



2012 EPISCOPATE CONGRESS

Clergy and Lay Delegates with the Hierarchs

SOLIA

THE
HERALD

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CONTENTS

English Section

55 Maxims, V. Rev. Fr. Thomas Hopko	2, 13
Episcopate Congress Recap	3, 9
64 th National ARFORA Congress,	
Axinia Lucia (Lucy) Pop	4, 9
Scholarship Recipients	5, 8, 9
"Take Up and Read:" The Importance of	
Reading the Scriptures,	
Archpriest Lawrence Farley	6, 14
All-Auxiliaries Family Life Conference:	
With Faith and Love, Draw Near ...,	
Dianne Scott Farah	7
Parish Educational Scholarship Awarded,	
Sts. Peter & Paul Church,	
Dearborn Heights MI	9
The Gospel, Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh ..	10-11
Guides to Christian Living, George W. Grube ...	12-13
Fr. Sophrony's Prayer,	
contributed by V. Rev. Fr. Thomas Hopko	14
Financial Report	15, 16
Solia Donations	16
St. George Cathedral Centennial Celebration	17

Romanian Section

O poveste adevărată, Aurel Sasu	18-19, 23
Conferința "Viața de Familie"	19
Congresul Episcopiei pe anul 2012	20, 23
Al 64-lea Congres al ARFORA,	
Axinia Lucia Pop	21
Întreită sărbătoare pentru credincioșii	
ortodocși români din Portland, Oregon,	
Participant	22
Rugul Aprins, Dumitru Ichim	22
Ierurgie, Alexandru Tomescu	23
Sfințirea bisericii Mănăstirii Adormirea Maicii	
Domnului din Rives Junction, Michigan	24

55 MAXIMS

By V. Rev. Fr. Thomas Hopko (2008)

1. Be always with Christ and trust God in everything.
2. Pray as you can, not as you think you must.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer done by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times each day.
5. Repeat a short prayer when your mind is not occupied.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.
7. Eat good foods in moderation and fast on fasting days.
8. Practice silence, inner and outer.
9. Sit in silence 20 to 30 minutes each day.
10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
11. Go to liturgical services regularly.
12. Go to confession and holy communion regularly.
13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings.
14. Reveal all your thoughts and feelings to a trusted person regularly.
15. Read the scriptures regularly.
16. Read good books, a little at a time.
17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
18. Be an ordinary person, one of the human race.
19. Be polite with everyone, first of all family members.
20. Maintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. Exercise regularly.
23. Live a day, even a part of a day, at a time.
24. Be totally honest, first of all with yourself.
25. Be faithful in little things.
26. Do your work, then forget it.
27. Do the most difficult and painful things first.
28. Face reality.
29. Be grateful.
30. Be cheerful.
31. Be simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. Never bring attention to yourself.

Cont. on page 13

EPISCOPATE CONGRESS RECAP

The 80th Annual Episcopate Congress took place September 27-29, 2012, at St. George Cathedral, Southfield, Michigan. The schedule included: a full-day Clergy Conference on September 27 followed by Vespers, Supper and the Pre-Congress Episcopate Council meeting that night; the Congress meeting on September 28 followed by Vespers, Supper and a program; and on Saturday, September 29, the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy and Ordination of Dan Hoarste into the Holy Diaconate, followed by the Closing Banquet and program.

Thursday, September 27

The Clergy Conference was preceded by an Akathist Service to Bishop Policarp, intoned by V. Rev. Frs. Laurence Lazar and Remus Grama in the Cathedral Church. Following the service, the Conference commenced in the small hall of the Social Center, presided by His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel. After welcoming comments, His Grace Bishop Irineu gave a lecture presentation on practical implications of the Faith based on the Epistle of St. James. Following this presentation, the clergy discussed a variety of administrative, practical and moral issues. The Conference closed with Vespers in the Cathedral Church followed by a dinner.

Following the dinner, the Episcopate Council meeting took place at the hotel. The 1 1/2 hour meeting addressed the following issues: reviewed the minutes of the July 21, 2012 meeting; reviewed the printed Report to the 80th Congress; approved of the establishment of a new Mission Parish in St. Laurent, Quebec that will be administrated by Fr. Daniel Ungureanu (currently the second priest at St. Nicholas Church, Montreal, QC); accepted into the ranks of the clergy of the Episcopate the priests: Rev. Fr. Ioan Cozma (for service to Sts. Michael & Gabriel Church, Palm Springs CA) and Rev. Fr. Cornel Sirjita (for service to Holy Archangels Michael & Gabriel Mission, Niagara Falls ON); clarified the meaning of the titles "Assistant" Priest and "Attached" Priest, with the condition that an "Assistant" must receive a salary; preliminary report by Bishop Irineu re: Parish / Mission membership figures since 1980; report on the status of the Youth Director position; approval of clergy petitions to be accredited with voting privileges at the Congress: Frs. Ioan Cotrigasanu (St. Elias Mission, Anjou QC) & Ovidiu Pacurar (St. Polycarp Mission, Naples FL); report on the status of the Court Case of Fr. Vasile Susan; report on the work of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America; Episcopate Council Recommendation to the Congress for acceptance of the 2013 Budget.

Friday, September 28

Following the Invocation to the Holy Spirit, the 80th Episcopate Congress was called into session with 104 delegates present. His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel gave the opening address which included a review of activities since the last Congress and focused on two major events: the Assembly of Bishops Meeting in Chicago in September 2012 and the upcoming 17th All American Council (AAC) of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) in Parma, Ohio in November. Archbishop Nathaniel discussed the ongoing work of the Assembly of Bishops and summarized some of the issues the various committees are tasked to resolve. In his capacity as *Locum Tenens* of the Metropolitan See of the Orthodox Church in America, the Archbishop informed the delegates about the procedure for sending delegates to the one day meeting of the AAC in November for the purpose of electing a new Metropolitan of the OCA after the resignation of Metropolitan Jonah in July 2012. The remainder of the meeting was moderated by V. Rev. Fr. Ian Pacurar. The reports, which had been received by the delegates prior to the meeting, were discussed and approved. Ms. Teva Regule (who is completing her doctoral studies in Theology) made a presentation about the Family Life / All Auxiliaries Conference to be held at Vatra Romaneasca, Grass Lake, Michigan on June 27-30, 2013. Positive, lively discussion followed. More detailed information will be published in *Solia-The Herald* and on the Episcopate website (roea.org). Questions and comments by delegates were most pronounced on reports of the Department of Missions, Department of Finance, the Joint Dialogue Commission and the Due Diligence Committee (relating to the Proposal for Unity with the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of North & South America). Following adjournment, delegates gathered for a photo in front of the Cathedral (see cover of this issue of *Solia*), followed by Vespers.

Saturday, September 29

The clergy led the hierarchs in procession for the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning for the closing of the Congress. During the beautiful service, Dan Hoarse (doctoral student in Theology and parishioner of Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Dearborn Heights, Michigan) was ordained into the Holy Diaconate by His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel. He is attached to the Hierarchal Chapel at the Vatra during the time of completion of his studies in Rome. At the banquet following the Liturgy, the newly-ordained Deacon Dan offered thanks to the Archbishop, to his parents and the many friends in attendance for their positive influence in his life and for their presence at the ordination; and he spoke movingly about the "holy fear" and responsibility he feels as he begins his service to Christ and His Church as a Deacon. In

Cont. on page 9

64TH NATIONAL A.R.F.O.R.A. CONGRESS



Delegates and Clergy with Archbishop Nathaniel and Bishop Irineu

The 64th National A.R.F.O.R.A Congress was held on June 1-3, 2012, and was hosted by the Ladies Auxiliary of St. George Romanian Orthodox Church located in Canton, OH.

The weekend activities began with the Executive Board meeting on Friday afternoon at the hotel, followed by an informal Welcome Reception for all present. The organizing committee did a wonderful job in hosting this event.

On Saturday morning, the registration of the delegates continued and a very nice breakfast was served by the ladies of the host parish. His Grace Bishop Irineu, the Spiritual Advisor for A.R.F.O.R.A., opened the Congress with a prayer. Fr. George Treff, the Parish Priest, addressed the delegates along with Florence Fenton, the Congress chairperson. 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; "Falling Asleep of the Ever-Virgin 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; "Saints Peter and Paul," Dearborn Heights, MI; and "St. George," Canton, OH.

President Lucy Pop thanked the Board and the delegates for taking time from their busy schedules to attend the Congress and to work for the benefit of the Episcopate and their parishes.

A.R.F.O.R.A. awarded one Undergraduate scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 this year. Unfortunately, there were no applicants this year for the graduate scholarship or Helen Muntean Education Scholarship. We encourage the parish priests and the local ladies

auxiliary presidents to remind their young people that A.R.F.O.R.A. offers these scholarships, and the forms are on the A.R.F.O.R.A. website (ARFORA.org). We continued to support the Monasteries, Seminarians, the Vatra Summer Camps, the widowed Preotese and the Episcopate Mission Fund. Our project, "Cancer Awareness in Women", raised monies both nationally and on local levels. Our main focus is organizing new auxiliaries and encouraging the existing auxiliaries to be more active on the National level. His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel presented a report to the Congress on the progress made with the ARFORA House improvements. This building is at the Vatra and houses the ladies that work at the summer camps. This past year, ARFORA raised \$7,700 to pay for these improvements.

Another project we undertook this year is to update the Bishop's residence at the Vatra. The living room furniture is quite old and needs to be replaced, and we are asking all parishes and ladies auxiliaries to help us with this project.

Teva Regule gave a presentation of what a "Family Life Weekend" may look like, when all auxiliaries would meet on the same weekend and in the same location for meetings, fellowship, social events. A brief discussion followed.

The day was concluded with a Parastas and Great Vespers, celebrated by His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel and His Grace Bishop Irineu, assisted by Frs. Treff, Grama, Stanciu, Ian Pac-Urar, and Deacon Wright. After the services, all present were invited to the great hall for dinner.

Sunday morning began with a Hierarchal Divine Liturgy, followed by a Farewell Brunch. Heartfelt

Cont. on page 9

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

WILLIAM R. STANITZ / AROY SCHOLARSHIP – 2012 (\$1,000)

This scholarship is awarded to AROY members who are pursuing a college education.



Ioana Ciuta of St. Paul, Minnesota and member of St. Mary Church, St. Paul, MN, is a recipient of the Stanitz/AROY Scholarship for 2012. Ioana completed her high school education at the Roseville Homeschool Christian Academy (4.0 average) while also earning college credits and a place on the Dean's list for four consecutive semesters (Century Community College & University of Minnesota) during her Junior and Senior years. She is an accomplished piano, violin and viola player, having begun music lessons at the age of 4. She has won awards on the local and state levels, and has even performed with the University of Minnesota Symphony Orchestra while still a high school student. Ioana has been involved in St. Mary Church all of her life, since her family immigrated to Minnesota from Romania when she was 1 year old. She states: "Our immigration was made possible by the generous support of the parishioners from St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church in St. Paul . . .". Growing up in the parish community, Ioana offered her time and talents to the parish through SPAROY and wherever she could help (cantor for church services, assistant Sunday School teacher, Dunarea and Izvorasul Dance groups). Ioana's long-term goal is to complete an MD/PhD degree, since she enjoys working with people and would like to be able to take "their medical condition to the lab and find a solution to the condition in question." She even learned American Sign Language during the twelfth grade so that she could directly communicate with deaf patients in a clinical setting. Currently, she is enrolled at the University of Minnesota in the College of Science and Engineering in pursuit of a degree in Chemical Engineering.

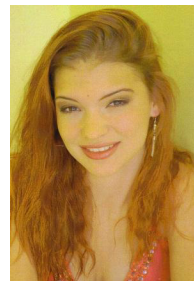
Ana Oancea of Grass Lake, Michigan and member of St. George Cathedral, Southfield, MI, is a recipient of the Stanitz/AROY Scholarship for 2012. Ana completed her high school education at Lumen Christi Catholic High School, Jackson, Michigan, summa cum laude. Ana's extracurricular activities included piano lessons, tennis team, art and volunteering for various non-profit organizations (Muscular Dystrophy Camp, McCulloch Book Readers Program, and Vatra Camp for Juniors). About her experience at



MDA camp, she says: "For the week I spent at MDA camp, I was assigned a child with muscular dystrophy, and we were together 24 hours a day. We ate, slept in the same cabin and participated in activities together. Each day there felt like a week, because there were so many activities to participate in; but I would do it all over again, because I'm glad I had the chance to get to know Grace." Ana also participated in various school clubs and organizations (SADD, Spanish, Book, Pro-Life, Traveling Science, and National Honor Society) during her high school career. Talented in art, Ana won several awards for her drawings. She also participated in the Cathedral's AROY chapter activities when possible and was a debutante at the AROY Cotillion in Cleveland in 2009. Due to the traveling distance from home, she most often attended services at Holy Dormition Monastery. Although not yet decided on her long term career goals, Ana is enrolled at Jackson Community College to complete the first two years of general education requirements so that she may transfer to a four year university to possibly pursue a degree in education.

DUMITRU GOLEA GOLDY-GEMU SCHOLARSHIP – 2010, 2011, 2012 (\$1,500)

This scholarship is awarded to undergraduate college students of Romanian origin.



Maya Alexis of Hallandale, Florida, is a recipient of the Goldy Scholarship for 2010. Maya completed studies at Broward College in 2010 with a major in Nursing and minor in Health Administration, and is continuing her studies toward a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing at Florida International University, Miami FL. Letters of reference describe Maya as: "an excellent student...industrious, intelligent and very competent...a meticulous person who exudes enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity...understanding and compassionate...considerate of others...thoughtful and caring...a wonderful person." In her essay, Maya wrote: "I believe my Romanian heritage helps make me a better American, because it gives me a deeper perception of life over all... a way of looking at life as well as the ability to distinguish important values ... faith in God and hope must always be within us if we are to succeed." Maya is a member of Holy Trinity Church, Miramar FL.

Christopher Sfedu of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is a recipient of the Goldy Scholarship for 2010. Christopher completed his high school education at The Shipley School, Bryn Mawr PA with honors (National

Cont. on page 8

“TAKE UP AND READ:” THE IMPORTANCE OF READING THE SCRIPTURES

By Archpriest Lawrence Farley

Perhaps the most important words Augustine of Hippo ever heard came from the mouth of a little kid playing a game. The child kept repeating in childish imitation of a teacher, “Tolle, lege! Tolle, lege!” “Take up, and read!” On impulse, Augustine took up the nearest book and began to read the words of St. Paul from Romans 13: “Not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.” It was all over for him. These words of Scripture provided the internal shove necessary for him to commit his life to Christ. Even in the days before Gideon Bibles, Augustine owed his conversion to reading the Scriptures.

We who are converted, who strive daily to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, also need to take up and read. Why? For at least two reasons.

First, all of our Orthodox worship presupposes our familiarity with the Bible, its stories and images. When the Bishop visits, the choir takes up the song as he enters, “The prophets proclaimed you from on high, O Virgin: the Jar, the Staff, the Candlestick, the Table, the Uncut Mountain, the Golden Censer, the Tabernacle, the Gate Impassible, the Palace, the Ladder and the Throne of kings”.

The hymn-writer who wrote this verse thought his hearers would recognize these images from the Old Testament. He assumed that all Christians knew of the jar which contained the manna, which was kept in the Holy Place and mentioned in Exodus 16. He assumed that all Christians knew of the uncut mountain prophesied in Daniel. He expected the hearers of the hymn to recognize these images as types and foreshadowings of the Mother of God. It is safe to say, however, that many Orthodox today do not remember these stories with enough familiarity to instantly understand their significance when they hear the episcopal hymn. And that is a shame, because it means that much of our Church’s catechetical richness is lost to us. We are the poorer for it. There is a chasm fixed between our liturgical texts and our understanding of them, between the Fathers’ teaching and our capacity to receive that teaching. But the chasm is not unbridgeable. We can easily cross it by studying the Scriptures.

There is another even more important reason for studying the Scriptures than enhancing our appreciation of our liturgical hymnody. St. John Chrysostom once said, “Ignorance of the Scriptures is a great abyss.” By this he meant that if one does not know the Scriptures, it is easy to fall into the abyss of worldli-

ness. If this was true in the days of St. John Chrysostom, when the secular world had a distinctly Christian tinge to it and when most of the population of Antioch and Constantinople went to church on Sunday, how much more true is it today, when most of our Canadian population does not go to church, and when our culture is correspondingly hostile to the Christian Faith. In the days of Chrysostom, if you followed the crowd, you would most likely find yourself in church. If you follow the Canadian crowd today, you will likely find yourself in more dangerous places.

St. Paul urged us to “not be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewal of our mind” (Rom. 12:2). Phillips [J.B. Phillips’ translation of the New Testament into modern English] translates this as “don’t let the world squeeze you into its own mold”. As you may have noticed, the world is very good at squeezing, and it exerts its pressure on us every time we turn on the television, listen to the radio, or open a book or magazine — even (or perhaps especially) if the television, radio or book is about “spirituality”. The proper response to this squeeze is not to externally cut oneself off from the world, entering a monastery, or living in a self-constructed fantasy world of fundamentalism, or refusing any contact with the culture around us. The answer is internal. The Lord promised His disciples that if they drank any deadly thing, it would not hurt them (Mk. 16:18). Similarly, we can ingest our culture and live in our world and not be hurt if we have first swallowed the antidote to the world’s lies — namely, the truths of Scripture, as interpreted by the rest of apostolic Tradition. As the Psalmist, says, “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your Word. Your Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119:9, 11). Ingesting the Scriptures can keep us safe.

This means, of course, that we approach our reading of the Scriptures for the purpose of transforming our lives, not just gaining intellectual or academic knowledge. Academic knowledge is wonderful, but that knowledge needs to not stay in our heads. It needs to sink down the further saving twelve inches, from our heads into our hearts. St. Paul said that the Scriptures were given “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16). If we read only to gain head knowledge, we read amiss, and our reading is dangerous, for then we might suppose ourselves to be holy when we are only learned. Being learned is great, but on the

Cont. on page 14

ALL-AUXILIARIES FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCE

“With Faith & Love, Draw Near”

June 27-30, 2013

Vatra Romaneasca, Grass Lake, Michigan USA

WITH FAITH AND LOVE, DRAW NEAR . . .

The Vatra has a special meaning as a meeting place for a first parish life conference, because it is the “hearth” of our home where we draw near to our Mother, the Church. For the last 75 years or so, Orthodox Christians have traveled from American states and Canadian provinces to meet each other within her gates. Truly, the original Orthodox on this continent did the planting, and the leadership of the church has faithfully done the watering, and God has made things grow in ways we did not foresee.

A lot has changed in the past 7 decades. We were once primarily of Romanian descent, but now when we gather we find we have expanded our circle to include Americans and Canadians of every ethnic group, some new immigrants, some 4th and 5th generation, some converts, as well as Orthodox from birth. Many parishes established during the early period of emigration no longer support large congregations. Other mission parishes have grown with the mobility needed in this country to support the job market, and to some extent, the retirement constituency. Parishes with currently large immigrant populations have different needs than parishes which are made up of mixed marriages and American Orthodox of several generations.

Yet we look to and celebrate, in all our parishes, that which we have in common: our love of God, our outreach to the community, our desire to pass on our religious world-view and heritage from our grandparents to our children. Our language is the language of the liturgy, and it is our song, unique to us, as Orthodox Christians.

We celebrate our past. We hope for our future. And we now address our present: Have our parishes and their auxiliaries met the needs of our members? Have we been open to the creative growth and comfort offered by the Holy Spirit? What ways are we preaching and living the gospel message? How have we introduced a Christian lifestyle in our homes? Have we taken care of our poor, our sick, our elderly, our prisoners? Have we welcomed newcomers and students who attend universities in our areas? Have we publicized our presence in our local communities? Have we offered books to our libraries explaining who we are? Have we looked for the lapsed and have



we invited our neighbors to our churches? Have we sent our children to seminary to prepare for the future parishes? Have we baptized our babies, married our children, and buried our dead in the Orthodox Church? Have we taken stock of where we were in the 50's and 60's compared to where we are now? There is a lot to talk about, and a lot to learn.

The purpose of a parish life conference is to share what we do, see what others do, and to come up with new ideas together for spreading the

gospel message of Jesus Christ. The old AROY cornerstone of “Faith, Knowledge and Good Works” is a good way to frame your parish life while preparing for a major conference at the Vatra next year. We seek to “know” God through worship and prayers. We seek to learn “about” God through study. We seek to “serve” God through good works. How has your parish flourished, or not, in each area? Be prepared to scrutinize and offer solutions for moving forward.

We can no longer put new wine into old wine skins. We need to realistically take a look at where we are, and where we want to go, and how we plan to get there by following the footsteps of Our Savior.

So, with faith, with love, draw near. Pack your ideas, your concerns, your open-mindedness, your creativity, and your good will in your suitcases, and join us for the first parish “life in Christ” conference at the Vatra in 2013!

Dianne Scott Farah

100TH ANNIVERSARY

NICHOLAS CHURCH
1621 S. Sawburg Road
ALLIANCE, OHIO

NOVEMBER 3-4, 2012

November 3

5 pm - Memorial Service / Great Vespers

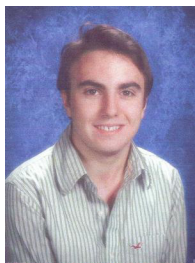
November 4

9 am - Matins; 9:45 am - Vesting of Hierarch

10 am - Hierarchal Divine Liturgy

1 pm - Banquet

Scholarship ... *Cont. from page 5*



Advanced Placement Scholar; National Youth Leadership Selectee). As described by the School's Director of College Counseling, Christopher "...desires to do well – always and everywhere. His ambitions are big and bold: to master the study of Arabic; to maintain his conversational fluency in both French and Spanish; to intern on Wall Street with the CEO of an investment banking firm (which he did at the age of fourteen); to become an Eagle Scout (which he did in the tenth grade); to pilot a helicopter (he obtained his license [in 2009]). Whatever Chris sets out to do he accomplishes, no matter how improbable it may seem to others. His determination is unsurpassed; he simply does not take no for an answer. ...He will endeavor to make the world a better place by combining his passion for business and his deep commitment to improving the lives of others around the world." In his essay, Christopher wrote: "As a first generation Romanian-American...every week, I would volunteer for three hours at a center in Philadelphia that taught English as a second language to immigrants. Not only was this experience rewarding from an educational standpoint, it was also rewarding as I was able to work first hand with those wishing to start a new life in the US." Christopher is attending the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia PA.



Ingrid Vatamanu of Lakewood, Ohio, is a recipient of the Goldy Scholarship for 2012. Ingrid completed her high school education at Lakewood High School, Lakewood OH with a 4.386 GPA and honors. Besides her high academic achievements, her extracurricular activities included: Rotary International Exchange Student to France; Interact Club (founder and president); Model United Nations (President); French Club officer; French Honor Society; National Honor Society; Band; freelance writer for the "Lakewood Times"; Model United Nations Excellence Award; Diploma of French Language Studies. Ingrid also completed approximately 200 hours of volunteer service in the community at Fairview Hospital and other organizations. Ingrid is currently a student at Barnard College, New York NY, where she is majoring in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations. One of Ingrid's teachers writes: "Perhaps Ingrid's most outstanding quality is her relentless commitment to learning and academic achievement. She challenges herself with rigorous AP courses, even in subjects, such as chemistry, which don't match her career interests. ...Having come from Romania at age eight, one might think she would be

at a disadvantage; yet, she was still able to keep up with the highest achievers who had spoken English from day one." In her essay, Ingrid wrote: "My Romanian parents give me love, encouragement, and a strong ethic. My religion has taught me that family and relationships are the foundations of a meaningful life. ...It is my goal to study international law to help others craft peaceful resolutions to world issues – like poverty, brain drain, lack of resources for schools – and help countries, like Romania, have a better future." Ingrid is a member of St. Mary Cathedral, Cleveland, OH.



Sophia Todeasa of Monroe, Connecticut, is a recipient of the Goldy Scholarship for 2011. Sophia completed her high school education at Masuk High School, Monroe CT with a 4.638 GPA and numerous honors and awards (National Merit Commended Scholar). Her extracurricular activities included: Fall & Winter Color Guard, National Honor Society, French Honor Society, Literary Magazine, Crossword Club, Chamber Choir and Camerata Choir. In the larger community, she was involved in Girl Scouts (Silver Award), Monroe Food Pantry, MACAROY church youth group (Secretary), Church Choir. In her letters of recommendation, Sophia is described as: "...a focused, mature, open-minded, intelligent and goal-oriented young woman who has extended herself into the school and the larger community. ... respectful ... insightful ... conscientious." In her essay, Sophia wrote: "The greatest thing that my heritage instilled in me is my Orthodox faith. ...Today there is so much controversy over illegal immigrants and prejudice against minority groups. The fact that my father is an immigrant makes it easier for me to decide where I stand. I know many Romanians who have immigrated here, and they are all wonderful, complex people. It leads me to understand that America is not the property of those whose ancestors came here generations ago, but is the homeland of all who chose to settle here despite being born elsewhere." Sophia is enrolled at Marist College, Poughkeepsie NY where she is majoring in Biology. She is a member of St. Dimitrie Church, Easton, CT.

Loredana Ramona Balaie of Dearborn Heights Michigan, is a recipient of the Goldy Scholarship for 2012. Ramona is a student at Wayne State University, Detroit MI, where she is majoring in Nutrition and Food Science with the intention to enter Medical School upon completion of her degree. Through the end of 2011, her cumulative GPA was 3.83. A physician who Ramona "shadowed" for six months had the following to say about her: "She is a great



candidate to become a successful and caring physician...She showed me that we can rely on her work ethic...I believe she will be a great physician." One of Loredana's professors wrote: "In addition to her academic and research achievements, Ramona has been highly involved in the community, both within Wayne State University and outside in the community at large. ...I have every confidence that Ramona will become a highly successful medical student and physician...". In her essay, Ramona wrote: "I love my Romanian heritage because it is part of my identity, and it reminds me of who I am and where I have come from. ... Being Romanian means being strong, hardworking, caring and humble among other things. Having these traits are very important, and they are helping me in my goals of being a successful member of the American society." Ramona is a member of Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Dearborn Heights, MI.

Laura Raicu of Shorewood, Wisconsin, is a recipient of the Goldy Scholarship for 2011. Laura is a student at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, where she is majoring in Psychology. At the end of the 2011 school year, her GPA was 3.935. One of her professors describes her as: "...a top student ... who always had something relevant and insightful to say about the difficult topics that we approached in our class discussions and journal-writing assignments. ...it was fascinating ... to know about Laura and her family's experience of living in Japan and then immigrating to Canada before coming to live in the United States. The pride Laura has in her Romanian background resonated very clearly in an extensive autobiographical essay Laura wrote for the class, which went into great detail about her mother and father's struggles during the 1989 uprising...". In her essay, Laura wrote: "I grew up in this atmosphere of hard work and faith. I learned that perseverance and prayer are the most important ingredients to success. They are what help me contribute to society as a Canadian citizen, U.S. resident, and Romanian. Whether I am tutoring a child, participating in research, or performing on stage, it is my parents' teachings and my predecessors' fortitude that fuel me."



64TH ARFORA Congress *Cont. from page 4*

thanks are offered to Fr. George Treff and Psa. Paula, the Congress Chairpersons, Florence Fenton, Bobbie Stelea, Laura Saraclar, and all the ladies and parishioners of St. George parish, for hosting the 64th National A.R.F.O.R.A. Congress.

Axinia Lucia (Lucy) Pop
National ARFORA President

PARISH EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED



Elizabeth Gheordunescu is the recipient of the 2012 newly-established \$1,000 **Traian & Anna Moga/Sts. Peter & Paul Educational Scholarship**, offered annually to students who are actively involved in the life of Sts. Peter & Paul Church and the community, while maintaining a high academic standing. Elizabeth is an undergraduate senior studying Pre-medicine,

Neuroscience and Medical Anthropology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She is a member of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (vice-president since 2010) and the Romanian Student Association. Her biggest accomplishment to date was when she was published in PNAS (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences). And yet, with all her studies and school activities Elizabeth has proven that one can still maintain an active church life, singing and assisting in the choir, holding office in the Youth Group and helping at banquets, festivals, etc. In her own words: "*I cherish being part of our church community. The encouragement and support that I have experienced growing up and attending our church has been phenomenal and has helped me accomplish the things that I am proud of today.*" We are proud of Elizabeth Gheordunescu and the Moga Family for their support of our Orthodox Christian youth.

Episcopate Congress *Cont. from page 3*

his closing remarks to the delegates and guests at the banquet, Archbishop Nathaniel honored the members of the Joint Dialogue Commission for their many years of dedicated service by bestowing upon each of them the golden medal of the Order of Bishop Policarp. He also bestowed the medal upon two members of the Chancery Staff for their many years of service: Mr. Mark Chestnut, Financial Secretary (25 yrs.) and Archdeacon David Oancea, Chancellor (24 yrs.). Archbishop Nathaniel thanked Fr. Lazar and John E. Lazar (co-chairman) and members of the Cathedral for their outstanding organization and hospitality to all delegates of the Congress. He invited everyone to attend the Cathedral's 100th Anniversary on the weekend of November 10-11, 2012.



Editor's note: You will thank yourself for reading this! The author tells the reader his experience of the Gospel when there was "no God in my life."

THE GOSPEL

By Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

From a talk given on March 1, 1989

It is of the Gospel that I wish to say a few words to you. In countries that are nominally Christian or allegedly Christian, it is very difficult for one to recapture the true meaning of the word and of the event of the Gospel. What is the Good News? What is new in it? What is good in it? Those of us who discovered the Gospel as a new life may perhaps feel that more intensely whether we are people of the East or people of the West. What is news? O, something very wonderful and very simple. It is life, but only those who were ill can know what it means to be whole; only those who were dead can appreciate what it means to be alive.

In one of his broadcasts in 1943, C.S. Lewis said, "What should happen to those who meet a Christian, a believer? They should stop arrested by what they see and exclaim, 'Lo, a statue has come to life!' That is, something that was nothing but stone, beautiful or not, but inert, insensitive, which could not hear or speak, of a sudden has become a living being. Can you imagine what would happen to people if all of us who call ourselves by the name of Christ were such that people encountering us should say, 'Look, this is a living being and because I have met him or her I understand now that I don't know yet what it means to be alive. I am a corpse, I am half dead, there is no life in me, and in these people there is life'."

I would like to single out a few elements of newness also in what one may discover in the Gospel; and to do this, I am afraid, I will be a little too personal for the taste of Britain. I was baptised an Orthodox when I was a child, but then the first World War came, the revolution came, the bitter and hungry and painful years of emigration. And there was no time for me to receive any kind of religious education, so that God did not exist for me. I was not an atheist by conviction (one is not an atheist at the age of 7 and 10, and 12, and 15), but I was an atheist in the truer sense of the word - there was no God in my experience, no God in my life. And therefore, there was no ultimate meaning in my life; all the meaning of life could be summed up in the necessity of survival. There was no common roof for my parents and me; there was food when it happened to be there, and there was a great deal of violence and hardship around. So that all my vision of life was that of a struggle, and all my understanding of people around me was that of a jungle peopled by prospective enemies.

And then one day, I happened to read the Gospel.

It happened by the act of God as it were, because it happened in order for me to discard it. I heard a priest speak to us boys, in a youth organization, and what he said shocked me, revolted me so much that I decided to check whether what he had said could possibly be true. We were teenagers, preparing to re-conquer Russia, sword in hand; and here was a man who spoke of Christ and spoke of nothing but meekness, humility, forbearance, turning one cheek when one was hit on the other, giving us an image of what was not manly. I came home determined to make sure and to finish with the Gospel if that was the Gospel and that was Christ. I counted the chapters of the Gospels, because as I expected no good from the reading, I thought that the shortest would be the best; and so I was landed with St. Mark's Gospel, a Gospel written for young ruffians like me, the youth of pre-Christian Rome.

And then something happened to me which you may interpret either as a hallucination or as a gift of God. Between the beginning of the first and the end of the second chapter of his Gospel, of St. Mark's Gospel, I suddenly became aware with total, absolute certainty that on the other side of the desk, the Lord Jesus Christ was standing alive. There was no hallucination of the senses - I heard nothing, saw nothing, smelt nothing; I looked, and my certainty remained as total and as totally convincing. And then I thought that if Christ is alive, if I am in his presence, then the man who died on Calvary was truly what is purported him to be, the man who died on Calvary was God come to us as a Saviour.

And then I began to read the Gospel with new eyes in a different way. I turned pages simply to read other passages than the one I had read about the beginnings, and I landed on a passage that said in St. Matthew's Gospel that God shines his light upon the good and the evil. And I sat back and I thought, "All my life I've been surrounded by people whom I considered as enemies, who to me were like beasts of prey, people of whom I was terrified and whom I wanted to fight, people who had taught me that the only way of survival was to become as hard as nails - and God loves them all. And if I want to be with God, I must learn to love them whatever they may do to me; because if I reject them, I will not be with God; I will not be with Christ who on being crucified said, "Father, forgive, they don't know what they are doing," and who said to Judas who had come to betray him, "Friend, why thou hast come hither?" I did not know these examples, but that is what I perceived.

And I remember coming out into the street the next morning, going to the suburban train that would bring me to my school and crowds of people to their work, and I looked round at all these people moving towards the station that had been so alien, that were to me prospective danger, tormentors, enemies, whom I wanted to ignore and fight if necessary. I looked at them and thought, "God loves them all! O, the won-

der! - we are in a world of love. Whatever they may feel about me, I know what they may not know themselves". This was my first experience; this was a moment when I suddenly felt that I was alive and that I had been dead. I had been a corpse among corpses; now I was alive among people who, who knows, perhaps were as alive as I, or, horror of horrors, were corpses that needed to come to life. And with the foolishness of a boy of 14-15, pressed in these carriages of the suburban train, I turned to my neighbour and said, "Have you ever read the Gospel?" He looked at me condescendingly, smiled and said, "Now, why should I?" And then I told him what I had just discovered. He probably thought I was mad. And I was and I am still, and I hope that this madness will never leave me; because from that moment onward, I felt there was no point in life except in whatever way of life, in whatever walk of life you are to proclaim the Gospel, to proclaim this miracle that the Gospel is a power of life, that Christ can give us life. And by contrast, that as long as we are not possessed of the life which Christ can give, we are dead whatever we imagine.

And then I discovered other things. I discovered the parable of the prodigal son, and that was such a wonderful experience, because that corroborated what I have felt within myself. Twice does the father say, "My son, your brother was dead, and he is now alive." He says that to the servants, he says that to the older son; he knew what it meant to be alive, and he knew what it meant to be dead. The prodigal son knew also what it meant to die and to resurrect. He was partaker after a fashion in the experience of Lazarus who had come to life after having tasted death. The older son did not know that in his imagination, his younger brother had gone into the far country, enjoyed life seeing things which he, faithful servant, slave, hireling of his father, had never seen. Perhaps he was jealous of him, but he certainly did not feel that he missed or had lost anything. And so what was there to be rejoiced at when he came back? And why was it that the father was so happy to see him back instead of saying, "No, you have squandered all my goods; go and earn your living." He did not know what it meant to be dead, because he had never been alive.

And then I discovered something more. I discovered an answer (o, that didn't come immediately) to a question that puzzled me: how could it be that God could know what it means to be a creature? How could the Immortal One know what it means to be dead? What could the Eternal One know about how one can lose even the transitory, ephemeral life which is ours? And then I realised that God in his Incarnation had become one with our creatureliness; he had not only a human body and a human soul, he had inherited this body and soul from generations back; he was the heir of centuries and centuries of humanity, of real, concrete people. He was true man, the only true

man, because to be a true man means to be a man in perfect oneness with God, partaker of divine nature, as Peter the Apostle puts it in his Epistle. The union of divinity and humanity had made his humanity not less human but more truly human. He knew what it meant to be a human being. He knew what it meant to be alive. Did he know what it meant to be dead? Later, I discovered the Cross. On the same evening, turning pages (the way I put it now of course could not have been the thing I perceived and put it when I was a boy in my middle teens), what I discovered was this - that Christ had chosen as it were simultaneously to be totally solid with God and totally solid with man, at one with God, at one with man. And that had two tragic consequences, because he stood before man in God's name, in total solidarity with him, without any compromise. He had become unacceptable to all those who were not prepared to accept God on his terms, on God's own terms, to be God's own people in a real, full, sacrificial, heroic sense. And because he had chosen to remain in total, ultimate solidarity with man before the face of God, he had to share with mankind all the predicament of being a creature, of living in a fallen world, of being a man who had brought through sin, mortality and death. And so he had to be rejected by mankind; he had to die outside of the city of men as the Anglican hymn has it, "on the little hill without the walls," not within Jerusalem, not within the company of men, outside, like the scape-goat who was loaded with the sins of Israel and cast out to die in the wilderness.

On the other hand, he could not die, because in his very humanity inseparably, perfectly united to his divinity, there was no space for dying; and yet, he chose to share with us the only ultimately tragic predicament of mankind. He chose mortality and death, and this he did on the Cross; something happened that he became unaware of his unity with the Father, and having lost God, he had to die; he could die and he could go down into the pit, into Hades, into the Sheol of the Old Testament, the place of the irremediable and ultimate separation from God. He came down into it as a man, and he filled it with the glory of his divine presence, harrowing hell, making an end to it. He had united God and man in his person; he called every human being to unite himself to him and through him to become the son or the daughter of God. What a marvel, what a wonder! That is what the Gospel meant to me when I began to discover it. . . .

Source: Metropolitan Anthony Library <http://www.metropolit-anthony.orc.ru/eng/>. His Eminence, Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, died peacefully August 4, 2003, at the age of 89. See his interesting biography at http://www.metropolit-anthony.orc.ru/eng/eng_biog.htm.



GUIDES TO CHRISTIAN LIVING

Prayer Before Study:

Let me behold your mercy, Lord; give my heart cause to rejoice in you. Let me find you, whom I have sought with love and longing. I am the one set upon by thieves, beaten, left half-dead upon Jericho's road. Come to my rescue, Good Samaritan! I am the sheep that went astray; look for me, and bring me into your fold. I am the coin that was lost; search for me, and rejoice over me. Do with me as you will, that I may stay with you all my life, eternally praising you in the company of your saints. Amen.

—St. Jerome

Scriptural References:

- ⇒ Romans 12:1-21
- ⇒ Hebrews 12:1-17
- ⇒ Luke 12:22-34
- ⇒ James 1:19-27; 2:14-24
- ⇒ Acts 17:27-28

The Church Fathers wrote for the people. In doing so, they stressed the practical aspect of Christianity. They spoke of certain “rules” which believers must follow to attain the fullness of life which Our Lord promised those who love Him and who wish to keep His Word.

It has been said that the writings of the Fathers are divided equally among apologetics (i.e. teaching the doctrine of the Church) and how this doctrine is to be carried out in the everyday lives of Christians. A great saint proclaimed that to be an “authentic” believer, one must first practice what the Church teaches, and pray for the courage and strength to maintain this belief. Then, when these two things are in order, one must “move their feet,” i.e. put teaching into practice! Following are some guides and ideas for living the Faith we profess.

- * To yield and give in to our sinful desires is the lowest form of slavery. To rule over such base desires is the only true freedom.
- Justin Martyr
- * If we remain ignorant of God we do not injure Him. Rather, we deprive ourselves of His friendship.
- Justin Martyr
- * If we are not ready to die into Christ's sufferings, His life is not in us.
- Justin Martyr
- * Rather than laying down our souls for money, we lay down our money for your souls.
- Tertullian
- * When the body is deprived of food, drink and clothing, it dies. But it suffers no harm at all in being deprived of sinful desires.
- Justin Martyr
- * Prosperity, in the eyes of God, consists of nothing else than to live according to the truth.
- Justin Martyr

- * The business of a Christian is nothing else than to be ever-preparing for death.
- Irenaeus
- * A person who does not do what God has commanded shows that he really does not believe in God.
- Clement of Alexandria
- * Something can sound very logical and still be false.
- Mark Felix
- * People tend to accept something as true simply because it is boldly asserted.
- Mark Felix
- * An abundance of words can sometimes appear to be solid proof, but it really isn't.
- Mark Felix
- * A man cannot live an authentically human life as a man, unless he has become a child of God.
- Augustine
- * You called Lord, you cried, you shattered my deafness, you sparkled, you blazed, you drove away my blindness, you shed your fragrance, and I drew in my breath; and I now pant for you.
- Augustine
- * Love can do all things; and if it ceases to be generous, it is no longer love.
- Gregory the Dialogist of Rome
- * It is the poor man who holds out His hand, but it is God Himself who receives whatever you give to the poor.
- St. John Chrysostom
- * The principal thing is to stand with the mind and heart before God, and to go on standing before Him unceasingly day and night, until the end of life.
- Theophan the Recluse
- * Christians walk in all humility and kindness and lying is not found among them, and they truly love one another. They despise not the widow, and grieve not the orphan. Those who have, distribute liberally to those who have nothing. If they see a stranger, they bring him under their roof, and rejoice over him as if it were their own brother, for they call themselves brethren, not after the flesh but after the Spirit and in God. If any of their own passes away from this life, and another believer sees it, he provides for the burial of that poor man. If they hear that any one of their own is imprisoned or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of the believers provide for his needs, and if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. And if there is any among them who is poor and needy and does not have an abundance of necessities they fast two or three days that they may supply, the need with the available food.
- Aristides

- * Do what you can and then pray that God will give you the power to do what you cannot.
- *St. Augustine*
- * He who gives to no one is truly poor!
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * Each of us who sins with his own free will chooses punishment. The blame lies with him who chooses. God is without blame.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * Love is nothing more than desiring to do good to one's neighbor, for the sake of the neighbor.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * We who seek the heavenly bread must rule the belly, which is beneath heaven.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * Those who glory in their looks, not in their hearts, dress to please others.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * Christians belong to no earthly country, and this enables us to scorn all earthly possessions.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * The proper dress of the temperate and wise man is what is plain, becoming and clean.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * It is right to supply needs, but it is not good to support laziness.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * The best riches are the poverty of desires.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * Make Christ a partner with you in your earthly possessions, so that he may make you a fellow-heir with Him in His heavenly Kingdom.
- *Cyprian*
- * It is not meager income that constitutes poverty. Rather, insatiable wants constitute poverty. But the good man, being free from such wants, is truly rich.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * An enemy must be aided, so that he won't continue to be an enemy.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * If someone expects to comprehend all things about God merely through his physical senses, he has fallen far from the truth.
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- * The greater our trials, the greater our rewards.
- *Tertullian*
- * You abuse the commandments of the Lord, yet you call yourselves His sons!
- *Cyprian*
- * He who parts and divides the Church of Christ cannot possess the seamless garment of Christ.
- *Cyprian*
- * There is more weight in a small number of wise men than in a great number of ignorant persons.
- *Lactantius*

- * The things you teach cannot have any weight unless you are the first to practice them.
- *Lactantius*
- * He who chooses transient things will be without eternal things. He who prefers earthly things will not have heavenly things.
- *Lactantius*

*Excerpted from **What the Church Fathers Say About ... Volume I**, by George W. Grube, Light & Life Publishing, Minneapolis, MN, 1996. To order, call 888-925-3918 or visit light-n-life.com.*

55 Maxims *Cont. from page 2*

- 33. Listen when people talk to you.
- 34. Be awake and attentive, fully present where you are.
- 35. Think and talk about things no more than necessary.
- 36. Speak simply, clearly, firmly, directly.
- 37. Flee imagination, fantasy, analysis, figuring things out.
- 38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
- 39. Don't complain, grumble, murmur or whine.
- 40. Don't seek or expect pity or praise.
- 41. Don't compare yourself with anyone.
- 42. Don't judge anyone for anything.
- 43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
- 44. Don't defend or justify yourself.
- 45. Be defined and bound by God, not people.
- 46. Accept criticism gracefully and test it carefully.
- 47. Give advice only when asked or when it is your duty.
- 48. Do nothing for people that they can and should do for themselves.
- 49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
- 50. Be merciful with yourself and others.
- 51. Have no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
- 52. Focus exclusively on God and light, and never on darkness, temptation and sin.
- 53. Patiently endure your faults and sins peacefully, under God's mercy.
- 54. When you fall, get up immediately and start over.
- 55. Get help when you need it, without fear or shame.



FR. SOPHRONY'S PRAYER

O Eternal Lord and Creator of all things, in your inscrutable goodness you have called me into this life and have given me the grace of baptism and the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. You have instilled in me the desire to seek your face. Hear my prayer!

I have no life, no light, no joy, no strength, no wisdom without you, O God. Because of my unrighteousness, I dare not lift my eyes in your presence. But I obey you who said:

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (*Mark 11*)

Truly, truly I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, He will give it to you in my name. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. (*John 16*)

Therefore, I now dare to approach you. Purify me from all stain of flesh and spirit. Teach me to pray rightly. Bless this day which you give to me, your unworthy servant.

By the power of your blessing, enable me at all times to speak and to act with a pure spirit to your glory with faith, hope and love, humility, patience, gentleness, peace, purity, simplicity, sobriety, courage and wisdom. Let me always be aware of your presence.

In your boundless goodness, O Lord God, show me your will and grant me to walk in your sight without sin.

O Lord, unto whom all hearts are open, you know what I need and what is necessary for me. You know my blindness and my ignorance. You know my infirmity and corruption. My pain and anguish are not hidden from you. Therefore, I beg you: Hear my prayer and teach me by the power of your Holy Spirit the way in which I should walk. And when my perverted will leads me otherwise, O Lord, do not spare me, but force me back to your way.

Grant me, Lord, to hold fast to what is good by the power of your love. Preserve me from every word and act which corrupts the soul, and from every impulse that is displeasing in your sight and harmful to the people around me. Teach me what I should say and how I should speak. If it be your holy will that I be quiet and make no answer, inspire me to be silent in a peaceful spirit that causes neither harm nor hurt to my fellow human beings.

Establish me in the path of your commandments, and until my last breath do not let me stray from the light of your ordinances. May your commandments be the sole law of my being in this life and for all eternity.

O Lord, I pray to you: Have mercy on me. Spare me

in my affliction and misery and hide not the way of salvation from me.

In my foolishness, O God, I plead with you for many and great things. Yet I am ever mindful of my wickedness, my baseness, my vileness. Have pity on me! Cast me not away from your presence because of my foolish presumption. Increase rather in me the right presumption of your grace and grant that I, the worst of people, may love you with all my mind, all my heart, all my soul and all my strength, as you have commanded.

By your Holy Spirit, Lord, teach me good judgment and sound knowledge. Let me know the truth before I die. Maintain my life in this world until the end that I may offer worthy repentance. Do not take me away while my mind is still blind and bound by darkness. When you are pleased to end my life, give me warning that I may prepare my soul to come before you. Be with me, Lord, at that awesome hour and assure me by your grace of the joy of my salvation.

Cleanse me from secret faults. Purify me from hidden iniquities. Give me a good answer at your dread judgment seat.

Lord of great mercy and measureless love for all people: Hear my prayer! Amen.

Contributed by V. Rev. Fr. Thomas Hopko

“Take Up and Read” *Cont. from page 6*

Last Day, our Lord will not inquire about how learned we were. He will inquire about how holy we were, about whether or not we let the world squeeze us into its own mold. If we reply to Him that, well, yes, we did let the world squeeze us into its mold, but we wrote some great treatises on the Maccabean dating of the Book of Daniel, we will find that this reply does not impress.

Here then is why we should read take up and read: to enrich our experience of worship in this age, and to be safe in the age to come.

Fr. Farley is the Parish Priest of St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church, Langley, BC. This article originally appeared in the “Canadian Orthodox Messenger” (Summer 2012), a publication of the Archdiocese of Canada of the Orthodox Church in America.

Never cease studying the Gospel till the end of your life. Do not think that you know it enough, even if you know it by heart. The Lord's commandments are exceedingly broad (Ps 119:96), even though they are expressed in few words. The Lord's commandment is infinite, just as the Lord who uttered it is infinite. The practice of the commandments and progress in them is unlimited. The most perfect Christians, brought to a state of perfection by divine grace, remain imperfect in regard to the commandments of the Gospel.

- From “The Arena” by St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

FINANCIAL REPORT

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Holy Cross , Hermitage, PA (2013)	\$1,000.00
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Cont. on page 16

SOLIA

December 3, 2011 - October 8, 2012

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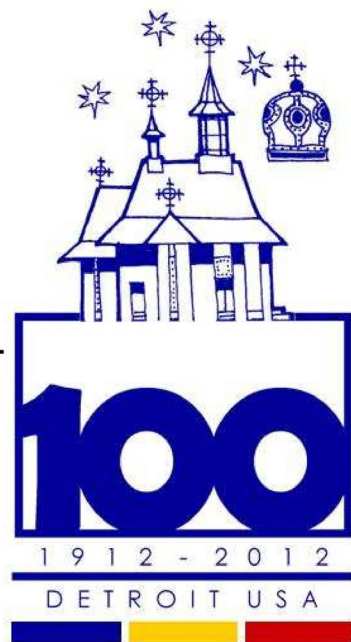
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Saint George Romanian Orthodox Cathedral CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

SĂRBĂTORIREA CENTENARULUI Catedralei Ortodoxe Române "Sf. Gheorghe"

INVITATION

Bring family and friends and join us as we give thanks to God and celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Saint George Cathedral — historic throne of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. In the name of all who have come before us, we invite you to come together for this historic weekend, as we commemorate this blessed moment in the life of our God-protected diocese!

Parishes and faithful are asked to please support our appeal! Be part of history — offer a gift, submit a greeting, participate with us!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10

- 4:00pm Historical Exhibition,
Concert of Romanian Music:
Ensemble of the Detroit Symphony
- 6:00pm Children's Gathering
- 7:00pm Parastas & Vespers
- 8:00pm Cultural Program, Reunion & Dance

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11

- 8:30am Matins
- 10:00am Hierarchal Divine Liturgy
Dedication of Centennial Troița
- 2:00pm Centennial Banquet

Details and information: Cathedral Office
(248 569-4833), SGROC.ORG, ROEA.ORG

INVITAȚIE

Veniți cu familia și prietenii să oferim recunoștința noastră lui Dumnezeu și să sărbătorim cea de-a 100-a Aniversare a Catedralei Sfântul Gheorghe — tronul istoric al Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din America. În numele tuturor strămoșilor noștri, vă invităm să veniți ca împreună să luăm parte la acest moment istoric, comemorând acest eveniment din viața eparhie noastre binecuvântată de Dumnezeu!

Rugăm pe toți credincioșii și toate parohiile să susțină apelul nostru prin donații și prezența voastră, astfel fiind participanți la acest eveniment istoric. Sărbătoriți cu noi!

SÂMBĂȚĂ, 10 NOIEMBRIE

- 4:00pm Expoziție Istorică și
Concert de Muzică Românească:
Ansamblul Orchestrei Simfonice din Detroit
- 6:00pm Întâlnirea Copiilor
- 7:00pm Parastas și Vecernie
- 8:00pm Program Cultural și Dans

DUMINICĂ, 11 NOIEMBRIE

- 8:30am Utrenia
- 10:00am Sfânta Liturghie Arhierească
Dedicația Troiței Centenare
- 2:00pm Banchet Festiv al Centenarului

Detalii și informații: Biroul Catedralei
(248 569-4833), SGROC.ORG și ROEA.ORG

Să mulțumim Domnului!

O POVESTE ADEVĂRATĂ

Zborul spre Statele Unite urma să aibă loc în 21 iunie 2012. Un drum lung și obositor, până pe Coasta de Vest, în orașul îngerilor. Cu biletul de avion în buzunar, cum se spune, mă adâncisem deja cu gândul în ideea de tihnită vacanță californiană. Când, așa, deodată, telefonul, care avea să schimbe cursul așteptării mele și a evenimentelor, cu iz de aventură, trăită mai întâi la Cluj, apoi la New York, alături de comunitatea românească din marea metropolă americană. Ce se întâmplase? În 10 iunie, din îndepărtata Canadă, părintele Dumitru Ichim, poetul îmbrățișărilor de umbre și al cuvintelor de laudă îndurerată își făcea drum, cu sufletul bolnav, în chilia tăcerii mele. Avea vocea tristă, resemnată, înfășată într-o durere de lacrimă uscată. Dorea,

fără vreo introducere, să-și ia rămas bun pentru ora întoarcerii în veșnicie. Plecase înaintea lui, în urmă cu doi ani, Florica, poetă și ea, după aproape două decenii de rugăciune la porțile disperării, ca să poată vedea, de dincolo, începutul de speranță a celor rămași să împlinescă, prin jertfa iubirii și a credinței, rostul căderii lor în lume. Fiindcă, ce altceva era biserica ortodoxă, ridicată din temelii la Kitchiner, lângă Toronto, decât bucuria de a celebra singurătatea, când toate în jur păreau să se cearnă, arghezian, ca o cenușă a țărâni.

Pe scurt, părintele se afla în fața morții. O vedea, îi simțea respirația, îi auzea foșnetul de întuneric. De la mine dorea doar să mă gândesc cu dragoste la el. Au urmat clipe, căroră îmi este imposibil, acum, să le măsoar pustietatea. Le-am trăit atunci ca pe un imens deșert al minții. Ce să spun, cui să vorbesc? Cum poți fi, în astfel de momente, slujitorul disperării celuiilalt și cum poți dăruia celuiilalt din ceea ce îți lipsește ție însuși? Nefireasca tăcere a fost un lung priveghi al inimii. Și mi-am dat seama, pentru întâia oară, ce-nseamnă să fii fericit cu Duhul, cu lumina din tine, cu umiliința tulburării tale. Era ca o ispită: să-i spun că Dumnezeu în care crede nu este al morților, ci al viilor și că adormirea din întristare este ea însăși un păcat? Prin urmare, părinte, i-am zis, pregătește-te de biruință, nu de înfrângere, gândește la veșmintele puterii de sus, nu la iarba câmpului de jos. “Bucurați-vă” este cuvântul învierii, și cine și-ar permite să intre cuprins de spaimă în acest templu al făgăduinței? Părinte, am încheiat, ești poet, luptă împotriva resemnării, ia de pe cuvinte fâșiile de pânză, scoate-le din peștera tăcerii și trimite-le să vorbească lumii despre bucuria preamăririi prin durere. Ca o neînțeleasă răzvrătire a



suspinelor lui Iov. Ai nevoie de ajutor? Te voi sprijini să-ți faci cunoscută pricina împovărării sufletului într-un volum de versuri. Iar promisiunea să fie aceasta: dacă voi avea mâine manuscrisul, vei primi, în zece zile, cartea tipărită. Lasă moartea să-și îngroape morții ei. Cum spuneam, era 10 iunie. Uitasem că în 21, a aceleiași luni, urma să traversez două continente și un Ocean, cu o destinație în care, dintru început, poeziei nu-i rezervasem nici un loc.

A doua zi am primit manuscrisul unui excepțional volum intitulat *Psaltirea apocrifă a dreptului Iov*. Puteam să nu-mi joc rolul bunului samarinean până la capăt? Cu sau fără doi dinari, ideea cărții luase chipul harului de vindecare și odihnă. În taină, se-implinesc feluritele slujiri! Ce era să fac? Duc

vestea poetului Vasile G. Dâncu, directorul Editurii Eikon, și-i prezint întâmplarea ca pe o mare descoperire a puterii sufletului viu și a împăcării cu noi înșine prin neștiuta taină a cuvântului. Îi explic, pe îndelete, mica dificultate în care mă aflu și-l rog, împreună, să găsim soluții pentru această fericită strâmtorare a unui rar prisos de laudă în slăbiciuni. A fost înțeleghetor, generos și sincer. Cele câteva zile de lucru la carte nu mi s-au părut mai lungi decât o plimbare îngândurată prin anotimpul plin de îndoieli al propriei mele vieți. În 19 iunie, volumul era tipărit, într-o formulă grafică de excepție. Expediez autorului primele treizeci de exemplare, în 20 iunie, pentru o ipotetică lansare a lor la “Săptămâna culturii românești”, de la Hamilton (Canada). Celelalte vor fi expediate, în absența mea, prin bunăvoința editurii. Cât de elementară și, totuși, cât de sublimă această poveste. Acest popas al morții, în care un poet își odihnește inima în plinătatea de lumină a propriei sale poezii. Ca un Iov îmbrăcat în trufia nefericirii lui. În trufia neputinței de a înțelege, blagian, nu atât drama noastră, cât “singurătatea ascunsă” a lui Dumnezeu în noi. Există în volum, ca și în textul biblic, o cutremurătoare nedelegare a lui Dumnezeu de om, așa cum există și o înfricoșătoare nedelegare a lui Hristos de suferință (agonia în versiunea lui Pascal). O scenă memorabilă din carte! Hristos coboară de pe cruce și se adresează lui Iov, celui din gunoi: “nu de apă, ci de tine mi-a fost sete”. De vaietele tale vrea să spună versul! Fiindcă, trec spre înviere prin pustia rănilor tale și beau, la Cina cea de taină, paharul făcut din lutul tău. Să mărturisim, i-am spus, într-un final, părintelui Dumitru Ichim, trufia desăvârșirii acestui lut. Pe care se află urma sărutului de două mii de ani al lui

Hristos.

Se schimbase ceva în viața, în “moartea” părintelui? Cu siguranță. Trecuse o lună de la apariția volumului. La sfârșitul lui iulie, în drumul spre casă, fac un popas strategic la New York. Scopul: să-l aduc în State, la întâlnirile de vineri, ale Cenaclului “Mihai Eminescu”. Și, iată, minunea: acolo unde demersurile prietenilor eșuaseră, izbutește recunoștința (toate sunt ale lui Dumnezeu!). A fost o seară de vis la “Romanian Garden”. Doamne, cum se frâneau euharistic cuvintele și cum, în negrul veșmintelor, se cuibărea lumina cea neînserată. Cum se desena poezia în hieroglifa trupului duhovnicesc și cum se sculpta vocea, cu de la sine bucurie, într-o fericită lepădare de sine. Poetul vorbea din adâncul inimii lui Iov. Căuta “limanul ultim din cuvânt” și ne arăta nouă, celor mulți, cum să nu ne scădem lui Dumnezeu prin umilință. Cândva, omul a purtat, spre Golgota, crucea lui Hristos. Acum, acolo, în acele clipe de tâlhărire a cerului, Hristos, cu siguranță, purta crucea părintelui Dumitru și-i încuraja “gustul de a fi”. Ce mulțumire mai mare puteam avea? Ne-am despărțit spre ora miezului de noapte. Îi rodise pe față un zâmbet de pustnic pentru care viața începea din nou să fie un tot al stărilor de vis. Se întorcea în Canada, pus ca un Iov, *în starea lui de început*.

Duminica, la Biserica “Sfinții Apostoli Petru și Pavel”, a părintelui Theodor Damian, are loc, în sala socială, obișnuita liturghie de după liturghie. Sunt orele de socializare, de cunoaștere, de trăire spirituală și de vindecare sufletească unii prin alții. Cele de-acum sunt dedicate lecturii din *Psaltirea apocrifă*. Mi-am amintit un mai vechi dialog cu părintele Dumitru Ichim. De câteva luni, îi plecase, în “eternitatea preexistentă” (D. Stăniloae), soția Florica Bațu, sensibilă poetă a înaltelor strigări de albastru și a luminilor înfășurate-n vânt. Îl întrebam pe părinte, de ce se pleacă argilei spicul, de ce-și pleacă “genunchiul de lumină” înaintea secerișului! E ultimul gest de reverență pentru ceea ce va fi, a fost răspunsul. Pentru ceea ce, ca “schimbare la față”, va fi pâinea euharistică. Bobul de grâu devenit *biserică*, vedere care vorbește și șoptă care tace. Nașterea de lumină, de la capătul nașterii din lut. La ineditul recital de poezie, am hotărât, prin urmare, să citesc *Hieroglifa spicului* și *La frângerea pâinii*. Prima: “Nu lacrima,/ ci steaua unghiului mă toarce:/ <<Pământ ești/ și în pământ te vei întoarce...>>/ Taci, cugete .../ pustului splendoare de ciulină .../ chiar și din aur buchea de țiar fi,/ să nu ndrăznești să-mi spui/ că-n lut am fost și-n lut am să reviu,/ că inima ...i/ mai bine eu mi-o știu;/ tot timpul după chipul Lui .../ în străvezimi ... Lumina/ mi-am limpezit-o strecurând pământul,/ iar de-a rămas din el vreun pic,/ e că m-asemăn cu Cuvântul/ ce L-a semnat pe Dumnezeu/ chiar și pe porțile de iad/ cu hieroglifa aplecată-n spic.” A doua (fragmente): ... dar nu de greutate,/ la amiază,/ spicul de grâu/ se apleacă argilei/ și nici de povara de rază/ a minutarului./ Nimeni nu i-a zămislit/ cunoașterii/ clipa ce și-o clipește cântarului/ când către tină își coboară/ genele de fecioară./ Ce face

În atenția Dumneavoastră:

CONFERINȚA “VIAȚA DE FAMILIE” A CELOR 3 ORGANIZAȚII AUXILIARE “CU DRAGOSTE ȘI CU CREDINȚĂ SĂ VĂ APROPIAȚI”

Va avea loc în perioada

27-30 iunie 2013 la

**VATRA ROMÂNEASCĂ,
Grass Lake, Michigan, USA**

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27-30 iunie 2013 VATRA ROMÂNEASCĂ

atunci ... se închină?/ Au e răpită în note înalte de
cleștar/ nașterii de lumină?/ ... poate fi, poate fi.../ peste
umăr șoptește duhul din glie/ zvârlind până la cer,/ din
crengile singuraticului păr .../ o ciocârlie/ .../ <<Spicul
își pleacă într-o parte capul/ să audă nevăzute stele în
amiază/ vibrându-și lacrima-n amar ca roua.>>/ Era la ora
a noua,/ dar vorba e ascunsă de norod,/ că nu e sunet, ci
frământ luminii/ ce-a mai rămas de la potirul Cinii/
când spicul de grâu/ îi slujea cu al inimii rod./ Numai în
clopotnița paiului/ mai pâlăuiau grelele/ pe care le
desferică/ stelele,/ nopților noastre zicu-le./ Spicule/
când bobului dai formă/ și-l faci biserică./ Mirelui care

Cont. la pag. 23

CONGRESUL EPISCOPIEI PE ANUL 2012



Al 80-lea Congres anual al Episcopiei a avut loc în perioada 27-29 Septembrie 2012, la Catedrala Sf. Gheorghe din Southfield, Michigan. Programul a inclus în prima zi Conferința anuală a clerului urmată de slujba Vecerniei, cină și Ședința Consiliului Episcopesc, în a doua zi a avut loc ședința Congresului, urmată de slujba Vecerniei, cină și programul artistic, iar Sâmbătă, în ultima zi, a avut loc Slujba Sfintei Liturghii Arhieresti și hirotonia Dlui Dan Hoarste ca diacon, urmate de Banchetul oficial și programul de încheiere al Congresului.

Joi, 27 Septembrie

Conferința clerului a fost precedată de slujba Acatistului pentru Episcopul Policarp, savârșită de către Prea Cucernicii Părinți Laurențiu Lazăr și Remus Grama în Catedrală. După slujbă, Conferința a început în sala mică a Centrului Social al Catedralei, prezidată de către Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel. După introducerile de rigoare, Prea Sfințitul Episcop Vicar Irineu a susținut o prezentare a implicațiilor practice ale credinței în viața de zi cu zi bazată pe Epistola Sf. Iacob. După prezentare, clericii au discutat o serie de probleme administrative, morale și practice. Conferința s-a încheiat cu slujba Vecerniei urmată de cină în Catedrală.

După cină, a avut loc Ședința Consiliului Episcopesc la hotel. Ședința a durat o oră și jumătate și a discutat următoarele: Procesul Verbal al Ședinței din 21 Iulie 2012; Raportul tipărit pentru cel de-al 80-lea Congres al Episcopiei; a aprobat înființarea unei noi Misiuni în St. Laurent, Quebec, care va fi administrată de Părintele Daniel Ungureanu (în prezent atașat la Biserica Sf. Nicolae din Montreal, Quebec); a acceptat primirea în rangul clerului Episcopiei pe următorii preoți: Pr. Ioan Cozma (pentru slujire la Parohia Sf. Arhangheli Mihail și Gavriil din Palm Springs, California) și Pr. Cornel Sirijita (pentru slujire la Misiunea Sf. Arhangheli Mihail și Gavriil din Niagara Falls, Ontario); a clarificat diferența dintre "preot asistent" și "preot îmbisericit sau atașat", cu explicația că preotul asistent trebuie să primească salariu; a ascultat un raport preliminar al Prea Sfințitului Episcop Irineu referitor la statistica membriei în Misiuni și Parohii; a ascultat un raport privind poziția de Director coordonator al tineretului;

a aprobat cererile următorilor preoți de a fi acreditați cu drept de vot la Congres: Pr. Ioan Cotrigășanu (Misiunea Sf. Ilie din Anjou, Quebec) și Pr. Ovidiu Păcurar (Misiunea Sf. Policarp din Naples, Florida); a ascultat un raport asupra situației procesului civil cu Pr. Vasile Susan; a ascultat raportul privind activitatea Adunării Episcopilor Canonici Ortodocși din America Centrală și de Nord; și a recomandat acceptarea de către Congres a bugetului pe 2013.

Vineri, 28 Septembrie

După rugăciunea de deschidere, al 80-lea Congres al Episcopiei a fost declarat în sesiune cu 104 delegați prezenți. Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel s-a adresat membrilor Congresului, făcând o trecere în revistă a activităților din Episcopie de la ultimul Congres și a pus accentul asupra a două evenimente majore: ședința Adunării Episcopilor Canonici Ortodocși din America care avut loc în Septembrie 2012 în Chicago și viitorul Consiliu al întregii Americi al Bisericii Ortodoxe în America din Parma, Ohio în Noiembrie. Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel a prezentat munca actuală a Adunării Episcopilor și a sumarizat câteva dintre problemele pe care diferitele comitete ale Adunării sunt însărcinate să le rezolve. În calitate de locțiitor al scaunului de Mitropolit Primat al Bisericii Ortodoxe în America, Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel a informat delegații asupra procedurii trimeriei de delegați la ședința de o zi a Consiliului întregii Americi al Bisericii Ortodoxe în America din Noiembrie cu scopul de a

Cont. la pag. 23



AL 64-LEA CONGRES AL A.R.F.O.R.A.



Cel de-al 64-lea Congres al A.R.F.O.R.A. a avut loc în Parohia Sfântul Gheorghe din Canton, Ohio în perioada 1-3 iunie, 2012. După cum se știe, A.R.F.O.R.A. este Asociația Reuniunilor Femeilor Ortodoxe Române din America.

Activitățile au început vineri seara, cu Ședința Comitetului de Conducere care s-a ținut la hotel, urmată de înregistrarea delegatelor și o recepție pentru toți cei prezenți. Organizația de femei de la Parohia Sf. Gheorghe a fost la înălțime în organizarea acestei recepții.

Sâmbătă dimineață, înregistrarea delegatelor a continuat la biserica Sf. Gheorghe, urmată de micul dejun servit de organizația de femei gazdă. Prea Sfințitul Episcop Vicar Irineu, a deschis lucrările congresului cu o rugăciune, după care, preotul paroh, George Treff și Florence Fenton, organizatoarea Congresului, au adresat câteva cuvinte de bun venit delegatelor. Luci Pop, Președinta A.R.F.O.R.A., de asemenea, a spus câteva cuvinte de bun venit delegatelor. 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; și "Sfântul Gheorghe", Canton, OH.

Președinta Luci Pop a mulțumit Comitetului de Conducere și delegatelor la Congres pentru efortul depus să participe la lucrările Congresului și să lucreze pentru beneficiul Episcopiei și al parohiilor.

A.R.F.O.R.A. a acordat o bursă de \$1,000 în anul 2011. Din păcate nu s-au primit aplicații pentru celelalte burse sponsorizate de A.R.F.O.R.A. Încurajăm preoții parohi și presedintele organizațiilor de femei locale să

amintească tinerilor de existența acestor burse și de faptul că formele de înscriere se găsesc pe site-ul www.ARFORA.org. În decursul anului trecut, am continuat să facem donații la trei mănăstiri și trei Seminarii, la taberele de vară de la Vatra, și misiunilor Episcopiei. De asemeni, nu am uitat nici pe preotesele văduve, cărora le trimitem un mic cadou de trei ori pe an. Am trimis o donație la organizația de cercetări în domeniul cancerului de sân. Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, a prezentat un raport în legătură cu lucrările de renovare efectuate la casa ARFORA de la Vatra. În această clădire sunt găzduite doamnele care lucrează la taberele de vară. Anul trecut, A.R.F.O.R.A. a colectat pentru acest proiect \$7,700. Pentru anul în curs, A.R.F.O.R.A. va strânge fonduri pentru a cumpăra mobilă pentru reședința Episcopului Irineu de la Vatra. Rugăm parohiile și reuniunile de femei să facă o donație pentru acest proiect..

În continuare, Teva Regule, a făcut o prezentare despre cum ar putea arăta un "week-end cu familia", unde toate organizațiile auxiliare ale Episcopiei să se întâlnească în același week-end și în același loc.

Ziua s-a terminat cu un Parastas urmat de Vecernie, la care au slujit Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, Prea Sfințitul Episcop Vicar Irineu, Pr. Treff, Pr. Grama, Pr. Stanciu, Pr. Pac-Urar și Diaconul Wright. După Vecernie, toți cei prezenți au fost invitați în sala socială unde s-a servit cina.

Duminică dimineață a avut loc Sfânta Liturghie Arhierască, urmată de masa de prânz.

Mulțumim din inima Pr. Paroh George Treff și Dnei Preotese Paula, doamnelor care au organizat Congresul, Florence Fenton, Bobbie Stelea, Laura Saraclar, și membrilor parohiei Sf. Gheorghe, pentru munca depusă ca și gazde ale celui de-al 64-lea Congres A.R.F.O.R.A.

Axinia Lucia Pop
Președinta A.R.F.O.R.A.

ÎN TREITĂ SĂRBĂTOARE PENTRU CREDINCIOȘII ORTODOCȘI ROMÂNI DIN PORTLAND, OREGON

Pe întreg cuprinsul eparhiei noastre, viața parohiilor pulsează și se desfășoară în ritmuri și cu intensități diferite, lucru ce depinde desigur de component și dinamica fiecărei comunități locale. Mai presus de toate însă, lucrul ce ne leagă pe toți este dragostea de Dumnezeu și de aproapele, din care izvorăsc bucuria nesfârșită de a trăi fiecare zi, ca o zi de sărbătoare.

Pentru noi toți cei care trăim în zona Portland-Vancouver și simțim ortodox-românește, vara ce tocmai a trecut a fost una deosebit de frumoasă, plină de trudă pe de o parte, dar și mai plină de satisfacții duhovnicești, pe de altă parte. Biserica noastră a avut parte de 3 evenimente deosebite.

Primul eveniment a avut loc în perioada 18-19 August, când am sărbătorit a 25-a Aniversare a Bisericii noastre locale, parte din Biserica universală a lui Hristos. Bucuria a fost sporită de vizita Înalț Prea Sfințitului Arhiepiscop Nathaniel în mijlocul nostru. A fost o sărbătoare a spiritului român-ortodox din diaspora americană. Ne-am amintit de cuvintele Sfintei Scripturi prin care ne vorbește însuși Dumnezeu, spunând "Eu sunt Alpha și Omega, începutul și Sfârșitul..." (Apoc. 21,6). Aniversarea a fost marcată de multe rugăciuni îndreptate către cer, de o agapă creștină și de publicarea unui Album Istoric Aniversar (carte în care s-a așternut sumar, munca de un sfert de veac a creștinilor ortodocși români din Portland în ogorul lui Hristos).

În seara aceleiași zile de Duminică, 18 August a început cel de-al doilea eveniment din viața parohiei, și anume Tabăra de Copii. Ea s-a desfășurat ca și în anii trecuți, pe parcursul unei săptămâni întregi. Tema centrală a taberei din acest an a fost "Sfintele Taine ale Bisericii", fiecare zi fiind dedicată uneia dintre ele, prin studiu și joc. Înalț Prea Sfințitul Nathaniel, din dragoste pentru comunitate, a poposit la noi până în Marțea acelei săptămâni. Înalț Prea Sfinția Sa a vizitat tabăra conversând și învățându-i pe cei mai tineri despre Ortodoxie în general. Tabăra din acest an a fost organizată împreună cu Parohia Ortodoxă Română "Pogorârea Sfântului Duh" din Oregon City, fapt ce a strâns împreună 30 de copii, începând de la vârste fragede (4-5 ani) până la adolescent (14-16 ani). Am experimentat încă o dată cuvintele psalmistului care spune "ce bine este să fie frații împreună".



Un al treilea eveniment deosebit din viața comunității noastre s-a desfășurat în Labor Day Weekend, la o săptămână după încheierea Taberei Ortodoxe. Este vorba de Festivalul Românesc, ediția a 9-a. A fost un weekend înviorător și plin de veselie în care am sărbătorit spiritul ortodox românesc în elementele lui cele mai pure și autentice, legate de Dumnezeu. Nu a lipsit nici turul de biserică spre care s-au îndreptat în mod aproape continuu oaspeții americani locali dornici de a afla mai multe despre comunitatea și credința noastră.

Pentru toate aceste evenimente aducem mulțumire lui Dumnezeu și ne rugăm pentru binecuvântarea Sa asupra comunității noastre. Mulțumim tuturor voluntarilor pentru toată munca depusă în cadrul acestor evenimente și a multor altora prin care dorim ca dragostea de Dumnezeu și de aproapele să o exprimăm în modul nostru unic și autentic. Slavă lui Dumnezeu pentru toate!

Participant

RUGUL APRINS

Descalță-te,
se auzi din rug de foc nemistuit;
e preînchipuire, de vrei semn -
a descălțării de grăunț!
Nu întreba de tâlcul greu!
Pe-aceleași urme Dumnezeu
spre tine s-o întoarce de pe lemn
îmbrățișându-te desculț!

Dumitru Ichim

O Poveste ... *Cont. de la pag. 19*

te aduce/ să să-i amintești că ne-am cunoscut/ la frângerea Pâinii/ pe cruce.”

Am fost oprit de sunetul strident al unui telefon. Suna, tocmai din Canada, părintele Dumitru Ichim! Întâmplare, coincidență? Nu știuse nimic nici despre improvizatul nostru salon de poezie, nici despre minunata-mi pescuire lirică. “Fericită petrecere în sfințenia bobului de grâu” au fost, totuși, cuvintele lui de despărțire. Și mi-am zis: cât de frumos știe înflori, uneori, necunoscutul dintre noi!

AUREL SASU

Congresul ... *Cont. de la pag. 20*

alege un nou Mitropolit Primat al Bisericii Ortodoxe în America după demisia Mitropolitului Jonah. Restul discuțiilor a fost moderat de către Prea Cucernicul Părinte Ian Pac-Urar. Rapoartele, pe care delegații le-au primit înainte de ședință au fost discutate și aprobate. Dna Teva Regule (care este doctorand în Teologie) a prezentat informații cu privire la viitoarea Conferință intitulată “Viața de Familie” care va fi susținută împreună cu Conferințele anuale ale celor trei organizații auxiliare din Statele Unite ale Episcopiei, la Vatra Românească în perioada 27-30 iunie, 2013. Discuții interesante, pozitive, au urmat. Mai multe informații cu privire la acest eveniment vor fi publicate în Solia și pe website-ul Episcopiei (www.roea.org). Întrebări și comentarii ale delegaților au fost mai pronunțate cu privire la raporturile Departamentului de Misiuni, Departamentului financiar, Comisiei de Dialog Comun și Comitetelor de verificare legală și financiară (în legătură cu Propunerea pentru unirea cu Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română din America de Nord și de Sud). La sfârșitul ședinței, delegații au făcut o fotografie în fața Catedralei (publicată pe coperta acestui număr al revistei Solia), după care a urmat slujba Vecerniei.

Sâmbătă, 29 Septembrie

Clericii prezenți au condus ierarhii în procesiune pentru Sfânta Liturghie Arhierască de la încheierea Congresului. În timpul Sfintei Liturghii, Dl. Dan Hoarste (doctorand în Teologie și membru la Parohiei Sf. Petru și Pavel din Dearborn Heights, Michigan) a fost hirotonit întru diacon de către Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel. Pe durata studiilor de doctorat la Roma, Dl Hoarste este atașat Paraclisului Episcopal de la Vatra. La masa festivă care a urmat, Diaconul Dan Hoarste a mulțumit ierarhilor, părinților săi și numeroșilor prieteni pentru influența pozitivă din viața sa și pentru prezența lor la hirotonia sa. Părintele Diacon a vorbit mișcător despre “frica sfântă” și responsabilitatea pe care le simte odată cu începutul slujirii sale ca diacon în Biserica lui Hristos. În cuvântul său de încheiere, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop

SOLIA SEPT/OCT 2012

IERURGIE

A trecut un sfert de veac de când,
Legenda avea s-adeverească,
Cum trei măicuțe au pus în gând,
Un Sfânt Lăcaș să ctitorească.

Pornit-au pe un drum străin și greu
Trecut-au ape, vămi, bariere...
Priveau spre Cer, rugându-se mereu
Și Calea lor a fost o priveghere...

Iar azi prin jertfa ajunsă la-mplinire
Au premărit divin-umana datorie:
Biserica în sărbătoarea de Sfințire,
Cea mai înaltă și-nchinată ierurgie.

Cărări de vieți cu gânduri rătăcite,
Vor genunchia pe praguri la intrare;
Din arderi care mistuie ispite,
Vor străluci luceferii în zare.

Lăsăm în urmă grijile-n genune;
Prin lacrimi ce se cern mărgăritare,
Greșelile se-ntorc în fapte bune,
Iar relele porniri, în cumpătare.

Privind în jur icoanele prea sfinte,
Sau codrul de aramă singuratec,
Ne răscolesc aducerile-aminte,
De-Agapia, Condrița sau Văratec...

Cu toți aici, la zid de biruințe
Sub slava ce se merită din plin,
Părtași să fim dreptei credințe,
Acum și pururea și-n vecii vecilor,
Amin.

Alexandru Tomescu

NOTĂ: Poezie dedicată Sfințirii Bisericii Mănăstirii “Adormirea Maicii Domnului” din Rives Junction, Michigan, sâmbătă 6 octombrie 2012.

Nathaniel a oferit membrilor Comisiei de Dialog Comun medalia de aur a Ordinului Sf. Policarp, ca semn de mulțumire pentru anii îndelungați de slujire. Deasemenea, Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel a oferit această distincție și la doi membri ai Cancelariei Episcopiei pentru anii mulți de serviciu: Dlui Mark Chestnut, Secretarul Financiar (25 de ani) și Prea Cucernicului Părinte Arhidiacon David Oancea, Cancelarul Episcopiei (24 de ani). Vlădicul a mulțumit Prea Cucernicului Părinte Protoiereu Laurențiu Lazăr și Dlui John E. Lazăr (Co-Președinte al Comitetului de organizare a Congresului), precum și tuturor membrilor Catedralei Sf. Gheorghe pentru excepționala organizare și ospitalitate. În încheiere, Arhiepiscopul a invitat pe toată lumea să participe la a 100-a Aniversare de la înființarea Catedralei în weekendul de 10-11 Noiembrie 2012.

SFINTIREA BISERICII MĂNĂSTIRII ADORMIREA MAICII DOMNULUI DIN RIVES JUNCTION, MICHIGAN

În ziua de 6 Octombrie a fost mare sărbătoare în oaza duhovnicească pe care o reprezintă Mănăstirea de maici din Rives Junction, Michigan. La un sfert de veac de la înființare, rugăciunile măicuțelor, ale Părintelui Roman Braga și ale tuturor celor care, de-a lungul timpului, au găsit locaș de reculegere spirituală în această Mănăstire, și-au găsit împlinirea, atunci când Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, împreună cu Prea Sfințitul Episcop Alexander de Toledo al Episcopiei Bulgare (OCA), cu Prea Sfințitul Episcop Vicar Irineu al Episcopiei noastre și Prea Sfințitul Episcop Vicar Irenee al Arhiepiscopiei Canadei au sfințit noul locaș de rugăciune.

Dacă în urmă cu 25 de ani, măicuțele conduse de Maica Benedicta se rugau într-un hambar, acum, după 25 de ani, sub oblăduirea Maicii Starețe Gabriella, ucenică a Maicii Benedicta, au înălțat rugăciuni în noua și măreața biserică din curtea Mănăstirii. Construită într-un stil unic, ce îmbină elemente ale stilului moldovenesc cu cel brâncovenesc, îmbodobită (parțial) cu o frumoasă pictură bizantină de către Maica Olympia, noul locaș de cult se înfățișează pelerinului ca o sinteză a credinței și iubirii față de Dumnezeu.

Însoțiți de un sobor impresionant de preoți și diaconi (peste 40) și de nenumărați credincioși (peste 800), ierarhii menționați mai sus au săvârșit slujba de sfințire,



după care s-a savârșit Sf. Liturghie Arhierescă în pavilion.

La sfârșitul Sfintei Liturghii, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel a făcut o scurtă trecere în revistă a istoricului Mănăstirii și a oferit Maicii Starețe Gabriella o cruce confecționată de el însuși pentru cei 20 de ani de slujire ca stareță a Mănăstirii.

A urmat un banchet aniversar la care au participat aproape 300 de persoane.

