Ioan Braescu, Redford, MI	\$1.00

EPISCOPATE ASSESSMENT (DUES)

Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL	\$15,340.00
Presentation of Our Lord, Fairlawn, OH	\$8,400.00
Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA	\$7,500.00
St Andrew Mission, Potomac, MD	\$4,560.00
St Nicholas, Troy, MI	\$4,000.00
St Dimitrie, Easton, CT	\$3,380.00
Ascension Mission, Montreal, QC	\$2,000.00
St Andrew Mission, Laval, QC	\$1,710.00
St Anne, Jacksonville, FL	\$1,650.00
Holy Cross, Hermitage, PA (2011)	\$1,500.00
St John, Woonsocket, RI	\$1,500.00
St Joseph of Maramures, Hazleton, PA	\$1,260.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Assiniboia, SK	\$1,000.00
Three Hierarchs, Ridgewood, NY	\$900.00
St Elias, Lennard, MB	\$690.00
Sts Michael & Gabriel, Apopka, FL	\$660.00
Holy Brancoveanu Martyrs Mission, Montreal, QC	\$600.00
St Nicholas, Alliance, OH	\$120.00
Ascension Mission, Montreal, QC	\$100.00

MEMORIAM

Doru Posteuca, St Paul, MN	\$200.00
(IMO Zamfira Posteuca)	

Doina Speriosu, Jamaica Estate, NY	\$100.00
(IMO Husband Dr Simon Speriosu)	
Maria Timmons, Mississauga, ON	\$100.00
(IMO Mother: Lucija Calvarasan)	
Paul & Silvia Costea, Dearborn Hts, MI	\$75.00
(IMO Nicolae & Maria Danin; Aurelian & Maria Gheordunescu)	
Daniel & Maria Plantus, Keego Harbor, MI	\$50.00
(IMO Constantin Nicula)	
Iuliana Campean, Grosse Pointe Park, MI	\$20.00
(IMO Valentina Cornea)	

DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS

National ARFORA	\$2,150.00
(2009 St Paraschiva Mission Project)	
St Elias, Ellwood City, PA	\$250.00
(IMO Constantin Nicula)	
Marlene D Tofan, San Francisco, CA	\$100.00
(IMO Fr Constantin Tofan)	

STANITZ SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Lynn Nitzu, Schaumburg, IL	\$50.00
(IMO John Stanitz)	

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN ASSISTANCE

Societatea Marasesti, Garden City, MI	\$50.00
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Pentecost ...

Cont. from page 3

with the faithful of all lands; our message, the message preached throughout the world; our salvation is tied to the salvation of the entire Body of Christ. In Jesus, there are no land boundaries which separate, no languages more precious than others, no people more comely than others, no perfect political or economic systems. The Kingdom of God is not of this world, nor can believers be kept from one another in the Lord.

As a spring must flow constantly to bring forth sweet, fresh water, so the Church must be filled with the Spirit in all of her members to refresh the world and bring all men to Christ the Savior. Pentecost is a day of great moaning, for what we wish to do in the Lord, we must be open to do: it is a day of great longing, for we wish to be united with Jesus and call on him to come; it is a day of celebration, for the separation of men from men, nations from nations, people from people, is overcome by the one Spirit in the one Lord from the Father.

Pentecost is the beginning of a new era; indeed, the "common era" when all are called to salvation – all are one in Christ. It is also the "year of the Lord," for it is the proper time, the fitting time, the "now" in which God, who is ever present to move us, would act in us. Let us look into our hearts and see if it is "renewed" in the Spirit. Let us test our spirit to see if it is one with the Comforter.

Originally published in Solia-The Herald, May 1985, pp. 1-3.

World Church News

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ern Christian Publications, the Orientale Lumen Foundation, the Center for Catholic Studies at Seton Hall University, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the conferences are open to lay persons, religious and clergy, providing an opportunity for Eastern Orthodox, Roman and Eastern Catholics, and Oriental Orthodox to gather, discuss, and learn about their respective traditions. Other speakers at the DC conference include Roman Catholic Archbishop Donald Wuerl of Washington, DC; Archimandrite Robert Taft, Professor Emeritus of the Pontifical Oriental Institute; Father Peter Galazda, Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky Institute, Ottawa, ON; Father Thomas FitzGerald, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA; and Elias Damianakis, Greek Orthodox lecturer and iconographer, Tampa, FL. Father John Behr, professor at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, will be among the speakers at the New Jersey conference. Other speakers include Eastern Rite Catholic Archbishop Cyril Vasil, Secretary of the Congregation for Eastern Churches; Archimandrite Cyril Hovorun, Director of Religious Education, Moscow; Archimandrite Robert Taft; Father George Gallaro, Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA; and Elias Damianakis. His All Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople will open the conference in Turkey. Speakers include His Eminence, Metropolitan Kallistos [Ware] of Diokleia; Richard Schneider, professor at Saint Vladimir's Seminary; Archimandrite Job Getcha, Institute of Orthodox Theology, Chambesy, Switzerland; Sister Vassa Larin of ROCOR, University of Vienna, Austria; and Bishop John Michael Botean, Romanian Greek Catholic Eparchy of Saint George, Canton, OH. Archbishop Cyril Vasil and Archimandrite Robert Taft will also address participants. For additional information and registration forms contact Orientale Lumen Conference, PO Box 192, Fairfax, VA 22038-0192; 703-691-8862; info@olconference.com and/or visit www.oltv.tv and www.olconference.com.

On the Holy Spirit

Cont. from page 2

partake of him enjoy him according to the capacity of their nature, not according to the extent of his power.

St. Basil the Great
On the Holy Spirit

One does not think of the Father without the Son; one does not conceive of the Son without the Holy Spirit. For it is impossible to attain to the Father except by being raised by the Son, and it is impossible to call Jesus "Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

St. Gregory of Nyssa
Against the Macedonians



The Old Testament manifested the Father plainly, the Son obscurely. The New Testament revealed the Son and hinted at the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Today, the Spirit dwells among us and makes himself more clearly known. For it was not safe, when the Godhead of the Father was not yet acknowledged, plainly to proclaim the Son; nor when that of the Son was not yet received, to burden us further (if I may use so bold an expression) with the Holy Spirit. . . but rather, that by gradual additions; and, as David says, goings up and advances and progress from glory to glory, the light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated.

St. Gregory Nazianzen
Orthodoxy XXXI

We receive the naked fire of the Godhead, the fire which our Lord spoke of: "I am come to cast fire upon the earth" (Lk. 12:49). What is this fire if not the Holy Spirit, consubstantial with the Son by his deity, the Holy Spirit with whom the Father and the Son enter into us and can be contemplated?

St. Symeon the New Theologian
Homily 45

If anyone claims that all believers have received and possessed the Holy Spirit without having consciousness or experience of him, he blasphemes by treating as a falsehood the words of Christ who says that the Spirit is a well of water sprung up into eternal life (Jn. 4:15); and again, "*He that believes in me. . . out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water*" (Jn. 7:38).

If the spring gushes up within us, the stream which flows from it must of necessity be visible to those who have eyes to see. But if all this happens within us without our having any consciousness or experience of it, then it is certain that we shall not know the eternal life which comes thence, that we shall not see the light of the Holy Spirit; that we shall remain as dead, blind and insensible in the life of eternity as we are in this present life.

St. Symeon the New Theologian
Homily 57

Come and Abide in Us *Cont. from page 4*

says (1 Cor 3:16) and as St Seraphim famously taught. The Spirit then brings us to the Father, as adopted sons, even praying for us: “the Spirit Himself makes supplication for us with groanings that cannot be uttered” (Rom 8:26). In other words, salvation in Orthodoxy is simply entering into the life of the Holy Trinity in the position of adopted sons: the Spirit is sent to us from the Father, rests in us and brings us back to the Father.

The constant invocation of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Church teaches us that His presence is not automatic but requires continual renewal through prayer and the struggle of self-purification. His presence is felt in those churches where the faithful are striving to talk to God, are struggling to know Him, follow His commandments in all things and have firmly committed themselves to a life in Christ of asceticism and prayer. In such places, the faithful “pull down” the Spirit into their midst. He “comes” and “abides” where invited and where He is welcome to stay. His energy and presence then become manifest: the church thrives with joy, humble enthusiasm and love. His holiness and tangible presence is felt. Hence our challenge is to always – at all times and in every circumstance, without fail – obey His gentle voice in our hearts. And this begins by taking seriously the words of the prayer “O Heavenly King”: *come and abide in us!*

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THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT IS AN ESCHATOLOGICAL REALITY

By Father Paul Florensky

People hardly know the Holy Spirit as a person, and then only in an incomplete, dim and confused fashion. It cannot be otherwise. For a full knowledge of the Holy Spirit would make all created being entirely spirit-bearing, entirely deified, and would confer a completely realized illumination. Then history would be ended; then the fullness of time would be at hand, and all waiting would be over; then there would indeed be no more time.

But as long as history continues, only instants of illumination by the Spirit are possible; only certain individuals at certain moments know the Paraclete, when they are raised above time into eternity.

Certainly, the Holy Spirit is indeed at work in the Church. But knowledge of the Spirit has always been a pledge or reward – at special moments and with exceptional people; and this is how it will be until ‘all is fulfilled’. That is why, when reading the Church’s writings, we cannot fail to be struck by something that seems strange at first but that later, in the light of what precedes, manifests its inner necessity. It is this: that all the holy fathers and mystical philosophers speak of the importance of the idea of the Spirit in the Christian world-view, but hardly any of them explains him-

self precisely and exactly. It is evident that the holy fathers know *something*; but what is even clearer is that this knowledge is so intimate, so hidden, without echo, ineffable, that they lack the power to express it in precise language.

Even Athanasius does not make clear the meaning of the ‘procession’ (*ekporevsis*) of the Spirit, as distinct from the ‘begottenness’ (*genesis*) of the Son. Of the three personal characteristics of the divine hypostases, ‘unbegottenness’, ‘begottenness’, ‘procession’, the first two are spiritually understandable, whereas the third represents only the sign of a certain spiritual experience that is still to come.

But the closer we draw to the End of History, the more do new, hitherto invisible roseate rays of the coming Day without evening appear on the domes of the holy Church.

Our characteristic attitude towards the Holy Spirit, it seems to me, is precisely one of expectation, of hope; a gentle and reconciling hope.

From The Time of the Spirit – Readings Through the Christian Year. SVS Press, Crestwood NY, 1984, p. 163.

The Annual Almanac published by The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America in December 2010
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CUVÂNT DE SUFLET

Mai – Iunie 2010

Lucrarea Duhului Sfânt în viața noastră.

Iubiți Frați Preoți, Frați și Surori în Hristos Domnul, Suntem în cuprinsul praznicului Înălțării Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos la cer. De aceea gândul ne va fi în legătură cu Înălțarea Mântuitorului nostru Iisus Hristos.

Sărbătoarea Înălțării Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos este oarecum ultima sărbătoare în legătură cu Mântuitorul nostru. Am sărbătorit Bunavestire, Întruparea Fiului lui Dumnezeu ca om, am sărbătorit Întâmpinarea Domnului, am sărbătorit Botezul Domnului, am sărbătorit Schimbarea la Față a Domnului, am sărbătorit Intrarea în Ierusalim și am sărbătorit Înălțarea la cer a Domnului Hristos.

În legătură cu evenimentele pe care le-am sărbătorit, Sfânta noastră Biserică are o alcătuire care, vorbind cu Domnul Hristos, zice așa: *“Te-ai născut precum însuși ai voit. Te-ai arătat precum însuși ai socotit. Te-ai răstignit cu trupul, Dumnezeuul nostru. Din morți ai înviat, călcând moartea. Te-ai înălțat întru slavă, Căci te toate le îplinești și ne-ai trimis nouă pe Dumnezeuiescul Duh, ca să lăudăm și să mărim Dumnezeirea Ta”*. Cuvintele acestea din urmă, *“Ne-ai trimis nouă pe Dumnezeuiescul Duh, ca să lăudăm și să mărim Dumnezeirea Ta”*, sunt cuvinte lămuritoare în legătură cu credința noastră. Toate aceste evenimente le sărbătorim pentru că credem în ele, iar credința noastră se întemeiază pe lucrarea Duhului Sfânt în sufletele noastre. *“Ne-ai trimis nouă pe Dumnezeuiescul Duh, ca să lăudăm și să mărim Dumnezeirea Ta”*.

Deci Te mărim Doamne pentru că Duhul Sfânt ne conduce. Să luăm aminte și să sărbătorim Întruparea Ta.

Duhul Sfânt ne conduce, să preamărim nașterea Ta în trup. Duhul Sfânt ne conduce, să ne gândim la întâmpinarea pe care ți-a făcut-o Dreptul Simion la patruzeci de zile după naștere. Duhul Sfânt este acela care ne lămurește în legătură cu Botezul Tău când aveai vârsta de treizeci de ani, după trup. Duhul Sfânt este acela care pune în evidență răstignirea Ta pentru noi și pentru a noastră mântuire. Tot Duhul Sfânt este acela care ne încredințează de Învierea Ta. Duhul Sfânt este acela care ne luminează să înțelegem Înălțarea Ta la cer. Deci fără lucrarea Duhului Sfânt nu-i cu putință să înțelegem lucrurile acestea care, toate, sunt mai presus de lume, toate sunt mai presus de cuvânt.

Când vine vremea unei sărbătoriri, oricare ar fi, ne gândim la Domnul Hristos așa cum Domnul Hristos S-a manifestat în legătură cu evenimentul pe care îl sărbătorim.

La Nașterea Lui după trup ne gândim la Domnul Hristos ca prunc. La fel ne gândim, ca prunc, și la Întâmpinarea Domnului Hristos. Ne gândim la Domnul Hristos ca Cel ce a fost Botezat în Iordan de Ioan, fiind El atunci la maturitate. Ne gândim la răstignirea

Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos. Sfântul Apostol Pavel, în Epistola către Galateni, zice că a vorbi despre răstignirea Domnului Hristos e ca și când ar fi zugrăvit icoana Răstignirii. Așa ne gândim și noi. Când e vorba de Învierea Domnului Hristos ne gândim la toate câte-s scrise în Sfânta Evanghelie. Și așa facem și la Înălțarea Domnului Hristos.

Ne închipuim că suntem pe Muntele Măslinilor. Ne închipuim că-L vedem pe Domnul Hristos binecuvântând. Ne închipuim că-L vedem pe Domnul Hristos înălțându-Se în timp ce îi binecuvintează pe Apostolii Săi și pe toată lumea, și pe noi.

Așa că, la această sărbătoare a Înălțării Domnului Hristos, care ține încă, nu ca sărbătoare, ci ca vreme de pomenire a Înălțării, trebuie să avem în vedere și alceva decât simpla înălțare. Ce înseamnă că Domnul Hristos S-a înălțat la cer? După ce Domnul Hristos a împlinit toate câte s-au făcut pentru noi, S-a înălțat cu firea omenească și a dus-o la ceruri și șade de-a dreapta Tatălui. Întrebarea este: Unde-i Domnul Hristos?

Răspunsul este simplu. Cu firea omenească este într-un singur loc. Noi zicem că în cer, deși nu știm ce-i cerul. Noi zicem că-i de-a dreapta Tatălui, gândindu-ne la cinstirea pe care o are firea omenească. Însă, Domnul Hristos nu e numai om ca să fie într-un singur loc, ci este și Dumnezeu și, de aceea, este pretutindeni. Este și acum în mijlocul nostru. A fost și este de față la fiecare Sfântă Liturghie. Este în sufletul nostru, este cu noi, iar în chip tainic este în Sfânta Cuminecătură. Știm aceasta de la Domnul Hristos. El, care a zis: *“Ni s-a dat toată puterea în cer și pe pământ, drept aceea, mergând, botezați toate neamurile în numele Tatălui și al Fiului și al Sfântului Duh, învățându-le să păzească toate câte am poruncit vouă. Și iată, Eu cu voi sunt în toate zilele, până la sfârșitul veacului”* (Matei, 18-20). Deci, Domnul Hristos este cu noi, nu ne-a părăsit. Ne-a dat și pe Duhul Sfânt ca să ne încredințeze de prezența Lui în sufletele noastre, în viața noastră de toate zilele.

Ce a făcut Domnul Hristos când S-a înălțat la cer? Ne spune Sfântul Evanghelist Luca că i-a binecuvântat pe cei ce erau atunci de față și care au devenit martori ai Înălțării Domnului. Suntem și noi martori ai Înălțării Domnului. Ultimile cuvinte ale Domnului Hristos adresate ucenicilor Săi sunt: *“Îmi ve-ți fi Mie martori în Ierusalim, în toată Iudeia și Samaria și până la marginile pământului”* (Faptele Ap.1,8). Ce aveau să mărturisească ucenicii Domnului? Aveau să mărturisească faptul că Fiul lui Dumnezeu S-a făcut om pentru noi și pentru a noastră mântuire. Aveau să mărturisească că S-a răstignit pentru noi în zilele lui Ponțiu Pilat. Aveau să mărturisească, că Domnul Hristos

Cont. la pag. 21

ȘEDINȚA PROTOPOPIATULUI CANADEI DE EST



Din inițiativa Ierarhului nostru, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, în zilele de 16 și 17 aprilie a.c., s-a ținut ședința de protopopiat a protoieriei Canadei de Est. Întrunirea a fost găzduită de Biserica Sf. Ioan Evanghelistul din Toronto. Ședința a fost onorată de prezența Chiriarhului și a Prea Cucernicului Părinte Ian Pac-Urar, Ph.D., Președintele Consistoriului Spiritual și Șeful Departamentului de Educație al Episcopiei noastre. Părintele Ian a adresat celor prezenți o informare în legătură cu hotărârile Sf. Sinod al O.C.A. Și a împărtășit tuturor din experiența sa preoțească.

La ședință au participat toți preoții de la parohiile și misiunile protopopiatului.

Cu binecuvântarea Înalt Prea Sfinției Sale, adunarea a fost deschisă și condusă de Prea Cucernicul Părinte Ionel Cudrițescu, Protopopul Canadei de Est. După intonarea imnului arhieresc, a rugăciunii și a troparului învierii s-a dat citire raportului de activitate a protopopiatului, care a cuprins perioada ultimilor doi ani, de când a fost reactivat. Raportul a fost apreciat ca fiind obiectiv și consistent în informații.

Din raport s-au desprins aspecte pozitive cu privire

la activitatea pastoral-duhovnicească a preoților, remarcându-se și activitățile administrative dintre care s-au reținut: cumpărarea unui locaș de cult de către Misiunea “Îălțarea Domnului” din Montreal, lucrările de extindere de la Parohia “Sf. Gheorghe” din Toronto, de la Parohia “Sf. Cruce” din London și începerea picturii la Biserica “Sf. Ioan Botezatorul” din Kitchener.

Un aspect important al raportului l-a constituit informarea adunării despre cele trei noi misiuni înființate în anul 2009, două în zona Montreal și una în zona orașului Toronto, la care slujesc preoți numiți anul trecut de către Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel.

Subiectele dezbătute în cadrul întâlnirii au fost legate de aspectele și particularitățile pastorației pe continentul nord american, cu precădere în zona estică canadiană, unde viețuiesc mulți români ortodocși, accentul fiind pus în special pe catehizarea tinerilor prin intermediul școlilor duminicale, dar și a unor lecții religie în alte zile decât Duminica. Toate comentariile au fost pertinente și au scos în evidență rolul preotului și al Bisericii în aceste acțiuni.

Subiectele și aspectele abordate au conferit ședinței

un caracter practic, în care experiența particulară a participanților a constituit factorul dinamizator și folositor al discuțiilor.

Conferința a fost completată și cu momente de rugăciune, ca cel de vineri 16 aprilie când la ceas de seară s-a săvârșit, în prezența Ierarhului, slujba vecerniei, în biserica gazdă a întrunirii, de către soborul de preoți prezenți în frunte cu protopopul locului.

Sâmbătă la orele prânzului întrunirea s-a încheiat. Seara, Înalț Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel s-a deplasat, însoțit de părintele protopop, în zona nordică a Metropolei Toronto, în orașul Aurora, la biserica "Misiunii Sfinților 40 de Martiri din Sevastia," unde s-a săvârșit slujba vecerniei de un sobor de preoți. Cu acest prilej, Înalț Prea Sfinția Sa a rostit un frumos cuvânt de învățătură în limba română, cât și în engleză, pentru oficialitățile locale prezente la eveniment. A urmat o agapă frățească oferită de gazde.

În cea de-a patra zi a vizitei pastorale a Înalț Prea Sfințitului Părinte Arhiepiscop Nathaniel în zona orașului Toronto, Duminică 18 aprilie, s-a săvârșit

slujba Sfintei Liturghii Arhieresti în Biserica "Sf. Gheorghe" din Toronto, păstorită de către Prea Cucernicul Părinte Ioan Bunea, în cadrul căreia Ierarhul a hirotonit întru preot pe diaconul Trif Vasile pe seama Misiunii "Sf. Pantelimon" din Terrebonne – zona Montreal. După Sf. Liturghie, gazdele au oferit o masă festivă celor prezenți.

Participarea la adunarea protopopiatului nostru a Înalț Prea Sfințitului Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, a însemnat pentru clericii prezenți o adevărată binecuvântare, mai ales că Ierarhul a deschis "cămara" îndelungatei sale experiențe de arhipăstorie, în dorința părintească de a ajuta prin povești și exemple pe cei prezenți în activitatea lor preoțească.

Vizitele pastorale, cât și primirea caldă cu care a fost întâmpinat peste tot, de slujitori și de credincioși, au scos în evidență bucuria duhovnicească a tuturor de a se întâlni cu înțâistătorul Sfintei noastre Episcopii, pentru unii fiind prima lor întâlnire cu un Ierarh.

Participant

ÎNALT PREA SFINȚITE PĂRINTE, BINE AȚI VENIT!



Stăpâne, bine ați venit la noi!
Solii vestesc prin crânguri și zăvoi,
Lumina înmugurește în lumini
Și-n suflete răsar potirele de crini.

Stăpâne, ați venit cu marea iubire
În cuget, în mers, în blânda privire;

Păcatul dispare pe mal de genune
Și pacea coboară, c-o rugăciune.

Stăpâne, e ceasul de sfântă îndurare
Nu cerem prea mult, un dram de iertare;
Cărarea e-ngustă, în priviri este teamă,
Mai bate un clopot, o toacă ne cheamă...

Stăpâne, e timpul înserării,
Ca Steaua ivită în marginea zării
Cu pas de Apostol, ce dragostea împarte,
Candele-aprindeți în pragul de noapte.

Stăpâne, în vremi de răscruce-ați venit,
Vă stăm în genunchi cu suflet smerit...
Gânduri-n grabă se scurg către vamă,
Din lacrimi vor țese speranțe-n năframă.

Stăpâne, de-om fi uitați și fără de Cuvânt,
Cu fruntea bătută de ploi și de vânt,
Ridică-veți mâna spre cer pentru noi,
Că-i atâta tristețe, îndoieli și nevoi.

Stăpâne, de-om hoinări cărările lumii,
Făceți-ne semn, din mijlocul turmii,
Păstorul ce-ndrumă și oi rătăcite
Și poartă pe umeri poveri ispășite.

Stăpâne, acum sunteți printre noi!
V-ascultăm, vă privim cu ochii-amândoi.
Slăvită vă e calea, toiagul cinstit,
Înalț Prea Sfințite, Bine ați venit!

Alexandru Tomescu

VIZITA PASTORALĂ A PREA SFÎNȚITULUI EPISCOP IRINEU CU OCAZIA SFINTELOR PAȘTI 2010



Prea Sfințitul Episcop Irineu împreună cu Părinții Simion Pavel, Ioan Lupescu, Nicolae Izbașa, Sebastian Dumitrașcu și credincioșii Parohiei Nașterea Domnului după slujba Învierii.

Din încredințarea Înalț Prea Sfințitului Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, Prea Sfințitul Episcop Vicar Irineu însoțit de Părintele Ierodiacon Sebastian Dumitrașcu de la Vatra Românească au participat la Slujba Învierii în Parohia Ortodoxă Română Nașterea Domnului din Chicago, Statul Illinois, 4 aprilie 2010. Parohia Nașterea Domnului, cea mai mare Parohie Ortodoxă Românească din cuprinsul Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din America, a împlinit anul trecut 70 de ani de la fondarea ei și a avut bucuria ca pentru prima dată la Slujba Învierii să participe un Ierarh. De aceea anul acesta bucuria a fost deplină în sufletele credincioșilor care la ceas de seară au venit cu mic, cu mare, la chemarea Prea Sfințitului Episcop Irineu “Veniți de luați lumină!” , și peste cinci mii de credincioși au venit să se bucure de bucuria Învierii și să ia lumină în sufletele și în casele lor.

Dupa rânduiala slujbei Învierii s-a ieșit afară din biserică cântând cu toții “Învierea Ta Hristoase Dumnezeu, îngerii o laudă în ceruri ...”. După citirea Evangheliei și cântarea “Hristos a Înviat”, Prea Sfințitul Episcop Irineu a ținut un înălțător cuvânt de învățătură și a transmis mesajul bucuriei Praznicului tuturor celor

prezenți cu ocazia Sfințelor Paști. După intrarea în biserică s-au cântat Canonul învierii și cântările speciale din perioada Pascală, încheind cu cuvântul de învățătură al Sf. Ioan Gură de Aur.

În aceeași zi, dimineața la orele 10:30 a început Sfânta Liturghie Arhierescă săvârșită de Prea Sfințitul Episcop Irineu, asistat de către P.C. Părinte Protopop Simion Pavel, preoții asistenți Ioan Lupescu și Nicolae Izbașa, și Părintele Ierodiacon Sebastian.

La încheierea Sfintei Liturghii, după cuvântul de învățătură și de mulțumire pentru frumoasa primire și buna organizare, Prea Sfințitul Irineu a asistat la sceneta Răstignirii Domnului prezentată de copiii de la Școala Duminicală. În curtea bisericii care era plină de credincioși, Prea Sfințitul Irineu dimpreună cu preoții slujitori, au ieșit și au stropit cu aghiazmă coșurile cu cozonac și ouă roșii, care au fost aduse de credincioși, conform tradiției noastre strămoșești. A fost o zi senină, plină de bucurie în comunitatea Parohiei Nașterea Domnului.

Tot în aceeași zi, Prea Sfințitul Irineu s-a bucurat de ospitalitatea familiei părintelui Simion Pavel, acasă



Prea Sfințitul Episcop Irineu împreună cu Părinții Gheorghe Ursache și Sebastian Dumitrașcu și un grup de credincioși la Biserica Sf. Maria a doua zi de Paști.

la fiica Părintelui Simion, Simona Bucur, participând alături de ceilalți membri ai familiei, după care, tot în aceeași zi, Prea Sfințitul Episcop Irineu a poposit și în mijlocul familiilor Părintelui Nicolae Izbașa și a Părintelui Ioan Lupescu, mulțumindu-le pentru primirea caldă și omenia românească pe care nu au uitat-o.

A doua zi de Paști, luni 5 Aprilie 2010, Prea Sfințitul Irineu a săvârșit Sfânta Liturghie la Parohia Sfânta Maria din Chicago, dimpreună cu părintele Paroh Gheorghe Ursache și Ierodiaconul Sebastian. La

sfârșitul slujbei, Vlădica Irineu a ținut un cuvânt de învățătură pentru cei prezenți, iar Părintele Gheorghe Ursache a mulțumit Prea Sfințitului pentru vizita și bucuria făcută cu ocazia Sfințelor Paști, după care a urmat o agapă frățească în casa parohială oferită cu multă dragoste de familia Părintelui Ursache.

În aceeași zi după amiază, Prea Sfințitul Episcop Irineu a plecat înapoi spre casă la Vatra Românească.

A consemnat,

Ierodiacon Sebastian Dumitrașcu

Cuvânt de Suflet

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a suferit patimă, a suferit pentru noi, S-a răstignit pentru noi, a murit pe cruce. Aveau să mărturisească, că Fiul lui Dumnezeu, care S-a făcut om, a înviat din morți, a treia zi după Scripturi. Și apoi S-a înălțat la ceruri și șade de-a dreapta Tatălui. Despre aceasta trebuia să dea ei mărturie și despre aceasta trebuie să dăm și noi mărturie.

Suntem la fel ca ucenicii Domnului Hristos. Ei nu L-au văzut cum S-a născut, nu L-au văzut la nașterea Lui și totuși au mărturisit, și întruparea Fiului lui Dumnezeu, și nașterea Mântuitorului nostru Iisus Hristos. Ei, care n-au văzut aceste evenimente, le-au mărturisit totuși, au dat mărturie despre ele. Nu au fost nici la întâmpinarea Domnului Hristos, dar au fost la intrarea în Ierusalim. Erau deja de mai multă vreme ucenici ai Domnului Hristos. Au auzit pe copii strigând: *“Mărire întru cei de sus, lui Dumnezeu; Osana întru cei de sus, bine este cuvântat Cel ce vine întru numele Domnului”* (Matei 21, 9; Ioan 12, 13) Au știut despre răstignirea Domnului Iisus Hristos, deși numai unul dintre ei a fost la crucea Domnului Hristos, Sfântul Evanghelist Ioan. Au dat mărturie

toți ucenicii despre răstignirea Domnului Hristos. Au arătat și înțelesul în care Domnul Hristos a pățit, pentru ce anume a pățit.

Sfântul Apostol Pavel, care n-a văzut nici unul dintre evenimentele pe care le sărbătorim, a dat mărturie despre toate acestea prin puterea Duhului Sfânt care l-a încredințat de toate câte le-a propovăduit. Sfinții Apostoli nu au văzut nici ei învierea Domnului Hristos. Nu au văzut-o pentru că ei s-au retras atunci când Domnul Hristos a pățit. Chiar și Sfântul Evanghelist Ioan, care a rămas lângă cruce până la urmă, nu a fost învrednicit să vadă învierea Domnului Hristos. De fapt, învierea Domnului Hristos nu a văzut-o nimeni. Noi ne închipuim cum a fost. Biserica ne învață că Domnul Hristos a ieșit prin piatra pecetluită. Cine a văzut aceasta? Nu a văzut-o nimeni, și totuși dăm mărturie despre aceasta. Dăm mărturie pentru că aceasta este credința noastră. Dăm mărturie pentru că Duhul Sfânt lucrează în noi convingerea aceasta.

Iubiți Credincioși,

Nici noi nu am văzut evenimentele în care credem și pe care le propovăduim și pentru care dăm mărturie. Și totuși, dăm mărturie. De ce dăm mărturie? Pentru că suntem convinși pentru aceasta. Cine ne-a convins?

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SCRISOARE PASTORALĂ DESPRE SFÂNTA SPOVEDANIE

Iubiți Credincioși,

Găsindu-ne în vremea marelui Post s'au ivit câteva chestiuni, în legătură cu Sf. Taină a mărturisirii, cari necesită lămurire arhierească. Ele sunt:

1. Rugăciunile premergătoare spovedaniei pentru grupuri

S'a recomandat ca atunci când sunt mai mulți parohieni cari să se spovedească deodată (Consiliul Parohial, Reuniunea Doamnelor, AROY Chapters, Misiuni, Retrageri Spirituale, etc) să se fixeze timpul îndată după Vecernie, făcându-se rugăciunile premergătoare și meditația în comun.

Să nu interpretăm greșit această îndrumare, confundând rugăciunile în comun cu "spovedanie în comun", dând deslegare generală, ori, nefăcând distincție între una și alta.

Îndemnul nostru este ca, pentru grupuri, rugăciunile premergătoare să se facă în comun, dar, la sfârșitul lor, fiecare credincios să se prezinte individual la preot pentru deslegare.

2. Frecvența spovedaniei și a cuminecăturii.

Găsindu-se tot mai mulți credincioși cari vor să se bucure de împărtășire mai frecventă, eventual la fiecare Liturghie, ei pun întrebarea dacă trebuie să se spovedească de fiecare dată când se cuminecă.

Spovedania și împărtășirea sunt două Taine de sine stătătoare și, deși s'a înrădăcinat obiceiul ca să se lege una de alta, nu există un temei canonic ori opreliște specifică, ca ele să nu se facă și separate. Cea mai bună dovadă o avem în faptul că preotul și diaconul se cuminecă la fiecare Liturghie, dar nu se spovedesc tot de atâtea ori. Logic și teologic nu putem aplica o lege pentru cler și alta pentru popor.

Având însă în vedere practica recentă și pentru a nu dejosi marea Taină a Cuminecăturii prin primirea ei fără serioasă pregătire, se impune ca această problemă să se rezolve pe cale duhovnicească.

Îndemnul nostru este că dacă aveți parohieni evlavioși cari își exprimă dorința să se cuminece regulat, să nu îi descurajați printr'un refuz rece și nici să nu-i luați în derâdere. Ei vor să se apropie de Trupul Domnului și preotul are datoria să-i călăuzească în acea direcție. Luați-i deci la o parte și explicați-le importanța pregătirii pentru Sf. Cuminecătură și, dacă intuiți sinceritatea lor, dați-le permisiunea să se cuminece la fiecare Sf. Liturghie (incluzând praznicele mari), cu condiția ca din timp în timp, eventual odată pe lună, să vină și să se spovedească reînoid astfel pregătirea pentru Cuminecătură.

3. Limitele parohiale ale spovedaniei.

În ultima vreme am fost literalmente inundat cu întrebări dela credincioși dacă se pot spovedi și la alt preot decât parohul lor.

Cauzele acestei stări de lucruri sunt multe. Unele deadreptul îngrijorătoare pentru că indică lipsa unei relații duhovnicești între paroh și parohieni ori proiectarea slăbiciunilor omenești în câmpul vieții sufletești.

Indiferent însă care ar fi cauza, nu există justificare canonică pentru a opri pe un credincios să se spovedească la duhovnicul către care se simte atras. În cartea de Mărturisire, tipărită la mănăstirea Neamț și răspândită peste tot în România, se merge chiar mai departe, îndemnând pe creștin "să-și aleagă pe duhovnicul său, ... căruia să-i încredințeze sufletul spre vindecare".

Istoria ne mai învață că, până la reforma Patriarhului Nectarie, la sfârșitul secolului al-IV-lea, spovedania nici nu se făcea în taină, decum să se facă exclusiv preotului local.

În România zeci de mii de credincioși se duceau ocazional ori în pelerinaj la mănăstiri, cu scopul principal ca să se spovedească și să se cuminece și n'am auzit niciodată ca pentru asta cineva să fi fost muștrat sau pedepsit.

Aici în America, Bisericele Ortodoxe, incluzând Episcopia noastră, organizăm misiuni în post, tocmai cu scopul ca să dăm credincioșilor șansa unei alegeri a duhovnicului.

La Facultatea de Teologie din Chișinău, duhovnicul Popescu-Moșoaia îndemna pe studenți ca cel puțin odată pe an să se spovedească la alt duhovnic decât preoții profesori de la Facultate.

Granițele parohiale administrative și responsabilitatea unică a parohului față de cei încredințați păstoririi sale nu include autoritatea de a opri pe cineva să se spovedească la cine dorește. Reticența ori opoziția categorică de a permite unui parohian să se spovedească la alt preot pornesc, mi se pare, și din interpretarea greșită a motivului. Vor fi cazuri unde motivul stă în atitudinea personală a individului față de preot, dar sunt și cazuri când unii vreau alt duhovnic tocmai pentru că sunt în strânse relații personale cu parohul. Mărturisirea trebuie să fie sinceră și fără nici un fel de rezervă. Mărturisindu-se cuiva foarte aproape omul se simte ispitit să treacă cu vederea anumite fapte. Că acest motiv este îndreptățit putem deduce și din practica generală că preotul să nu fie duhovnicul preotesei.

Iar din punct de vedere pastoral, practic și psihologic nimic nu va câștiga parohul care încearcă

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EDUCAREA CREȘTINĂ A FAMILIEI

Sfinții Mucenici Leontie, Ipatie și Teodul

18 Iunie

Sfântul Mucenic Leontie a trăit în timpul împăratului Vespasian, prigonitor al creștinilor, locuind în cetatea Tripol din Elada. Era cunoscut ca un soldat viteaz, puternic, bun la inimă și creștin care atrăgea și pe alții la creștinism. Auzind de dânsul un prigonitor al creștinilor, senatorul Adrian, a trimis un grup de soldați conduși de tribunul Ipatie să-l aresteze pe Leontie. Dar ajungând aproape de cetatea Tripol, tribunul Ipatie s-a îmbolnăvit foarte rău, aproape să moară. După trei zile de suferință a venit la tribunul îngerul Domnului și i-a spus că pentru a se vindeca va trebui ca, împreună cu toți soldații lui, uitându-se la cer să strige de trei ori: «Dumnezeul lui Leontie, ajută-mi mie!» Neștiind ce să creadă, Ipatie s-a sfătuit cu prietenii lui și au decis că ceea ce li se cere nu este un lucru greu. Deși nu înțelegeau ce se întâmplă, din dragoste pentru tribun erau gata să facă ceea ce li se cerea. Deci s-au strâns toți soldații și împreună cu tribunul Ipatie au strigat: «Dumnezeul lui Leontie, ajută-mi mie!» și imediat tribunul s-a vindecat.

Senatorul Adrian se pregătea să meargă la Tripoli să-l judece pe Leontie cel pe care Ipatie trebuia să-l aresteze. Dar, uimit de cele întâmplate, tribunul Ipatie împreună cu prietenul său Teodul s-au hotărât să lase soldații unde se aflau, iar ei doi, să se ducă înainte, în cetate, să-l afle pe Leontie. Și mergând ei, le-a ieșit înaintea Leontie și i-a poftit în casa sa, fără să le spună cine este. Iar după ce s-au ospătat bine, le-a spus că el este Leontie și știe că au venit să-l aresteze. Atunci cei doi și-au cerut iertare și i-au povestit întâmplarea cu îngerul și i-au cerut să le explice. Iar Leontie, văzându-i cu inima curată s-a rugat la Dumnezeu pentru ei și a început a le vorbi despre creștinism și inimile lor s-au umplut de dragoste pentru Domnul nostru Iisus Hristos. Și «... rugându-se sfântul cu căldură, un nor luminos – a coborât peste tribunul Ipatie și peste Teodul, prietenul lui, și umbrindu-i, a lăsat ploaie peste ei și i-a botezat. Aceasta văzând-o sfântul, a chemat peste dânsii, pe când îi ploua, numele Prea Sfintei Treimi, al Tatălui și al Fiului și al Sfântului Duh.» (Viețile Sfinților pe Iunie). Și așa au fost botezați.

Când senatorul Adrian a venit în cetate și a aflat că tribunul și prietenul său, care trebuia să-l aresteze pe creștinul Leontie, au devenit ei înșiși creștini, s-a infuriat peste măsură și a dat ordin ca Ipatie, Teodul și Leontie să fie arestați. Cu toate chinurile la care au fost supuși, nici Ipatie, nici Teodul și nici Leontie nu au vrut să renunțe la creștinism. Pentru a pune frică în toți cei ce ar fi dorit să devină creștini, Adrian a dat ordin ca, după multe chinuri, tribunului Ipatie și prietenului său Teodul să li se taie capetele cu securea. «...iar Mucenicul Leontie fiind întins și legat de patru pari, a fost bătut cumplit de niște ostași și în acele

munci grele și-a dat sufletul său cel sfânt în mâinile lui Dumnezeu.» (Viețile Sfinților pe Iunie)

Sfinții Mucenici Leontie, Ipatie și Teodul se sărbătoresc pe 18 Iunie în fiecare an.

Întrebări pentru părinți:

- Îngerul Domnului i-a spus tribunului că pentru a se vindeca va trebui să se roage la Dumnezeu împreună cu toți oamenii lui. Ne-am gândit noi vreodată cât de important este să ne rugăm nu numai pentru noi ci și pentru alții? Ne rugăm noi în fiecare zi pentru soțul nostru/soția noastră, pentru fiecare din copiii noștri, pentru părinții și bunicii noștri care mai trăiesc și pentru iertarea celor ce au murit? Din dragoste creștinească sau din milă, ne rugăm noi pentru un prieten care e bolnav sau pentru un om complet necunoscut pe care îl vedem pe stradă cersind? Îmi amintesc cât de mult m-a emoționat odată, demult, după ce abia ieșisem din spital când, o fetiță de patru ani m-a întrebat dacă am fost bolnavă pentru că ea și familia ei se rugaseră pentru mine. I-am învățat pe copiii noștri să se roage și pentru alții? Cred că nu există în lumea asta nimic mai frumos decât o rugăciune pe care o faci pentru altul. Dacă toți oamenii din lume și-ar învăța copiii aceasta, cred că omenirea ar arăta cu totul altfel. Putem face greșala de a nu-i învăța pe copiii noștri aceasta? Categorie, nu !
- Deși știa că au ordin să-l aresteze pentru că este creștin, Leontie i-a invitat în casa sa pe tribun și pe prietenul său și nu le-a dat doar hrana materială, ci le-a dat și hrană spirituală vorbindu-le fără frică despre creștinism. Ce am fi făcut noi în locul lui? Desigur, ne-am fi ascuns de cei doi. Ce facem noi, în zilele noastre, când stăm de vorbă cu cineva? Nu cumva, pentru a fi “politically correct” evităm orice discuție referitoare la religie? Nu cumva, pentru a arăta bine în fața șefului sau a unui grup de prieteni pretindem că de fapt nici noi nu prea credem în Dumnezeu și râdem de glumele proaste care se fac despre biserică, preoți, religie? Câți dintre noi au curajul să protesteze când cineva face de față cu noi glume proaste despre lucruri sfinte? Câți dintre copiii noștri au puterea să părăsească un grup care râde de religia lor? Câți dintre noi au destulă personalitate încât să închidă televizorul în momentul în care s-a făcut o glumă proastă la adresa creștinismului?
- Cât de puternică este familia noastră în credință? Probabil nu toți membrii familiei cred la fel de intens. Cei din familie care sunt mai puternici în credință fac tot ce pot să-i ajute pe cei mai slabi? Nu cumva ar trebui să-i ajutăm mai mult pe copiii

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Educarea Creștină ...

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noștri din licee și mai ales din universități care sunt expuși la mult mai multe influențe negative și sunt mult mai derutați decât noi, ceilalți?

- Oare nu ar trebui să ne ajutăm mai mult unii pe alții și să ne rugăm mai mult unii pentru alții pentru a ne salva sufletele noastre și ale copiilor noștri?

Să ne ajute Dumnezeu !

Maica Preoteasă

Sedința Protopopiatului ...

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să forțeze un act duhovnicesc. Spovedania, prin însăși natura ei, este cea mai intimă manifestare a sufletului. Ea nu se poate legaliza, încercui ori folosi ca instrument de pedeapsă pentru nimeni.

Având în vedere cele de mai sus, îndemnul nostru este ca să faceți cunoscut, prin anunț public și prin buletinul parohial, că parohienii cari doresc pot să se spovedească oricărui preot canonic și că pe baza acestei mărturisiri pot primi Sf. Cuminecătură fie în biserică fie acolo unde s'au spovedit.

În speranța că veți da cuvenita ascultare acestor îndemnuri pastorale, primiți arhieresti binecuvântări și doriri de tot binele.

+Arhiepiscop VALERIAN

9 Aprilie, 1976

Cuvânt de Suflet

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Nu putem zice, că nu știm cine ne-a convins, și totuși, într-un fel, știm cine ne-a convins. Lucrarea Duhului Sfânt în sufletul nostru, în ființa noastră. Întrebarea rămâne însă, până unde ține convigerea noastră? Cât suntem de neclintii în convigerea noastră?

Ar putea spune Domnul Hristos: *“Fericit ești, că nu trup și sânge ți-a descoperit ție aceasta, ci Tatăl Meu cel din ceruri”* (Matei 16, 17). Ar putea spune despre unii, dar despre alții nu. Oricum e sigur că numai Duhul Sfânt este acela care ne încredințează și despre Înălțarea Domnului Hristos, ne face să fim martori ai Înălțării Domnului Hristos.

La Înălțarea Domnului Hristos se spune că Domnul Hristos i-a binecuvântat pe cei ce erau atunci de față, și i-a binecuvântat ca pe niște martori ai Înălțării Lui. Dar Domnul Hristos ne binecuvintează și pe noi. Și noi suntem martori ai Înălțării și suntem sub binecuvântarea lui Dumnezeu.

Ea se revarsă peste noi la Sfintele Slujbe, se revarsă mai ales la Sfânta Liturghie. Este o prelungire a binecuvântării de la înălțarea Domnului ceea ce primim noi, ca binecuvântare, prin mijlocire preotească.

Să ne gândim la toate acestea, iubiți Frați Preoți și iubiți Credincioși. Să avem în vedere toate acestea și,

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mai ales, să fim încredințați de toate evenimentele. *“Te-ai înălțat întru slavă, Hristoase, Dumnezeuul nostru, bucurie făcând ucenicilor cu făgăduința Sfântului Duh, încredințându-se ei prin binecuvântare, că Tu ești Fiul lui Dumnezeu, Mântuitorul lumii”*.

Să ne gândim mereu la aceste cuvinte. Să ne cercetăm pe noi dacă avem bucuria din credința noastră în Înălțarea Domnului Hristos, dacă avem încredințarea pe care o dă Duhul Sfânt care S-a pogorât peste Sfinții Apostoli. Să avem încredințarea că Mântuitorul nostru Iisus Hristos este Fiul lui Dumnezeu.

Crezând toate acestea, să fim mai buni.

Cu părințești binecuvântări,

+ IRINEU
Episcop Vicar