

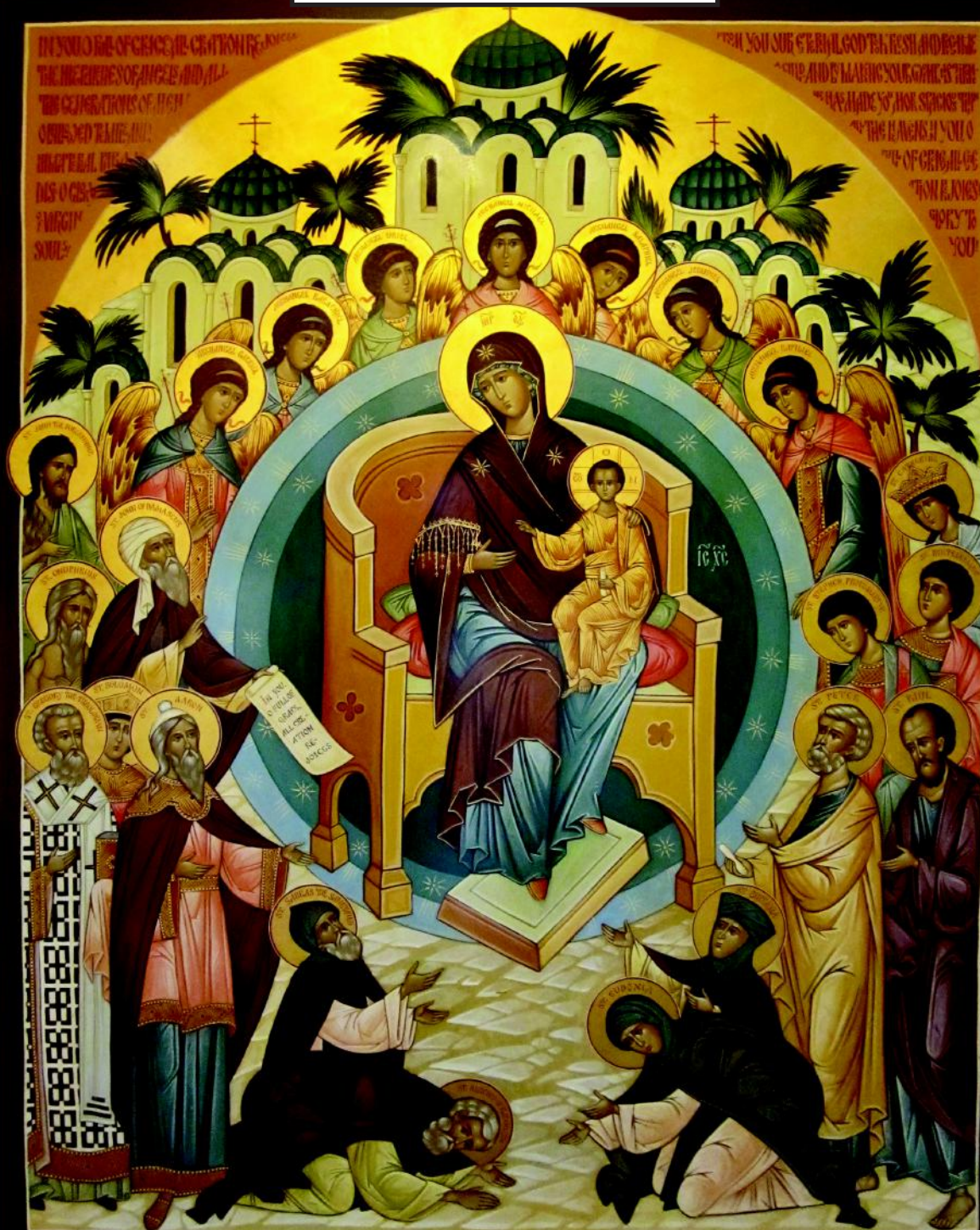
JULY/AUGUST 2013

# SOLIA

THE HERALD

JACKSON, MI

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# SOLIA

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**COVER:** This icon, "All Creation Rejoices in You," shows in visual form the contents of the famous hymn written to the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary by St. John Damascene in the 8th century: "All of Creation rejoices in you, O full of grace - the assembly of angels and the human race. O sanctified Temple and spiritual Paradise, the glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate and became a child - our God before the ages! He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of Creation rejoices in you, O full of grace. Glory to you."

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Sunday, October 6, 2013  
9:00 a.m. - Akathist, 3rd and 6th Hour  
9:45 a.m. - Vesting of the Hierarch  
10:00 a.m. - Hierarchal Divine Liturgy  
12:00 p.m. - Reception

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# “BE PREPARED”

by Psa. Lillian Lupu

*“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out’. ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour” (Matthew 25:1-13).*

Lord Baden Powell used the motto “be prepared” when he instituted the Boy Scouts and later the Girl Guides movement which taught young men and women life skills. In Ezekiel, we hear: “Prepare yourself and be ready” (38:7). The reading in Matthew about the 10 virgins waiting for the Bridegroom is read during Holy Week. The messages are all very clear: be prepared.

It was Thursday, June 20, 2013. We had had a large amount of rain, and the rivers looked swollen. I remember looking out my office window and thinking that the Bow River seemed to flow faster than usual, and it was quite a bit higher than I had seen in a while. A few of my colleagues gathered by the window and commented that the sky looked like it was going to rain again, but we surely didn’t need any more rain. It did start to rain - heavily. By 12 noon, a State of Emergency was declared in Calgary. Both the Bow and the Elbow Rivers had breached their banks. None of us left early from work, because we had been through this before; and, we didn’t feel alarmed. There was a large outdoor banquet that had been scheduled for that evening, and there was some grumbling and disagreement on its account; because we had been through this before, and it never interrupted any of our plans. News about some communities flooding down river started coming through, but that too had happened before.

By the time the evening news came on, several more

neighborhoods had been flooded, and people were being evacuated from their homes. It was starting to sink in. This was not like what we had been through before. I now started to wonder how I was going to get to work in the morning with all the road closures that were being announced. The morning news answered my question. All of downtown Calgary was under water, and the city was shut down.

What ensued was a myriad of increasing disasters: neighborhoods flooding and unbelievable scenes on television. Where we had walked just yesterday on our lunch hour was now underneath four feet of water. No one had ever expected all this to happen. “It came so

fast” was the general comment. No one had been prepared for such devastation.

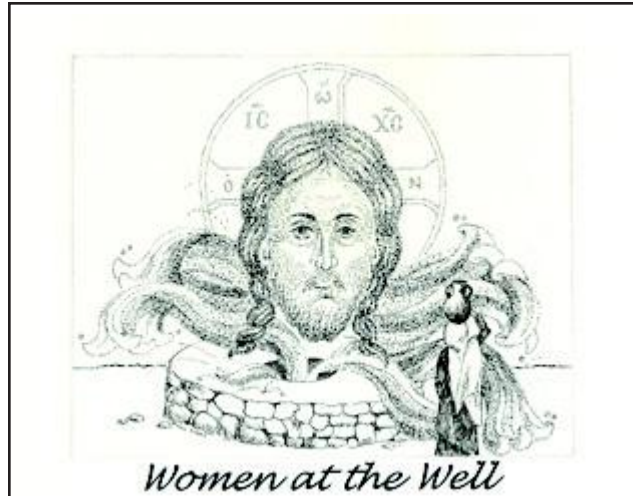
The lack of preparation for the disaster that occurred in Calgary made me wonder: How prepared are we for the moment Christ will come again, or for the moment He has chosen for us to leave this earth? It will come in an instant when we are least prepared, if we do not watch faithfully. We tend to ignore the signs, the messages given to us, and believe that that we have been through this before, day after day, and

know the outcome. “*You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times*” (Matthew 16:3).

We put off serving our Lord with prayer, fasting and attending church, because we have “gone through this before.” We always think that there will be lots of time, or simply ignore the possibility that the end may be near. The disaster in Calgary was a very vivid example of God’s mighty hand. It was also a very graphic example that what we treasure can be taken away in an instant, and that we should always be prepared for our physical and, more importantly, our spiritual life. Disasters can take place at any moment even in our spiritual life. We have to be prepared so that the outcome is not devastating. “The spirit must be sober, in order to sense the danger, and vigilant, to recognize from which side the danger is coming and from whom,” wrote St. Nikolai Velimirovich.

We have to guard our spiritual nature, our soul, which is eternal. We need to serve our Lord and pray for our Salvation. We should be prepared (vigilant) with oil for our lamps (energy for good works and for prayer), in order to enter into the wedding with the bridegroom. “*Believe me, if God revealed to us the disasters to which we were exposed and from which He protected us, our*

*Cont. on page 6*





# A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

## Descent of the Holy Spirit Romanian Orthodox Church Elkins Park (Philadelphia), Pennsylvania



**Clergy and Faithful with His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel after the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy**

During the first hot week of this summer in Philadelphia, our parish made the final preparations for a very special event in the life of our community: 100 years since the founding of the church. With a few hundred people expected to participate, the preparations were in full swing: the final touches were put on the new iconostas, the church and hall were decked with flowers, bows and pom-poms, and the kitchen sent enveloping aromas of Romanian cooking.

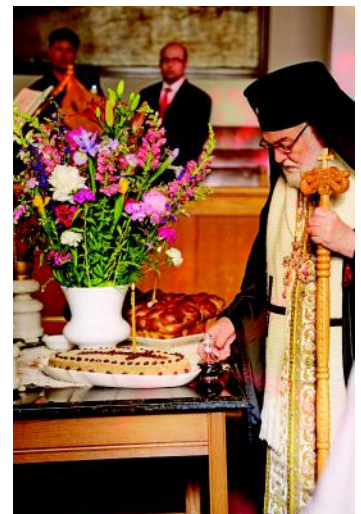
The events started on a sunny Saturday afternoon, June 1, 2013. We had among us visiting priests from near and far: Fr. Milorad Orlic of the Serbian Church in Elkins Park; Fr. Traian Stafuc, of Hazleton, PA; Fr. Ioan Proteasa of New York, NY. Fr. Adrian Grigoras, along with the visiting priests, welcomed our guest of honor, His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel. Andrei Robu and Oana Grigoras, two of the youngsters of our church, had an offering of bread and salt, the traditional Romanian symbol of hospitality.

The Vespers were followed by a Memorial Service for the departed in our parish, for all those who have put their heart, soul and hard work into establishing, building and maintaining our church for the past 100 years. There really is no church without the people who worship in it and live their lives around it. There are the

people who came here over 100 years ago, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They dreamt of a life in America, for themselves, for their children and their children's children. This was a life in a new country, full of opportunities, but also a life that maintained their traditions, their Romanian language and especially their Orthodox faith. The people remembered in the Memorial Service are the reason we could stand in our beautiful church, on such a unique occasion, and celebrate 100 years of history in the making.

In the warm afternoon sun, the priests and congregation moved outside for the blessing of the new *troița*, which now graces the front yard of our church. A reception for all the guests followed in the Church Great Hall, with Roma-

*Cont. on page 16*



**Archbishop Nathaniel at the Memorial Service**

SOLIA JULY/AUGUST 2013



# 65TH NATIONAL A.R.F.O.R.A. CONGRESS



**Delegates to the ARFORA Congress with His Grace, Bishop Irineu.**

The 65th National A.R.F.O.R.A. Congress was held on July 4-7, 2013 at the Vatra in Grass Lake, Michigan. This was the first year when all auxiliaries (ARFORA, AROY and The Orthodox Brotherhood) met at the same time, in the same place. "Vatra Romaneasca" was the obvious location to be chosen for this event. The planning for the weekend events took about nine months and required a lot of time and effort from a very dedicated group of people, led by Ms. Teva Regule.

The weekend activities began with the church service on Thursday afternoon, followed by a picnic and the ARFORA Executive Board meeting in the evening.

On Friday morning, the registration of the delegates continued, and the first session of the ARFORA Congress started. His Grace Bishop Irineu, the spiritual advisor for A.R.F.O.R.A., opened the Congress with a prayer. Teva Regule, the Chairperson for the weekend events, addressed the delegates. Lucy Pop, A.R.F.O.R.A. President, also addressed the Congress and welcomed the delegates. The Auxiliaries represented were: "Holy Nativity", Chicago, IL; "Holy Cross", Hermitage, PA; "St. Mary Cathedral", Cleveland, OH; "St. Mary", Chicago, IL; "Holy Trinity", Youngstown, OH; "Presentation of our Lord", Fairlawn, OH; "Saint Nicholas", Alliance, OH; "St. George Cathedral", Southfield MI; "Sts. Peter and Paul", Dearborn Heights, MI; "Exaltation of the Holy Cross," Phoenix, AZ; "Descent of the Holy Spirit," Merrillville, IN; "St. Mary," St. Paul, MN; "St. Mary," Falls Church, VA.

ARFORA awarded an Undergraduate Scholarship to Ana M. Oancea of Grass Lake, Michigan, in the amount

of \$1,000. We continued to support the Monasteries, Seminarians, the Vatra Summer Camps, the widowed Preotese and the Episcopate Mission Fund. Last year, we worked on a project to update the Bishop's residence at the Vatra. The living room furniture was quite old and needed to be updated. We collected \$5,000 and paid for the new furniture. Another project was to send Christmas gifts to the Romanian soldiers fighting in Afghanistan. The gifts have been received with much appreciation and thankfulness. Our main focus is organizing new auxiliaries and encouraging the existing auxiliaries to be more active on the national level.

During the ARFORA luncheon, our guest speaker was Ps. Stefanie Yova-Yazge, who gave a very interesting presentation about the role of women in the Church. After the luncheon, we had the third session of the Congress. At the end of the meeting, we had elections of the new board members. The slate of the new board was presented to the Congress by His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel. The new Executive Board is: President, Adela Price; Vice President, Georgie Washington; Secretary, Deb Moga; Treasurer, Mary Sankey; Auditors, Esther Pora and Adelina Balog; Immediate Past President, Lucy Pop; Members at Large: Louise Gibb, Corina Phillips, Cristiana Drimboi, Dorina Riscutta, Ps. Ana Lupescu, and Ps. Anca Morar.

The day concluded with Vespers, followed by a nice dinner. After the dinner, everybody was invited to St. Mary's chapel for the "Oratorical Contest" and the "Bible Challenge," which was a lot of fun. Teams of three

*Cont. on page 6*



# A LIVING HERITAGE: THE FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCE

“Vatra Romaneasca”, July 4-7, 2013

During the Fourth of July weekend, 2013, a very special event took place at the “Vatra,” the headquarters and hearth of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.

The event was prepared carefully by a committee of generous and dedicated faithful, a committee chaired by Ms. Teva Regule. The event, the “Family Life Conference,” aimed to gather Romanian-American Orthodox faithful of all ages and offer them an occasion to reflect on their faith and their commitment to it; and, to work out practical ways to live it.

The Conference was also an opportunity to transmit a strong and unequivocal statement, that the “Vatra” remains the headquarters of the Romanian-American Orthodox faithful in the New World, and that it has its own particular identity and history. With its more than a century of history, the Romanian-American community is part of American history and the American nation; it is a community that has a heritage worth being preserved and shared with fellow Americans.

The Conference also served a number of practical purposes. The auxiliary organizations of the Episcopate, ARFORA, AROY and the Orthodox Brotherhood held their annual conferences, elected their boards and planned their programs for the coming year. In addition, a number of “workshops” were occasions for education, exchanging new ideas, and an opportunity to advance new ways for better promoting the faith and the way to practice it. A number of very interesting presentations were made, including: the beginning of Romanian-American monasticism and its role today; Orthodox Christian Fellowship and many others.

Being the first Conference of this type, the number of participants was unexpectedly large. If the character of the Conference, its very strict and tight schedule and the very challenging subjects covered are all considered, this high number of participants is more than impressive. It is a fact that in matters of truth and conscience, the only valid criterion is the moral high ground. Most definitely, the participants of the Conference held that moral high ground.

During the Conference, the entire “Vatra” and its facilities were used at full capacity. The “Valerian Trifa Romanian-American Heritage Center,” though not part of the Episcopate but nevertheless a good neighbor, made its facilities available on Friday, July 5th.

The time of an extended weekend was very wisely

## 65<sup>TH</sup> ARFORA *Cont. from page 4*

participated in the Bible Challenge, and we had a team representing ARFORA. The topic was the Gospel of St. Mark. After the Bible Challenge, everybody went into the pavilion for the “Romanians Got Talent” program, which was followed by dancing. All stayed and enjoyed the Romanian music and dancing until midnight.

On Saturday morning, the new Executive Board met to discuss the plans for the new term. In the afternoon, there were a number of seminars on different topics, and everybody attended the ones that were of interest to them. On Saturday evening, we all went to the Cotillion (presentation of the Debutantes), followed by dancing. St. Mary’s Church from Chicago prepared and served a very good dinner of Romanian skinless sausage (mititei) and other delicacies. All had a very good time and enjoyed each other’s company.

On Sunday morning, His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel and His Grace Bishop Irineu concelebrated the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy, followed by a Farewell luncheon. Ron Muresan was the MC, and Bishop Irineu gave the Invocation. President James Carabina of the Orthodox Brotherhood, President Adela Price of ARFORA, and Secretary Jessica Precop of AROY gave short speeches, as did Teva Regule, the Chairperson of the event. The main speaker was His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel.

We thank the ladies from The Presentation of Our Lord in Akron, OH, who prepared and served coffee, crepes and other delicacies in the coffee shop throughout the weekend. Heartfelt thanks are offered to all who worked tirelessly to make sure everything ran smoothly, starting with the registration, the logistics of all events, the cooking team, and all who helped in one way or another. It was a group effort that contributed to the success of this weekend, and we cannot wait to come back to the Vatra in future years.

*Axinia Lucia (Lucy) Pop*  
National ARFORA President, 2009-2013

## “Be Prepared” *Cont. from page 3*

*whole lives would not suffice to offer Him thanks.” – H.H. Pope Shenouda*

*For photos on the floods in Calgary, Alberta Canada, watch this YouTube video: <http://youtu.be/s4Ktj5Uosco>.*

used by those who attended the event. I am convinced that all of the participants left enriched and able to better serve the Orthodox Church and better represent the Romanian-American community. They also showcased “Vatra” at its best and then some.

**Alexandru Nemoianu**  
V.D. Trifa Heritage Center Historian



# PRIMATES, REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL CHURCHES ISSUE STATEMENT DEFENDING PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

[MOSCOW, RUSSIA – OCA (July 26, 2013)] At an unprecedented gathering in the Moscow Kremlin on July 24, 2013, the Primates and Representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, after which a statement was issued on the occasion of the 1025th Anniversary of Rus’.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, was among those who signed the statement, the text of which reads as follows:

**“We, heads and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, who have come to Moscow on the occasion of the celebration of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Russia at the invitation of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, consider it our duty to raise our voice in defense of our Christian brothers subjected to persecution for their faith in various parts of the world today.**

**“Every day thousands of believers in Christ are being tortured and driven out of their native lands; many people meet their death.**

**“News about tortures and murders are coming from Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India. In Kosovo, religious shrines are being defiled, many churches have been destroyed, and many people are deprived of the opportunity to visit the graves of their relatives and to pray to God in the land of their ancestors.**

**“The situation in the Middle East causes deep concern. Many countries of this region are swept with a wave of violence and terror, with Christians falling victim to it. Libya, where there are almost no Christians left, is breaking into warring tribes. Terrorist acts go on in Iraq, where one tenth of the former one and a half million Christians has left. The situation in Egypt is getting more and more alarming as the conflict there has entered into another bloody phase and the Christian population flees the country in a mass exodus. Grief and sufferings have befallen families of thousands of ordinary people. As a rule, the first to suffer from unfolding conflicts are the most unpro-**



**A prayer service near the monument to Vladimir the Great held as part of the celebration of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus. © RIA Novosti. Alexey Furman.**

**tected groups of the population including ethnic and religious minorities.**

**“In September 2010, the first meeting of the Orthodox Primates of the Middle East region took place in Cyprus. The Primates expressed their deep concern over the situation in this region and the future of Christians in the area. The same concern was expressed at the similar meetings in Jordan in August 2011, in Constantinople in September 2011, and in Cyprus in March 2012. The statement in support of suffering Christians in the Middle East was adopted at the meeting of the heads and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, held in Moscow in November 2011.**

**“The situation in Syria is particularly tragic today. In the heat of the fratricidal war, Christians, as well as representatives of other religious groups, are massacred, driven out of their native cities, towns and villages, out of the places where they used to live for centuries in peace with people of other religious traditions.**

**“Paramilitary groups do not hesitate to use every possible means to achieve their goals. Their radical members carry it too far in their crimes. Horrific scenes of violence, public executions, humiliation**

*Cont. on page 13*



# ANNUAL CAMP VATRA FOR SENIORS HELD AT VATRA ROMANEASCA



**Camp Staff and Students with His Grace, Bishop Irineu, Fr. Dan Hoarste (Director) and V. Rev. Fr. Alin Munteanu.**

In keeping with our tradition of over 60 years of summer camps, once again this year from July 14 to July 20, the Mother of God, the Protectress of the Vatra, called and gathered in her loving arms teens from many corners of our diocese to come and participate in the Annual Camp Vatra for Seniors. With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, we gathered to learn about our faith, to pray as one united body and to get to know other young Orthodox Christians in a peaceful place that many of us call “home.” Upon His Eminence’s appointment, I directed the camp session this year, assisted by Very Rev. Fr. Alin Munteanu from Arizona, along with a group of talented and dedicated young men and women as part of the staff. We provided a wide range of activities, spiritual, educational and recreational, all centered around the theme: **“We are the Temple of the Living God”** (2 Cor. 6:16).

The heart of the camp’s life was the spiritual experience of drawing closer to God, actualized in the daily morning and evening prayer services held in the historic Pioneer Chapel of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. Those daily services contained an Epistle and Gospel reading stemming from our camp theme, read by the teens, and reflected upon briefly at the end of the service by the serving clergy. Besides the daily communal prayers, other liturgical celebrations included: the Small Blessing of the Water on the opening night of the camp on Sunday, July 14, when the entire campus was blessed with the holy water; a memorial prayer service for the departed family members of campers and staff, and even

for some fellow campers who have passed into eternal life, held in the cemetery on Wednesday, July 17; on Friday afternoon, there was the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Confession, being an experience of great value for the campers who allowed themselves to draw personally and freely even closer to God; on Friday evening, we celebrated Great Vespers with Litia for the feast of Saint Elias chanted by our campers under the guidance of Doamna Preoteasa Sonia Munteanu and Ms. Jessica Precop; and then finally, the Divine Liturgy on Saturday, July 20 for the feast of the Prophet Elias.

The educational aspect of the camp was centered upon two interactive sessions. In the morning class, entitled “Orthodox Life (OL),” led by the priests, the teens explored the story of Creation with the focus on the fall and the redemption of humanity and what it means for us here and now as life in Christ our Lord. The evening session, the “Hang Time” with the priests, divided into two groups of twelve campers with each of the priests – Fr. Dan and Fr. Alin - was an occasion of direct interaction for the teens to discuss matters of importance to them in a relaxed context centering upon the theme: “The Fruits of the Spirit.” Besides those sessions, additional occasions of learning were given throughout the week: on Wednesday, a visit to the offices of the Chancery where we were welcomed by Archdeacon David, our Chancellor, who introduced us to the staff in the office and gave us a tour of the ethnic museum, providing a short history of the diocese and about Romanian traditions; on Friday morning, the campers heard a presentation given by Very



Rev. Fr. Romey Rosco from Dearborn Heights on the Ten Commandments and the Sacrament of Confession, engaging in a discussion afterwards; and in the afternoon of the same day, the campers baked the prosphora for the next day's Divine Liturgy under the guidance of Doamna Preoteasa Mary Ellen Rosco who shared with them the way the holy bread is made in preparation for the Liturgy. It was a most valuable experience as each of the campers baked a small bread to offer for the service.

The camp experience was enriched further by pilgrimages to the two monasteries nearby. On Monday, July 15, we were graciously hosted at the Dormition Monastery by Mother Abbess Gabriella who welcomed us in the newly-built monastery church, offering to the campers words of wisdom about the monastic life and educating us about traditional Orthodox architecture and iconography. Later in the afternoon, Mother Macrina held an impromptu discussion with the teens in the chapel of the monastery, challenging them to turn to God for help, to look to Him for support in all kinds of need and not rely on the new and modern ways of the world which can sometimes be destructive to the young soul. On Wednesday, July 17, the camp went on our second pilgrimage to the Holy Ascension Monastery in Clinton, where His Grace Bishop Irineu – the Auxiliary Bishop and Abbot of the Monastery – welcomed us with love and hospitality. After taking a tour of the beautiful and scenic grounds of the monastery, we stopped in the monastery chapel where the campers sang along with the Fathers of the monastery the service of daily Vespers. At the end, His Grace Bishop Irineu offered to the teens encouraging words, reminding all of us to be close to God and keep him in our hearts (“să nu uitați de Dumnezeu și de rugăciune / Do not forget about God and prayer”), and then giving all of us the chance to venerate the relics of the “friends of God/the saints” which the monastery has for veneration. We remained for supper at the monastery where the brotherhood prepared a lenten meal for us.

Besides the spiritual and educational aspects of the camp experience, we provided many recreational activities diverse in content and purpose: ice-breakers for the debut of the camp in order to get to know one another and about one another; the Arts and Crafts burned matches cross project on Monday evening; and even a choir practice session on Tuesday; we didn't miss the organized sports almost every evening; and of course, the biggest hit of the week - the Camp Olympics on Tuesday afternoon - where priests and campers teamed up for the competition with all kinds of relays and challenges ending with the camp-wide water balloon throw. We spent a refreshing Thursday afternoon swimming at Portage Lake; and in the evening, we held the camp dance to Romanian and American tunes. On our last night, the counselors organized a slideshow presentation and a review of the intense camp week for all of us to reflect upon and even laugh about the happenings of the days at camp.

The week came to an end very quickly. On Saturday morning, our last day, the Feast of Saint Elias, the whole

camp gathered in the upstairs chapel of the Vatra for the closing Divine Liturgy. Once more, the opportunity to teach and share liturgical knowledge with the campers was fulfilled by having the service of the Preparation of the Holy Gifts – the Proskomedia – done in the middle of the Church so all those present could witness it. It was a beautiful experience to have the teens watch it and participate in it by offering the names of their loved ones for commemoration. As the camp director, I delivered the sermon at the Divine Liturgy, thanking the campers for their participation and encouraging them to be strong and firm in their faith with hope in the Lord. I also challenged them to build their relationship with God more and more every day, to beautify “the temple of the living God” with the tools they received in this short time at camp, and not to be afraid to be beacons of the light of Christ in the world.

The camp officially closed with the lunch offered to family and friends and all those who came to the Vatra for the closing of the camp week. At the end of the meal, each camp participant received a certificate of attendance, a prayer book, a prayer rope and a small icon of the Mother of God, the Protectress of our camp. Words of gratitude were expressed to: our hierarchs, His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel and His Grace Bishop Irineu for their support and vision of this camp program, to the Chancery staff for their assistance and administrative support, to all the staff members who through their love and dedication made the camp experience a safe and enjoyable one for all – Fr. Alin Munteanu (spiritual father and instructor), Psia. Sonia Munteanu (nurse), Mrs. Rodica Nemes (cook), Mr. David Stefanescu (nurse and lifeguard), Ms. Jessica Precop (Dorm mother and Arts and Crafts) and Ms. Bethany Avramaut (Dorm mother), Mr. Michael Pacurar (Dorm Father and Recreational Activities Coordinator), Mr. David Grecu (Dorm Father, Sports and Maintenance coordination), Ms. Julia Balaie (hostess), Ms. Elizabeth Kalugar (hostess), Ms. Rachel Hildreth (hostess).

We are grateful to all the parish priests who encouraged the young members of their communities to come to the Vatra for camp this year and who are continuously giving us support through their prayers. Our appreciation goes to all the parents who trusted us to provide a wholesome, fun and worthwhile experience for their teens at camp. This year, our campers came from near and far; and I am proud to say that it was a great group of inspiring teens, who love God and life and exhibited it in a beautiful and meaningful way among themselves and to all of us, clergy and staff. Our Senior Camp Vatra participants were: **Dacia Munteanu** (Detroit, Michigan); **Stefan Kleinhenz** (St. Spyridon GOC, San Diego, California); **Alexandru Niculescu** (St. Nicholas, Troy, Michigan); **Alexandra Darling** (St. Mary of Egypt, Indianapolis, Indiana); **Christopher Man** and **Cristina Marila** (St. Mary, Chicago, Illinois); **Lisa Heisler**, **Sarah McCormick**, **Julia Kalugar**, **Zachary Kalugar**,

*Cont. on page 11*



# SAINT NICHOLAS CAMP 2013

This year, St. Nicholas Camp at Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, was again a time for our children to be together for a week as a family in the care of the Church.

The Camp was organized through the efforts of His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, our Deans: V.R. Fr. Michael Lupu, V. R. Fr. Daniel Nenson; Rev. Fr. Cosmin Vint, Ps. Alice Nenson, Mrs. Virginia Murray, and Rev. Dn. Dan Simion Chirtu. The team that ran the Camp included: His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, V. R. Fr. Daniel Nenson, Fr. Raphael, Ps. Alice Nenson, Ps. Teodora Chirtu, Mrs. Virginia Murray,



**Some of the Staff and Students of Saint Nicholas Camp 2013 with Archbishop Nathaniel.**

Mrs. Constanta Paranuik, Mrs. Jeannette Vilcu, Mrs. Geraldine Bruketa, Mr. Con Melit, Corneliu Calancea (camper and counselor), Bogdan Chiriac (camper and counselor), Patrick Julius Epman (camper and counselor), Michelle Beaumont (camper and counselor), Michaela Williams (camper and counselor) and Rev. Dn. Dan Simion Chirtu. Also we got help from Rev. Fr. Cosmin Vint and Ps. Mihaela Vint.

We tried to serve the children as counselors, teachers, parents and priests and not to have barriers between us but roles and responsibilities, governed by mutual respect, aiming to love and care. If it was an achievement, we thank God for that.

The children are good people; but as kids, while they grow, they need continual teaching and sometimes correction. We tried to do that, too, at the Camp.

The Camp is a time when everybody can learn. The children had a complex program starting in the church with the morning prayers and then at sunset, finishing with the evening prayers. During the morning program, they had religious education, music, arts and crafts; and in the afternoon, camp-wide games, play and relaxation. They also contributed to the daily cleaning of the camp premises. We hope that the time at the Camp time is a good seed that will bring a bountiful harvest in their lives. On Wednesday, the children, one by one, had confession. On Thursday, we celebrated the Divine Liturgy, and the children received communion.

We all live by the love and care of God, but the fruit comes if, by our will, having faith and love, with His help, we do the same. We thank the parents for caring for their children and showing an interest in Church Camp.

Thinking of future Camps, for the safety and the benefit our children and to ease the work of the people who

run the Camp, the children need to be prepared in the church and at home, regarding what the Camp is for, their role, responsibility and accountability, without forgetting that they are children and should enjoy that time.

The Camp was a marathon; but now, when it is finished, we thank God that He helped all of us to run and complete it.

We thank His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel!

We thank the entire team and the children. We thank the Parish Priests for their efforts to transmit the meaning of the Camp to the parents! We thank all the parents!

Last and not least, I would appeal to the Church Communities to give more attention to and use of the Church Camps. There is nothing in today's society that can give the children something for their soul and teaching for life as a Camp like this can give. The Camps are like bridges that give rest, illumination and hope to our children, who are swimming in the waves of today's society that can so easily draw them away from God and salvation. The Camps are alive as much as we support them by sending the children and participating as volunteers with love and care. It is a good experience and good work for everybody.

Fort Qu'Appelle's Saint Nicholas Camp needs our help to continue to run and for necessary renovations. As we all live due to God's gifts to us, we need to give our thanks to the Lord and offerings to others for the harvest of eternal life. The families who are glad that their children went to the Camp are invited to answer to this Church offering with their own. Our deeds will give life to our faith and love and make them to continue to grow through the grace of God.

**Deacon Dan Chirtu, Camp Director**



# STANITZ / AROY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS - 2013

The recipients of the 2013 Stanitz / AROY Scholarship received their awards at the closing banquet of the First Annual Family Life & All Auxiliaries Conference on July 7, 2013. The Stanitz / AROY Scholarship was established in August 1971 by the Constantin J Stanitz family of Chicago, Illinois, in memory of their son William Robert Stanitz who met a premature, tragic death in California. This year, we had three very qualified and accomplished applicants and were able to award two scholarships.



**Maria Berce**

The first scholarship was awarded to **Ms. Maria Berce**. Maria's family emigrated from Romania in 2002, and she attends Holy Nativity Church in Chicago, Illinois. Maria regularly attends Sunday School, participates in the church's annual Christmas and Easter plays, and is a member of their Romanian Folk Dancing Group. She is a member of the Holy Nativity AROY Chapter and represented her chapter as a delegate to the 2009 AROY Conference in Cleveland, Ohio. Maria graduated from Francis Parker High School. Some of her high school activities include being a Students United Leader and a Racial Dialogues Leader. Maria was also on her high school volleyball team and has volunteered countless hours in her community including at the Cook County Assessor's Office, Swedish Covenant Hospital, and Casa Central. She will be attending Emory University in the fall. The Holy Nativity AROY Chapter Advisor describes Maria as role model for the youth of the parish. Congratulations to Maria for her accomplishments and best wishes to her in her future endeavors.

The second scholarship was awarded to **Mr. John Avramaut**. John is the son of Nick and Marie Avramaut and grandson of John and Millie Avramaut and Sam and Stella Habian. He has two older siblings, Nick and Bethany. John attends St. Mary's Cathedral in Cleveland, Ohio and is very active in parish life including serving as an altar boy, attending church school, and helping at banquets and other parish cultural and fundraising events. He is a member of Cleveland AROY and has held many leadership positions includ-



**John Avramaut**

ing historian, treasurer, and president. John has been a delegate at two national AROY conferences and chaired the Sunday Banquet at the 2009 AROY Conference in Cleveland. He has attended the summer Vatra camps for several years both as a student and as a counselor. John graduated in the top 25% of his class at Midpark High School and received the award of merit and an honors diploma. He also received two varsity letters and an offensive linemen award on the football team, as well as four letters for community service and one for academics. John will be attending Ohio State University Mansfield in the fall. The Cleveland AROY Chapter Advisor describes John as a dependable worker at church and in school. Congratulations to John for his accomplishments, and best wishes to him in his future endeavors.

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## Camp Vatra *Cont. from page 9*

**Elena Bucciarelli, Elizabeth Schester and Alex Crisan-Oltean** (St. George Cathedral, Southfield, Michigan); **Razvan Rus, Dragos Beldie, Ilie Grecu and George Lohan** (Holy Nativity, Chicago, Illinois); **Maria Grigoras** (Descent of the Holy Spirit, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania); **Daniel Philips** (Presentation of Our Lord, Fairlawn, Ohio); **Alina Iancu and Alisa Iancu** (St. Mary Cathedral, Cleveland, Ohio); **George Olariu** (St. Dimitrie the New, Frederick, Colorado); **Cristian Munte and Blaise Hebert** (Sts. Peter and Paul, Dearborn Heights, Michigan). Thank you all for making the Vatra Camp for Seniors 2013 a great experience, and I pray that the Lord will keep you safe and in His loving care always!

*Fr. Dan Hoarste*

## REMINDER

### The 81st Annual Episcopate Congress

Friday, September 6 – Saturday, September 7, 2013  
Vatra Românească, Grass Lake, Michigan

Special Guest: His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon

For detailed information,  
see *Solia-The Herald*, May/June 2013  
or click on the blue "2013 Episcopate Congress"  
button on the Episcopate's website: [roea.org](http://roea.org).



# DOXAICON

*To Boldly Go Where No Conference Has Gone Before...*

By Dr. Jonathan Chaves



**Panel discussion with Christian science-fiction and fantasy authors. Left to right: Nebula Award finalist John C. Wright, L. Jagi Lamplighter, Matushka Donna Farley, and Craig Alan Loewen.**

SPRINGFIELD, VA-- July 19-21, 2013—a mini-conference like no other took place, entitled *Doxacon—Where Faith and Truth Meet Science Fiction and Fantasy*, at the Hilton Hotel in Springfield, Virginia. This event was conceived, organized, and implemented entirely by members of St. Mary Orthodox Church: parish priest, Rev. Fr. David Subu; his wife, Preoteasa Stephanie Subu; and parishioner Daniel Silver, along with a dedicated group of assistants—including myself. There was no support, financial or otherwise, from outside the parish. And yet the enrollment of 9 presenters and 100 attendees included visitors from unexpectedly far afield—Hong Kong, British Columbia, Alabama, Tennessee, Ohio, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Connecticut, and North Carolina. The remaining were from the Greater Washington DC area. Upon arrival to the hotel, all of them received complimentary copies of the May, 1997 issue of *Chronicles* (“Utopias Unlimited”) that focused on science fiction, courtesy of Scott Richert, together with subscription forms for the journal. As chance would have it, this issue included an article by one of our keynote speakers, Dr. Thomas Bertonneau! Attendees also had the option of purchasing T-Shirts with the official Doxacon motto: Geek Orthodox.

The presentations were preceded and followed by services, at the church, and, just before the opening keynote address, in the hotel conference room itself: this latter, the chanting of the Akathist hymn of praise, “Glory to God for All Things,” was composed by an Orthodox priest who endured the ordeal of the Gulag in the Soviet Union. (The service was led by Metropolitan Savas of the Greek Orthodox diocese of Pittsburgh, himself the

other keynote speaker.) Among the gifts God is thanked for in this beautiful text is the inspiration of writers, artists, musicians, and scientists who glorify Him in their work, either directly or indirectly.

To attend a conference on literature that opened in this manner was, for an academic such as myself, a dream come true, or no, not even a dream: I had long since given up hope that in today’s groves of academe any discussion of literature, art, music, philosophy, or religion itself could possibly be conducted on the basis of the assumption that *The Truth is Out There*, and yet this is in fact the very title of a book by Professor Thomas Bertonneau of the Oswego campus of the State University of New York (English Department, *mirabile dictu*—as well as being one of the contributors to the *Chronicles* issue that was distributed), a volume that explores the echoes of Christian theology that can be discerned in various TV science fiction and fantasy programs. Bertonneau’s address was entitled, *Plurality and Divinity in the Work of Olaf Stapledon* (an influence of C.S. Lewis), and was an exemplary demonstration of how to study literature with an attitude of love and thirst for truth, rather than with the “deconstructivist” propensity, now rampant in academia, to dismantle the remnants of civilization, in the deluded hope that one is thereby contributing to some future utopia.

I myself, a sinologist, spoke on Chinese poems that narrate celestial journeys, and encounters with deities up to and including a “Lord of the Sky,” poems that deploy such images as the “heavenly ladder.” The poems read dated from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and prepared the ground for a discussion of the extraordinary master painter, Wu Li (1632-1718), who was baptized, in



all likelihood at the hand of Belgian Jesuit missionary, *François de Rougemont*, S.J., (1624-1676), and then received into the Society of Jesus and ordained one of the first three native Chinese Catholic priests. In one of his masterful Christian poems, written entirely in classical Chinese forms, he triumphantly notes that now, there is a true “ladder to Heaven,” in the person of Jesus Christ! Here, then, is one author for whom the fantasies of fiction actually have come true!



**Metropolitan Savas**

Metropolitan Savas, in a closing keynote address at our church, speculated intriguingly on the underlying motivations of authors, screenplay writers, and others whose work seems to echo Christian themes. How self-conscious are they? What are they aiming at? Are they indeed in it only for the money?

And Fr. David Subu, in a session presentation, showed how a close analysis of the *Dune* series by Frank Herbert—apparently a lapsed Catholic—nevertheless demonstrated the extent to which the author had found new language and new imagery to present the great story of incarnation, sacrifice, and transcendence. It has been a cause of sadness for me that our academy today seems almost completely cut off from the intellectual riches of the clergy, these seemingly being limited to seminaries. But here was a perfect display of the wealth available. The only partially comparable experience I have had was a few years back at a conference on the Jesuits and their contributions at Boston College, where many of the academics were themselves members of the Society of Jesus.

In addition to presentations such as these, there were actual authors of science fiction and fantasy, all of them professing Christians: Nebula Award finalist John C. Wright (atheist turned Catholic convert mid-career), his wife L. Jagi Lamplighter, Matushka Donna Farley, and Craig Alan Loewen. They spoke of the practical problems and challenges faced by writers in their position; perhaps the heart of their message was captured by Wright when he pointed out that Christ Himself conveyed his teachings primarily in the form of *parables*—stories, that is to say. In the time of Christ, agriculture and exploring the wonders of His earth was the great

odyssey of man. Today, it is outer space and wondering about the possibility of living “off world”.

Here was a literary conference in which, instead of Foucault and Derrida, the names on everyone’s lips were those of G.K. Chesterton, C.S. Lewis, and Tolkien. In fact, Dr. Alison Scott of The George Washington University’s Gelman Library brought from the Special Collections department British first editions of *The Hobbit* and all three ring novels with their impeccably printed, oversize black-and-red maps of Middle Earth, and these attracted a great deal of attention.

Plans are said to be underway for a Doxacon West, in Seattle, as well as for a Doxacon II here on the east coast. For me, it would be ideal if such events could somehow reach the radar screens of our college and university faculties, as a small beam of light indicating that a traditional aspiration to transcendence can still inspire the reading and study of literature. . . . Does this sound impossible? When I first heard of Doxacon, I thought it would never occur. Thankfully, I was wrong.

*(Editor’s Note: Doxacon would like to expand its search for speakers at our next event. Please contact Preoteasa Stephanie Subu at 703-254-8915 or [psastephanie@stmaryorthodox.org](mailto:psastephanie@stmaryorthodox.org) to receive more information. You may also visit our site at [www.doxacon.org](http://www.doxacon.org).)*

## Primates ... *Cont. from page 7*

**against human dignity and violation of human rights have become habitual. Abductions and murders often committed for mercenary ends have become a common occurrence. Extremists do not stop at insulting religious leaders who have always enjoyed respect in the East.**

**“The world mass media, as well as many politicians, are silent about the tragedy of Christians in the Middle East.**

**“We express solidarity with His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Great Antioch and All the East who could not share our joy of celebrations today since he has to stay with his flock at the moment so difficult for them. Our prayers are with him and our brothers in Christ *who are being killed all day long* (Rom. 8:36).**

**“We are grieving together with all the suffering people of Syria. We demand that the outstanding Christian hierarchs of Syria – Metropolitan Paul of Aleppo and Iskenderun and Syrian Jacobite Metropolitan Mar Gregory John Ibrahim of Aleppo be immediately freed.**

**“We make this appeal to all the warring sides and those who can make a political impact on the situation: Stop the wave of violence and extermination of civilians! Impose a moratorium on the military hostilities so that a basis for peaceful settlement of civil conflicts could be worked out at the negotiation table! Free the captured clergy and other civilians!**

*Cont. on page 16*



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# THE CHALLENGE OF MISCARRIAGE

## Questions, reflections, and healing on the loss of a child

by Kristine Lorentz

*You probably didn't even notice. I never had the chance to tell you. I had just entered my second trimester and was anxious to tell you the news that we were expecting another baby. Instead though, the very same week, we found out that our little one had passed away. What next? What is an Orthodox mother to do after a miscarriage? What would happen to my baby? Could anyone tell me?*

It seems nobody really knows what to say about miscarriages. Some seemed to have only little bits of information and advice on this tricky subject. That's most unfortunate, because to me, it didn't matter that our baby had never actually been born. My husband and I had still experienced the death of a child. If we are truly a pro-life community that recognizes life beginning at conception, then we, the Church, must be ready and willing to acknowledge and assist those women who have lost their babies, no matter what stage of life their baby reached. Even though our baby was only about the size of a lime, Robert and I decided he needed a burial. We returned our precious little baby to the earth and planted a white crepe myrtle in memory.

Did you ever worry or wonder what happens to a little unborn baby that perishes? Does the baby need to be baptized like we do to join the body of Christ? St. Gregory of Nyssa tells us that a baby has a pure soul: "Whereas the innocent babe has no such plague before its soul's eyes obscuring its measure of light, it continues to exist in that natural life; it does not need the soundness that comes from purgation, because it never admitted the plague into its soul at all." What a comfort it was to know that because my little baby never had the chance to be corrupted by sin, he was immediately transformed into a glorious new form in the Kingdom of God in a way we cannot even understand or imagine. He will not have to endure trial or Judgment like the rest of us. What a privilege to have carried that little baby while on earth, even for a short time! This is why Fr. David said it was only appropriate to sing "Christ is Risen" or "Holy God" at the time, since this baby had no sins to forgive. Hence, that white colored crepe myrtle will always be a perfect reminder of this purity.

Traditionally, a baby is supposed to receive a name on the 8th day after birth. However, if this baby really is an angel now as St. Gregory tells us, then is it not okay to have a name to call upon to pray for us while we remain here on earth? Although this baby was perfectly formed (10 fingers & 10 toes, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, even a teeny little bottom), we were unable to tell the gender for sure. But the moment we got our horrible news, we decided this child needed a name, and that name would be Sava. My due date was near St. Sava's feast day. St.



**The Lament of Rachel (Jeremiah 31:15)**

Sava was the first archbishop of Serbia, and he is very important to Serbs. I have a great-great grandmother too that was named Sava, after the Sava River. In Bosnia, where she was born, it was a trend long ago to name girls after rivers. Naming your baby is one of the best ways to honor that child as well as help you accept that he or she was a real person.

The next time you hear that someone has miscarried, remember to act the same as you would with any other death in the family. Drop off a meal, send a card, light a candle, ask the parents how they are doing (don't forget, the fathers are mourning the loss too, not just the mothers), and most importantly remember to pray for them to find peace and comfort.

Here are two helpful websites for Orthodox women suffering from miscarriages: Lost Innocents: Practical help for miscarriage from an Orthodox Christian perspective <http://lostinnocentsorthodox.blogspot.com>; also there is another site similar to the one above that is Romanian: <http://pruncipier.dutisinascutiinaintedevreme.wordpress.com>.

*Kristine Lorentz is a member of Protection of the Holy Mother of God Orthodox Church in Falls Church, Virginia.*

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## A Centennial ... *Cont. from page 4*

nian food, music and dance.

On Sunday, June 2, the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy was attended by members and friends, old and young, some who remember founders of our church and some who might be remembered on the occasion of the bicentennial. However, we all united in prayer and thanked God for allowing us to be present on such a special occasion.

The Divine Liturgy was made even more special by the blessing of Marius Viola as reader and Nicholas Jones as subdeacon.

The Liturgy ended with the blessing of the new Iconostas. It was created and sculpted by Mr. Constantin Croitoriu, a master craftsman from Romania, and the icons were skillfully painted by the nuns at the Agapia Monastery Workshop.



**Blessing of the Troița**



**The Hierarchal Divine Liturgy**

In celebrating our church, we are really celebrating the lives of all those who have made this church. We would be amiss to forget that the church is also about the present and the future generations. We are responsible to keep up the faith and spread the word of God. Just like the founders of the church, the parishioners of today have to continue their prayer, but also the hard work to maintain the church and preserve it for the generations of the next 100 years. We can only be full of hope that this will happen, given the number of people present at the Divine Liturgy and all the celebrations of the week-end.

## Primates ... *Cont. from page 7*

**“As servants of the Almighty God, we ardently pray to the Author of Peace, the Lord Pantocrator that peace and love of brothers may be restored in**

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### EPISCOPATE SUPPORTERS

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**the Middle East, refugees may come back to their settlements as soon as possible, the wounded may be healed and the innocent people who were killed may rest in peace. May the Lord inspire all those involved in the hostilities with wisdom and the good will to stop them!”**

According to an advance release issued by Interfax, the event “marked the first time the Grand Kremlin Palace will bring together the heads and senior clergymen of all 15 existing Christian Orthodox Churches uniting over 227 million believers.”



# CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

**Saints Peter & Paul Church, Dearborn Heights, Michigan**



**Elizabeth  
Gheordunescu**

Elizabeth Gheordunescu graduated on May 4, 2013 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Neuroscience from the University of Michigan's College of Literature, Science and the Arts in Ann Arbor. She was an active member and public relations chair of the UM Pre-SOMA (Student of Osteopathic Medicine Association), as well as a leader of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship and the Romanian Student Association. She will be continuing her education by attending medical school at the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

IULIA SIMONA BALAIIE, daughter of Virgil & Cornelia Balaie, graduated from Crestwood High School in Dearborn Heights, MI on May 30th where she was an Honor Roll student. She was in the National Honor Society for three years, Link Crew, Build On, and the Book Club. She earned the President's Award for Educational Excellence, Oakland University's Academic Achievement Award, Gold Star Award, Silver Star Award, Torch Award, School Service Award, and the Above and Beyond Award. Some of the group activities she was involved in were recycling, donating blood and tutoring other students, and she was on the Varsity Girls Swim Team for 3 years. Julia intends to earn an Associate's Degree in psychology from Henry Ford Community College, then transfer to Wayne State University for a Masters Degree as she pursues a career in clinical child psychology. She has been very active in the life of Sts. Peter & Paul Church, a graduate of the Sunday School, singing in the church choir, active in the Youth Group helping out at church dinners and festivals, and was a counselor at Camp Vatra for Juniors for three consecutive summers (2010-2012).



**Iulia Balaie**



**George  
Gheordunescu**

GEORGE GHEORDUNESCU, son of Cristian & Gabriela Gheordunescu, graduated Cum Laude from Cranbrook Kingswood Upper School in Bloomfield Hills, MI, on June 7, 2013. He played on the boys soccer team for four years and ran track for three years. He was also an active member of the Gold Key Club. A graduate of the Sts. Peter and Paul Sunday School, George served as altar boy, and now as sacristan. He is currently vice-president of the Youth

Group and looks forward to attending the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in the fall.

MIRIAM A. LEWIS, daughter of Mrs. Regina Lewis, graduated Cum Laude on May 29, 2013 from John Glenn High School in Westland, MI, where she was in the National Honor Society with an academic grade point average of 4.0. She also ran track and was in the Karate Club. This fall, she will begin attending Alabama State University to ultimately pursue a Master's Degree in the medical field. At Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Miriam is a Sunday School graduate, a member of the Youth Group and sings in the choir.



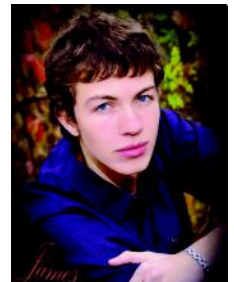
**Miriam Lewis**



**Joseph Moga**

JOSEPH PAVEL MOGA, son of Dr. Paul & Kristine Moga, graduated from Salem High School in Plymouth, MI, on June 9, 2013, where he was an Honor Roll student, and excelled in track and field sports. Club participation included Timber Wolves, Games Club, Anime Club and Choir. He was also an active Cub Scout and Boy Scout. At Sts. Peter & Paul Church, he is a Sunday School graduate, a former altar boy and currently a sacristan. He also sings in the choir with his father and grandfather. Joseph's plan is to study the sciences at Eastern Michigan University.

JAMES MICHAEL STANULET, son of John & Mariana Stanulet, graduated on June 8, 2013 from South Lyon East High School, where he was an Honor Roll student and has received honors in Geometry, Spanish, and Choir. He was a member of the Varsity Tennis Team for two years, a member of the Men's Cougar Choral for four years, a member of the Thespian Society for his senior year, and he participated in the school's Theater Department where he took part in theater productions as an actor and a crew member. His hobbies include composing electronic music, DJ-ing for parties and events and playing video games. At Sts. Peter & Paul Church, James attended Sunday School and was both altar boy and sacristan. He plans to attend the College of Engineering at the University of Michigan (Dearborn campus) this September.



**James Stanulet**

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OUR GRADUATES (and their families) AND GRANT THEM A BRIGHT AND SUCCESSFUL FUTURE!



# CUM TREBUIE SĂ NE PURTĂM ÎN BISERICĂ

## În picioare sau șezând

Postura tradițională pentru rugăciune și închinare în Biserica Ortodoxă este în picioare. În Biserica Ortodoxă din România nu există bănci în biserici. Scaunele sau strănile de pe pereții laterali sunt de obicei rezervate pentru bătrâni și bolnavi. În America de Nord am avut și avem tendința să construim bisericile noastre cu bănci, iar pentru că le avem a trebuit să decidem când să ședem și când să stăm în picioare. Înainte de toate, trebuie spus, că este unanim acceptat (și de preferat) să se stea în picioare în timpul slujbei.

Când ar trebui să stăm cu siguranță în picioare? Întotdeauna în timpul citirii Evangheliei, ieșirilor preotului din altar, prefacerii sfințelor daruri, distribuirii Sfintei Împărtășanii, ori de câte ori preotul dă o binecuvântare și la încheierea slujbei. În multe parohii, cărțile de Sfânta Liturghie pe care le puteți găsi în bănci vă pot sugera când trebuie să stați în picioare. Urmăriți instrucțiunile din aceste cărți (este probabil mai sigur decât să urmăriți oamenii din primele rânduri). Dacă nu știți ce să faceți, stați în picioare. Nu este niciodată greșit să stați în picioare în biserică.

## Aprinsul lumânărilor

Aprinsul lumânărilor este o parte importantă în cadrul cultului Bisericii Ortodoxe. Le aprindem când ne rugăm, aducând o ofrandă (jertfă) care însoțește rugăciunile noastre. Ortodocșii aprind lumânări când intră în biserică și acesta este de obicei, cel mai potrivit timp să aprindem lumânările, dar sunt și momente când nu e potrivit să le aprindem. Nu este potrivit să aprindem lumânări în timpul citirii Apostolului sau citirilor din Sfânta Evanghelie, vohoadelor (procesionile preotului cu Evanghelia și darurile), și predicilor. Dacă ați ajuns la biserică după ce Sfânta Liturghie a început, un sfat bun este să așteptați ca oamenii să se așeze, dacă sunt în picioare în timpul unei rugăciuni, după care să aprindeți lumânările. Nu este potrivit a aduce lumânări de acasă. Lumânarea reprezintă o jertfă, un dar adus lui Dumnezeu prin care ajutăm și Biserica.

## Sosirea la biserică

Dintr-un motiv necunoscut, a devenit o obișnuință să se sosească târziu la biserică. Este de preferat ca sosirea la biserică să se facă înainte ca Sfânta Liturghie să înceapă. Dacă totuși sosiți după începerea slujbei, intrați în liniște, observând ceea ce se întâmplă. Dacă se citește din Apostol sau din Sfânta Evanghelie, ori dacă se desfășoară Intrarea Mică sau Intrarea Mare, atunci, așteptați până se termină și apoi căutați-vă un loc pe bancă. Dacă veniți în timp ce Preotul ține predica, de asemenea, așteptați până se termină. Încercați să nu întrerupeți Liturghia în timp ce vă căutați un loc. Cea mai bună metodă de a evita aceste lucruri este să sosiți la timp. Enoriașii care sosesc târziu la Liturghie nu pot primi Împărtășanie.



## Cum trebuie să stăm în timpul slujbei

În Biserica Ortodoxă, statul “picioar peste picioar” este considerat nerespectuos. În cultura Nord-Americană, acest lucru nu este interzis și majoritatea încercăm să stăm cât mai confortabil pe scaun. Am putea să stăm cu picioarele încrucișate în biserică? Nu. Nu pentru că este greșit, ci pentru că ar deveni o poziție mult prea confortabilă și relaxantă, incompatibilă cu starea de rugăciune. Ar fi ca și când ați fi acasă în scaunul dumneavoastră preferat, stând cu picioarele încrucișate și lăsat pe spate, ceea ce ar putea favoriza ca mintea dumneavoastră să nu mai fie concentrată la slujba care se desfășoară. De altfel, faptul că putem sta jos în biserică este mai degrabă o concesie și nu modul normal pentru rugăciune, pentru că nu vrem să fim prea relaxați și cu mintea în altă parte decât la Liturghie. Ar fi de preferat să alternați statul în picioare cu statul pe scaun. Atunci când stați pe scaun, stați cu picioarele apropiate, fiind gata oricând să vă ridicați în momentele indicate. Încrucișați-vă mâinile pentru rugăciune și nu picioarele!

## Înăuntru și afară

De multe ori pare să fie prea multă mișcare în spatele bisericii în timpul slujbelor. Este de parcă am avea o ușă rabatabilă pe care o folosesc atât adulții cât și copiii. Este de preferat să folosiți toaleta înainte de a sosi la biserică. Dacă vă împărtășiți, nu ar trebui să mâncați sau să beți nimic, deci nu aveți nevoie de apă. În timpul slujbei, trebuie să ne concentrăm la rugăciune și nu la socializare. Este de înțeles dacă aveți nevoie să ieșiți cu copiii mici afară. Nicidecum nu e potrivit pentru cineva



să se afle în sala socială a bisericii în timpul slujbei. E ca și cum L-am ignora pe Dumnezeu Căruia I se aduce rugăciunea. Indiferent că se pregătește mâncare sau cafea, toate aceste activități pot aștepta până se termină slujba și nu trebuie să se facă în detrimental participării la Liturghie. Ne aducem aminte de dojana Mântuitorului adresată Martei care se străduia să facă ospaț mare: ”Marto, Marto, te silești și de îngrijești de multe, însă un singur lucru trebuiește...”

### **Plecarea înainte de terminarea slujbei**

Dacă plecați înainte de terminarea Liturghiei/Slujbei nu numai că este nepoliticos, dar vă și privează de binecuvântarea de la sfârșit. De fiecare dată Liturghia începe cu “Binecuvântată este împărăția Tatălui...” și se termină cu ”Binecuvântarea Domnului peste voi toți...”. A pleca imediat după împărtășanie înseamnă a trata Biserica ca pe un restaurant fast food unde venim și plecăm după cum ne place. Chiar dacă trăim într-o lume în care ne grăbim, în prezența lui Dumnezeu, trebuie să facem efortul de a ne lupta cu această presiune de ajunge imediat la următorul lucru pe care îl avem de făcut în ziua respectivă. Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur asemuiește pe cei care pleacă de la slujbă înainte de binecuvântarea de sfârșit a preotului, cu Iuda care a plecat de la Cina cea de Taină înainte de a se termina. Așadar să nu ne grăbim când suntem în biserică și îi mulțumim lui Dumnezeu pentru darurile Sale.

### **Urme de ruj**

V-ați uitat vreodată la o icoană care avea peste tot urme de ruj? Este dezgustător, nu-i așa? Poate că rujul arată bine pe buzelor celor care-l poartă, dar arată îngrozitor



pe icoane, cruci, lingurița de împărtășanie și pe mâna preotului sau a episcopului. Nu este politicos să lăsăm urme de ruj pe lucrurile sfinte. Care este răspunsul? Dacă insistați să purtați ruj când veniți la biserică, atunci este indicat să vă ștergeți înainte de a venera icoanele, de a lua împărtășanie, de a săruta Sfânta Cruce sau mâna preotului sau a episcopului. În final, Dumnezeu nu este impresionat de cum arătăm în exterior (haine, machiaj, ruj, etc.), ci de cum arătăm în interior, de ardoarea rugăciunii noastre și de pioșenia noastră.

### **Venerarea Icoanelor**

Când intrăm în biserică, în mod tradițional, mergem să venerăm icoanele. De obicei, la intrarea în biserică există un tetrapod, sau un închinător pe care sunt așezate icoane. Atunci când venerăm/sărutăm o icoană trebuie să avem grijă cum o facem. Nu se cuvine să sărutăm chipul icoanei. Nu se cuvine să sărutăm fața sau gura chipului din icoana. De preferat este să sărutăm mâna. Când ne apropiem de o icoană să o venerăm, cel mai potrivit este să sărutăm Evanghelia sau crucea din mâna sfântului din icoană, scrisoarea/sulul din mâna lui, mâna sau piciorul acestuia. În timp ce facem aceasta, trebuie să arătăm respectul cuvenit pentru Sfântul/Sfânta din icoană.

### **Vorbital în biserică**

Nu-i așa că este minunat ca atunci când venim la biserică să ne întâlnim cu prieteni sau chiar cu membri ai familiei noastre? Cu siguranță, însă potrivit este să așteptăm până după terminarea slujbei pentru a-I saluta și socializa. Nu se cuvine să ne salutăm prietenii și discutăm în timpul slujbei. Pe lângă faptul că este lipsit de respect față de Dumnezeu, este nepoliticos și față de ceilalți oameni din jur care încearcă să se roage. Vorbiți cu Dumnezeu prin rugăciuni și cântări de mulțumire în timpul slujbei și cu prietenii sau cunoscuții după terminarea slujbei.

### **Sărutați (nu strângeți) mâna Episcopului**

Știați că cel mai potrivit mod de a saluta un preot sau un episcop este de a cere binecuvântare și de a-i săruta mâna dreaptă? Cum se face acest lucru? Apropiati-vă de preot sau episcop având mâna dreaptă peste mâna stângă, cu palma în sus și spuneți: ”Părinte/Prea Sfințite binecuvintează”. El va face semnul crucii și își va așeza mâna sa dreaptă peste ale dumneavoastră. Acesta este un mod mult mai potrivit și tradițional de a saluta clericii decât strângerea mâinilor. Prin sărutarea mâinii (preotului sau episcopului) arătăm respect pentru serviciul pe care îl săvârșesc – întrucât ei sunt cei care ne binecuvintează și ne oferă darurile lui Dumnezeu. Așadar, data viitoare când vă întâlniți cu preotul sau episcopul dumneavoastră, cereți-le binecuvântarea și nu le strângeți mâna.

### **Cum ne îmbrăcăm pentru mersul la biserică**

Vă mai amintiți când oamenii se îmbrăcau cu cele mai bune haine ca să meargă la biserică? De fapt, până nu de mult, hainele elegante însemnau hainele de duminică,

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# AL 65-LEA CONGRES AL A.R.F.O.R.A.



Cel de-al 65-lea Congres A.R.F.O.R.A. a avut loc la Vatra Românească în Grass Lake, Michigan între 4-7 iulie, 2013. Acesta a fost primul an când toate organizațiile auxiliare ale Episcopiei s-au întâlnit în același timp și loc. Vatra Românească, care anul acesta împlinește 75 de ani de existență, a fost locul cel mai potrivit pentru această conferință. Pregătirile pentru acest “week-end cu familia” au durat mai bine de nouă luni și au presupus un efort susținut din partea unui grup de persoane foarte dedicate, sub conducerea neobositei Teva Regule.

Activitățile au început joi după amiază cu slujba de deschidere, urmată de un picnic, iar joi seara a avut loc ședința Comitetului de Conducere al ARFORA.

Vineri dimineață, înregistrarea delegatelor a continuat și a început prima sesiune a congresului ARFORA. Prea Sfințitul Episcop Irineu, a deschis ședința Congresului cu o rugăciune. Teva Regule, organizatoarea conferinței, a adresat câteva cuvinte de bun venit delegatelor. Lucy Pop, Președinta A.R.F.O.R.A., de asemenea, a spus câteva cuvinte de bun venit celor în audiență. Au fost prezente la Congres, delegate de la următoarele parohii: “Nașterea Domnului”, Chicago, IL; “Sfânta Cruce”,

Hermitage, PA; “Catedrala Sfânta Maria”, Cleveland, OH; “Sf. Maria”, Chicago, IL, “Sfânta Treime”, Youngstown, OH; “Întâmpinarea Domnului”, Fairlawn, OH; “Sfântul Nicolae”, Alliance, OH; “Catedrala Sfântul Gheorghe”, Southfield, MI; “Sfinții Petru și Pavel”, Dearborn Heights, MI; “Înălțarea Sfintei Cruci”, Phoenix, AZ; “Pogorârea Duhului Sfânt”, Merrillville, IN; “Sf. Maria”, St. Paul, MN; și “Sf. Maria”, Falls Church, VA.

A.R.F.O.R.A. a acordat o bursă de \$1,000 studentei Ana M. Oancea, fiica Arhidiaconului David Oancea. În decursul anului trecut, am continuat să facem donații la trei mănăstiri și trei Seminarii Teologice, taberelor de vară de la Vatra și misiunilor Episcopiei. De asemenea, nu am uitat nici pe preotesele văduve, la care trimitem un mic cadou de trei ori pe an. Tot anul trecut, A.R.F.O.R.A. a hotărât să strângă fonduri pentru a cumpăra mobilă nouă pentru reședința Episcopului Irineu de la Vatra.

S-au strâns \$5,000 și s-a cumpărat mobilă pentru camera de zi. Alt proiect la care s-a lucrat în anul ce a trecut a fost trimiterea de cadouri de Crăciun unui grup de soldați români în Afghanistan. Cadourile au fost

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# POEME DIN GRĂDINA LUMINII

## - Recenzie -

Florica Bațu-Ichim s-a născut la 13 aprilie 1945 în București, într-o familie aromână. A absolvit Academia de Științe Economice și a debutat editorial cu placheta de versuri Mesagerul alb (1970), în urma câștigării concursului de poezie Prima Verba (1969). De atunci a publicat mai multe volume de versuri dedicate copiilor, acești „îngeri tereștri” și două volume de proză autobiografică, în care descrie tragedia pe care a trăit-o timp de 23 de ani ca bolnavă de leucemie. Se stinge din viață la 4 septembrie 2010, pe patul din spitalul orașului canadian Kitchener unde a trăit 36 de ani, după ce a emigrat din România, împreună cu soțul ei preotul și poetul Dumitru Ichim, cu care are șase copii care i-au justificat și alinat suferința.

Mircea Eliade afirmă că fiecare dintre noi ne căutăm întreaga viață valorile definitorii care să ne echilibreze ființa.

Florica Bațu-Ichim a găsit în centrul ei ființial, credința și familia care i-au înșeninat viața afectată de boală. Acestea sunt, de altfel, temele predilecte/coordonatele pe care se clădește poezia autoarei din volumul Poeme din Grădina Luminii (i.s.F.E.P. – Tipografia centrală, Chișinău, 2013), pe axa orizontală/terestă se află familia, iar pe axa celestă/verticală, Dumnezeuirea: „Tată Doamne, te iubesc/ și umil îți mulțumesc/ pentru tot ce-mi dai mereu,/ pentru pâine,/ curcubeu,/ pentru îngerașul meu!” (Rugăciune)

Volumul se deschide cu Balada Mântuirii și cuprinde numeroase imnuri de slavă dedicate Dumnezeuului Tată, Fiului Iisus și Fecioarei Maria. Ca orice mamă credincioasă, Florica Bațu-Ichim trăiește până la identificare, condiția Maicii Preciste. Impresionant este faptul că, deși numeroase poeme ale Floricăi Bațu-Ichim sunt rugăciuni. Ea nu cere nimic pentru sine, ci mulțumește Tatălui Cereșc pentru faptul că i-a dat viață. Abia pentru copii săraci și abandonati, îndrăznește să ceară o hăinuță sau o ghetuță. În fața bolii nu se simte singură, pentru că se simte înconjurată de dragostea familiei și a lui Dumnezeu. Lui Iisus îi aduce următoarele daruri: „Precum magii, tare aș vrea/ să-ți aduc ofranda mea:/ uite-mi sufletul curat,/ uite-mi trupul ne’ntinat,/



uite rugăciunea mea/ albă ca un fulg de nea.” (Închinarea magilor).

Aceste ofrande le regăsim și în poezia ei. Poeta uzitează un limbaj dezarmant de simplu dar plin de dragoste și puritate, parcă răsfoind paginile cărții se aud cum fâlfâie aripi de îngeri. Poeta iubește copiii fascinanți, animalele blânde și florile încântătoare, astfel încât, versurile ei creează un mic Paradis terestru, gingaș, diafan, imaculat. Dragostea pentru copiii ei se regăsește și în aceste dulci ghicitori originale: „Cine-i dulce/ și frumoasă/ și o pup/ când vin acasă?” (fetița mea); Cine-i mic/ neastâmpărat/ și îl pup/ când s-a culcat?” (Băiatul meu)

În Cuvânt înainte, poetul Horia Ion Groza subliniază cu emoție: „Pentru noi ceilalți, dacă toate celelalte nouă cărți pe care le-a publicat se vor pierde, va rămâne a zecea, La

porțile disperării, începutul speranței, un document de o mare valoare umană, pe măsura negrăitei frumuseți a sufletului ei de mamă, al puterii dragostei și vieții, al nobleții spiritului omenesc.”

Din același cuvânt înainte aflăm că, din dragoste pentru mama lor, doi dintre copii ei, au urmat studii superioare și lucrează în cercetare împotriva cancerului: Dr. Thomas Ichim este cercetător de biologie moleculară, fiind șeful companiei Medistem Laboratories din San Diego, iar Dr. Christine Ichim a studiat și a obținut doctoratul în mecanismele moleculare ale leucemiei la Sunnybrook Hospital al Universității din Toronto, iar în prezent urmează studii postuniversitare în San Diego.

Rugăciunea cu care se încheie cartea ne pune pe gânduri: „Doamne, ajută-ne pe toți/ și pe vii și pe cei morți.” (Rugă). Să păstrăm un minut de reculegere pentru poeta Florica Bațu-Ichim, cea care acum se află în Grădina Luminii.

Lucian Gruia





# Cum trebuie să ne purtăm ...

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sau de sărbătoare. În zilele de astăzi, nu se mai întâmplă asta și modul în care ne îmbrăcăm pentru biserică a devenit neglijent. Ar trebui să-i oferim lui Dumnezeu tot ceea ce e mai bun din ceea ce facem, inclusiv să ne îmbrăcăm adecvat când venim la biserică, care este casa lui Dumnezeu. Ar trebui să ne îmbrăcăm cu "hainele de duminică" atunci când venim la biserică și nu cu cele pe care le folosim zilnic la diverse alte activități. Ar trebui să ne îmbrăcăm cu modestie și să nu atragem atenția celorlalți. Îmbrăcămîntea noastră ar trebui să fie întotdeauna în concordanță cu învățătura creștină. Iată câteva sfaturi:

- Copiii - numai copiii sub 10 ani pot să poarte pantaloni scurți și aceștia ar trebui să fie eleganți. Pantaloni scurți de alergat sau alte tipuri de pantaloni scurți nu sunt potriviți pentru a fi purtați la biserică (de către copii sau de către adulți). Pantofii sau sandalele trebuie să fie curați și șireturile legate. Nimeni nu ar trebui să poarte tricouri cu diverse înscrisuri sau logo-uri neadecvate.
- Femeile – Rochiile purtate la Biserica trebuie să fie elegante, dar modeste. Nu e potrivit a purta rochii scurte, rochii strânse pe corp sau rochii fără spate. Dacă totuși femeile poartă pantaloni – aceștia trebuie să fie eleganți (fără blue jeans sau pantaloni mulați). Pantaloni scurți de orice fel nu sunt potriviți.
- Bărbații – și ei trebuie să se îmbrace modest. În timp ce costumul și cravata nu sunt obligatorii, cămășile trebuie să fie curate și să aibă nasturii închiși până la guler. Nasturele imediat de sub guler poate fi lăsat deschis, dar doi sau chiar trei nasturi și mai mult deschiși nu este adecvat. Pantaloni trebuie să fie curați și călcați. Pantaloni tip blue jeans sunt considerați inadecvați pentru îmbrăcămîntea de biserică ca și pantalonii scurți de orice fel.

În cazul în care trebuie să mergeți în altă parte după slujbă, vă puteți aduce un set de haine mai comode și vă puteți schimba după. Aduceți-vă aminte să vă folosiți bunul simț atunci când vă îmbracați pentru biserică. În final, nu mergem să fim văzuți de ceilalți, ci ca să ne întâlnim și să ne rugăm lui Dumnezeu.

## **Blocarea rândului de bănci**

De multe ori se blochează intervalulul dintre rândurile de bănci astfel încât nimeni nu poate să treacă mai departe să se așeze pe bancă. De fapt, cei care blochează rândul de bănci vin devreme, astfel încât ocupă cele mai bune locuri dintre rânduri și nimeni nu mai poate trece de ei. Cel mai "eficient" mod de blocare a întregului rând de bănci se întâmplă atunci când doi oameni se așează la ambele capete ale rândului de bănci. Cum se poate evita blocarea locurilor? În primul rând cei care sosesc primii trebuie să ocupe locurile de la mijlocul băncii astfel încât locurile de la margine să rămână libere pentru cei care sosesc mai târziu. Iar pentru cei care au copii mici și care

vor avea nevoie să iasă la un moment dat, este indicat să ocupe locurile care să le faciliteze ieșirea.

## **Când trebuie să ne închinăm cu semnul crucii și când nu**

Fiecare dintre noi, dacă ne-am uitat în jur în timpul slujbei, am putut observa că fiecare își face cruce la momente diferite sau chiar în mod diferit. Într-o anumită măsură, momentul în care ne facem cruce ține de pioșenia fiecăruia și nu este încadrat de o anumită regulă, sau de un canon. Însă există momente ale slujbei când este absolut convenit să ne facem cruce și sunt momente când nu trebuie să ne facem cruce. Iată o listă cu aceste momente:

- Faceți-vă cruce: cand auziți una din variantele frazei "Tatăl, Fiul și Sfântul Duh" ; la începutul și sfârșitul slujbei sau rugăciunilor personale; când intrați sau ieșiți din biserică; când treceți prin fața Sfântului Altar; în fața unei icoane, a Sfintei Cruci sau a Evangheliei.
- Nu vă faceți cruce: în fața potirului înainte și după primirea împărtășaniei, deoarece riscăm să lovim potirul sau mâna preotului (potrivit este să încrucișăm mâinile pe piept); când primim binecuvântare de la preot sau episcop – doar sărutăm mâna dreaptă a acestora.

## **Dacă atingeți veșmintele preotului**

Multora le place să atingă poalele veșmântului preotului atunci când el trece prin biserică la iesirea cu darurile. Acesta este un obicei frumos și evlavios prin care ne atașăm rugăciunile personale la rugăciunea care se spune la intrarea cu darurile. În același timp însă, trebuie să fim atenți să nu tragem prea tare de veșmânt încât să incomodăm preotul sau să deranjăm alți oameni.

## **Gustări pentru copii**

Întotdeauna poți să îți dai seama unde au stat copii în biserică deoarece mereu se găsesc urme și firimituri lăsate de la gustări. Părinții obișnuiesc să aducă o mică gustare (fructe, biscuiță, suc) pentru copiii la biserică. Pentru copiii până la 3-4 ani este adecvat, dar cei care au ajuns la vârsta de 7 ani trebuie să se străduiască să nu mai mănânce în timpul slujbei pentru a putea primi împărtășania. Pentru copiii care primesc o gustare în timpul slujbei, încercați să le o dați înainte de a primi împărtășania. Nu pot veni cu gura plină sau mestecând la împărtășanie. De asemenea, trebuie păstrată curățenia în biserică. Mestecatul gumei în timpul slujbei este total nepotrivit!

## **Anafora**

Dupa ce primim Sfânta Împărtășanie și la sfârșitul Liturghiei este o tradiție să luăm și o bucată de prescură sfințită, nafură sau anafură – care reprezintă pâinea care a mai rămas după prepararea Sfintei Împărtășanii. În timp ce anafora nu reprezintă Sfânta Împărtășanie, ea este totuși pâine sfințită și trebuie mâncată cu pioșenie astfel încât să nu cadă firimituri pe jos. La sfârșitul împărtășirii sau după ce am sărutat crucea la sfârșitul Sfintei Liturghii, putem să luăm o bucată de anaforă și

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# ÎNCEPUTUL ANULUI BISERICESC

Istoria lumii a început cu o sărbătoare. Dumnezeu a făcut lumina și apoi lumea, iar îngerii se bucurau slăvind-L pe Dumnezeu... [...].

Din veșnicia plinătății Sale, Dumnezeu Se revarsă în timp, în creația Sa, ca și pe ea, prin Biserica zidită ca o recapitulare a creației, să o umple de viața Sa veșnică. Zilele (etapele, veacurile – cum le numește Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul) creației și toate cele cuprinse în ele au ca și izvor, dar și ca țintă, pe *Hristos* – *Logosul divin*. El este *Alfa și Omega*, *Începutul și Sfârșitul cel nesfârșit* al creației și al timpului. Iar **descoperirea lui Iisus Hristos ca și Creator și Mântuitor al lumii pune și începutul anului bisericesc, al timpului liturgic.**

Ca să facă o distincție tranșantă între *kronos* (timp liniar) și *ikairos* (timp favorabil), Biserica, deși se folosește de calendarul astronomic civil, a ales ca anul liturgic eclesial să nu înceapă la 1 ianuarie, ci la 1 septembrie, pentru că, după tradiția moștenită din Legea Veche, în aceasta zi (care era și începutul anului civil la evrei) s-a început creația lumii și tot în aceasta zi și-a început Mântuitorul Hristos activitatea Sa publică, atunci când a citit în sinagogă cuvintele proorocului Isaia (cap. LXI, 1-2):

*‘Duhul Domnului peste Mine, pentru ca M-a uns ca sa binevestesc săracilor..., să vestesc anul milei Domnului’* (Luca IV, 18-19).

Începutul Anului Nou bisericesc a fost instituit de către Sfinții Părinți la Sinodul I de la Niceea, când s-a rânduit să se sărbătorească data de 1 septembrie ca un început al mântuirii creștinilor, în amintirea intrării lui Hristos în mijlocul adunării evreilor vestind tuturor *“anul bineplăcut Domnului”*.

*Rugăciune la început de an Stăpâne Doamne, Dumnezeul nostru, Izvorul vieții și al nemuririi, Făcătorul a toată făptura văzută și nevăzută, Care ai pus vremile și anii întru a Ta stăpânire și îndreptezi toate cu iconomia Ta cea cerească și întru tot bună, mulțumim Ție pentru îndurările minunate pe care le-ai făcut asupra noastră în toată vremea trecută a vieții noastre și Te rugăm, întru tot Îndurate Doamne: binecuvintează cununa anului ce a sosit cu bunătatea Ta și păzește pe binecredincioșii creștini români de pretutindeni, pe păstorii și învățătorii noștri; înmulțește zilele vieții noastre întru sănătate deplină sufletească și trupească și ne dăruiește sporire în toate faptele cele bune. Dăruiește de sus bunătățile Tale întregului Tău popor: sănătate și mântuire și întru toate bună sporire. Sfântă Biserica Ta, țara noastră cu toate orașele și satele, izbăvește-le de toată reaua întâmplare, dăruindu-ne tuturor pace fără de tulburare. Răzvrătirile eresurilor strică-le cu puterea*

SOLIA JULY/AUGUST 2013

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



*Ta, iar pe noi întărește-ne, Doamne, întru iubirea Cea către Tine și întreolaltă, ca să ne învrednicim cu inimă curată totdeauna a aduce mulțumire Ție, Părintelui Celui fără de început și Unuia Născut Fiului Tău și Preasfântului și bunului și de viață făcătorului Tău Duh, Dumnezeului Celui slăvit întru o ființă, și a cânta preasfântului Tău nume: Slavă Ție, Dumnezeului și Binefăcătorului nostru, în vecii vecilor! Amin.*

Pr. Mihail Stanciu

(Articol preluat de pe website-ul <http://www.razbointrucuvant.ro>)





## 65-lea Congres ...

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primite cu multe mulțumiri și aprecieri.

La masa de prânz, am avut ca invitată specială pe Psa. Stefanie Yova-Yazge, care a vorbit despre rolul femeilor în Biserica Ortodoxă. După masă, s-au continuat lucrările congresului cu a treia sesiune. La sfârșit au avut loc alegerile pentru noul Comitet Executiv. Lista cu nume pentru noul comitet a fost prezentată congresului de către Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel. Noul Comitet Executiv al ARFORA este: Adela Price, Președintă; Georgeta Washington, Vice-Președintă; Deb Moga, Secretară; Mary Sankey, Casieră; Esther Pora și Adelina Balog, controloare; Lucy Pop, Președinta de anul trecut; Members at Large: Louise Gibb, Corina Phillips, Cristiana Drimboi, Dorina Riscutta, Psa. Ana Lupescu, și Psa. Anca Morar.

Ziua s-a terminat cu slujba Vecerniei, urmată de cină. După cină, toată lumea a fost invitată în biserică unde a avut loc o "Competiție Oratorică" și un concurs cu întrebări din Evanghelia după Sf. Marcu. La concurs s-au înscris grupuri formate din trei persoane de diferite vârste. Unul din aceste grupuri a reprezentat ARFORA. După concurs, toată lumea a mers în pavilion unde a avut loc programul "Românii au talent", urmat de muzică și dans. Toți cei prezenți s-au simțit minunat, s-a cântat și dansat până la miezul nopții.

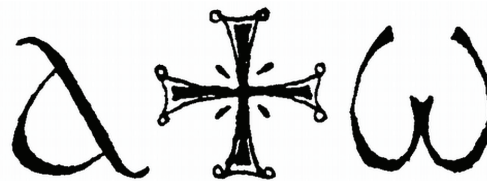
Sâmbătă dimineața, noul Comitet Executiv ARFORA s-a întâlnit să discute planurile pentru noul an. După masă, au fost un număr de seminare pe diferite teme și fiecare persoană a participat la seminarul care l-a interesat. Sâmbătă seara toată lumea a mers la Balul Debutantelor (cotillion). Mâncarea pentru acest eveniment a fost pregătită de parohia Sf. Maria din Chicago, IL.

Duminică dimineața a avut loc Sfânta Liturghie Arhierească, urmată de masa de prânz. Prea Sfințitul Episcop Irineu a deschis masa cu o rugăciune, iar Ron Mureșan a făcut prezentările.

James Carabină, președintele organizației "Frăția Ortodoxă", Adela Price, președinta ARFORA, și Jessica Precop, secretara AROY, au adresat câteva cuvinte celor în audiență, de asemenea și Teva Regule, organizatoarea evenimentului din acest week-end. Vorbitorul principal a fost Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel.

Mulțumim doamnelor de la Parohia "Întâmpinarea Domnului" din Fairlawn, OH, care au pregătit și servit cafea, clătite și alte bunătăți în fiecare zi în "coffee shop". De asemenea, mulțumim din suflet tuturor care au lucrat neobosit să asigure desfășurarea în bune condiții a tuturor evenimentelor, începând cu înregistrarea, programarea evenimentelor, pregătirea mâncării și curățenie. A fost un efort de grup care a contribuit la succesul acestui week-end. Toată lumea s-a simțit bine și sperăm să ne revedem din nou la Vatra în anii ce vin.

**Axinia Lucia (Lucy) Pop**  
National ARFORA President  
2009-2013



## Cum trebuie să ne purtăm ...

*Cont. de la pag 22*

când ne întoarcem la locul nostru putem să o consumăm cu grijă de a nu scăpa firimituri pe jos.

### Un gând de final

Societatea Nord Americană are o atitudine un pic mai neglijentă/nepăsătoare față de viață. Nu lăsați ca această atitudine să intervină în viața dumneavoastră de creștini ortodocși. Cu siguranță că sunt și alte aspecte care ar fi trebuit acoperite aici, însă modul în care ne comportăm în biserică se bazează pe bun simț și pe respectul cuvenit a fi arătat lui Dumnezeu și semenilor nostril. Aduceți-vă întotdeauna aminte că sunteți în biserică pentru a vă ruga lui Dumnezeu. Chemarea preotului "Cu frică de Dumnezeu, cu credință și cu dragoste să vă apropiați!" trebuie să reprezinte modul în care să ne comportăm în biserică. Dacă acesta este motto-ul nostru, atunci cu siguranță vom ști cum trebuie să ne purtăm în biserică.

**Pr. David Barr**

*(articol tradus și adaptat după The Word, Ianuarie 1997, pag 4-7)*

## REAMINTIM

### Al 81-lea Congres Anual al Episcopiei

Vineri, Septembrie 6 – Sâmbătă, Septembrie 7, 2013  
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