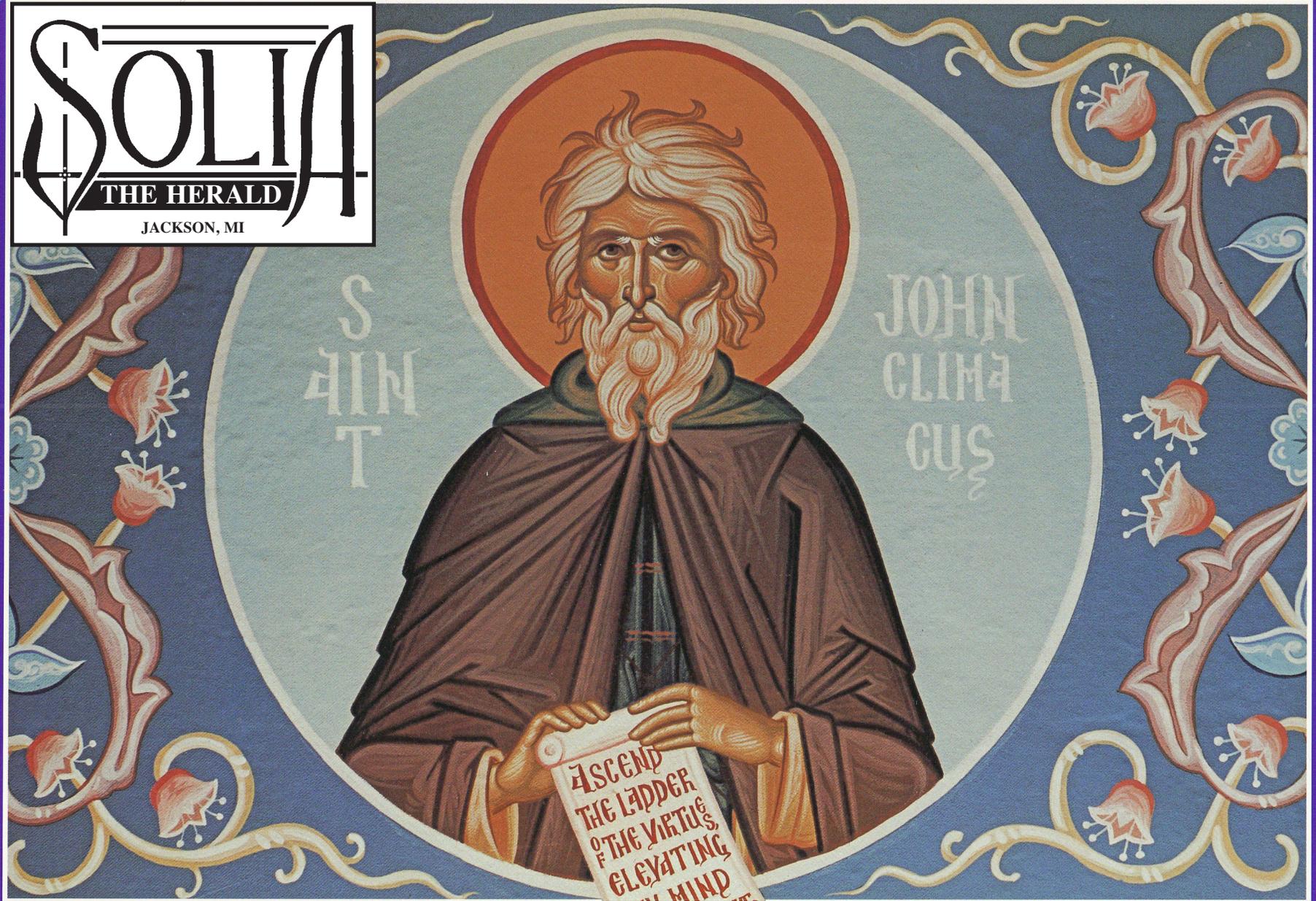


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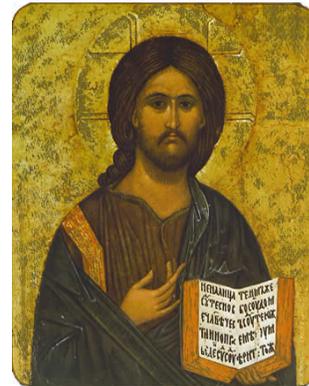
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COVER: Icon of St. John of the Ladder from Dormition Skete, Buena Vista, Colorado. The fourth Sunday of Lent is named for St. John of the Ladder (March 14 this year). St. John of the Ladder (also called St. John Climacus) is a church father who lived in the 7th century. He realized in his own life the ideal of penitence (feeling sorry for what we have done wrong and having the desire or will to change one's way). St. John got his name from a book he wrote called "The Ladder of Perfection," in which he gives spiritual directions to help us "climb" spiritually. (Text and icon reproduction from "Teaching Pics", produced by the Orthodox Christian Education Commission (<http://store.orthodoxed.org/> or call: 800-464-2744).

HONORING OUR LORD'S SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS

by Hieromonk Calinic (Berger)

How can we understand why Christ died the way He did? What is the meaning then of Good Friday? Are Christians today honoring this one day as they should?

Though the answer to the first question is vast and deep, we might start with one perspective: the Apostle Paul draws a parallel between the first man, Adam, and our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he calls the “second Adam” (cf. I Cor. 15:22, 45). The Fathers of the Church – for example, Irenaeus and Justin Martyr – built on this theme, drawing parallels between the first Adam and the second, or “new Adam,” Christ. The first Adam is the “son of God” (Lk. 3:38), a special creation made in the “image” of God (Gen. 1:26), uniting in himself the material and spiritual worlds. The new Adam is preeminently *the* Son of God, the *express* image of God (Col. 1:15, Heb. 1:3), uniting in Himself heaven and earth, the Uncreated and the created. The first Adam has no human father – he is the root of humanity, for from Adam are all born; and the new Adam has no human father – he is the root of renewed humanity, for in Christ are all baptized, or born anew.

Through His entire life, Christ the New Adam undoes what the first Adam brought about, in order to confirm humanity in its new beginning. The first Adam, tempted in a garden, sinned; the new Adam, tempted in a desert, did not sin. The first Adam, in accepting Eve’s stretching out her hands to a tree in egotism, fell from communion with God and then blamed others for the occurrence. The new Adam stretched out his hands on the tree of the Cross, in self-sacrifice, and then forgave others for the occurrence. From the rib, or side, of the first Adam, came his bride, Eve, while he was in a deep sleep. From the side of the new Adam, came also His bride, the Church (as blood and water – Eucharist and baptism) while He was in the sleep of death. The act of the first Adam, which expressed disobedience stemming from egotism, a false autonomy, self-preservation and even a “survival of the fittest” mentality, resulted in separation from God and the entrance of death into the world. All of these things were reversed through Christ’s obedience “even unto death” (Phil. 2:8), in a renunciation of all self-preservation, egotism and any autonomy apart from God. In place of the egotism of the old Adam, there is the perfect and total self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Its result is resurrection from the dead and the pouring

out of the Holy Spirit, man’s restoration to a state of grace-filled immortality.

Thus, Christ’s death on the Cross is the definitive act which undoes the legacy of the first Adam. It is the culmination of God’s great economy for our salvation and “opens for us the way to paradise” by occasioning our resurrection, our union with God, our deification.

“We needed an Incarnate God, a God put to death, that we might live,” wrote St. Gregory the Theologian (Or. 45.28). The Cross is the fulfillment and purpose of the Incarnation. Yet Christ did not simply die; He died in degradation, in abandonment, in all the fullness of human tragedy and horror. He identifies with the worst of the human condition; He becomes “a curse” for us (Gal. 3:13). He ac-

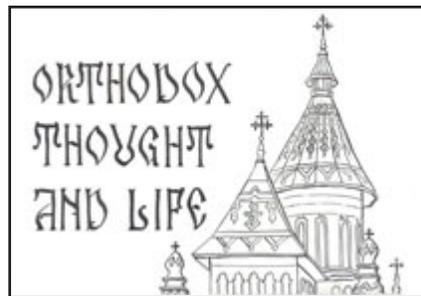
cepts it all, innocently, that He might free us from it all (Heb. 4:15, 9:26-8). Such was His great act of love and self-sacrifice.

Christ leaves nothing undone for our salvation – both generally, and in the lives of each human individual. It is only up to us to appropriate His gift. But according to the Lord Himself, there is only one way to do this: “take up the cross and follow Me” (Lk. 9:23).

Should this not begin by honoring the commemoration of this great event, which brought about our salvation? How is it then, that Christians today – of all denominations – cannot take off from work or school this *one day*, the holiest day of the year, on which what Jesus Christ did for the salvation of each one of us is remembered and honored? A profound and spectacular drama occurred on that *one day* – and yet the world goes about its business, taking absolutely no notice whatsoever.

One author, an American Protestant, David Rensberger, has recently published some very insightful reflections about the (lack of) observance of Good Friday in America. He writes that he feels out of place in society on that day, that the normalcy of daily life seems “bizarre, remote, almost unreal,” and that there is a spiritually perceptible disconnect between the believer and the rest of the world on that day. He expresses well the feelings that many Orthodox who have sought to enter deeply into Good Friday services also experience.

He makes another significant observation: Good Friday is unmarketable. There is no money to be made
Cont. on page 15



With Pascha coming early in 2010 (April 4), Great and Holy Lent commences on February 15. Following is a resource to assist the faithful at this time of the Church's annual liturgical cycle when all Orthodox Christians are called to a heightened attentiveness to the Christian life.

AN INTRODUCTION TO GREAT LENT

by **Fr Alexander Schmemmann**
Excerpts from Great Lent

When a man leaves on a journey, he must know where he is going. Thus with Lent. Above all, Lent is a spiritual journey, and its destination is Easter, "the Feast of Feasts." It is the preparation for the "fulfillment of Pascha, the true Revelation." We must begin, therefore, by trying to understand this connection between Lent and Easter, for it reveals something very essential, very crucial about our Christian faith and life.

Is it necessary to explain that Easter is much more than one of the feasts, more than a yearly commemoration of a past event? Anyone who has, be it only once, taken part in that night which is "brighter than the day," who has tasted of that unique joy, knows it. [...] On Easter we celebrate Christ's Resurrection as something that happened and still happens to us. For each one of us received the gift of that new life and the power to accept it and live by it. It is a gift which radically alters our attitude toward everything in this world, including death. It makes it possible for us to joyfully affirm: "Death is no more!" Oh, death is still there, to be sure, and we still face it; and someday, it will come and take us. But it is our whole faith that by His own death, Christ changed the very nature of death, made it a passage — a "passover," a "Pascha" — into the Kingdom of God, transforming the tragedy of tragedies into the ultimate victory. [...]

Such is that faith of the Church, affirmed and made evident by her countless Saints. Is it not our daily experience, however, that this faith is very seldom ours, that all the time we lose and betray the "new life" which we received as a gift, and that in fact we live as if Christ did not rise from the dead, as if that unique event had no meaning whatsoever for us? [...] We simply forget all this — so busy are we, so immersed in our daily preoccupations — and because we forget, we fail. And through this forgetfulness, failure, and sin, our life becomes "old" again — petty, dark, and ultimately meaningless — a meaningless journey toward a meaningless end. [...] We may from time to time acknowledge and confess our various "sins," yet we cease to refer our life to that new life which Christ revealed and gave to us. Indeed, we live as if He never came. This is the only real sin, the sin

of all sins, the bottomless sadness and tragedy of our nominal Christianity.

If we realize this, then we may understand what Easter is and why it needs and presupposes Lent. For we may then understand that the liturgical traditions of the Church, all its cycles and services, exist, first of all, in order to help us recover the vision and the taste of that new life which we so easily lose and betray, so that we may repent and return to it. [...] And yet, the "old" life, that of sin and pettiness, is not easily overcome and changed. The Gospel expects and requires from man an effort of which, in his present state, he is virtually incapable. [...] This is where Great Lent comes in. This is the help extended to us by the Church, the school of repentance which alone will make it possible to receive Easter not as mere permission to eat, to drink, and to relax, but indeed as the end of the "old" in us, as our entrance into the "new." [...] For each year, Lent and Easter are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.

A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see — far, far away — the destination. It is the joy of Easter, it is the entrance into the glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Easter, that makes Lent's sadness bright and our lenten effort a "spiritual spring." The night may be dark and long, but all along the way, a mysterious and radiant dawn seems to shine on the horizon. "Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of man!"

Posted on Monachos.net — Orthodoxy through Patristic, Monastic & Liturgical Study. "Great Lent" by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, may be purchased from SVS Press (<http://www.svspress.com/> or 1-800-204-2665).

ATTENTION: 2010 EPISCOPATE CONGRESS

Date: September 30 - October 2, 2010

Location:

**St. Mary Cathedral, Cleveland, Ohio
/ Cleveland Airport Marriott Hotel**

Tentative Schedule: September 30 – Clergy Conference / October 1 – Congress Sessions / October 2 – Hierarchal Divine Liturgy & Closing Banquet.

A TO-DO LIST FOR AN ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

by Psa. Nicole Mitescu

A new year is upon us, which always occasions self-reflection, “resolutions,” and the like. Such things are really about attempting to readjust our attitudes.

There is a story going around the internet about a carpenter who has spent his whole life building houses. When he at last decides to retire, his boss asks him to build one final house. He agrees rather grudgingly and goes through it as quickly as possible, using shoddy materials and workmanship. After the house is completed, the boss hands him the key and says that the house is a gift to the carpenter for his many years of service. Of course, the carpenter feels terrible at having done such a poor job on this house.

There is a point to the story of course, which is that what we do each day contributes to what and who we become. We build each day on what we have done (or not done) on previous days.

If we believe that our goal in life is to grow closer to God, then it follows that each day’s activities can bring us closer to or move us farther from God. That is a pretty breath-taking fact when you consider all the other priorities in our lives with multiple responsibilities, distractions, and temptations. It seems that so many of us are just barely coping with a variety of family and work-related hardships. Where can we possibly find “more time” in the day to “do more” to improve our relationship with God?

I am the first to tell you that I “should be doing more,” but that’s not what this article is about. The carpenter’s problem was not a lack of time or expertise or materials, it was his attitude. Instead of putting his heart and mind into the construction, he simply did his job with a negative attitude.

Perhaps instead of feeling stressed at not having sufficient time or resources to volunteer at another charity or contribute more to the church coffers or even to attend more church services, we should simply take a look at our attitude in our attempts to grow closer to God.

In my family, I am the notorious list-maker. The other members of my family are happy and talented at picking up whatever needs to be done, and getting it done in any order that seems efficient to them. Not

me. I need to create a list, I love checking off what we have done, I re-order the list several times to make sure everything will get done; and in fact, on big occasions like Christmas and Pascha, I’ll even have a timetable for everyone to follow. Not surprisingly, not everyone in my family is as happy as I am with my lists, but they do generally read them with love and kindness.

So here is my list of seven ways to help work toward a “better attitude” in growing closer to God each day: 1) love 2) forgive 3) ask forgiveness 4) be thankful 5) praise 6) work 7) pray. Please note that all of these are verbs, requiring a deliberate action on our part, but none of these require extra money; and only one, praying, requires extra time. (Work in my books is just a basic part of our lives.)

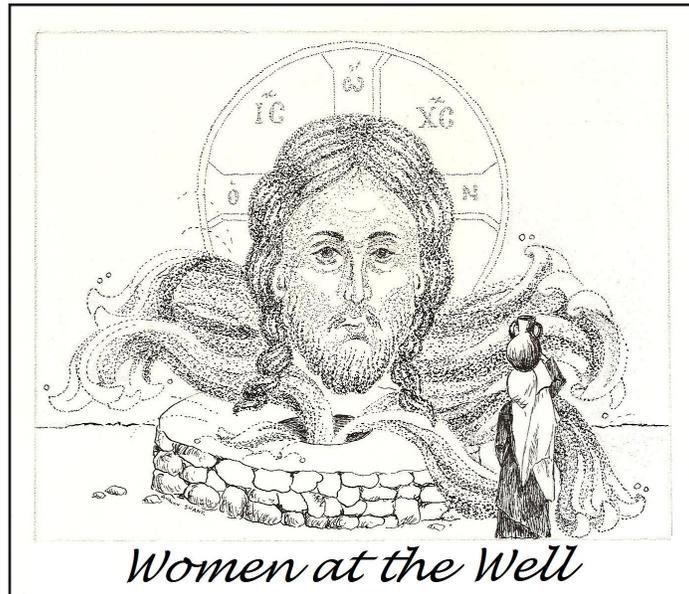
Do I check off my list each day? No, of course not. There are good days and bad days, and then there are days when I don’t even remember the items on my list. With God’s love and understanding, I pray that He will continue to forgive my sinfulness and my forgetfulness. But

I do try to think of doing something kind or helpful for at least one other person each day. Somehow, in making that small gesture, it reminds me that I am a Christian; and by helping others, I am in some way helping myself too.

Something written by St. John Chrysostom gives me a lot of encouragement. It is from *Homily III on St. Matthew*. Speaking about the Lord, he writes, “He [God] is doing and contriving all things, so that even for a little He may crown you; He goes about seeking excuses, whereby He might deliver you from hell. For this cause, even though you have worked only from the eleventh hour of the day, He gives you your entire wages” (*Nicean and post-Nicean Fathers*, vol. 10, p. 18). That is such a vivid image of God “seeking excuses” to offer us His gift of salvation! What an encouragement to do little things for God, and never quit, knowing that He sees us and will grow the fruits of our small labors.

A friend sent me a little poem by Howard Thurman that reminds me of how much our attitude affects

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AT THE THRESHOLD OF THE FAST: THE SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS

by M.C. Steenberg

It is, at last, time for Great Lent to begin. The weeks of preparation are at their end; the gradual reduction and proscription of foods and activities comes now under the full weight of the Fast. The Church, on this very night of the 'Sunday of Forgiveness', has had its fabrics of whites and golds solemnly removed and replaced with deep purple: her customary garments of joy are exchanged for the attire of penitence. And so, kneeling and prostrate, her people look ahead to Pascha, the great feast of the Light, for the first time from within the context of the full Lenten discipline.

Thy grace has shown forth, O Lord, it has shone forth and given light to our souls. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the season of repentance. Let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light, that having sailed across the great sea of the Fast, we may reach the third-day Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls. (Sticheron at the Aposticha, Sunday evening Vespers).

The Sunday of Forgiveness stands, as others have written, at the 'threshold of Great Lent'. The Vespers of this evening is a cardinal moment for many: a service in darkness by which their whole mode and attitude of being are propelled as if by a great wave into the 'sea of the Fast'. There have been, already, four weeks of preparation for this moment; but this Sunday is the actual doorway into Lent, the threshold on the other side of which stands the fullest measure of asceticism that the Church metes out to the whole of her faithful throughout the world.

And with what voice do these faithful enter into the season of the Fast? We have already called this day the 'Sunday of Forgiveness', and by such a name is it most often known. But this title is an abbreviation, an emphasis on only one aspect of the day's commemoration. There is another theme, too, and one which is in fact given far more space in the hymnography of the day: *the expulsion of Adam from Paradise*. As we stand at the threshold of the fast, we sing of him who stood before the gates of Eden. As we make ready to enter in to this season of preparation, we commemorate him who was cast out of primal Paradise. This is a Sunday of forgiveness, but it is also a Sunday of expulsion.

Adam sat before Paradise and, lamenting his nakedness, he wept: 'Woe is me! By evil deceit was I persuaded and led astray, and now I am an exile from glory. Woe is me! In my simplicity I was stripped naked, and now I am in want. O Paradise, no more shall I take pleasure in thy joy; no more shall I look

upon the Lord my God and Maker, for I shall return to the earth whence I was taken. O merciful and compassionate Lord, to Thee I cry aloud: I am fallen! Have mercy on me!' (Sticheron at Lord, have I cried..., Saturday Vespers).

The scene painted by the hymns of the day is one of a great and terrible sorrow. Adam sits before the closed gates of Eden, in the sheer horror of his affliction, he cannot even stand; and there, weeping, he laments the loss of so great a gift. Though already expelled from the Garden and chastised by the Word of God, it is at this moment that he truly realizes the weight of his deeds and the seriousness of his state of affairs. 'I am an exile from glory. I am in want. No more do I look upon the Lord my God and Maker'. As Great Lent begins, we are reminded in language stronger and more direct than any that has come in the preceding weeks of preparation, of the gravity of our condition in Adam.

Adam was cast out of Paradise through eating from the tree. Seated before the gates he wept, lamenting with a pitiful voice and saying: 'Woe is me, what have I suffered in my misery! I transgressed one commandment of the Master, and now I am deprived of every blessing. O most holy Paradise, planted for my sake and shut because of Eve, pray to Him that made thee and fashioned me, that once more I may take pleasure in thy flowers.' Then the Saviour said to him: 'I desire not the loss of the creature which I fashioned, but that he should be saved and come to knowledge of the truth; and when he comes to me, I will not cast him out.' (Sticheron at the Aposticha, Saturday Vespers).

Two things ought to strike us from within this particular hymn: first, the depth of the lament of Adam, with his acknowledgement of creation's formation 'for my sake' and its loss because 'I transgressed'; and second, the response made by the Saviour. There is no belittling of the Paradise from which Adam has been cast, no attempt to 'play down' the glory of his previous home in order to accommodate the guilt felt at its loss. This was the cradle of 'every blessing' into which the loving Father had set His precious child, where even the flowers gave cause to rejoice. This, and nothing less, was the gift thrown aside in the transgression of the will of God. But we are struck, too, by the words uttered by the Saviour in response to the cries of Adam's pitiful voice: 'I desire not the loss of the creature which I fashioned, but that he should be saved and come to knowledge of the truth; and when he comes to me I will not cast him out.'

'I will not cast him out.' God's words in this, the moment of primordial chastisement, are already the

words of salvation. They are words of calling, of beckoning, of reconciliation. But they are also words of directive: *'when he comes to me....'* God does not take fallen Adam and, with a divine fiat that would mean little to the long-term well being of humankind, magically place him back in the Garden whose gates Adam himself had locked shut. He knows that it is Adam's heart that most desperately needs to be healed, needs to be turned away from the desire for its own ends and back to a desire for the heart of God Himself. And so the Saviour whispers to the weeping Adam, *'When you come back to me, I will not cast you out'*.

Then, in the consistent tradition of the Triodion, the words of the text make clear that the Saviour's injunctions are not to the historical Adam alone, but to each of us as members of the one race of which he stands at the head.

Come, my wretched soul, and weep today over thine acts, remembering how once thou wast stripped naked in Eden and cast out from delight and unending joy. (From the First Canticle of the Matins Canon).

The preparatory weeks that have passed, the Publican and the Pharisee, the Prodigal Son, the Last Judgment, have gradually been preparing us to move the narrative of sin, fall, repentance and judgment into the first person; and today, whether we are ready for it or not, the sacred history of Adam and our own, personal histories as individuals are brought wholly together into one, communal story.

The Lord my Creator took me as dust from the earth and formed me into a living creature, breathing into me the breath of life and giving me a soul. He honoured me, setting me as ruler upon earth over all things visible, and making me a companion of the angels. But Satan the deceiver, using the serpent as his instrument, enticed me by good; he parted me from the glory of God and gave me over to the earth and to the lowest depths of death. But, Master, in compassion, call me back again. (Sticheron at Saturday Vespers).

This is no longer a third-person narrative. No longer can I, standing outside and beyond the closed Royal Doors of the Church, feign innocence in the face of a story of 'long ago and far away'. Lent is beginning, and as the personal tone of the hymns professes, this is to be *my* Fast, *my* exile, *my* return. Shall today be, too, the day of my expulsion?

Adam was cast out from the delight of Paradise: bitter was his eating, when in uncontrolled desire he broke the commandment of the Master and he was condemned to work the earth from which he had himself been taken, and to eat his bread in toil and sweat. Therefore let us love abstinence, that we may not weep as he did outside Paradise, but may enter through the gate. (From the Third Canticle of the Matins Canon).

Amidst all the sombre reflections upon judgment and eviction, there is a quiet hope that abounds in the hymnography of this day. I stand beside Adam, I am joined to Adam, I cannot of myself escape from Adam's

condition. But through the Church, I need not suffer alone the whole torment of Adam. *'Let us love abstinence, that we may not weep as he did outside Paradise, but may enter through the gate.'* The 'sea of the Fast' is not simply an ocean into which we are tossed and through which we must struggle to survive: Great Lent is also a harbour, a safe port wherein we may suffer our repentance in the surety of divine grace and tender compassion. Thus do we petition the Lord:

O God of all, Lord of mercy, look down compassionately upon my lowliness and do not send me far away from Eden; but may I perceive the glory from which I have fallen, and hasten with lamentations to regain what I have lost. (From the Ninth Canticle).

It is in this context that the hymnography for this, the eve of Great Lent, takes its full meaning. We are called to see Adam's life, to see our life, and to know the two as one. And then we are called to amend and to change our ways of living, thinking and acting (this being the true meaning of *metanoia*, repentance) from within the full scope of our lives in Christ. Through the story of our sin, our fall, our loss, we are thrust into a forum for change, wherein our greatest aid is the incarnate and resurrected Son of God Himself.

The arena of the virtues has been opened. Let all who wish to struggle for the prize now enter, girding themselves for the noble contest of the Fast; for those that strive lawfully are justly crowned. Taking up the armour of the Cross, let us make war against the enemy. Let us have as our invisible rampart the Faith, prayer as our breastplate, and as our helmet almsgiving; and as our sword let us use fasting that cuts away all evil from our heart. If we do this, we shall receive the true crown from Christ the King of all at the Day of Judgement. (Sticheron at the Matins Praises).

'Let us use fasting that cuts away all evil from our heart.' The entrance into Great Lent is made as the entrance into the full fray of the spiritual and physical battle we must each wage on the journey into the Kingdom of God. And though this is a battle we must each wage ourselves, we do not enter into it alone. As an invisible rampart, we have the Faith, the truth of God revealed in His Son and in all the economy of space and time, borne alive in our hearts through the illumination of baptism. And as a visible rampart we have the Church, though here, too, there is the reality of the invisible. It is within the community of *all* the faithful, past and present, that we struggle towards resurrection, towards Pascha. It is amidst our neighbours that we stand in this arena and wage this battle. 'If we do this, we shall receive the true crown'. From the usual context of 'I' and 'thou' in which we communicate day by day, Great Lent calls us to stand before the gates of Paradise in solidarity as the great family of humankind, the united children of the one God.

And so, forgiveness. Before we cross that threshold and step out into the 'arena of the virtues', we are reminded that no solidarity can ever truly coexist in

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WORLD CHURCH NEWS

Memory Eternal: Archbishop JOB of Chicago and the Midwest [Orthodox Church in America] -

On Friday, December 18, 2009, His Eminence, Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest unexpectedly fell asleep in the Lord. Archbishop Job was born Richard John Osacky in Chicago on March 18, 1946. He completed university studies at Northern Illinois University and, after graduating from Saint Tikhon Seminary, South Canaan, PA, in 1970, he served as cantor and youth director at Saint John the Baptist Church in Black Lick, Pennsylvania. He assumed responsibilities in leading Divine Services in the prescribed manner for readers, conducting religious education and youth work, and painting icons. It was his extraordinary affinity with Orthodox youth that gained him the recognition of the Church at large. In 1973, Reader John was ordained to the holy diaconate and consequently to the holy priesthood by Bishop Theodosius of Pittsburgh [later Metropolitan Theodosius of All American and Canada]. He was assigned to the parish in Black Lick, where he also served as spiritual director for the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at nearby Indiana University of Pennsylvania. As a celibate priest, he maintained a zeal for the monastic life in all his endeavors. In 1975 he was made a riasaphor monk, and later was tonsured a monk in the Lesser Schema by [then] Bishop Herman in August of 1982. In November of that year he was elevated to the rank of archimandrite. Recognizing that zeal and spirit of dedication to Church service in Father Job, the Diocese of New England nominated hieromonk Job as their diocesan bishop. The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America ratified the nomination and elected him Bishop of Hartford and the Diocese of New England. He was consecrated to the episcopacy on January 29, 1983, at All Saints Church in Hartford, Connecticut. At its session of November 5, 1992, the Holy Synod of Bishops elected Bishop Job as Bishop of Chicago and Diocese of the Midwest. He was enthroned as Bishop of his native city at Holy Trinity Cathedral on February 6, 1993. In his years in the See of Chicago, the Diocese of the Midwest experienced tremendous growth. This was witnessed in—but certainly not limited to—the establishment of numerous new mission parishes in the diocese. In addition to his regular duties as the ruling hierarch of the Diocese of the Midwest, His Eminence enjoyed his long-standing and excellent reputation as an iconographer and iconologist. He was often called upon to offer lectures on this subject, and he was willing to assist and encourage other iconographers. In recognition of his more than twenty years of “good and faithful” service as archpastor, at the March 2004 Session of the Holy Synod, Bishop Job was elevated to the rank of archbishop. His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel participated in the Funeral services for Arch-

bishop Job in Chicago on December 22-23, 2009. May His Eminence, Archbishop Job’s memory be eternal!

Serbian Orthodox Church Elects New Patriarch [Radio Free Europe - Radio Liberty] –

The bells at Belgrade’s Cathedral Church rang out to announce that **Bishop Irinej of Nis** had been elected patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, signaling that 79-year-old Irinej would be the Serbian Orthodox Church’s 45th patriarch. The veteran bishop, known to be relatively moderate, was picked at a gathering of dozens of bishops and other clergy at the Patriarchate in Belgrade on January 22. . . . Irinej of Nis was then enthroned on January 23 in a ceremony broadcast on television, with the second part of a new two-step ritual slated for Pec, in western Kosovo, at a date that has yet to be announced. Irinej will replace Patriarch Pavle, who died in November following a long illness at the age of 95. Pavle had headed the church for almost 20 years, a period that included the ethnic wars of the 1990s, which accompanied the breakup of Yugoslavia. In a statement issued by the Belgrade patriarchate, Irinej said he would carry the “burden and all the problems of my awesome and difficult duty together with my fellow bishops. “The new patriarch will have to face long-lasting issues such as relations with the Vatican and churches in Macedonia and Montenegro that are seeking independence. Observers see Irinej as seeking compromise between conservatives — who are opposed to openness to other churches and Western influences in Serbian society — and reformists, who want the church to be more open and modern. In a recent interview, Irinej said he would not oppose a visit to Serbia by the Roman Catholic pope. The hard-liners of the church have long opposed such a visit. . . . [The] election was held behind closed doors amid reports of feuding and jostling among the voters. Under the complex system, each member of the Holy Assembly of Bishops chooses three preferred names from the list of potential candidates. Any names selected by more than half the assembly members then move to a short list limited to three candidates. The process can be slow. For the election of Patriarch Pavle in 1990, the vote was taken nine times before a short list was achieved. Once the list is in hand, the names of the final three candidates are put in three unmarked, sealed envelopes and placed inside a Bible. A monk selected by the assembly then takes the three envelopes from the Bible, selects one at random, and gives it to the presiding bishop, who announces the name of the new patriarch. The so-called apostolic vote was introduced in 1967 to prevent Yugoslavia’s secular authorities from meddling in church affairs. Church leaders said it was the Holy Spirit that guided the monk in selecting an envelope,

thereby eliminating human interference from the final stage of the process. The Serbian Orthodox Church is the second-oldest Slavic Orthodox Church in the world and the westernmost Eastern church in Europe. It is believed to have between 7 million and 14 million followers, located primarily in the republics of former Yugoslavia.

Coptic Christians Persecuted in Egypt [*The Student Operated Press - Sean Harrison Higgins*] - Making up about 10% of the population in Egypt, most Egyptian Christians are Coptic Christians. The Coptic branch of Christianity is one of the oldest surviving branches of Christianity. The Coptic Church bears similarities to the Eastern Orthodox. Some of the oldest extant Christian texts come from the Coptic religion. Despite their crucial importance to Christian discourse and religious ideas, the suffering this branch of Christianity experiences in Egypt is not well documented or publicized. Late at night on Christmas Eve Mass in Naj Hammadi southern Egypt on January 7th there was a vicious drive-by shooting which resulted in the deaths of six church goers and one security official. Despite the official Egyptian report that three suspects have been arrested in association with the shootings, the persecution of Coptic Christians has gone largely ignored in the West. The shooting was said to be an act of revenge for the unconfirmed rape of a Muslim girl in Egypt by a Christian man in November. After the incident in November, Muslims rioted against Christians for five days, destroying and burning down property and causing utter havoc. The Muslim majority in Egypt still felt the isolated incident had not been adequately punished. Furthermore, the incidents regarding Coptic persecution is largely ignored in the Egyptian press. This sort of persecution should be more widely documented in the West. In America, many Evangelical Groups feel they themselves are being persecuted by more liberal Christians and political parties. Ironically, while crying out for conservative practices in the face of persecution in America, "their Christian brothers and sisters in less fortunate lands are truly being persecuted, with violence and terror. For Christians in the West, the severity of the abuse done to the Coptic branch should be taken less lightly". As one of the first established Christian groups it is possible that without them, Christianity might not have spread as effectively in Europe in the first place.

Metropolitan Jonah to address 2010 Ancient Christianity Conference - May 14-16. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah will be the keynote speaker at this year's Ancient Christianity Conference at Saint Luke Mission, Anniston, Alabama, May 14-16, 2010. The conference, the theme of which is "Jesus Christ, the Great Physician," will be sponsored by the Brotherhood of Saint Moses the Black, a pan-Orthodox, non-profit ministry devoted to sharing the richness of

the Orthodox Christian tradition and its African roots with Americans who have had little exposure to the faith. Other speakers include Abbot Gerasim; Fathers Moses Berry, Jerome Sanderson, and Paisius Altschul; Deacon Nathaniel Johnson; and Mother Katherine. The conference fee, which does not include housing, is \$40.00. Special hotel rates are available through April 13 by calling the Victoria Inn at 256-235-0503. To register and/or obtain additional information on the Brotherhood and the conference, log on to www.mosetheblack.org.

Orthodox Christians Support Airlift to Haiti [*International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)*] Baltimore, Md. — International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is working in partnership with Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) to deliver two of the most critical needs in Haiti today – water and shelter. Water purification equipment that will serve 10,000 people and 500 family tents, as well as other supplies, are being airlifted to Haiti. The aid, valued at more than \$600,000, is expected to reach Port-au-Prince by Saturday, January 16. IOCC's participation in the airlift is made possible through a \$20,000 emergency grant by the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society. The Orthodox Church in America (OCA) has also expressed its solidarity with the people of Haiti by donating \$10,000 to IOCC's relief effort. Three days after an earthquake devastated wide sections of the capital of Port-au-Prince and buried countless people, traumatized Haitians were still sleeping in parks and streets, fearing aftershocks. The airlift provided by IOCC and its ecumenical partners includes water tanks and water purification equipment, tents, and personnel to provide technical assistance. IOCC, founded in 1992 as the official humanitarian aid agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), continues to coordinate its response with Action by Churches Together (ACT) and Orthodox partners on the ground to address the urgent humanitarian need for emergency supplies such as food, safe water, hygiene supplies, and shelter. IOCC is a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy. Efforts by IOCC staff are ongoing to monitor needs in Haiti as they emerge and to coordinate shipments of aid through the alliance. You can help the victims of disasters around the world, like the Haiti Earthquake, by making a financial gift to the IOCC International Emergency Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief as well as long-term support through the provision of emergency aid, recovery assistance and other support to help those in need. To make a gift, please visit www.iocc.org, call toll free at 1-877-803-IOCC (4622), or mail a check or money order payable to IOCC, P.O. Box 630225, Baltimore, Md. 21263-0225.

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West Bank Land Sales by Church Spur Uproar [Palestine News Network (PNN)] - January 17, 2010.

The Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem is once again being rocked by controversy over alleged land sales to Israeli investors in the West Bank. So incensed is the local Palestinian Orthodox community that Theophilos III, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, had to be accompanied by security guards in full riot gear when he arrived in Bethlehem last week to celebrate Christmas. Many in the local community boycotted Christmas celebrations with Theophilos altogether, while Christian scout group bands that would normally welcome the patriarch stayed silent and some 2,000 scouts refused to greet the Greek patriarch as is otherwise customary. The controversy began some four months ago after a court in Israel heard two Israeli companies present rival deeds to a piece of land near Bethlehem that both claimed to have leased from its owners, the Greek Orthodox Church. The Greek Orthodox Church is one of the biggest single landowners in Israel and the Palestinian territories and has engaged in land sales or leases to Israel since the early 1950s. Both the Israeli parliament and the Israeli prime minister's office are built on formerly Greek Orthodox land. While such sales were always controversial, leasing land in occupied territory to Israeli or Jewish investors has proven explosive. The latest plot of land in question, between the Har Homa and Gilo settlements south of Jerusalem, is particularly sensitive because it would link those two settlements and close yet another gap in the semicircle of Jewish settlements that is severing the occupied eastern part of Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. "It is shameful for us that our church is selling land to Israel," said Elias Iseed, head of the Greek Orthodox Club in Beit Sahour, a village next to Bethlehem. "It is shameful in front of the other churches and our Muslim brothers, who may not understand that it is the Church, not the people, who are selling the land." Mr Iseed, who helped organise the Christmas protests in Bethlehem on January 7, said he thought there was "corruption" in the church, and it needed to be rooted out. The protests at Christmas, he said, were meant to drive that message home to Theophilos. In the Orthodox creed, which goes by the Julian calendar, Christmas falls on January 7. This is not the first time land sales to Israelis have caused serious discord within the Greek Orthodox Church. Theophilos' predecessor, Ireneos II, was stripped of his authority by the Holy Synod of Jerusalem, the church's ruling body, in 2005 after another land lease, this one of the Omar Bin Khattab square just inside the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem's Old City, came to light. Indeed, Theophilos became patriarch and was recognised by both the Palestinian Authority and the Jordanian government, Jordan also being part of the Holy Land, only after promising no more land sales or leases in occupied territory to Israeli or Jewish investors as well as a

concerted effort to reverse previous sales or leases approved by Ireneos. That, however, put him at odds with Israel, which also must recognise the powers of a new patriarch. Indeed, Israel withheld recognition of the patriarch for two years, during which Orthodox clergy started meeting difficulties being granted visas. In an interview with a Greek newspaper in 2006, Theophilos complained of Israeli "blackmail", the purpose of which he said was "to ratify the agreements for the purchase and sale of property signed by our predecessors". The Israeli government eventually recognised the new patriarch in December 2007, however, and some are now suggesting that that recognition came at a price. "I think the continued leasing of land was a condition by Israel [to grant him recognition]," said Marwan Toubasi, chairman of the Arab Orthodox Council in Palestine. Mr Toubasi said that while news of the latest lease deal only came out in late 2009, and went to court only because Theophilos had apparently leased a plot of land that Ireneos had already signed off to another group of Jewish investors, the deal was actually struck in 2008. This was despite what Mr Toubasi said were concerted efforts by the local community to present alternative investors from Arab countries to the church. The local community had even offered to help the Church reverse course on the latest lease deal by raising money to pay any penalty. "The matter is political. If it were about money, we could find Arab investors," he said. The Greek Patriarchate has been highly reticent about speaking out on the matter. It secured an injunction to have the court case over the land near Bethlehem heard behind closed doors. As for the Christmas protests, a spokesman would only say at the time that they were a "personal matter". But the matter is not going away. Critics of the patriarch from within the Orthodox community are also accusing him of renegeing on promises to include two Arab bishops in the Holy Synod, and of generally failing to listen to local concerns. Certainly, continued land sales will make the position of any Greek patriarch extremely difficult, as the signs reading "The Holy Land is not for sale" that greeted Theophilos in Bethlehem last week made clear. "We are Palestinian before being Christian," said Mr Toubasi. "This is our land. The core of the struggle with Israel is about land. This is property donated by our ancestors to the church in order to serve the community at large, Muslim or Christian. But in this issue, the Church is serving the interest of Israel to Judaise Jerusalem."

Greek Battle over Religious Symbols [BBC News]

– December 20, 2009. The head of the Greek Orthodox Church has warned the country's new socialist government that it faces a major battle over removing religious symbols from schools. The European Court in Strasbourg has ordered Italy to take down crucifixes from its classrooms, and Greece's justice minister has acknowledged that it may have to follow suit.

THE DATE OF EASTER

Easter is an annual festival observed throughout the Christian world. The date for Easter shifts every year within the Gregorian Calendar. The Gregorian Calendar is the standard international calendar for civil use. In addition, it regulates the ceremonial cycle of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. The current Gregorian ecclesiastical rules that determine the date of Easter trace back to 325 CE at the First Council of Nicaea convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine. At that time the Roman world used the Julian Calendar (put in place by Julius Caesar).

The Council decided to keep Easter on a Sunday, the same Sunday throughout the world. To fix incontrovertibly the date for Easter, and to make it determinable indefinitely in advance, the Council constructed special tables to compute the date. These tables were revised in the following few centuries resulting eventually in the tables constructed by the 6th century Abbot of Scythia, Dionysius Exiguus. Nonetheless, different means of calculations continued in use throughout the Christian world.

In 1582 Gregory XIII (Pope of the Roman Catholic Church) completed a reconstruction of the Julian calendar and produced new Easter tables. One major difference between the Julian and Gregorian Calendar is the "leap year rule". . . . Universal adoption of this Gregorian calendar occurred slowly. By the 1700's, though, most of western Europe had adopted the Gregorian Calendar. The Eastern Christian churches still determine the Easter dates using the older Julian Calendar method.

The usual statement, that Easter Day is the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs next after the vernal equinox, is not a precise statement of the actual ecclesiastical rules. The full moon involved is not the astronomical Full Moon but an ecclesiastical moon (determined from tables) that keeps, more or less, in step with the astronomical Moon.

The ecclesiastical rules are:

- Easter falls on the first Sunday following the first ecclesiastical full moon that occurs on or after the day of the vernal equinox;
- this particular ecclesiastical full moon is the 14th day of a tabular lunation (new moon); and
- the vernal equinox is fixed as March 21

resulting in that Easter can never occur before March 22 or later than April 25 [before April 4 and no later than May 8 according to the Julian Calendar]. The Gregorian dates for the ecclesiastical full moon come from the Gregorian tables. Therefore, the civil date of Easter depends upon which tables - Gregorian or pre-Gregorian - are used. The western (Roman Catholic and Protestant) Christian churches use the Gregorian tables; many eastern (Orthodox) Christian churches use the older tables based on the Julian Calendar.

In a congress held in 1923, the eastern churches adopted a modified Gregorian Calendar and decided to set the date of Easter according to the astronomical Full Moon for the meridian of Jerusalem. However, a variety of practices remain among the eastern churches.

There are three major differences between the ecclesiastical system and the astronomical system:

- The times of the ecclesiastical full moons are not necessarily identical to the times of astronomical Full Moons. The ecclesiastical tables did not account for the full complexity of the lunar motion.

- The vernal equinox has a precise astronomical definition determined by the actual apparent motion of the Sun as seen from the Earth. It is the precise time at which the apparent ecliptic longitude of the Sun is zero. (Yes, the Sun's ecliptic longitude, not its declination, is used for the astronomical definition.) This precise time shifts within the civil calendar very slightly from year to year. In the ecclesiastical system the vernal equinox does not shift; it is fixed at March 21 regardless of the actual motion of the Sun.
- The date of Easter is a specific calendar date. Easter starts when that date starts for your local time zone. The vernal equinox occurs at a specific date and time all over the Earth at once.

Inevitably, then, the date of Easter occasionally differs from a date that depends on the astronomical Full Moon and vernal equinox. In some cases this difference may occur in some parts of the world and not in others because two dates separated by the International Date Line are always simultaneously in progress on the Earth. . . .

Source: Naval Oceanography Portal. For the full article and "Date of Easter Calculator," go to <http://www.usno.navy.mil> and type "Date of Easter" in the Search box.

SCHOLARSHIPS THROUGH THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE (ROEA)

All information and some application forms may be accessed via the internet at: <http://roea.org/scholarships.htm>

ARFORA Undergraduate Scholarship for Women

Two scholarships of \$1,000 each may be awarded annually to women who have successfully completed the first year of a baccalaureate program at an accredited college or university. They must also be registered in the next year of their program of undergraduate study. These women must be voting communicant members of the ROEA. (See Application Requirements below).

ARFORA - Martha Gavrilă Scholarship for Women

One scholarship of \$1,000 may be awarded annually to a woman who has completed a baccalaureate degree and has been accepted for graduate work at an accredited college or university. The applicant must be registered in a graduate program and must specify her course of study. She must also be a voting communicant member of the ROEA. (See Application Requirements below).

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ARFORA SCHOLARSHIPS

Besides the conditions listed above, the applicant must submit the following, which constitutes a formal application: 1) Three letters of recommendation must be mailed sealed, directly to the attention of the A.R.F.O.R.A. Undergraduate or Martha Gavrilă Scholarship Committee at the address listed below: one from the parish priest, and two from individuals not related to the applicant, attesting to her character. 2) A photograph must be included with the above specified information. 3) A formal letter projecting the applicant's plans, including personal goals, projected use of degree, church and community involvement, honors and awards.

Send completed application by MAY 15, 2010 to: ARFORA Undergraduate (or) ARFORA - Martha Gavrilă Scholarship, C/O 222 Orchard Park Dr, New Castle PA 16105-3018 .

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AUXILIARY BISHOP SCHEDULE

August – December 2009

August 2. Detroit, MI. Holy Ascension Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

August 5. Grass Lake, MI. St. Mary Chapel. Evening: Attended Vespers for Transfiguration of the Lord.

August 6. Grass Lake, MI. Vatra Romaneasca. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy for Transfiguration of the Lord.

August 9. Detroit, MI. Holy Ascension Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

August 14. Laval, QC. St. Mary Mission. Patronal Feast. **Evening:** Great Vespers.

August 15. Montreal, QC. St. Nicholas. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

August 16. Laval, QC. St. Andrew Mission. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. **Afternoon: Montreal, QC. Holy Ascension Mission.** Visited the new location.

August 22-23. Cleveland, OH. St. Mary Cathedral. Saturday Evening: Romanian Festival. **Sunday:** Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

August 30. Detroit, MI. Holy Ascension Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

September 5-6. Cleveland, OH. St. Mary Cathedral. A.R.O.Y. Congress. **Saturday Evening:** Great Vespers. **Sunday:** Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

September 8. Grass Lake, MI. Vatra Romaneasca. Patronal Feast. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

September 12-14. Hollywood, FL. Holy Cross. Patronal Feast. **Saturday Evening:** Great Vespers. **Sunday:** Hierarchal Divine Liturgy and Ordination into Holy Priesthood of Rev. Dn. Ovidiu Pacurar. **Sunday Evening: Miramar, FL. Holy Trinity.** Vespers. **Monday: St. Polycarp of Smyrna Mission.** Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Installation of Rev. Fr. Ovidiu Pacurar as Parish Priest.

September 19-20. Southfield, MI. St. George Cathedral. Romanian Festival. **Saturday Evening:** Attended Great Vespers. **Sunday:** Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

September 26-27. Chicago, IL. Holy Nativity. 70th Anniversary. **Saturday Evening:** Great Vespers. **Sunday:** Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

September 30. Detroit, MI. Holy Ascension Monastery. **Evening:** Great Vespers.

October 1. Detroit, MI. Holy Ascension Monastery. 2nd Pilgrimage for Feast of Protection of Mother of God. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

October 4. Dearborn Heights, MI. Sts. Peter & Paul. 80th Anniversary. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

October 10. Cleveland, OH. St. Mary Cathedral. Episcopate Council Meeting.

October 11. Lilburn, GA. Sts. Constantine & Helen. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Romanian Festival.

October 14. Grass Lake, MI. St. Mary Chapel. Akathist Service for St. Parascheva.

October 17-18. Ridgewood, NY. Descent of the Holy Spirit. **Saturday:** Holy Unction. **Sunday:** Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

October 25. Dearborn Heights, MI. Sts. Peter & Paul. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

October 26-27. Grass Lake, MI. St. Mary Chapel. Akathist Service for St. Demetrius the Great Martyr and St. Dimitrie the New (Basarabov).

October 31. Sambata de Sus, Romania. Sambata de Sus Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Funeral Service for V. Rev. Archim. Teofil Paraiianu. Concelebrated with Metropoli-

tan Laurentiu of Sibiu, Metropolitan Iosif from Paris, Archbishop Calinic of Arges, Bishop Visarion of Tulcea, Bishop Daniil of Varset, Bishop Macarie from Norway, Bishop Sofian from Germany and Bishop Paisie of Timisoara.

November 1. Oiejdea, Alba Iulia, Romania. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy and Parastas.

November 8. Bals – Olt, Romania. Sts. Constantine and Helen. Consecration of the Church and Hierarchal Divine Liturgy concelebrated with Metropolitan Irineu of Oltenia, Archbishop Calinic of Arges, Bishop Lucian of Caransebes, Bishop Galaction of Alexandria, Bishop Nicodim of Severin and Bishop Sebastian of Slatina. Banquet.

November 15. Slatina – Olt, Romania. Clocociov Monastery. Patronal Feast. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

November 21. Grass Lake, MI. St. Mary Chapel. Akathist Service for Feast of Entrance of the Birthgiver of God in the Temple.

November 22. Detroit, MI. Holy Ascension Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

November 28. San Jose, CA. Holy Cross. Evening: Holy Unction.

November 29. Hayward, CA. Holy Resurrection. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Baptism of Valentina Filip-Nicola, daughter of Valentin Filip & Amalia Filip-Nicola.

December 4. Troy, MI. St. Nicholas. Wake Service for Alexandru Halmaghi.

December 6. Troy, MI. St. Nicholas. Patronal Feast. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 13. Detroit, MI. Holy Ascension Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 14-18. Phoenix, AZ. R.O.E.A. Clergy Conference.

December 20. Detroit, MI. Holy Ascension Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 25. Elmhurst, NY. St. Mary. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 26. Easton, CT. St. Dimitrie. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. **Afternoon:** Holy Unction.

December 27. Ridgewood, NY. Descent of the Holy Spirit. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 28. Brooklyn, NY. Cypress Hills Cemetery. Little Memorial Service at the grave of Rev. Dr. Casian Stefan Fetea.

HIERARCHAL SCHEDULE

December 2009

December 6. Detroit, MI. St. Raphael of Brooklyn. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Pastoral Visit.

December 13. Phoenix, AZ. St. John. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 14-17. Phoenix, AZ. R.O.E.A. Clergy Retreat.

December 20. Phoenix, AZ. Holy Cross Mission. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 22-23. Chicago, IL. Holy Trinity Cathedral (OCA). Funeral Service and Funeral Liturgy for Archbishop JOB concelebrated with Metropolitan JONAH and other hierarchs.

December 24. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Vigil for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ.

December 25. Southfield, MI. St. George Cathedral. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ.

December 26. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy for the Synaxis of the Birthgiver of God.

CLERGY & PARISH CHANGES

STATUS OF THE CLERGY

AIRINEI, Rev. Deacon Mircea, was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on 26 July 2009 at Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, PA by His Grace, Bishop TIKHON (OCA Bishop of Philadelphia) at the request of His Eminence, Archbishop NATHANIEL. He is assigned Parish Priest of Three Hierarchs Mission, Baton Rouge, LA, effective 1 February 2010.

ANTON, Rev. Fr. Virgil, is assigned Parish Priest of Holy Archangels Michael & Gabriel Church, Palm Springs, CA, effective 9 December 2009.

DUMITRU, Rev. Fr. Antonel, is assigned as Co-Pastor of Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste Mission, Aurora, ON, effective 10 October 2009.

MORARIU, Rev. Fr. Stefan Dan, is assigned as Co-Pastor of Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste Mission, Aurora, ON, effective 10 October 2009.

ONOFREI, Rev. Deacon Rares, was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on 11 October 2009 at St. Mary Cathedral, Cleveland, OH by His Eminence, Archbishop NATHANIEL. He is attached to St. Dumitru Church, New York, NY while he completes his studies at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY.

VASIU, Rev. Fr. Mircea, is temporarily attached to St. Mary Church, St. Paul, MN effective 17 January 2010, to serve in place of Rev. Fr. Georgel Oanca during his service as a Military Chaplain overseas during 2010.

VINT, Rev. Fr. Cosmin, who was assigned to the Protection of the Mother of God Church at the Romanian Orthodox Deanery Centre, Ft. Qu'Appelle, SK, is now assigned as Parish Priest of Protection of the Mother of God Mission, Ft. Qu'Appelle, SK, effective 10 October 2009.

ZMED, V. Rev. Fr. George, died in retirement on 12 January 2010.

STATUS OF THE PARISHES/MISSIONS

DURHAM/RALEIGH, NC – St. Basil the Great Mission was accepted as a Mission of the Episcopate by the Episcopate Council on 30 May 2009.

COLUMBUS, OH – St. Andrew Mission was announced as being officially closed at the Episcopate Council Meeting on 10 October 2009.

NILES, OH – Annunciation Mission was announced as being officially closed at the Episcopate Council Meeting on 10 October 2009.

AURORA, ON – Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste Mission was accepted as a Mission of the Episcopate by the Episcopate Council on 10 October 2009.

FORT QU'APPELLE, SK – Protection of the Mother of God Mission was accepted as a Mission of the Episcopate by the Episcopate Council on 10 October 2009.

STATUS OF THE DEANERIES

ATLANTIC DEANERY & SOUTHERN DEANERY – On 10 October 2009, the Episcopate Council approved the removal of the following parishes from the Atlantic Deanery for inclusion in the Southern Deanery: Holy Cross Church, Alexandria, VA; St. Mary, Falls Church, VA; St. Andrew Mission, Potomac, MD; St. Philothea Mission, Hagerstown, MD.

At the Threshold *Cont. from page 7*

the same framework as hatred, anger and resentment. A house divided against itself will not long stand. We are called, at this the doorway of the Fast, to do what Christ commands us always to do: to forgive one another in all love before presenting our offering at His temple. Too often do we ignore this command.

Often when I offer praise to God, I am found to be committing sin; for while I sing the hymns with my tongue, in my soul I ponder evil thoughts. But through repentance, Christ my God, set right my tongue and soul, and have mercy upon me. (Penitential sticheron in Tone Three, as used on Sunday evenings during the first five weeks of the Fast).

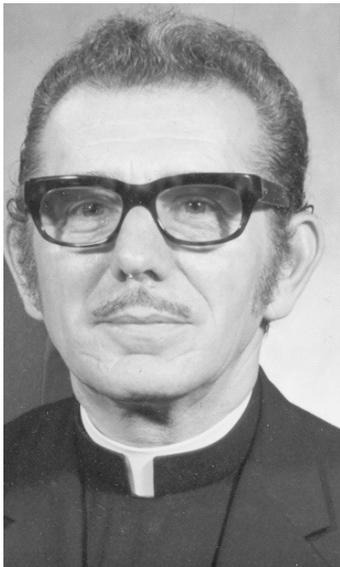
The first step in our journey through Lent must be this act of mutual forgiveness, of reconciling ourselves to one another in the context of the holy community in which we shall grow and advance together. If we set out upon the season of inner repentance without beginning here, in an act of fraternal repentance, then we will certainly find ourselves 'committing sin while singing hymns with our tongues'. The gate of Paradise will only be more firmly shut.

But if this moment of mutual forgiveness is embraced and made real in our lives, then we shall be readily equipped both as individuals *and as a community* to fight worthily the battle before us. It shall not be we alone in the arena, but we the united Church who stand together in the contest that leads to all the brightness of the third-day Resurrection. And from within this community we will be able to find in our own selves the authentic voice of our genuine individuality, and shall be able to join the hymnist's words to our own:

When I think of my works, deserving every punishment, I despair of myself, O Lord. For see, I have despised Thy precious commandments and wasted my life as the Prodigal. Therefore I entreat Thee: cleanse me in the waters of repentance, and through prayer and fasting make me shine with light, for Thou alone art merciful. Abhor me not, O Benefactor of all, supreme in love. (Sticheron at Lord, have I cried..., Sunday evening Vespers).

Source: Monachos.net - Orthodoxy through Patristic, Monastic & Liturgical Study. Rev. Deacon Matthew (Dr. M.C.) Steenberg is Professor of Theology at Leeds Trinity University College in the United Kingdom.

IN MEMORY:
VERY REV. FR.
GEORGE ZMED



Archpriest George Zmed, 93, retired pastor of Holy Nativity Romanian Orthodox Church, Chicago, IL, fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday, January 12, 2010. He was born in Chicago, Illinois on April 24, 1916 to Nicolae and Paraschiva (nee Balan) Zmed, both of Comlosul Mare, Timis, Romania. At the age of five years, George was taken to Comlosul Mare where he lived until returning to the United States in November of 1952.

George Zmed attended elementary school in Comlosul Mare, secondary education at the Avram Iancu Liceul, the Theological Academia Timisoara and Caransebes 1938-42, and one year at the Law School in Cluj.

He was ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop Vasile Lazarescu on October 18, 1942 in Pesac, Banat and to the priesthood by the same hierarch on the 25th of October, 1942 in Satchinez. He had the distinction of Brau Rosu (Red Sash) from Metropolitan Lazarescu and was elevated to be archpriest by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America on March 19, 1996.

After his return to The United States, Father Zmed was received into the ranks of the Episcopate clergy in July, 1958. Parish assignments were: in Romania (Pordeanu, Gaiul Mic) and in The United States, Nasterea Domnului (Holy Nativity), Chicago, 1952-83, when he retired.

Father George was Spiritual Advisor to AROY, contributed to the SOLIA Newspaper, was the Administrative Dean to the Chicago Deanery, and participated in other Episcopate Activities. He was fluent in the Romanian and English languages. He was a musician with a fine voice, and he put on many musical programs for the parish.

He married Persida Golub of Cerneteaz, Romania at the Church of Saint Ilie in Timisoara on October 15, 1942. The Zmeds had three sons: Cornel, Walter and Adrian.

All funeral services took place at Holy Nativity of the Lord Romanian Orthodox Church, Chicago, IL. A wake (saracusta) was served on January 20 and Divine Liturgy followed by Funeral Service for a Priest on January 21, celebrated by His Grace, Bishop Irineu, assisted by numerous clergy.

May his memory be eternal!

ANNOUNCEMENT

The 62nd Annual A.R.F.O.R.A. Congress
 will take place on June 4 - 6, 2010
 in Falls Church, Virginia

Hosted by:

**Protection of the Holy Mother of God
 Orthodox Church**

7223 Roosevelt Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22042-1625
 (703) 280-0770

Hotel: Marriott Fairview Park

3111 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church, VA 22042
 (800) 228-9290 or (703) 843-3400

Mention: **Reservation code ARFORA** to receive special discounted rate of \$85 plus tax per night. Please make reservations no later than May 14, 2010.

**Please see the next issue of Solia or roea.org
 for the Schedule of Events.**

Scholarships *Cont. from page 11*

Wm. R. Stanitz / AROY Scholarship

In August of 1971, the Constantin J. Stanitz family of Chicago established a Scholarship Fund in memory of their son, William Robert Stanitz, who met a tragic death in California. Two undergraduate scholarships of \$1,000 each may be awarded annually. The applicant must be an active AROY member, a graduate of high school or a college student, or one who intends to enroll in a school or college of university level. The following constitutes a formal application:

(a) a biographical history including family (b) educational background and grades (c) AROY and Church activities (d) extra-curricular interests or achievements (e) reasons why applying for the scholarship (f) photograph (g) letter of recommendation from parish priest or AROY advisors regarding parish/AROY activities. All applicants who meet the qualifications and submit all of the necessary information will be eligible for the scholarship, which is awarded by random drawing. **Send completed application by JULY 1, 2009 to: WILLIAM R. STANITZ - AROY SCHOLARSHIP FUND, ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE, PO BOX 309, GRASS LAKE, MI 49240-0309.**

Dumitru Golea Goldy-Gemu Scholarship

Offers two undergraduate scholarships of \$1,000 each, which may be awarded annually to undergraduate students of Romanian origin according to the established requirements and rules. The applicant must have completed high school or already be enrolled in college. **Application Deadline is MAY 31, 2009. Applicants may obtain requirements and forms from: GOLDY SCHOLARSHIP, ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE, PO BOX 309, GRASS LAKE MI 49240-0309.**

Bujea Memorial Scholarship

One undergraduate scholarship of \$500 may be awarded annually to a Canadian student who has successfully completed one year of an accredited Orthodox Theological Program or a Late Vocations Program. It is limited to those who either seek ordination into the priesthood or who wish to serve the Church in a more professional manner. The applicant must be a communicant voting member of the ROEA. **For application forms, write to: Bujea Memorial Scholarship Committee, PO Box 1341, REGINA SK S4P 3B8 CANADA. Application deadline: APRIL 30, 2009.**

TOMA LUPU

1923-2010



Toma was born in Corabia, Oltenia in 1923. He was the youngest of 4 children born from Toma and Stana Lupu. After his schooling, he served in the army and then spent a while in the “lager” camp in Germany.

In 1948, he came to Canada and settled in Toronto. He met Maria Petruchin in Toronto at a dance, fell in love, and they were married soon after.

Toma and Maria bought a house on Dewson Street and were the first of the new wave of Romanians to own a house in Toronto. For this reason, many of the new Romanians met at their house. Some stayed for a short time, some a long time. In this humble home, they created friendships, babies were baptized by visiting priests, and they planned the founding of St. George Romanian Orthodox Church of Toronto.

Three children were born to Toma and Maria (1950- Mihai [Fr. Michael – Calgary, AB], 1952- Toma, and 1959- Florica). The Romanian community bought an old bank which was converted into a chapel. The first services were celebrated on June 21, 1954. In 1970, Toma approached the Anglican bishop, asking his help to buy a church for the Romanian Community. On July 1, 1970, they bought the existing church on Rosethorn Ave.

Because of Toma’s faithful and dedicated service to the church, he was elected to the Episcopate Council of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate. This was an honoured position and required much travel as well as decision-making for the future of the ROEA. He was always a vigorous and faithful supporter of the hierarchs of our church.

Toma was a loving husband, raised his children, enjoyed his 5 grandchildren, worked hard as a businessman, served his community and was a dedicated cantor at St. George’s. He was present at all events at the church, both spiritual and social. Everyone knew Toma Lupu.

In later years, his physical strength diminished, but his faith and support of the church never wavered, and his love for family was enduring. Even in his declining days, he could still be heard reading the Lord’s Prayer during the Divine Liturgy.

The attendants at Toma’s funeral spanned generations, included a variety of ethnic backgrounds, came from all corners of North America, and condolences were received from around the world.

Memory Eternal! Vesnica Pomenire!

Honoring Our Lord’s Sacrifice ...

Cont. from page 3

on this day – media, retail and advertising giants have nothing to gain. So they ignore it. One point might be added: in our society today, Good Friday is not a holiday. It is the *one day* a year that a Christian must make a *sacrifice* to observe. Our Orthodox Church calls us to do precisely that, for Good Friday is the strictest fast day of the year. “We do not eat on this day of the Crucifixion,” states the *Typic*. Even today, pious believers will strive not to eat until after the Lamentations, or at least until after Vespers.

Jesus felt abandoned on the Cross. Except for His Mother and few others, all His friends, disciples, and even the multitudes of people whom He had healed, raised from the dead, forgiven and taught – all were gone in His moments on the Cross. Last of all, He felt abandoned by God: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?” (Mk. 27:46). But God did not abandon Jesus. Neither does He abandon us. So let us not abandon Jesus on the Cross anew. We know what the disciples might not have understood at that time: that Jesus will rise from the dead, filled with the Holy Spirit, in a glorified, spiritualized body, as the God-man. We have therefore no excuse – we need only to put “first things first” and show by our concrete deeds our gratitude to our Lord for what He did for us on the Cross. Should this not include our fully honoring that *one day* per year?

Let us make every effort – through our keeping the fast, our laying aside of every other concern and our attending *all* of the divine services – to keep that day, that *one day* a year, Good Friday, *sacred and holy*, as it is indeed. The purpose of honoring Good Friday is to show Christ our gratitude for His act, our love for Him, and our fervent desire to be included among His disciples, whom He makes into the adopted sons of God, the community of redeemed sinners, Spirit-bearing and Christ-like, and who have taken up the cross and will therefore share in His resurrection from the dead.

A To-Do List ... *Cont. from page 5*

others as well as ourselves. It is a Christmas poem, but I keep it posted on the wall by my desk all year long. It is called *Candles for Christmas*. If we simply substitute “this Sunday” for “this Christmas,” I think the point is clear:

I will light Candles this Christmas;
Candles of joy despite all sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,

Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all the year long.

Cont. on page 16

FINANCIAL REPORT

EPISCOPATE SUPPORTERS

Anonymous , Indianapolis, IN	\$1,500.00
V. Rev Fr. Catalin & Psa. Nicole Mitescu , Claremont, CA	\$550.00
Cornel & Sharon Ivascu , Franklin, MI	\$300.00
Drs. Jeffrey & Felicia Ivascu O'Connor , Birmingham, MI	\$300.00
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M/M Valer Pufescu , Ann Arbor, MI	\$50.00
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Anna Jonascu , Westland, MI	\$35.00
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M/M Ovidiu Grama , Berea, OH	\$25.00
Violet Kaibas , Farrell, PA	\$25.00
M/M Nick Preda , Bradenton, FL	\$25.00
Ray & Mary Sankey , New Castle, PA	\$25.00

GENERAL DONATIONS

St. Mary , Elmhurst, NY	\$1,000.00
(Hierarch Travel Expenses)	
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St. John Ladies Auxiliary , Woonsocket, RI	\$302.21
(Hierarch Travel Expense)	
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John & Constanta Korolchuk , Inver Grove Hts., MN	\$50.00
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MEMORIAM

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*Marie Farca , Yardley, PA	\$50.00
(Museum Fund – IMO Mitru Costea)	
Peter Posteuca , Apple Valley, MN	\$50.00
(IMO Zamfira Posteuca)	

EPISCOPATE ASSESSMENT

St. Mary Cathedral , Cleveland, OH	\$22,380.00
Sts. Peter & Paul , Dearborn Hts., MI	\$21,240.00
St. George Cathedral , Southfield, MI	\$16,000.00
Holy Trinity , Los Angeles, CA	\$11,640.00
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Descent of the Holy Spirit , Warren, MI	\$9,000.00
St. Mary , Colleyville, TX	\$6,720.00
Holy Cross , Hollywood, FL	\$5,640.00
St. Mary , Calgary, AB	\$5,220.00
St. George , Winnipeg, MB	\$5,040.00
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St. Dumitru , New York, NY	\$3,120.00
St. Mary , Portland, OR	\$3,120.00
St. Nicholas , Montreal, QC	\$3,060.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit , Merrillville, IN	\$3,000.00
St. Elias , Ellwood City, PA	\$2,880.00
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Holy Resurrection , Warren, OH	\$2,580.00
St. Anne , Pomona, CA	\$2,160.00
St. Dimitrie , Easton, CT (2010)	\$1,690.00
St. George , Canton, OH (2009)	\$1,570.00
St. Nicholas Mission , Ottawa, ON	\$1,560.00
St. Mary Mission , Laval, QC	\$1,350.00
St. Elias Mission , Richmond Hill, ON	\$1,170.00
Holy Cross Mission , Phoenix, AZ	\$1,080.00
St. George , Canton, OH	\$1,000.00
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Holy Transfiguration Mission , Hartford, CT (2009)	\$300.00
Holy Trinity , MacNutt, SK (2009)	\$240.00

ARCHBISHOP'S CHARITY ENDOWMENT FUND

St. John Ladies Auxiliary , Woonsocket, RI	\$300.00
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DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS

St. Anne , Pomona, CA	\$200.00
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ROEA / STANITZ-A.R.O.Y. SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Kathy Stanitz , Wheaton, IL	\$500.00
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* *Correction Note: This donation should have been included in the September-October edition.*

A To-Do List ... *Cont. from page 15*

In other words, just feeling sad should not prevent us from doing something that spreads joy to others, which can be as simple as lighting a candle for them.

Of the seven ways for an "attitude adjustment", the last one on the list is prayer. I wondered why in my mind it was last rather than first. Then I decided it was because it was the one that summed up all the others. Even the smallest prayer never goes unheard. What a consolation! This knowledge above all can keep our attitudes in check. And in my prayers, I am hoping that this article will be helpful to others who are trying to change parts of their lives, and that your prayers will help me with my own attitude adjustment!

CUVÂNT DE SUFLET

IANUARIE - FEBRUARIE 2010

ÎN FAȚA LUI IISUS HRISTOS

Iubiți Frați Preoți și Iubiți Cititori.

Pentru că ne aflăm la început de An Nou, și fiecare dintre noi își propune planuri noi de viitor, cred că cel mai important lucru este să fim cu luare aminte la întâlnirea noastră cu Hristos, să ne cercetăm fiecare cum am fi să stăm în fața lui Iisus Hristos. Am început acest an nou cu toată încrederea, cu nădejdea să înmulțim bucuria, cu nădejdea să înmulțim binele, și toate acestea numai și numai cu ajutorul lui Dumnezeu.

De ce am ales această temă? *“în fața lui Iisus Hristos”*.

Am ales-o pentru că mulți dintre credincioșii noștri, nu se simt și nu caută să fie în fața Domnului Hristos. Sunt mulți dintre credincioșii noștri care împlinesc anumite lucruri ce țin de viața religioasă, dar care uită de prezența Mântuitorului, care se gândesc prea puțin la prezența Mântuitorului. Ori, pentru noi este foarte important să ne știm în fața lui Iisus Hristos, este foarte important să știm ce înseamnă să fii în fața Mântuitorului.

Deci, cuvântul meu va pune în atenția celor care citiți acest mesaj, ceea ce înseamnă să fii în fața Mântuitorului, ce înseamnă să te simți în fața Mântuitorului, cum anume poate cineva să ajungă să simtă prezența Domnului Hristos.

Am zis: *“în fața lui Iisus Hristos”*. De ce? Pentru că nu toți cei care știu de Iisus Hristos sunt aparținători ai Lui, nu toți sunt creștini, și de aceea n-am zis *“în fața Mântuitorului nostru”* sau *“în fața Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos”*, cum ar fi fost firesc și cum, de fapt, o să fie cuvântul meu, pentru că sigur că Domnul Hristos ia partea celor care cred în El. Eu personal mă prezint ca unul care îl are în vedere pe Domnul Hristos, pentru că deja avem o legătură cu El, fiindcă pentru noi Iisus Hristos din Nazaret nu este un simplu om, nu este un simplu învățător, nu este un prooroc mai mare decât alți prooroci, ci este Fiul lui Dumnezeu Care s-a făcut om, este Domnul nostru Iisus Hristos.

Sfânta Evanghelie dă mărturie despre felul cum s-au raportat la Iisus contemporanii Lui. Și anume, dacă citim din Sfânta Evanghelie, constatăm că, chiar de la început, de la nașterea Mântuitorului, oamenii s-au împărțit între credincioși și necredincioși. Au fost ceea ce a spus Dreptul Simeon, Primitorul de Dumnezeu, (că așa e numit Dreptul Simeon în slujbele noastre), care este numit primitorul de Dumnezeu, pentru că L-a primit pe Iisus în brațele sale când Iisus avea 40 de zile de viață pământească, și când a fost dus la Templul din Ierusalim ca să primească pentru El cele rânduite în Legea Vechiului Testament, Dreptul Simeon a spus: *“Acesta este pus spre căderea și ridicarea*

multora din Israel și ca semn ce va stârni împotriviri”.

Prin acestea, Dreptul Simeon, Primitorul de Dumnezeu, a anunțat o situație care avea să se desfășoare, nu numai în vremea propovăduirii Mântuitorului, nu numai în vremea când Domnul Hristos a propovăduit aici pe pământ, ci în toată vremea, în toată istoria Bisericii până acum și sigur și de acum înainte. Adică oamenii, în fața lui Iisus, se împart în credincioși și necredincioși, iubitori ai Mântuitorului și împotriviți față de Mântuitorul. Și anume, chiar de la început, de când S-a născut Iisus în această lume, știm că au fost și oameni care s-au bucurat de prezența Lui cum ar fi Sfântul și Dreptul Iosif, Maica Preacurată, Mama Mântuitorului nostru Iisus Hristos, Preasfânta Fecioară Maria. S-au bucurat de prezența Mântuitorului nostru Iisus Hristos păstorii din Betleem, s-au bucurat de prezența, de venirea pe lume a Fiului lui Dumnezeu, magii de la Răsărit, care de fapt, n-au știut despre Iisus Hristos ceea ce știm noi. De exemplu, magii de la Răsărit au știut că S-a născut un împărat. Când au ajuns în Ierusalim, călăuziți de steaua care îi conducea, au întrebat: *“Unde este împăratul lui Israel, a cărui stea am văzut-o noi la răsărit?”* și atunci a apărut îndată un împotrivițor față de Iisus Hristos, și anume Irod, care a spus că s-a născut Unul care poate fi împărat în locul lui și s-a gândit cum să-l facă să-l nimicească, să-l omoare. Așa că, de la început, oamenii au fost împărțiți în credincioși și necredincioși, iubitori și împotriviți. Binenteles că lucrul acesta nu s-a întâmplat numai la Nașterea Mântuitorului. Dumnezeu a rânduit ca Iisus să fie scutit de asuprirea lui Irod, să nu ajungă să fie omorât de Irod, a rânduit să plece Maica Domnului cu Iisus din Ierusalim în Egipt.

Toate evenimentele, afară de înălțarea Mântuitorului, au avut și cinstitori și împotriviți. Mai întâi de toate, știm că minunile pe care le-a făcut Iisus Hristos nu au putut fi negate. Oamenii au văzut minunile pe care le-a făcut Domnul Iisus Hristos și unii dintre ei au dat mărire lui Dumnezeu, s-au mirat de prezența lui Iisus, au dat mărire lui Dumnezeu pentru minunile pe care le-a făcut, dar, au fost și împotriviți.

De fapt, martorii ai tuturor evenimentelor în legătură cu prezența Domnului Iisus Hristos sunt toți cei credincioși, martorii înălțării din vremea noastră suntem noi, credincioșii, care credem în înălțarea Domnului Iisus Hristos, martorii ai învierii în vremea noastră suntem noi, cei care credem în înviere, martorii Jertfei Mântuitorului Iisus Hristos, martorii întrupării Fiului lui Dumnezeu suntem noi, cei ce credem în întruparea

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Cuvânt de Suflet

Cont. de la pag. 17

Fiului lui Dumnezeu, martorii minunilor pe care le-a făcut Domnul Hristos suntem fiecare dintre noi. Dacă cei de odinioară se minunau de minunile Domnului Iisus Hristos, și noi trebuie să ne minunăm și dacă ne minunăm de Dumnezeu, L-am cunoscut pe Dumnezeu, iar dacă nu ne minunăm de Domnul Iisus Hristos, înseamnă că încă n-am cunoscut pe Domnul Iisus Hristos.

Sfântul Isaac Sirul are un cuvânt în legătură cu Dumnezeu. Și zice el așa: că *“încă n-a cunoscut pe Dumnezeu cel ce nu se minunează de Dumnezeu”*. Dacă ne minunăm de Dumnezeu, L-am cunoscut iar dacă nu ne minunăm, dacă nu stăm cu admirație în fața lui Dumnezeu, încă n-am cunoscut pe Dumnezeu. Tot așa, și în ceea ce privește pe Mântuitorul nostru Iisus Hristos, Care și El este *“Dumnezeu adevărat și om adevărat”*; încă nu L-am cunoscut pe Domnul Iisus Hristos dacă nu ne minunăm de Domnul Iisus Hristos, de Jertfa Lui, de învierea Lui, de înălțarea Lui la cer, de întruparea Fiului lui Dumnezeu, de Nașterea Lui cea mai presus de fire. Dacă nu ne minunăm de lucrurile acestea, încă nu suntem în fața Domnului Iisus Hristos, avem în fața altceva decât ceea ce este Iisus Hristos.

Amintesc de aceste lucruri pentru motivul că sunt unii, și mai ales tineri, care se iau după concepții greșite, după concepții din afara creștinismului, după concepții necreștine, unii care fac yoga, care se duc la cursuri de yoga, unii care știu de zen, unii care știu de lucruri de felul acesta. Numai că Hristosul de la ședințele yoga nu e Hristosul Bisericii, nu e Hristosul Evangheliei, al nostru, nu e Iisus Hristos al celor credincioși, al dreptmăritorilor creștini.

Mai sunt aici în America, și chiar foarte mulți dintre credincioșii noștri care au probleme sufletești, probleme personale, și în loc să caute Biserica, Taina Spovedaniei, recurg la tot felul de terapii și ședințe la psiholog, crezând că găsesc rezolvare, dar se înșală. E dureros că și unii preoți încurajează ședințele la psiholog, ceea ce nu e bine, nu e creștinesc, nu e pe placul lui Dumnezeu, nu la psiholog îl întâlnești pe Iisus Hristos ci numai în Sfânta Biserică și în Sfintele Taine unde se află cu toate darurile Sale, nimeni nu ne poate ajuta mai bine ca Biserica.

Părintele Arsenie Boca avea o vorbă mare, pe care și eu am spus-o mereu în cuvântările mele. Spunea părintele celor ce-l căutau și mai ales îi cereau cuvânt de folos: *“Măi fraților, în așa fel să vă trăiți viața, ca atunci când vă veți întâlni cu Domnul Hristos să nu roșeaască fețele voastre”*.

E lucru mare să ne gândim la întâlnirea noastră cu Domnul Hristos. Unii cred, alții nu cred, dar acest lucru se va întâmpla într-o zi, când vom pleca din lumea aceasta.

Binențele că toate acestea sunt taine și rămân taine. De aceea, acum la început de an nou să ne gândim că

fără de Dumnezeu nu putem face nimic, ce suntem de fapt în fața voinței lui Dumnezeu?, decât o mână de țărână. Și așa cum spune vorba noastră românească: *“Fiecare lucrul tău să-l începi cu Dumnezeu”*. Să începem acest An Nou cu Dumnezeu și cu binecuvântarea Lui.

Să-L avem în fața noastră pe Domnul nostru Iisus Hristos, dar să nu uităm nici de Maica Domnului. Când vorbind cu Maica Domnului în rugăciune spunem așa: *“De Dumnezeu Născătoare Fecioară, ceea ce ai născut pe Mântuitorul, șters-ai blestemul cel dintâi al Evei, că Maică ai fost bunăvoinței Tatălui, purtând în brațe pe Dumnezeu-Cuvântul întrupat”*. Sunt niște lucruri neașteptate, niște lucruri pe care numai așa le putem purta în suflet, dacă le urmărim și dacă le înțelegem așa cum le prezintă Biserica. Și iarăși: *“De Dumnezeu Născătoare Fecioară, ceea ce ai născut pe Mântuitorul, perdu-ai blestemul cel dintâi al Evei, că Maică ai fost bunăvoinței Tatălui”*.

Într-o poezie scrisă de Traian Dorz, se spune: *“mai bun, mai blând, mai drept, mai credincios, mai ca Hristos”*, așadar cât mai asemănător cu Domnul nostru Iisus Hristos. Și asta se poate realiza când în jurul nostru îi vom ajuta pe toți să fie mai curați, mai fericiți. Când vom aduce o undă de bucurie din bucuria credinței noastre strămoșești.

Așa să ne ajute Dumnezeu.

+ IRINEU, Episcop Vicar



ANUNȚ

**Congresul Anual A.R.F.O.R.A.
va avea loc între 4-6 iunie, 2010
în Falls Church, Virginia**

**Anul acesta Congresul va fi găzduit de
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VIZITA ÎNALT PREA SFINȚITULUI ARHIEPISCOP NATHANIEL ÎN PAROHIA “BUNA VESTIRE” DIN GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN



Duminică 10 ianuarie 2010, a fost o zi deosebită pentru credincioșii Parohiei “Buna Vestire” din Grand Rapids, MI. Arhipăstorul lor își anunțase vizita în Parohie cu numai două zile înainte, iar enoriașii erau nerăbdători să-l întâlnească.

Vlădica Nathaniel a venit în dimineața zilei de duminică însoțit de către Dl. Richard Grabowski, asistent administrativ al Cancelariei Episcopiei.

Înainte de slujbă, Înalt Prea Sfințitul s-a închinat la icoane și a admirat noul iconostas și iconografia bisericii. În timpul Slujbei Sf. Liturghii atmosfera a fost plină de emoție sfântă.

După slujba Sfintei Liturghii arhieresti, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel a rostit cuvânt de învățătură vorbind despre faptul că toți suntem mădulare ale Trupului lui Hristos care este Biserica, după cum ne arată Sf. Apostol Pavel în fragmentul din Epistola către Efeseni care s-a citit în această duminică și peste toți se revarsă lumina lui Hristos după cum ne spune Evanghelistul Matei.

Urmând Sfintei Liturghii Vlădicul a participat la slujba parastasului de șase luni oferit de către D-na Elena Cristea pentru odihna sufletului soțului Ioan. Participarea și cuvântul de mângâiere al ierarhului au

turnat balsam peste sufletul greu încercatei văduve de 38 de ani și al băiatului de 12 ani rămași în urmă.

Apoi, înaltul oaspete a fost rugat să binecuvinteze tradiționala pâine și sare prezentate de către Președintele Consiliului Parohial, Dl. Florin Străjeriu și a primit un buchet de flori și urări de bun-venit din partea Dnei Speranța Dumitrescu, delegata Reuniunii de Doamne.

Ierarhul a distribuit apoi copiilor de la școala Duminicală medaliile pentru participarea la sceneta Nașterii Domnului, prezentată de Crăciun, iar Doamnelor profesoare de la școala Duminicală, icoane pentru activitatea deosebită.

Întâmpinat din nou cu imnul arhieresc, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel a binecuvântat masa oferită de către D-na Elena Cristea spre pomenirea soțului. În timpul mesei și după masă, Vlădicul a discutat cu apoape toți membrii parohiei, făcându-și timp de a le adresa o binecuvântare și câteva cuvinte fiecăruia.

Apoi, luându-și rămas bun de la Părintele Paroh Anton Frunză și familia sa, arhierul a binecuvântat pe cei prezenți și s-a întors la Vatra Românească, sediul Episcopiei.

Participant

ASPECTE CREȘTINE ÎN LIRICA EMINESCIANĂ

La 15 ianuarie a.c., românii de pretutindeni, din țară și de dincolo de fruntariile ei, strânși în jurul bisericilor și comunităților lor, sărbătoresc 160 de ani de la nașterea Luceăfarului poeziei românești, poetul nepereche **Mihai Eminescu**.

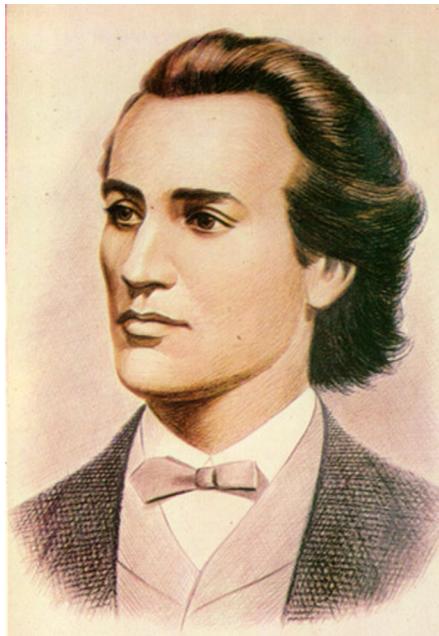
Mai întâi o precizare. Mihai Eminescu nu este un poet religios în sensul strict al cuvântului, epitet ce se cuvine mai ales unor Vasile Voiculescu, Tudor Arghezi sau Daniel Turcea. Suntem siguri că el și-a primit educația religioasă în familie, mai ales de la mama, evocată atât de sugestiv în poezia "O, mamă". Înselat de cunoaștere, a fost un lector asiduu al cărților vechi, inclusiv a celor bisericești. Mai mult, avea unchi și mătuși retrași la mânăstirile moldovene, care i-au îndrumat pașii spre Biserică. O indicație prețioasă este însemnarea unui duhovnic pe o veche carte bisericească, descoperită de curând, care glasuieste: "Pe ziua de Sfinții Voievozi, din anul 1886, m-a chemat la mânăstirea Neamțu, la bolniță, și l-am spovedit și l-am împărțit pe poetul Mihai Eminescu. Iar Eminescu era limpede la minte, numai tare posac și trist și mi-a sărutat mâna și mi-a spus: Părinte, să mă îngropați la țărnul mării și să fie într-o mânăstire de maici și să ascult în fiecare seară, ca la Agafton (mânăstire de maici lângă Botoșani) cum cântă "Lumină lină" (Arhim. B. V. Anania, *Ipostaze lirice eminescene*, în *Telegraful Român* (Sibiu), 1-15 Iunie 1989, p. 1).

Deci, poetului îi erau familiare sfintele slujbe și iubea imnul "Lumină lină", unul din cele mai frumoase din cadrul Vecerniei ortodoxe. Cât privește taina spovedeniei, chiar dacă i-a fost sugerată sau inițiativă i-a aparținut, cert este faptul că s-a spovedit și s-a împărțit, sărutând mâna călugărului duhovnic, ca un bun creștin care se aproprie senin de moarte, considerând-o numai o trecere la altă stare, aceea a veșniciei, cu recompense și pedepsele ei în funcție de viața pământească - cum învață Biserica Ortodoxă.

Una din poeziile cu conținut religios este **învierea** în care sunt prezentate antitezele, atât de dragi poetului. Clipele care preced cea mai mare minune - învierea din morți a Domnului - stau sub pecetea tensiunii dintre întuneric și lumină, dintre frig și căldură, dintre moarte și viață, punând deci în opoziție nimicnicia umană cu măreția divină.

Într-un cadru mistic, după ce orologiul vremii a bătut cele 12 trepte, liniștea pune stăpânire pe biserică, nemaiauzindu-se decât glasul preotului ce cheamă: "Veniți de luați lumină!".

"Un clopot lung de glasuri vui de bucurie



Colo-n altar se uită și preoți și popor

Cum din mormânt răsare Christos învingător

Iar inimile noastre s-unesc în armonie"

Împreună, deci, preoți și popor, văd biruința Mântuitorului "lumina ducând-o / Celor din morminte" cu "moartea pre moarte călcând-o" cum mărturisim în troparul învierii, și - ca un singur glas - răsună imnul apoteozat "Cântări și laudă-nălțăm / Noi, ție, Unuia / Primindu-l cu psalmi și ramuri / Cântând aleluia / Christos a înviat din morți / Cu cetele sfinte, / Cu moartea pre moarte călcând-o / Lumina aducând-o / Celor din morminte".

Deși cunoscutul tropar al învierii folosește verbul "a dăru", poetul

utilizează altul, mai dinamic, "a duce"; Domnul însuși **duce** celor din morminte lumina, adică viața, referire clară la dogma creștin ortodoxă a pogorării la iad a Mântuitorului, ceea ce face din acest poem "un tratat de teologie a învierii. Unirea în treime a lui Iisus este clar reliefată "Noi, ție, Unuia", iar învierea nu este un lucru consumat istoric, ci actual, "preoți și popor privesc uimiți dar bucuroși cum Domnul se ridică din mormânt învingător" (Pr. Gh. Calciu, *Ortodoxia lui Eminescu în "Rugăciune" și în alte poezii*, în volumul *Centenarul Eminescu*, San Diego, 1989, p. 8)

În altă ordine de idei, sunt cercetători avizați care consideră că una din sursele de inspirație ale celebrului poem Luceăfarul este prologul Evangheliei după Ioan. Hyperion este o entitate increată, coexistând din eternitate cu Părintele său, părtaș cu acesta la crearea lumii, întrupat cu menirea de a lumina făpturile și în imposibilitatea ontologică de a părăsi condiția lui divină. În el se concentrează atât Logosul primordial, cât și cel întrupat, Eminescu găsim în universul creștin un filon de aur pentru poezia sa. (Arhim. B. V. Anania, *Drama divină a lui Hyperion*, în "Telegraful Român" nr. 17-20 din 1983).

Dintotdeauna, Biserica Ortodoxă ca și cea Catolică de ambele rituri (latin și oriental), au acordat un cult special Sfintei Fecioare Maria.

Eminescu va dedica Sfintei Fecioare Maria două poezii, "Răsai asupra mea" și "Rugăciune".

"Răsai asupra mea" este unul din sonetele cele mai reușite ale poetului.

"Răsai asupra mea, lumină lină / Ca-n visul meu ceresc d'odinioară, / O, maică Sfântă, Pururea Fecioară / în noaptea gândurilor mele, vină".

Familiarizat cu terminologia ortodoxă, poetul mărturisește dogma pururei feciorii a Maicii Domnului,

definită la Sfântul Sinod ecumenic de la Efes din 431, acceptând faptul că s-a învrednicit să fie Născătoare de Dumnezeu. În plus, revine termenul “lumină lină”, ceea ce duce la concluzia indubitabilă că Eminescu era fascinat de vecerniile ortodoxe, ca cele de la mănăstirea Agafton, din mărturia-testament de mai sus. El își recunoaște teluricul păcătos, chiar înstrăinarea de credință, poate datorită și pesimismului schopenhaurian, într-un vers subtil “în noaptea gândurilor mele, vină”, dar speranța-virtute teologică prin excelență - îl îndreptățește să invoce ajutorul divin pe calea mântuirii:

“Dă-mi tinerețe, redă-mi credința / și reapari din cerul tău de stele / Ca să te-ador de-acum pe veci, Marie”

Scriind acest sonet în 1879, Eminescu - similar cu Fericitul Augustin în “Retractari” - se răscumpăra de înstrăinarea religiei, exprimată plastic în “împărat și proletar” din 1874, poezie cu caracter social a cărei frază “Religia, o frază de dâșii inventată / Ca cu a ei putere să vă aplece-n jug”, repetată pâna la saturație și scoasă din adevăratul ei context, i-a făcut pe criticii literari ai regimului fără Dumnezeu să-l considere un “ateu”. Aici, Eminescu își recunoaște vina înstrăinării și imploră smerit și umil ajutorul ceresc, pentru ca cea mai sfântă dintre sfinți, Fecioara Maria să mijlocească la Părintele luminilor pentru răscumpărarea lui: “redă-mi credința”, două cuvinte mari care atestă cunoașterea dogmei răscumpărării, atât de importantă în Ortodoxie.

O altă poezie religioasă, superbă ca fond și formă, este “**Rugăciune**” scrisă tot în 1879. Și aici expresia lirică este o ipostază a spiritului, ființa noastră păcatoasă deschizându-se ca un crin, ca un vas purificat, prin durere și rugăciune, pentru a primi binecuvântarea Domnului prin sfinții Săi, în acest caz prin Sfânta Fecioară.

În lumea creștină, Maica Domnului este ocrotitoarea corăbierilor, iar lăcașul de cult ortodox are forma unei nave, simbolizând arca Bisericii care traversează istoria spre eternitate și mântuire. Așa se explică faptul că în iconografia bizantină, Maica Domnului este zugrăvită pe bolta altarului - la prora - cu privirea și brațele deschise ocrotitor către credincioșii dinăuntrul navei. Mesajul este clar: “noi, cei băntuiți” de “valul” istoriei, în “nava” bisericii suntem protejați de Domnul Hristos aflat la cârmă și de Sfânta Fecioară, aflată la prora bisericii (Arhim. B. V. Anania, Ipostaze, ... p. 2)

Versurile sunt de o frumusețe fără seamăn:

“Crăiasă alegându-te / îngenunchiem, rugându-te / înalță-ne, ne mântuie / Din valul ce ne băntuie / Fii scut de întărire / și zid de mântuire”

Poemul este un adevărat axion, o laudă sfântă adusă Sfintei Fecioare Maria unde, pe lângă elementele ortodoxe menționate, întâlnim și termeni catolici, ca cel de “regină”, slavonizat în “crăiasă” sau ideea că Sfânta Fecioară poate mântui - dogma catolică al lui “co-redemptrix” (împreună mântuitoare) cu Hristos, care diferă substanțial de cea ortodoxă, ce spune că numai Dumnezeu poate mântui.

În rest, cele două strofe urmează corect terminologia ortodoxă, supravenerarea (hiperdoulia) Maicii Domnului fiind exprimată cu smerenie răsăriteană, nu majestos ca la catolici (Pr. Gh. Calciu, op. cit., p. 9).

Finalul “Rugăciunii” îmbină majestuozitatea cu smerenia, teologia cu pietatea:

“Rugămu-te-ndurărilor / Luceafărului mărilor / Ascultă-a noastre plângeri / Regina peste îngeri / Din neguri te arată / Lumina dulce, clară / O, Maică Preacurată / și Pururea Fecioară, Marie”

Am lăsat voit la urmă un alt giuvaer al liricii eminescene, “**Colinde, colinde**”, de o sensibilitate și delicatețe fără seamăn. Iat-o, în întregime:

*“Colinde, colinde / E vremea colindelor
Când ghița se-ntinde / Asemeni ogliindelor
Și tremură brazii / Mișcând rămurelele
Căci noaptea de azi-i / Când scânteie stelele
Se bucură copiii / Copiii și fetele
De dragul Mariei / își piaptână pletele
De dragul Mariei / Și-a Mântuitorului
Lucește pe ceruri / O stea călătorului”*

subtilă aluzie la Steaua ce i-a călăuzit pe Magi din Răsărit până la peștera Bethleemului acum 2000 de ani.

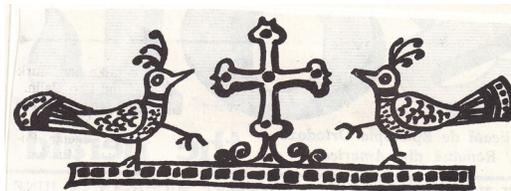
Eminescu s-a adăpat la izvorul nesecat al folclorului românesc, începutul cunoscute-i “Doina” - “*De la Nistru pân-la Tisa / Tot Românul plânsu-mi-s-a*”, nefiind altceva decât ideea unui colind din Transilvania ce glăsuiește: “*P’ lângă Mureș, p’ lângă Tisa / Maica Sfântă plimbă-mi-s-a*” unde, din dorința de a-L face pe Prunc mai de-al nostru, Sfânta Fecioară nu mai caută loc să nască în țara Sfântă, ci pe meleagurile Mioriței (Cezar Vasiliu, *Nihil sine Deo. Eseuri istorice și teologice.*, San Diego, 1990, p. 43)

S-a scris mult despre pesimismul lui Eminescu, rod al influenței filozofiei lui Kant și Schopenhauer sau al vechii spiritualități a Indiei asupra gândirii sale. Desigur, în viața sa, poetul a avut parte ca oricare dintre muritori de frământări și revoltă, de necazuri și decepții, de căderi și de ridicări, dar ele nu i-au smuls din suflet credința în Domnul și în sfânta Maică, Pururea Fecioară. Ideile dogmatice exprimate, mai ales cele din domeniul mariologiei, ni-l prezintă ca pe un cunoscător profund al dogmei ortodoxe, numind Biserica Ortodoxă “Maica Neamului Românesc”.

Omul de cultură complet - cum l-a desemnat Noica, profetul - cum l-a numit Iorga, cel ce a dat un stil sufletului românesc, după G. Ibrăileanu, **Mihai Eminescu** este darul cel mai de preț pe care Dumnezeu l-a făcut limbii și poporului român!

Veșnică să-i fie pomenirea!

Pr. Prof. Dr. Cezar Vasiliu



ÎN MEMORIA: ÎNALT PREA SFINȚITULUI ARHIEPISCOP IOV DE CHICAGO ȘI AL MIDWESTULUI.



Vineri 18 decembrie 2009, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Iov de Chicago și al Midwestului a adormit neașteptat în Domnul.

Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Iov s-a născut Richard John Osacky în Chicago în data de 18 martie 1946. Și-a completat studiile universitare la Universitatea Northern Illinois, și după ce a absolvit de la Seminarul

Teologic Ortodox Sf. Tihon din South Canaan, PA, în 1970, a slujit ca director al tineretului și cantor în Parohia Sf. Ioan Botezătorul din Black Lick, Pennsylvania. În această perioadă a avut responsabilitatea de a da răspunsurile la strană, de a conduce educația religioasă a tineretului și a pictat icoane. Afinitatea sa extraordinară în relațiile cu tineretul i-a adus recunoașterea Bisericii în general.

În 1973, citețul John a fost hirotonit deacon și apoi preot de către Episcopul Theodosius de Pittsburgh

(mai târziu Mitropolitul Primat Theodosius). A fost numit preot paroh în Parohia din Black Lick, unde a slujit și ca director spiritual pentru studenții creștini ortodocși de la Universitatea Indiana din Pennsylvania.

Deși preot celibatar, el menținea un zel monastic în tot ceea ce făcea. În 1975, a devenit monah fiind rasofoar, iar în August 1982 a fost tuns în schima mică monahală de către Episcopul (pe atunci) Herman. În noiembrie 1982 a fost ridicat la rangul de arhimandrit. După ce a fost nominalizat de către Eparhia de New England pentru postul de episcop, Sf. Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe în America (OCA) a ratificat nominalizarea și l-a ales Episcop de Hartford și al Episcopiei de New England. A fost hirotonit în treapta arhieriei în data de 29 ianuarie 1983 în Biserica Tuturor Sfinților din Hartford, Connecticut.

În sesiunea din 5 noiembrie 1992, Sf Sinod al OCA l-a ales ca Episcop de Chicago și al Episcopiei de Midwest. A fost întronizat în data de 6 februarie 1993 la Catedrala Sf. Treime din Chicago.

În anii arhipăstoririi sale, Episcopia Midwestului a crescut imens, o dovadă a acestui fapt fiind nenumăratele misiuni și parohii înființate. Înalt Prea Sfințitul Iov era un foarte bun iconograf și iconologist.

Cont. la pag. 24

ÎN MEMORIA: PREA CUCERNICULUI PĂRINTE GEORGE ZMED 24 aprilie 1916 - 12 ianuarie 2010

Părintele George Zmed s-a născut în Chicago, Illinois în data de 24 aprilie 1916 din părinți creștini ortodocși Nicolae și Paraschiva (născută Bălan) Zmed, amândoi originari din Comloșul Mare, Timiș, România. La vârsta de cinci ani, George a plecat din SUA în România, la Comloșul Mare.

George Zmed a urmat școala generală în Comloșul Mare, studiile secundare la liceul Avram Iancu și cele universitare la Academia Teologică de la Timișoara și Caransebeș între 1938 și 1942, după care



a făcut și un an de Drept la Cluj.

A fost hirotonit diacon în data de 18 octombrie în Pesac, Banat și preot la data de 25 octombrie 1942 în Satchinez de către Arhiepiscopul Vasile Lăzărescu. A primit distincțiile de brâu roșu de la Mitropolitul Lăzărescu și a fost ridicat la rangul de protoiereu de către Sf Sinod al OCA în data de 19 martie 1996.

După ce s-a întors în America în noiembrie 1952, a fost primit în cadrul Episcopiei în iulie 1958. A păstrorit de-a lungul timpului următoarele parohii: Pordeanu, Gaiul Mic în România și Nașterea Domnului (Holy Nativity) în Chicago, între 1952 și 1983 când s-a pensionat.

Părintele George Zmed a fost îndrumătorul spiritual al AROY, a contribuit cu articole la revista Solia, a fost Protopop al Protoieriei Chicago și a participat în nenumărate activități din cadrul Episcopiei. Vorbea fluent româna și engleza. A fost înzestrat de Dumnezeu

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EDUCAREA CREȘTINĂ A FAMILIEI

Cuviosul Tit din Pecersca

- 27 Februarie -

Cuviosul Iacov Sihastrul

- 29 Ianuarie -

Cuviosul Tit era preot monah în Mănăstirea Pecersca. Tot în această mănăstire se afla monahul Evagrie, bun prieten cu Tit. Prietenia lor, care i-a impresionat pe mulți, din păcate s-a terminat cu o ceartă și lucrurile au mers atât de rău încât cei doi nici nu mai vorbeau unul cu celălalt. Este știut că e mare păcat să te duci la biserică fără ca înainte să te fi împăcat cu toată lumea. Cei doi, însă, se urau atât de mult încât nici nu se gândeau să se împăce. Dar iată că Tit s-a îmbolnăvit foarte rău și dându-și seama de greșeala făcută a trimis să fie chemat Evagrie la patul său ca să se ierte unul pe altul. Evagrie era atât de adâncit în ura sa încât a refuzat să vină. Adus cu forța de către ceilalți călugări, când Tit și-a cerut iertare Evagrie nu numai că nu l-a iertat, ci a început să-l blesteme. Iar în acel moment Evagrie a căzut jos mort, iar Tit s-a ridicat din pat complet vindecat. Întrebat fiind cum s-au întâmpat acestea, Tit a spus celorlalți călugări: "Când boleam, fiind cumplit stăpânit de mânie, am văzut îngerii depărtați de mine și plângând de pierderea sufletului meu, iar diavolii bucurându-se de mânia mea. Atunci am început a vă ruga pe voi ca, mergând la fratele, să cereți iertare pentru mine. Iar când l-ați adus la mine și eu m-am închinat lui, iar el nu s-a întors la mine, atunci am văzut un înger nemilosiv, ținând o sulică de foc cu care a lovit pe acela care nu m-a iertat și îndată a căzut mort; iar mie, același înger mi-a dat mâna, m-am sculat și acum sunt sănătos." (Viețile Sfinților pe Februarie) După cele întâmplate, cuviosul Tit nu s-a mai supărat niciodată pe nimeni, înțelegând cât de importantă e pacea dintre oameni.

Cuviosul Tit se sărbătorește în fiecare an pe 27 Februarie.

Cuviosul Iacov Sihastrul a trăit într-o peșteră lângă cetatea Porfirion ducând o viață aspră. După 15 ani de pustnicie, fiind ispitit peste puterile lui, a ucis pe cineva. Când și-a dat seama ce a făcut, pierzând speranța de mântuire, a vrut să renunțe la pustnicie și să fugă în lume. Întâlnindu-se, însă, cu un monah îmbunătățit, la sfatul acestuia s-a hotărât să-și petreacă restul vieții nevoindu-se într-un mormânt și cerând iertare de la Dumnezeu. După un timp a venit o secetă mare și episcopul a primit semn de la Dumnezeu că ploaia va veni numai prin rugăciunile Cuviosului Iacov. Episcopul și credincioșii s-au dus la mormântul în care se nevoia Cuviosul Iacov. Iar Cuviosul Iacov rugându-se pentru ploaie, Dumnezeu i-a ascultat rugăciunea și a dat ploaie îndeajuns. Cuviosul Iacov,

luând aceasta ca un semn că mai este speranță să fie iertat, a dus în continuare o viață și mai aspră. Când a venit vremea, și-a dat sufletul în pace, și chiar după moarte a făcut minuni.

Cuviosul Iacov Sihastrul e sărbătorit pe 29 Ianuarie în fiecare an.

Întrebări pentru părinți:

- Dacă stăm și ne gândim bine, câte persoane urâm noi în momentul acesta? Dacă avem un accident și murim pe neașteptate, câți sunt cei cu care ne-am certat și nu am mai avut timp să ne împăcăm? Câtor oameni le-am sus cuvinte aspre fără ca, după aceea, să încercăm să facem pace? Dar cu soții/soțiile noastre și cu copiii nostri cum ne-am purtat? Nu cumva am venit nervoși de la servicii și ne-am scos necazul pe soții și pe copii? Dar cu părinții și socrii noștri cum ne-am purtat?
- Am încercat să ținem pace în familie și ne-am rugat la Dumnezeu să ne dea pace în familie? Dar pe copiii noștri ce îi învățăm? Ei învață de la noi. Dacă noi iertăm și ei vor ierta. Dacă noi ținem mânie și ei vor ține. Dacă avem în familie pe cineva bătrân sau bolnav, ne-am îngrijit să-l sfătuim să se împăce cu cei cu care s-a certat?
- O femeie mi-a povestit o întâmplare care m-a impresionat în mod deosebit. Când mama ei era pe patul morții și-a chemat familia și s-a împăcat cu toți. Soțului ei i-a spus că îl iartă pentru tot, numai pentru un singur lucru nu îl poate ierta. I-a spus că, pur și simplu nu poate să-i ierte acel lucru. Bătrânei i s-a făcut mai rău, părea inconștientă, toți credeau că nu-și mai revine. Și-a revenit totuși, și-a chemat soțul și l-a iertat. Nu putea să vorbească mult, dar a lăsat să se înțeleagă faptul că, atunci când părea inconștientă, a suferit mult pentru că nu-și iertase soțul. După ce l-a iertat a murit liniștită. Cea care mi-a povestit întâmplarea este o femeie serioasă, la 50 și ceva de ani, ingineră de profesie. Ca un om păcătos care judecă pe alții, nu am putut să nu mă întreb ce păcat atât de mare poate face un soț ca să nu-l ierte soția nici pe patul morții? Într-o altă discuție, femeia mi-a spus și păcatul tatălui ei: cu zeci de ani înainte, în tinerețe, își obligase soția să avorteze un copil. Nu mai comentez. Să nu judecam ca să nu fim judecați. Dumnezeu să îi ierte, căci acum amândoi sunt morți.
- Ni s-a întâmplat vreodată să păcătuim atât de mult încât să credem că nu mai este salvare pentru noi?

Cont. la pag. 24

Educarea ... *Cont. de la pag. 23*

Mai ales copiii noștri nu li s-a întâmplat să dispere, crezând că nu mai e nici o scăpare pentru ei? Viața părintelui Iacov Sihastrul trebuie să fie o încurajare pentru noi. E adevărat, noi nu putem duce viața aspră pe care a dus-o acesta, dar cu încredere în Dumnezeu și cu un duhovnic bun, dacă ne dăm seama de greșeala făcută și ne străduim să ne îndreptăm, există speranța de a ne salva sufletele. Dumnezeu să ne ajute!

Maica Preoteasă

Arhiepiscop Iov *Cont. de la pag. 22*

Deseori era solicitat să lectureze asupra acestui subiect.

Ca recunoaștere a celor peste 20 de ani de slujire arhierescă, Episcopul Iov a fost înălțat la rangul de Arhiepiscop în sesiunea din martie 2004 a Sf. Sinod.

La slujba înmormântării săvârșită miercuri, 23 decembrie, în Catedrala Sf. Treime din Chicago, a participat alături de alți ierarhi, preoți și diaconi și Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel.

Veșnica pomenire!

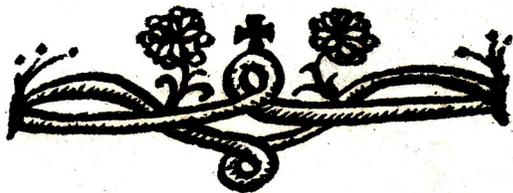
Părintele Zmed *Cont. de la pag. 22*

cu o voce deosebită și a realizat multe programe muzicale pentru parohie.

A fost căsătorit cu Persida Golub din Cerneatez, România în biserica Sf. Ilie din Timișoara în data de 15 octombrie 1942. Împreună au trei copii: Cornel, Walter și Adrian.

Slujba înmormântării a avut loc la Biserica Nașterea Domnului din Chicago și a fost prezidată de către Prea Sfințitul Episcop Vicar Irineu.

Veșnica pomenire!



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