

JANUARY/FEBRUARY
2013

SOLIA

THE HERALD
JACKSON, MI

VOL. LXXVIII
Nos. 1-2



SOLIA

THE
HERALD

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SOLIA — THE HERALD (ISSN 0038-1039) is published bi-monthly for \$15.00 per year: United States, \$20.00 per year: Canada, and \$25.00 per year in other countries by The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, 2535 Grey Tower Road, Jackson, MI 49201-9120. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, Michigan, and additional offices. Phone: (517) 522-3656, Fax: (517) 522-5907. E-mail: solia@roea.org. Website: <http://www.roea.org>.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: SOLIA — THE HERALD, P.O. Box 185, Grass Lake, MI 49240-0185, U.S.A.

Articles and news published in SOLIA do not necessarily reflect the views or the endorsement of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.

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COVER: Orthodox Christian hierarchs, clergy, seminarians and faithful of all ages joined tens of thousands of pro-lifers from across the nation for the annual March for Life in the US capital on Friday, January 25, 2013. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon led the faithful from the Ellipse to the steps of the Supreme Court in witness to the sanctity of life 40 years and three days after Roe v. Wade legalized abortion in the United States.

CLERGY CHANGES

ORDINATIONS

BICA, Florin, was ordained into the Holy Diaconate on December 26, 2012 by Archbishop Nathaniel at Dormition Monastery, Rives Junction MI for service to St. Mary Cathedral, Cleveland OH.

BICA, Rev. Deacon Florin, was ordained into the Holy Priesthood on January 6, 2013 by Archbishop Nathaniel at St. Mary Cathedral, Cleveland OH and attached there.

HOARSTE, Rev. Deacon Dan, was ordained into the Holy Priesthood on December 23, 2012 by Archbishop Nathaniel at Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Dearborn Heights MI and attached to St. Mary Hierarchal Chapel, Grass Lake MI.

NEMES, Rev. Deacon John (Ilie Geani), was ordained into the Holy Priesthood on December 25, 2012 by Archbishop Nathaniel at St. George Cathedral, Southfield MI and attached to St. Mary Hierarchal Chapel, Grass Lake MI.

SATNOIANU, Ionel, was ordained into the Holy Diaconate on January 6, 2013 by Archbishop Nathaniel at St. Mary Cathedral, Cleveland OH for service there.

ASSIGNMENTS / RELEASES

BICA, Rev. Fr. Florin, was assigned Parish Priest of Holy Trinity Church, Youngstown OH effective January 26, 2013.

NICHITEAN, Rev. Fr. Bogdan M., was accepted by the Episcopate Council on July 28, 2012 and assigned as Parish Priest of St. John the Hozevite Mission, Denver CO, effective July 28, 2012.

ONOFREI, Rev. Fr. Rares, was released from his duties as Parish Priest of St. Anne Church, Pomona, CA and assigned as Parish Priest of Sts. Michael & Gabriel Church, Sacramento CA, effective December 4, 2012.

PARAU, Rev. Fr. Vasile, who was attached to Exaltation of the Holy Cross Mission, Phoenix AZ, was assigned Parish Priest of Holy Cross Mission, San Diego CA, effective January 1, 2013.



Family Life Conference

-Start Your Planning Now-
Family Life/All-Auxiliaries Conference
"With Faith and Love, Draw Near"
 July 4 – 7, 2013 — Vatra Romaneasca

Updates:

• BIBLE CHALLENGE

Exploring the Gospel of Mark
Looking for a Church School curriculum for Lent?
An Adult Education Program?

In preparation for the BIBLE CHALLENGE at this year's Family Life Conference, with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel and the cooperation of our Department of Religious Education, we encourage an Episcopate-wide study of the GOSPEL OF MARK. Mark is the Gospel reading on many of the Sunday Divine Liturgies in Great Lent, and is considered to be the first written account of the life and message of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We encourage all parishes to study this text during this pre-Lenten, Lenten, and Paschal season and then come to the Family Life Conference and compete in the BIBLE CHALLENGE. Study guides and practice questions are available at: www.orthodoxyouth.org/Mark.

3 members make up each BIBLE CHALLENGE team. We are planning for 3 divisions—teen/Jr. AROY (12-18 yrs), young adult/Sr. AROY (19-30), and adult (31+). **The winning team's parish will receive \$1,000, donated by The Orthodox Brotherhood!** For more information, contact: Teva Regule (teva@mit.edu) or Fr. Ian Pac-Urar (pacurar@zips.uakron.edu).

• ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

"Re-imagining my Church Family... Staying connected and growing in the faith in our 20s... Our Service to the Lord in Liturgy and Life..."

These are the themes of the first Oratorical Contest of our Episcopate. We've designed the contest so that youth and adults alike feel encouraged to think more deeply about our faith and begin to articulate it to others. We plan to have 3 divisions with **scholarship prize money available for the winners!** Contestants should each build their essay using the resources of our faith—the Bible, Liturgy, Ancient and Modern Church writings—as well as their own experience.

Oratories will be judged on theological content, coherence of thesis, and delivery. All contestants should submit the final version of their oratory in advance to the Chair by June 21, 2013. Chair: Ron Muresan (ronmuresan@hotmail.com).

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• Teen/Jr. AROY division (12–18 yrs.)

Theme: "Re-imagining my Church Family: Who is my Family and What does this mean to me?"

Study the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25–37) and apply it to your life today. Oratories should be 4–7 minutes in length.

• Young Adult/Sr. AROY division (19–30yrs.)

Theme: "Staying Connected and Growing in the Faith in our 20s: Challenges and Opportunities".

The experiences and decisions of early adulthood often set the foundation for a large part of the rest of our adult lives. Explore the challenges and opportunities of connecting and growing in the faith during this time in our lives from the resources of our faith. Topics may include experiences of the college years, first jobs, relocating to a new city, marriage and/or first serious relationship. Oratories should be 5–8 minutes in length.

• Adult division (31+ yrs.)

Theme: "Our Service to the Lord: In Liturgy and Life."

The theme of our conference is "With Faith and Love, Draw Near." These are the words of invitation to receive and become more fully the Body of Christ. As members of the Church, we are called to gather as the Body of Christ, enlivened by the Holy Spirit and become a light for the entire world. We do this when two or three are gathered in His name. In the Liturgy, we offer ourselves and the work of our hands in the form of bread and wine which we receive back as the Body and Blood of Christ so that we may participate in His Life. After the Liturgy, we are all called to continue this work day by day, for the continuing sanctification of the whole world.

Explore and connect some of the challenges and opportunities of service in liturgy and life. What are the implications of this work for strengthening the entire Church, our local parish, and/or our own relationship with God? Oratories should be 7–10 minutes in length.

• VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

• In order to take care of all the many logistics of putting on this conference, we need VOLUNTEERS to come and help. For example, can you devote a few hours to helping with registration, staffing the gate, setting up tables, clearing tables, etc.? You don't have to belong to ARFORA, AROY or Brotherhood to VOLUNTEER, but you'll probably want to join once you have helped! Workers are welcome to stay at the Vatra gratis. To volunteer, please contact Ron Muresan (ronmuresan@hotmail.com).

• The Planning Committee would like to **thank the folks at St. Mary's parish in Chicago for volunteering to sponsor the Friday evening Cultural/Talent Night as well as provide some meals for the conference!** Do we have any other parishes willing to help?

MEET THE NEWLY-ORDAINED CLERGY



Fr. Gheorghe Acsente was born on November 15, 1974 in Reditu-Galati, Romania to Apostol and Tudosia Acsente. He is a graduate of the Cantor School of St. Andrew Seminary in Galati (1993) and the St. Philothea Faculty of Theology in Pitesti, Romania (2008). He married Diana Sandoiu in 2002.

On February 19, 2012, he was ordained in the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Nathaniel at Protection of the Mother of God Church, Falls Church, VA. On March 25, 2012, he was ordained into the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Nathaniel at St. Dumitru Church, New York, NY and assigned Parish Priest of Three Hierarchs Church, Ridgewood NY.



Fr. Gabriel Alexe was born on September 21, 1971 in Calinesti-Arges, Romania to Gheorghe & Virginia Alexe. He is a graduate of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of Bucharest, in Bucharest (1995), the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at "Ovidius" University in Constanta (2004-Masters),

"Valahia" University in Targoviste (2011 - Doctorate). On January 25, 1998, he married Gabriela Silvia Stoleru. He was ordained into the Holy Diaconate on April 20, 2001 by Archbishop Teodosie of Tomis at "Dervent" Monastery, Baneasa-Constanta, Romania, and served at Sts. Peter & Paul Cathedral, Constanta (2001-2005) and Holy Transfiguration Church, Bucharest (2005-2011). He also worked on the national level for the protection of families and the rights of children and the handicapped. On October 22, 2011, he was ordained into the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Irineu at Sts. Peter & Paul Serbian Orthodox Church, utilized by the Holy Confessors of Transylvania Mission in Oakville, ON Canada. He is Parish Priest of Protection of the Mother of God Mission, Pierrefonds QC.



Fr. Florin Bica was born on June 14, 1974 in Fagaras, Romania to Gheorge & Cornelia Bica. He is a graduate of the Andrei Saguna Faculty of Theology in Sibiu, Romania (1997). He married Mariana Monica Cotocea in 1999. On December 26, 2012, he was ordained into the Holy Diaconate by Arch-

bishop Nathaniel at Dormition Monastery, Rives Junction MI. On January 6, 2013, he was ordained into the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Nathaniel at St. Mary Cathedral, Cleveland, OH and assigned Parish Priest of Holy Trinity Church, Youngstown OH.



Fr. Dn. Dan Chirtu was born on September 2, 1945 in Bucharest, Romania to Gheorghe & Alexandrina Chirtu. He is a graduate of the Polytechnic University in Bucharest from which he received a degree in Mechanical Engineering (1974). He married Teodora

Nicola in 1980 and immigrated to Canada in 1984. He worked as an engineer until 2007. He completed the Saint Stephen's Course of Studies in Orthodox Theology (2009), and received a Master of Arts in Applied Orthodox Theology from the Antiochian House of Studies / University of Balamand (2011). On June 26, 2011, he was ordained into the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Nathaniel at St. John the Baptist Church, Kitchener ON and assigned to Holy Cross Church, London ON.



Fr. Dan Hoarste was born on June 13, 1982 in Fagaras, Romania. His parents are Constantin-Florin & Cornelia-Mariana Gioiculeasa. He is a graduate of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA (2008) and is currently completing his Doctorate in Sacred Theology at the

Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, Italy. On September 29, 2012, he was ordained into the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Nathaniel at St. George Cathedral, Southfield MI. On December 23, 2012, he was ordained by Archbishop Nathaniel into the Holy Priesthood at Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Dearborn Heights MI. During the completion of his studies, he is attached to St. Mary Hierarchal Chapel, Grass Lake MI.



Fr. Florin Lapustea was born on April 16, 1984 in Negresti Oas, Romania to Rev. Fr. Constantin & Psa. Rodica Lapustea. The family immigrated to the United States in 1991. He completed his primary, secondary and college education in California, and is a graduate of the University of Oradea,

Dept. of Orthodox Theology (2012). He married Madalina Purcariu in 2007 and works as a roadway design engineer. On October 12, 2008, he was ordained by Bishop Iustin Sigheteanu (Hodea) into the Holy Diaconate at Holy Cross Church, San Jose CA. On September 17, 2012, he was ordained by Archbishop Nathaniel into the Holy Priesthood at Holy Cross Church, San Jose CA and attached to the parish.



Fr. John (Ilie Geani) Nemes was born on July 4, 1983 in Sibiu, Romania to Ilie & Rodica Nemes. He completed his primary, secondary and college education in Ohio, and is a graduate of Andrei Saguna Faculty of Theology in Sibiu, Romania (2009). He married Daniela Casianov in 2010. On January 30, 2011, he was ordained by Archbishop Nathaniel

into the Holy Diaconate at St. George Cathedral, Southfield MI for service there. On December 25, 2012, he was ordained by Archbishop Nathaniel into the Holy Priesthood at St. George Cathedral, Southfield MI. He is currently attached to St. Mary Hierarchal Chapel, Grass Lake MI awaiting assignment.



Fr. Dn. Ionel Satnoianu was born in Bucharest, Romania on November 29, 1979 to Stefan & Magdalena Satnoianu. He is a graduate of "Radu Voda" Theological Seminary in Bucharest (1994), where he was one of the founding members of "*Harisma*" male choir and a member of "*Te Deum Laudamus*" male choir, as well

as a member of two mixed choirs. From 1999-2000, he attended the Theological Institute "Justinian the Patriarch" in Bucharest, where he completed 1½ years and then interrupted his studies when he came to the U.S. in December 2000 with the "Harisma" male choir. In 2003, he was hired as a Religious Worker (Cantor) by St. Mary Romanian Orthodox Cathedral, Cleveland, OH and has served as a cantor since then. In 2006, he continued his theological studies at "Ovidius" University of Constanta, Romania as a distance learning student and graduated in 2009. In 2010, he was hired as an Administrative Secretary of St. Mary Cathedral, and in 2011 became a U.S. citizen. In 2012, he married Elisa Roxana Ilinca who holds a Bachelor degree in Romanian and English Literature and a Bachelor degree in Theology and Social Work. In Romania, she worked as a librarian for the Library of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Patriarchate. On January 6, 2013, he was ordained by Archbishop

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PRAY AND WORK FOR ORTHODOX UNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

HOLY SYNOD MEETS

WASHINGTON, DC [OCA] - The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America met in conjunction with the Enthronement of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon at Saint Nicholas Cathedral here January 26-27, 2013, and took the following actions:

- elected His Grace, Bishop Michael of New York and New Jersey to serve as Secretary of the Holy Synod.
- established the composition of the Lesser Synod of Bishops, which will include Metropolitan Tikhon; Bishop Michael, Secretary; Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; and Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West.
- heard the report of Archimandrite Alexander [Pihach] on the life of the OCA's Representation Church of the Great Martyr Catherine, Moscow, and his work as the OCA's recently appointed Representative to the Patriarch of Moscow.
- heard the report of Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky, OCA Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, on external affairs matters.
- reviewed various clergy matters and actions of mutual concern.

Of major importance, said OCA Secretary Father Eric Tosi, was the establishment of the new Department of Continuing Education as according to the recommendations of the Strategic Plan passed at the 16th All-American Council.

"The department will be responsible for coordinating continuing education programs for OCA clergy in the dioceses and establishing guidelines and requirements for all OCA clergy," Father Eric said. "Department members will work in conjunction with the OCA's dioceses, seminaries and other institutions in fulfilling the Holy Synod's mandate that every priest and deacon pursue 20 hours of continuing education each year—five hours of which will focus on professional and ethical issues, including sexual misconduct. Funds for this effort will be raised through various means in order to provide a self-funded program," Father Eric added. "Special emphasis will be given to developing and delivering programs in legal and ethical issues for clergy—especially with regard to clergy sexual misconduct—and leadership and management training for clergy and lay leaders." Additional details and information in this regard will be released in the near future.

Before adjourning, the members of the Holy Synod began establishing plans for their Spring Session, slated to convene in March 2013.

Nathaniel into the Holy Diaconate at St. Mary Cathedral, Cleveland OH for service there.

ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA – AN INTERCONNECTED AND SHARED HISTORY

Presentation given by Nicholas Chapman of Herkimer NY at the Orthodox Christian Laity 25th Anniversary Conference, Washington DC on Oct. 27, 2012

Introduction

The study of the history of Orthodoxy in America is still at a very early stage with a substantial amount of primary documentary materials as yet unread or undiscovered, in both English and other languages. The realms of archeology and oral history are even more virgin fields. The present circumstances of the Church in America make it increasingly important to get to grips with these sources. I believe a more complete understanding of our common heritage will help to forge a single present identity, that in turn can provide a foundation for wider efforts to bring an end to the canonical irregularities of Church governance that have arisen in North America and elsewhere in the past one hundred or more years.

The work that I have done to date suggests that we have a more interconnected and shared history than is commonly realized and that an awareness of this can help to foster a clearer single Orthodox identity. Such an identity would transcend the narrow categories of modern nationalistic philosophies that have impacted the life and mentality of all Orthodox churches to differing degrees since at least the early 19th century. In the short time available, I will present five themes of American Orthodox history....

1. The Genesis of Orthodoxy in the Americas

There has been some presence of Orthodox peoples in the Americas from the beginnings of European colonization following Columbus's first landing in 1492. Early Spanish historians place Greeks in Santa Domingo by 1500 AD and fighting with the conquistador Cortes in the capture of what is now Mexico City in 1521. The first person identified by Spanish records as a *Greek Christian* is Doroteo Teodora, a member of a Spanish exploration party on the Florida coast in 1528. The early French explorer Samuel de Champlain records two *Slavonians* in his party exploring what is now the coast of Maine at the end of the 16th century and he has a Greek as an interpreter with the native peoples of the St Lawrence Valley in the 1620's. Merchants, many of whom were associated with the London-based companies trading with Russia and the Ottoman Near-East, began the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown. These settlers compared Jamestown to Constantinople and referred to the Native Americans as *infidels* or *Turks*. Two of the Directors of the Virginia Company published works that include references and substantial sections on Orthodox faith and practice. These inter-

actions between Virginia, Muscovy and the Levant continued throughout the 17th century, fueled by economic and religious considerations. Thus, the Royal Governor Sir William Berkeley proposes importing workers from the Greek Morea in 1675, whilst his successor Lord Culpepper advocates for sending a delegation of Virginia planters to the Patriarch of Moscow in 1681. Ultimately, these connections between Virginia and centers of Orthodox life may be seen to culminate in the conversion to Orthodoxy of Colonel Philip Ludwell III of Virginia who was received into the Russian church in London in 1738, after travelling there for this purpose. To borrow a phrase from the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, "time does not permit me to tell" of many other early events prior to the transfer of Alaska to the United States in 1867. Suffice it to say that by 1865, the Orthodox presence in what is now the lower 48 had become substantial enough for St Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow to propose the creation of, in America, a Russian Orthodox Church. (It should be noted that at no time does Philaret include Alaska within his definition of America.)

Metropolitan Philaret notes the possible presence of as many as thirteen thousand Orthodox believers in America but suggests the primary motivation for establishing an ecclesiastical structure is *American spiritual leaders* who first showed the *desire to have an Orthodox Church in America*.... This is a reference to approaches to Moscow, from the Episcopalian diocese of California, whose Bishop in San Francisco reported the *presence of some four hundred persons belonging to the Greek Church who, while they recognized his authority up to a certain point, yet refused to receive communion from his hands*. Such developments in California and elsewhere led to an Episcopalian delegation visiting Moscow in 1864, headed by the Episcopalian Bishop of New York.

By 1866, a decision had been made to construct an Orthodox temple in New York City. A major fundraising event for this was held in Moscow in 1866 in conjunction with the visit to Russia of Gustavus Vasa Fox, the assistant secretary of the US Navy. At that banquet, the attorney to the Synodal board of Moscow spoke of the proposal to erect a Russian church in New York



Colonel Philip Ludwell III

City, for which ... a subscription in America had produced already seven thousand dollars.... Mr. Curtin expressed in the name of General Clay... the hope that the Russians would soon find, in coming to New York, an Orthodox church worthy of the Greek religion. Mr. Clay, he said, would subscribe 500 rubles, and Mr. Fox as much; and he believed that private subscriptions in New York would yet yield twenty five thousand more. He was certain, too, that twenty four thousand rubles, additional to the thousand given by Messrs. Clay and Fox, would be raised in Russia. These were substantial amounts of money, possibly millions in current dollars. I do not know what became of these monies; perhaps we are looking at the first question of financial accountability in American Orthodox history!

2. Orthodoxy as an aspect of American History

...Suffice it to say that the history of Orthodoxy in North America should first be studied within the wider context of the exploration and subjugation of the new world by the European powers and how their geopolitics were fueled by economic and religious considerations. These determine their interactions from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 through to the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917 and beyond. The impact on the emergence of Orthodox life in the United States of American independence, the Civil War, the concept of Manifest Destiny, the Cold War, changing immigration policy, etc. must be appraised. The internal situation of the Orthodox churches in the near East, Russia and the Balkans must be understood as it impinged upon their activities or lack of same in the United States. We also need to be aware of the growth of the Church in other parts of the West in the same period that interconnect with and often predate developments here.

3. The Crucial Role of Ordinary Believers

Until now, the history of Orthodox mission in North America has tended to focus almost exclusively on the clergy and monastics that arrived in Kodiak, Alaska in 1794. There is almost no recognition of the work that had already taken place before their arrival whereby devout but un-ordained Orthodox believers had brought Orthodoxy to the native peoples. One such person was Osip Prianishnikov, a merchant from Tobolsk in Siberia who by 1791 was fluent in the Kodiak, Aleut and Chugach Yupik languages. Combining this with his knowledge of church services, he was able to lead the native peoples in *morning services, hours and evening services*, even before the arrival of the missionary fathers. After their arrival, he became their translator and continued to fulfill the ministry of a reader.

Prianishnikov was not the only Russian to have taught the Alaskans prayer. John Ledyard of Connecticut, the great early explorer, records in his 1778 visit to Alaska that the *Russians assembled the Indi-*

ans in a very silent manner, and said prayers after the manner of the Greek Church....I could not but observe with what particular satisfaction the Indians performed their devoirs to God, through the medium of their little crucifixes, and with what pleasure they went through the multitude of ceremonies attendant on that sort of worship. This was 16 years before St Herman and his fellow laborers arrived!

In a similar vein, but very different cultural context, we have the aforementioned Colonel Philip Ludwell III who appears to have created an Orthodox prayer house in Williamsburg, Virginia in the 1740's and 50's and was able to commune from the pre-sanctified gifts that the Holy Synod of Russia had blessed him to take from London to Virginia in 1739. During this period, Ludwell would also translate the liturgies of St John Chrysostom and St Basil as well as the Orthodox Catechism of Metropolitan Peter Moghila of Kiev. The latter was published in London in 1762. He is an example in his life of Orthodox piety and philanthropy, and evidence points to some of his descendants continuing in the Faith until very recent times.

Some of these descendants quite probably played a part in the formation of an Orthodox prayer house in Galveston, Texas in the 1850's. Galveston had also been the home of George Fisher, a Serbian Orthodox seminary drop out who arrived in America in 1814. He ended his life in San Francisco in 1873, having served in the 1860's as the Greek consul and been one of the founders of the Holy Trinity parish in that city.

So the creation of Orthodox churches in America was much more the fruit of the devotion and labor of pious believers, both clergy and lay, than the result of some kind of hierarchical master plan formulated in Constantinople, Moscow or anywhere else!

4. Orthodoxy in America and the emergence of Evangelicalism

Time once again does not permit me to develop this theme, but I strongly believe there was a connection between early Orthodoxy in America and the Moravian, Methodist and Episcopal churches. The more contemporary phenomena of the Evangelical Orthodox Church actually has much deeper historical roots. The Moravians from their mid-15th century beginnings in the Czech lands until at least their arrival in America in the mid-18th century perceived themselves as an *orphaned Eastern church*. According to the *New York Gazette* of Jan 21, 1751, in petitioning the British authorities for permission to settle in America, they presented a *public writing from the chief Patriarch of the Greek Church, in 1740, acknowledging them to be descended from the Eastern Church.*

In a similar vein, the early Methodists looked east for ecclesiastical legitimacy. One of the reasons the young John Wesley was expelled from Savannah was

Cont. on page 16

IN MEMORY

PSA. BETTY LIMBESON



Preoteasa Elizabeth “Betty Jane” Limbeson, wife of the late Priest John Limbeson, fell asleep in the Lord in Irvine, CA on January 17, 2013. Betty Limbeson (nee Russ) was born in Cleveland, OH on August 12, 1925 to the late Vasily and Helen Russ, members of Saint Mary Romanian Orthodox Church. In 1946, she married John M. Limbeson, who after completing his military service as a World War II US Army officer,

was employed in the aerospace industry. They were the parents of a son, John Mitchell “Mitch,” and daughter, Merry Ann. Throughout her life, Betty loved raising funds for various Orthodox church projects and charities. One of her last efforts in this regard involved raising funds for the construction of the wall for the boy’s home in Guadalupe, Mexico, for Project Mexico. Eventually, Betty became known as and was called the “wall lady.” In 1980, her husband was ordained to the diaconate in the Romanian Episcopate by the late Archbishop Valerian and assigned to Los Angeles’ Holy Trinity Church. He also assisted at St. Luke Antiochian Orthodox Church, Garden Grove, CA. After his ordination to the priesthood by Bishop [now Archbishop] Nathaniel in 1985, the Limbesons were founders of St. Anne Church in nearby Pomona, CA, where Preoteasa Betty eagerly became a full partner to Fr. John in serving the Church. After a few years at Saint Anne’s, Fr. John was assigned as parish priest of Saints Constantine and Helen Church, Indianapolis, IN where Preoteasa Betty served as godmother and sponsor to many who were baptized into the Church. She accepted this responsibility with great love and adored her new godchildren. After Fr. John’s retirement in 1997, the Limbesons relocated to Laguna Woods, CA. Preoteasa Betty relocated to northern California after Fr. John’s repose on August 19, 2005. In time, she moved to the St. John of Kronstadt Care Center, Castro Valley, CA, operated by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. At the center, she quickly became part of the “family,” making daily visits to other residents, many of whom were alone. She was deeply loved, and she returned the love by always doing what she could to bring happiness to others and attending the center’s twice-monthly Liturgies, at which she always received Holy Communion. Five days before her repose, she received the Holy Gifts for the last time. Two days before entering eternal life, she received Holy Unction, celebrated by Archpriest Stefan Pavlenko, Burlingame, CA, and Priests Peter Salmas and John Kocolas, Belmont, CA.

In addition to Fr. John and her parents, Preoteasa Betty was predeceased by her sister and brother, Violet and Ozzie. She is survived by her beloved children, John “Mitch” [Kathy] and Merry Ann [Serge] Lukianoff; three grandchildren, Natalie Loukianoff, Kati [Victor] Sarbu, and Alisha; and great grandchildren Lily-Ana and Christian Sarbu. Funeral services were celebrated at St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church, Irvine, CA on January 23. Interment took place on January 26 at Holy Transfiguration Monastery Cemetery, Ellwood City, PA, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Memory eternal!

PSA. VICTORIA MOLDOVAN



Preoteasa Victoria Moldovan

fell asleep in the Lord on January 18, 2013 in Jameson Care Center, New Castle, PA at the age of 99. Victoria Moldovan (nee Bertza) was born June 8, 1913 in East Chicago, Indiana, the daughter of John and Ana Bertza. She was a 1931 graduate of East Chicago High School. She earned her B.S. from Westminster College, West

Middlesex where she majored in Religion, History, and English. She also earned her Master’s degree in Education from Westminster. She retired in 1978 from the Farrell Area School District where she was a teacher for 32 years. She was a member of Holy Cross Orthodox Church, Hermitage PA, where her husband, Rev. Fr. Nicolae Moldovan, was the priest for many years. She was a member of the church’s ladies auxiliary and served as director of the Church Choir and its Sunday school. She was a teacher at the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (ROEA) summer church camp in Grass Lake MI and wrote for the SOLIA newspaper. She was a loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother who will be dearly missed by all who loved her. Her husband whom she married in Romania on July 23, 1933, passed away on April 18, 1989. In addition to her parents and her husband, she was preceded in death by her son-in-law Robert Price. She is survived by two daughters, Adela Price, of New Castle, PA and Mariana McMullen and her husband Walter, of Palos Verdes Estates, California; three grandchildren, Robert N. Price and his wife Terri, of New Castle, PA, Nicolene McMullen, of San Francisco, CA and Kerry Mikkelsen and her husband Lon, of Hood River, OR; four great grandchildren, Victoria Price, Robert Price and Terra and Finn Mikkelsen; one brother, Emil Bertza and a nephew, John Bertza both of Las Vegas, NV. The Funeral Service took place on January 21, 2012 at Holy Cross Church, Hermitage officiated by Rev. Dr. Calinic Berger with His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel in attendance. Psa. Moldovan was interred in St. John’s Cemetery in Hermitage. Memory eternal!

THE MYSTERY AND THE PROCESS OF DEATH

An interview with Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and St. Vlassios by Pavel Chirila, Professor and Doctor at St Irene's Hospital in Bucharest (Romania).

1. Question: Tell us something about death, something that comes spontaneously to you, something you consider extremely important.

Answer: What comes spontaneously to mind is that death is a terrible mystery, as we chant in the Funeral Service, which is a poem by St. John Damascene. This is related to the fact that the soul is violently detached from the harmony of its union with the body. It is also a sad event, because it is related to man's corruptibility and mortality which is manifested in all life.

In addition, it brings to my memory the Service of the Resurrection of Christ, which we Orthodox celebrate with splendor. We hold lit candles in our hands and sing triumphantly the hymn of victory: "Christ is risen from the dead, by death He has trampled down death, and on those in the tombs He has bestowed life". This beautiful image shows our attitude towards life and death. We are corruptible and mortal, but we possess the "medicine of immortality", which is the resurrected Christ. Employing modern terminology, we may say that by the incarnation of the Son and the union of humanity with the divine nature in the person of the Logos, a "spiritual cloning" has taken place; our mortal nature has been united with the life of God. This is why death has changed its name and is now called "dormition" (falling asleep), and the places where the departed ones are buried are called "cemeteries" ("dormitories" in Greek, where people sleep), not burial grounds.

So, when I see people holding a lit candle and chanting "Christ is Risen" on the night of the Resurrection of Christ, I understand better that we should regard death as a process of passing from the "land of Egypt" to the "land of Promise", from death to life, which takes place in Christ, and as a hope for our resurrection which again takes place in Christ. It would be very fortunate if we were to anticipate death in this position, holding the candle of the Resurrection and chanting "Christ is Risen". After all, we are "strangers and pilgrims" in this life; our true country is elsewhere. I am always impressed by the words of St. Nicholas Cabasilas (14th century), that while we live here on earth we are like an embryo in our mother's womb, and at the moment of death we are born, we get



Metropolitan Hierotheos

out of that womb. This is why in the Orthodox Church the saints are celebrated on the day of their dormition or their martyrdom, not on the day of their physical birth.

2. Question: We understand from Holy Scripture that there are two kinds of fear: a holy fear, which is fear of God and the beginning of wisdom according to the psalmist, and another kind of fear inspired by demons, which is pathological fear. To what category does the fear of death belong?

Answer: Indeed, there is a fear of God which is an energy of the grace of God and the beginning of salvation, that is, man fears/respects God and starts obeying His commandments; and there is a fear inspired by demons which causes anxiety and anguish. However, besides these two fears there is also another fear, so-called psychological fear, which is related to a person's insecurity and emotional inadequacy.

The fear of death means something different for each person. For secular and atheist people it is related to the course to "nothingness"; that is, they think that they leave the only existing world and end up in the nothingness of non-existence. This is something that does not exist for us Orthodox. For Christians, the fear of death is related to the soul's departure from the world they know, their friends and relatives, and its entry into another world they do not know yet. They do not know how they are going to live, what will happen with God's judgment which follows death. This is why hope and proper preparation is needed.

Of course, those Christians who have reached the illumination of the "nous" [the perceptive mind where we can sense or perceive the presence of God] and deification and have been united with Christ transcend the fear of death, as exemplified by the life of the Apostles, the Martyrs and in general the Saints of the Church. In reading the Synaxaria, we see phrases like: "On this day saint (so and so) is perfected in peace" or "is perfected by the sword", etc. It has to be underlined that in Greek the verb "teleioutai" means "is perfected", is led to perfection, and differs from the verb "teleionei", which means "ceases to exist". We may also say that the life of the senses ("vios") is terminated by death, while life ("zoe") is perfected but not terminated.

What is important is that, with the spiritual life we live, we should defeat the fear of death and feel death as a path towards an encounter with Christ, the Panagia [All-holy Birthgiver of God] and the saints.

3. Question: We know from the Holy Tradition that at a person's death angels, saints as well as demons are present. What can you tell us about this?

Answer: From the teaching of Christ and the whole tradition of the Church we know that both angels and demons exist, and they are not personifications of

good or evil, but individual beings created by God. Demons were angels who lost communion with God. Many saints proved worthy to see angels, as well as demons of temptation, while in this life.

According to the teaching of our Fathers, angels and saints, often even Christ and the Panagia, appear to those about to die in order to support them, to strengthen them to avoid the fear caused by death. The demons also appear, especially when they are able to influence certain people because of their passions, and they demand power over their souls. We are reminded of this in the prayer to the Panagia in the service of the Compline (“Apodeipnon”): “At the hour of my death, care for my miserable soul and drive the dark faces of evil spirits far from it”.

From the teaching of the Church it is well known that each person has a “guardian angel” protecting him, and this is why there is a special prayer to the guardian angel in the service of the Apodeipnon. Fr. Paisios, a monk on the Holy Mountain, used to tell me that he would often see his guardian angel beside him and embrace him. He used to say that we must strive to reach salvation, so that our guardian angel, who has been to so many pains to protect us and help us in our life, may not go empty-handed to God, if we are not saved due to our indifference.

I remember with emotion that my father, when he entered the church, would go to the northern gate of the Holy Altar and kiss the icon of Archangel Michael and ask him to receive his soul in due time, when he had repented, protect it from evil demons, and lead it to God. Perhaps this prayer, among everything else, helped him have a good dormition and a happy, smiling face in the coffin.

4. Question: *We read in Holy Scripture that mercy has exceeded judgment. Does this mean that almsgiving absolves a multitude of sins?*

Answer: We have to see what mercy means. In reality, mercy is the feeling of divine grace, the love of God. When we pray saying “Lord have mercy”, we ask God’s mercy, God’s grace. He who experiences divine grace is generous to his brothers with all sorts of charity, expressed by prayer, theological words, material contributions, and thus puts into practice the beatitude “blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy” (Matthew 5:7). In this sense, it can be said that the feeling of God’s mercy and almsgiving transcends judgment.

He who has been transformed spiritually and has been united with God does not fear judgment, for what Christ said applies to him: “I tell you the solemn truth, the one who hears My message and believes the One who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned, but has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24).

According to the teaching of the Fathers of the Church, there are three judgments. The first occurs throughout our life, when we are faced with the di-

lemma of whether to follow the will of God or to reject it, when we have to choose between a good and an evil thought. The second judgment takes place when the soul exits the body, according to St. Paul’s words “people are appointed to die once, and then to face judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). The third and final judgment will be at the Second Coming of Christ. The first judgment is important.

St. Symeon the New Theologian says that, when a person is united with Christ in this life and sees the Uncreated Light, then the judgment has already taken place for him and he does not wait for it at the Second Coming of Christ. This reminds us of the words of Christ I mentioned above.

At this point I would like to repeat the saying by St. Basil the Great and other Fathers of the Church that there are three categories of those who are saved, that is, *the slaves* who follow the will of God in order to avoid hell, *the wage-earners* who struggle to earn Paradise as a reward, and *the sons* who obey God’s will out of love for God. So, throughout our life we must advance spiritually and pass from the state of the slave to the state of the wage-earner and from there to the mentality of the son. This means to pass from fear and recompense to love. To love Christ, because He is our father, our mother, our friend, our brother, our bridegroom and our bride. This way we transcend the judgment.

5. Question: *Tell us something about sudden death.*

Answer: The assessment of sudden death depends on each one’s viewpoint. For secular people, sudden death is good, accepted and desirable, because they will not suffer and they will not be tormented by illnesses and old age. For believing Christians, though, sudden death is bad, because they are not given the possibility to prepare better for their encounter with Christ and the heavenly Church. When someone visits a high-ranking official, he prepares accordingly. We should do the same with respect to our encounter with Christ.

Preparation, by repentance, is essential. This is why Father Paisios of everlasting memory used to say that cancer is a saintly illness because it has filled Paradise with saints, meaning that a long illness prepares people with prayer and repentance. According to the teaching of St. Maximus the Confessor, pain cures pleasure.

In any case, death is the most certain event. We see it around us, everything dies, all living creatures, our friends, our relatives. What is not certain and is unknown to us is the hour of death, when death will come. It may happen while sleeping, while walking, while travelling, while working, while entertaining ourselves, etc. This is why we should pray to God daily, as the Church does: “For the completion of our lives in peace and repentance, let us ask the Lord” and “For a Christian end to our lives, peaceful, without shame and suffering, and for a good account before the awesome judgment seat of Christ, let us ask the

Lord”.

In the teaching of the holy Fathers, we come across the truth that one of the greatest gifts a person can have is the daily “memory of death”. When this is maintained with the grace of God, it leads man not to despair, hopelessness, or psychological fear, but to inspiration, to prayer, creativity, even in human affairs, because he tries to finish his tasks and prepare properly. When we live each day as if it were the last day in our life, then even sudden death will find us ready.

6. Question: *Which is the correct expression: “the hour of death” or “the moment of death”?*

Answer: This depends on how one interprets the words “hour” and “moment”. In speech we often use the word “hour” meaning the moment. But I understand that your question refers to whether death is a process or a moment.

What can be said is that there is a process of death, that is, long illnesses lead man gradually to death, but the separation of soul and body takes place at a specific moment by the will of God.

This moment is important, because man’s mode of existence changes, and we cannot know how it will be from then on. We know the state where the soul is attached to our body, which communicates with the creation through the senses. We do not know by experience what is going to happen then and how we will be. At present we usually see the world created by God, people, friends, the beauty of earth, not angels and demons. Then, however, the soul will not see through the senses of the body but will see what is presently invisible. This is why the saints want to be conscious and pray during the process of death, in order to leave this world with prayer and to have the strength and grace of God accompanying them.

We have to say that the privilege of being able to pray during these hours and receive communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, in order to be surrounded by the grace of God when the soul leaves the body, is eliminated in our days with so-called life support equipment in Intensive Care Units. From a Christian viewpoint, the hour and moment of death requires an appropriate preparation, that is, Confession, Holy Communion, Holy Unction, prayer by family and friends, our own prayer. However, in Intensive Care Units, it is impossible to such an ecclesial-pastoral ministry. Thus, because of existing modern techniques and drugs, in our days more and more people die not being conscious of what goes on at that hour and moment. This is an important problem. Modern medical methods pose a dilemma: “Prolongation of life or obstruction of death?”. With everything that is offered by medical science the question is: is our life prolonged so that we repent and devote it to God or is death obstructed, which creates a lot of pain, physical and existential?

In any case, it is a great blessing from God for

someone to die surrounded by his beloved ones who pray and, above all, to die living in the Church, with Holy Communion, prayer, the blessing of his Spiritual Father, the grace of God and the prayers of the saints. Our permanent wish should be a death like the one depicted in the icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos, with her in the middle surrounded by the love of Christ, the Apostles, the Hierarchs.

7. Question: *Some people die unexpectedly. Is it true that God takes someone when his probability of salvation is at the maximum?*

Answer: We Christians absolutely believe that we have been created by the God of love and that God directs our life, He gives life to us and He takes it when He considers it to be the right moment. We also know that God loves man whom He created and wants his salvation. Therefore, it is certain that God allows each man’s death to occur at the most appropriate moment.

Of course, God’s love does not abolish the freedom of man. Man has the ability to act positively or negatively, to respond to the love of God or to reject Him.

Since you said that some people die unexpectedly, I would like to remind you, that we should remember death continuously. We should not feel that we are going to live eternally on earth, because this is a spiritual sickness. There is an alternation between life and death, similar to the alternation between day and night. Modern molecular biology stresses that death is inextricably linked with life, because among the genes there are the genes of aging, which are found in the mitochondria. So, from the moment of our conception, death exists in the DNA, and we see death in our body with the death of cells and, generally, with aging, the passing of years, wrinkles, illnesses, everything which theologically is called corruptibility and mortality. We should not be myopic and behave like an ostrich.

In this process we should know that God did not create us to die, that death is a consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve, and that God loves us and cares for us. He is our affectionate father. It is not correct on the one hand to pray with the “Lord’s Prayer”, the well-known “Our Father”, and call God “Father”, and on the other hand to live as orphans.

8. Question: *The Orthodox faith attaches particular importance to repentance. We thank the Lord for giving repentance to us. Can repentance at the time of death be so great that a man is saved, even though he is burdened by great sins?*

Answer: In our Orthodox Tradition, it is known that sin is not something moralistic; it is ontologically something, namely, the course from life according to nature to life contrary to nature. Thus, repentance is man’s return from life contrary to nature to life according to nature. With sin, man lost his communion with God, with his brother and with the creation. With repentance, he acquires this communion once again.

So, repentance is associated with a progression in man's liberation from everything enslaving him. The Fathers described this progression in three words: purification, illumination, deification, and this is what is called *therapy*. This happens throughout life. Therefore, salvation is related to therapy. The physician of the body examines us, makes a diagnosis and recommends an appropriate therapeutic method which we should apply. The same holds true for the illness of the soul.

A confession at the time of death opens for man the way to salvation. If he did not have time to be cured spiritually, then the Church with its prayers helps man to salvation, bearing in mind that perfection is endless, it is a dynamic not a static state.

Throughout our life we must have this "spirit of repentance". We should consider how we were created by God and the point we have reached because of sin. If we read carefully the book of Genesis, according to the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, and see how Adam and Eve lived and what they became afterwards because of sin, then repentance will develop inside us.

So, someone who has the "spirit" of repentance throughout his life feels this repentance at the hour of death, and actually he feels it to a great degree. On the contrary, when he lives his life without repentance it is difficult to show repentance at the last moment.

My Geronda [spiritual father], of everlasting memory, the Metropolitan of Edessa Kallinikos, lived continuously with the memory of death. When he was told by the doctors that he has a tumor in the brain, he confessed right away, he wrote his will, he prayed and had absolute faith in God, saying: "Perhaps God said to me 'stop'. I don't need you any more". He would pray continuously saying "your will be done". He gave himself up to God and had a peaceful and saintly end, similar to his whole life.

Therefore, even though there is a possibility for someone who had some spark of love for God in him to repent at the hour of death, we should repent when we are healthy, so as to have the ability to be cured, that is, to proceed from self-love to the love of God and love of men, to reach selfless love out of selfish love.

9. Question: *After man's death, what are the links between the soul and this world?*

Answer: Although the soul is separated from the body, man's hypostasis [personality] still exists. As we see in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the rich man is conscious of his state, of his relatives who are still alive, and he cares for them. Thus, after death, men care for their beloved ones and ask God for their salvation. All our prayers to the saints are based on this truth. Of course, this link between the soul and living persons is spiritual, not material.

In the book of the Revelation of St. John which describes the celestial Divine Liturgy, one can see

these relations of the saints with us and their prayer for all people living on earth. This is why our Fathers depicted in the Divine Liturgy this uncreated Divine Liturgy which takes place in the Heavens, in the uncreated Temple. In the Divine Liturgy we live the atmosphere of the heavenly Liturgy, and we anticipate it.

We ourselves often feel the love and protection of the saints, as well as of those close to us who have departed from this world, and wish to meet them. A spiritual child of mine was very happy at the hour of death, because, as she said, she would meet this heavenly Church.

Therefore, the soul continues to live after its exit from the body; it is not led to non-existence. If a person lived in repentance during his life, then his soul after exiting the body will enter this heavenly Divine Liturgy and will pray, like a spiritual priest, for the whole world, and will wait for the resurrection of the body. Then the soul will enter the body so that the body too participates in this heavenly Pascha celebration.

10. Question: *What advice should we give to those close to us regarding our attitude to a person about to die on the day, or at the hour or at the moment of death?*

Answer: The process of death is very important for each man, because in front of him is the road to salvation or the road to eternal perdition. Unfortunately, in these circumstances, many people look only after the physical health of their relatives and friends without regard for their eternal course. This is why we should take care that a person who is about to die confesses, receives Holy Communion, receives the grace of God through the Sacrament of Unction and does everything that our Church has available. In particular, we should live the last moments of the life of our beloved one in prayer. We should consider not simply that we are losing our relative, our friend, but that he is moving from one way of existence (with body and senses) to a different way of existence, without body. So, intense prayer is what is needed at that time.

I remember the last moments of my Geronda. I was beside his bed and could not offer anything else; I just prayed to God for his soul to be received by angels. An aunt of mine who was present thought that I was sad, as I concentrated and prayed. But I was just praying, because that moment is holy and crucial.

Overall, we must experience daily, as St. John Chrysostom says, that the present life is an "inn". We entered this inn, we live, but we must take care to depart in good hope, without leaving anything here in order not to lose what is there. Furthermore, all of us Christians should realize that death has been defeated by the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ, that communion with Christ is a continuous transcendence of

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SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE (ROEA)

We hope to honor the ARFORA/AROY Scholarship recipients in person at this year's Family Life/All-Auxiliaries Conference at the Vatra (July 4-7, 2013).

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The A.R.F.O.R.A./Martha Gavrila Scholarship for Women is offered to women in post-graduate studies. It was established in memory of Mrs. Martha Gavrila, long-time president of A.R.F.O.R.A. who worked tirelessly for the Episcopate and Vatra Romaneasca. The first scholarship was awarded at the 1985 A.R.F.O.R.A. Congress held at St. Mary Church in Chicago, Illinois. The sum of \$1000.00 may be awarded annually to a selected student. **DEADLINE: MAY 10, 2013.** Go to <http://roea.org/arforagavrila.html> to download the Application Form & Requirements.

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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: (a) be an active member of their church community – partaking in services, showing themselves to be a leader and an example among peers in their parish's young religious community, (b) a graduate of high school, (c) college student, or one who intends to enroll in a school or college of university level, (d) not be a previous Stanitz Scholarship recipient. **DEADLINE: JUNE 1, 2013.** Go to <http://roea.org/stanitzaroy.html> for application requirements.

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The Pamfil and Maria Bujea Seminarian Scholarship is a \$10,000 scholarship given once only to a male or female Canadian or American Orthodox Christian citizen studying with the intention of serving, for a given period of time, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America in Canada. The time to be served is at the discretion of the ruling hierarchy. The number of scholarships awarded to qualified students is determined by the committee. The scholarship is given directly to the School of Theology at the beginning of the recipient's second year of continued theological studies. **To be considered for the Autumn-Winter Term, a fully completed application must be post-marked on or before May 31, 2013. Applicants may obtain requirements from <http://www.roea.org/bujea.html>.**

The Mystery ... *Cont. from page 12*

death and of the fear of death, that the exit of the soul from the body is a course towards the heavenly Church and the encounter with Christ, the Panagia and the saints, that the soul will return to the body, and the body will be resurrected and live eternally, according to the way it lived on this earth.

St. Maximus the Confessor writes that from the moment of death, and especially after the Last Judgment, there are two possibilities: those who are in communion with Christ will live in "eternal well-being" and the rest in "eternal woeful being". So, everyone will enjoy "eternal being". The difference is between "well" and "woeful".

Therefore, our advice to the relatives and friends of those about to die is to have faith in Christ and confidence that we are not just citizens of this world, but we are travelers guided to our true country, which is heaven. Our citizenship is above in heaven. The desire for the heavenly land should overwhelm us.

Source: MYSTAGOGY (johnsanidopoulos.com), July 23, 2010.

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Holy Cross , Hermitage, PA (Hierarch Travel)	\$250.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit , Merrillville, IN (Hierarch Travel)	\$200.00
Gail Morgavan , Valparaiso, IN (Hierarch Travel)	\$100.00
George & Ana Mohan , Brunswick, OH	\$60.00
Cecilia Teodorescu , New York, NY	\$60.00
Florence Westerfield , Warren, MI	\$30.00
Helen & Nick Burz , Royal Oak, MI	\$25.00
Drs Marius & Alis Vidinas , Bloomfield, MI	\$25.00

EPISCOPATE ASSESSMENT (2012)

Descent of the Holy Spirit , Warren, MI	\$7,880.00
Protection of the Mother of God Mission , Ft Qu'Appelle, SK	\$280.00

EPISCOPATE ASSESSMENT (2013)

St Mary Cathedral , Cleveland, OH	\$25,020.00
St Mary , Chicago, IL	\$21,480.00
Sts Peter & Paul , Dearborn Hts, MI	\$20,040.00
Holy Trinity , Miramar, FL	\$13,980.00
St Dimitrie , Easton, CT	\$13,800.00
St Dumitru , New York, NY	\$11,760.00
Holy Trinity , Los Angeles, CA	\$10,808.00
Protection of the Mother of God , Falls Church, VA	\$10,740.00
St Mary , Anaheim, CA	\$10,560.00
Three Hierarchs , Bellevue, WA	\$9,240.00
St George , Toronto, ON	\$8,220.00
St Mary , Dallas, TX	\$6,060.00
Holy Cross , Alexandria, VA	\$5,400.00
St Mary , St Paul, MN	\$5,400.00
Holy Cross , Hermitage, PA	\$4,340.00
St Mary , Portland, OR	\$3,960.00
St John , Glendale, AZ	\$3,900.00
St Nicholas , Regina, SK	\$3,900.00
Sts Michael & Gabriel , Middle Village, NY ...	\$3,720.00
St Anne , Jacksonville, FL	\$3,060.00
Holy Cross , San Jose, CA	\$3,060.00
St Joseph of Maramures , Hazleton, PA	\$3,060.00
St Raphael , Detroit, MI	\$2,880.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit , Merrillville, IN	\$2,820.00
St Elias , Ellwood City, PA	\$2,820.00

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WORLD CHURCH NEWS

New Patriarch elected for Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East

Source: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America / Dec. 17, 2012

On December 17, 2012, during a special session held at the Balamand Patriarchal Monastery of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Holy Synod of the Church of Antioch elected Metropolitan Youhanna X [John] (Yaziji), Archbishop of Western and Central Europe, to be Patriarch of Antioch and all the East as successor to the newly-departed Patriarch Ignatius IV (Hazim), who fell asleep in the Lord in early December. Patriarch John X was born in 1955 in the city of Latakia, Syria into a pious Orthodox home. His father was Syrian and was a professor of Arabic Language. His mother is Lebanese. He has four brothers, with his brother Paul being the current Metropolitan of Aleppo, and he has one sister who is a nun. During his early studies, he played a key role in the leadership of Orthodox youth, and organized many choirs to sing in the local churches. He received his primary, secondary and university education in Latakia, Syria graduating with a degree in civil engineering. He earned a degree in theology in 1978 from the St. John of Damascus School of Orthodox of Theology at the Balamand University and a doctorate in theology (emphases in Liturgy and Byzantine Music) in 1983 from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece. He was tonsured a monk at the Athonite Monastery of St. Paul on the Holy Mountain, was ordained to the holy diaconate in 1979 and to the holy priesthood in 1983, and in 1981 became professor of Liturgical Studies at the St. John of Damascus School of Orthodox Theology at the Balamand University. He assumed the position of dean of that theological school from 1988-1991 and again from 2001-2005. He was elected and consecrated to the sacred episcopacy in 1995 with the title Bishop of al-Hosn. He has served as superior of the Monastery of St. George al-Humayrah in the Christian Valley (Wadi al-Nasara) in Syria, superior of the Our Lady of Balamand Monastery, and spiritual father to the Convent of the Dormition in Blemmana, Syria. In 2008, he was elected and enthroned as the Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Western and Central Europe. The newly-elected Patriarch has had strong influence in the Middle East and other areas, having participated in many international Orthodox and ecumenical conferences in countries such as Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Cyprus, Russia and Great Britain. His love of music has led him to translate many selections of liturgical music. He is the author of a work on the principles of Byzantine Music which he first wrote in 1990, with a second edition having been published in 2001. In 1999, he lectured at the Balamand University

on the subject of the contribution of the Church of Antioch to liturgical development in the 6th and 7th centuries. He has written scholarly works on the life of St. Nektarios the Wonderworker, the role of marriage in the life of Orthodox clergy, the life of St. Macrina, St. Gregory Nazianzus, and a comprehensive work on the life of the saints published in 1984. In 2002, he lectured at Oxford University on the topic of the Church in the Middle East, and also at the biennial Clergy Symposium for the Archdiocese of North America.

Romanian NGOs ask for end of state financing for religious groups

Source: Romania-Insider.com / Feb. 6, 2013

Over 20 NGOs have asked the Romanian Parliament to put an end to financing religious groups to the tune of EUR 540 million every year. The funds – around 0.4 percent of the country's GDP – should be directed to education, research and health. ...“In a secular state like Romania it is not normal to have hundreds of millions of euros taken away from state, local and central authorities and from the country's real needs, to the benefit of religious groups. These are private organizations and should be self-financed using the believers' volunteer contributions,” the NGOs write in the letter. The 23 NGOs include ActiveWatch, Centre for Advanced Research in Management and Applied Ethics, The Resource Center for Public Participation (CeRe), among others. There are 17 recognized religious groups in Romania, which include the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformed – Calvin Church – protestant, the Pentecostal Church, Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mosaic cult, the Armenian Church, among others. According to the European Court of Human Rights, state funding for religious groups does not represent a violation of the conscience freedom of the tax payer. Countries such as France, Ireland and The Netherlands do not offer subventions to any religious group, nor cover the salaries of the clergy. But in most European countries, the state covers the financing for the Church, in one way or another, according to a report from Apador CH. In Austria and Germany, the state allows religious groups to impose a certain tax on believers, and in order to avoid this tax, many believers formally dropped out. In Romania, for a religious group to be recognized, it needs to be legally set up, be active in Romania for at least 12 years and its members – Romanian citizens – need to be at least 0.1 percent of Romania's population according to the latest census. Other religious associations exist in Romania, but are not recognized by the state. The 2011 census showed that out of Romania's 19 million in-

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Orthodoxy ... *Cont. from page 7*

for celebrating the liturgy of St John Chrysostom when it was not an authorized rite of the Church of England. A later 18th century American source says that Wesley, with the encouragement of his Moravian friends, travelled to Constantinople in the 1780's and was ordained a Bishop by the Patriarch.

At the same time, the then dominant Anglican Church in America looked to the Church of Russia as its model in its achievement of its independence from Constantinople, when considering its own distinctiveness from the Church of England. Following independence from Britain, the American Episcopal Church obtained its first resident Bishop in the person of Samuel Seabury of Connecticut. He was ordained Bishop in Scotland by Bishops of the non-juror tradition whose early 18th century antecedents had actively negotiated for acceptance as an Orthodox Church. Seabury brought to America forms of liturgical office based on the Scottish Book of Common Prayer. His *Communion Office*, published in New London in 1786, contains an explicit epiclesis or prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit on the gifts after the words of institution, following the Orthodox tradition. This tendency of the Episcopal Church in America towards Orthodoxy came to a head in the 1860's with the formation of the Russo-Greek Committee that actively sought union with the Orthodox East.

5. Orthodoxy, Democracy and the Emergence of Nationalism

In a major speech before the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut in 1783, the seventh President of Yale, Dr. Ezra Stiles, suggests that the Orthodox Church may offer a model of religious tolerance for the nascent American republic. He said:

The United States will embosom all the religious sects or denominations in Christendom... (He then enumerates all the Christian churches he knows to be present in America, including a Greek church.) All religious denominations will be independent of one another, as much as the Greek and Armenian patriarchates in the East; and having, on account of religion, no superiority as to secular powers and civil immunities, they will cohabit together in harmony, and, I hope, with a most generous catholicism and benevolence.

A few years later in Paris, France, the Orthodox believer and first naturalized US citizen, John Paradise, introduced Thomas Jefferson to Adamantios Koreas, one of the fathers of the modern Greek nation and language. After their meeting, Jefferson and Koreas corresponded for many years regarding the understanding of liberty, democracy etc. Koreas was also a graduate of the Orthodox-founded *Evangelical Greek School* in Smyrna where he studied alongside his contemporary, the future St. Nikodemos of the Holy

Mountain. Perhaps these two could be said to typify two polarities of the contemporary Greek church in America....

Another renowned early American philosopher was Benjamin Franklin who corresponded frequently with the early Russian enlightenment thinker and Orthodox churchman Mikhail Lomonosov. It was Franklin who arranged for John Paradise to gain American citizenship, and the latter in turn corresponded with Eugenios Voulgaris, the Corfu-born Bulgarian who went on to become the Archbishop of Cherson in the Russian church and is remembered with the epithet "Teacher of the Nations." Thus, the Orthodox enlightenment in Greece and Russia is seen to interact with some of the founding fathers of the American republic.

Conclusion

Our Orthodox past is not isolated from the mainstream of American history but interwoven with it. Within this past, we have both saints and philosophers. The time has come to begin building upon the foundation they have laid through their prayers, writings and actions. This must be done in a spirit of charity and mutual respect whilst understanding our God-given calling to pass on *the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints* (Jude 1:3).

Nicholas Chapman, Director of Holy Trinity Publications in Jordanville, NY, is a regular OrthodoxHistory.org contributor who has single-handedly rewritten our understanding of early Orthodoxy in America, and hosts a podcast on Ancient Faith Radio called Speaking of Books.

Originally posted on ocl.org on Nov. 15, 2012.

Financial Report *Cont. from page 14*

Holy Resurrection , Warren, OH	\$2,700.00
Sts Michael & Gabriel , Apopka, FL	\$2,580.00
Sts Michael & Gabriel , Palm Springs, CA	\$2,340.00
Annunciation , Grand Rapids, MI	\$1,860.00
Holy Cross Mission , Phoenix, AZ	\$1,650.00
St Anne , Pomona, CA	\$1,560.00
St Elias Mission , Thornhill, ON	\$1,290.00
Holy Transfiguration Mission , West Hartford, CT	\$990.00
St Stephen Mission , St Petersburg, FL	\$900.00
St Andrew Mission , Brooksville, FL	\$390.00

DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS

St Athanasius the Great Mission , Naperville, IL	\$630.00
St John Ladies Auxiliary , Woonsocket, RI	\$150.00

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HIERARCHAL SCHEDULE

HIS EMINENCE, ARCHBISHOP NATHANIEL

December 6, 2012 – January 31, 2013

December 6. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas feast day.

December 9. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Memorial Service for Patriarch Ignatius.

December 12-14. Aurora, IL. St. Athanasios Greek Orthodox Church. Funeral Services for Helen Boytor.

December 16. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 23. Dearborn Heights, MI. Sts. Peter & Paul. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Ordination of Deacon Dan Hoarste into the Holy Priesthood. Lunch. Christmas program.

December 24. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Eve of Birth of Christ. Royal Hours. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Great Compline.

December 25. Southfield, MI. St. George Cathedral. Birth of Christ. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Ordination of Deacon John (Ilie Geani) Nemes into the Holy Priesthood. Reception.

December 26. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Synaxis of Birthgiver of God. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Ordination of Florin Bica into the Holy Diaconate. Lunch. Christmas carols.

December 27. Clinton, MI. Ascension Monastery. St. Stephen, Apostle, First Martyr and Archdeacon. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy concelebrated with Bishop Irineu. Lunch.

December 30. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

January 1. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

January 5-6. Cleveland, OH. St. Mary Cathedral. Saturday: Great Vespers. **Sunday:** Blessing of Readers: Ovidiu Vatamanu & Ionel Satnoianu. Blessing of Subdeacon: Ionel Satnoianu. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Ordination of Subdeacon Ionel Satnoianu into the Holy Diaconate. Ordination of Deacon Florin Bica into the Holy Priesthood. Great Blessing of Waters. Lunch.

January 12-13. Merrillville, IN. Descent of Holy Spirit. Saturday: Great Vespers & Reception. **Sunday:** Blessing of Subdeacon: Reader George Ross. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Blessing of Pantocrator icon. Banquet.

January 19-21. Hermitage, PA. Holy Cross. Saturday: Great Vespers. **Sunday:** Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Wake Service for Psa. Victoria Moldovan. **Monday:** Funeral & Burial Services for Psa. Victoria Moldovan.

January 22. Dearborn, MI. St. Clement Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Liturgy. Trisagion. Burial of V. Rev. Fr. Panayot Pamukov.

January 24-28. Washington, DC. Thursday: Visit with Congressman Chris Smith. Vespers at St. Nicholas OCA Cathedral. **Friday:** March for Life. Rose Dinner. **Saturday:** Liturgy & Enthronement of Metropolitan Antony of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church USA at St. Andrew Church. Banquet. Vespers: St. Nicholas OCA Cathedral. Holy Synod Meeting at Omni Hotel. **Sunday:** Liturgy. Enthronement of Metropolitan Tikhon (OCA). Banquet. Holy Synod Meeting at Omni Hotel. **Monday:** Holy Synod Meeting at St. Nicholas (OCA) Cathedral.

World ... *Cont. from page 15*

habitants, 16 million were Orthodox. Some 860,000 were Roman Catholics, 160,000 were Greek Catholics, 600,000 were Reformed, 370,000 were Pentecostals, and 350,000 other religions, while over 20,000 said they did not believe in God, and over 80,000 did not declare any religion....

Assembly of Bishops Posts Minutes, Budget and Articles of Incorporation

Source: Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America / Feb. 8, 2013

The Assembly of Bishops has released minutes from its most recent meeting (Assembly III), held in Chicago from September 10-12, 2012. Though the final minutes will not be approved until the next meeting of the Assembly, scheduled for the Fall of 2013, the Assembly presents these as summary minutes. Some of the chief concerns of the last meeting, as reflected in the minutes, were: the creation of a budget, the completion of the By-Laws, a review of the work of the Committee for Canonical Regional Planning, and the drafting of a statement. Posted [online] with these minutes are Articles of Incorporation, filed by the Assembly with the federal government in October of 2011. This was a first step towards the Assembly's legal incorporation. Since incorporation requires the creation of By-Laws, these were, as mentioned above, a chief agenda item at Assembly III. Having been completed there, they are now awaiting final approval. Once approved, the Assembly will post them on its website [assemblyofbishops.org]. Also included in this posting is the proposed budget for the 2013 fiscal year, approved at the last meeting.

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SFÂNTUL SINOD S-A ÎNTRUNIT ÎN SESSIUNEA DE IARNĂ ȘI A ÎNFIINȚAT DEPARTAMENTUL DE EDUCAȚIE CONTINUĂ PENTRU CLER.

WASHINGTON, DC [OCA]

29 ianuarie 2013

Sfântul Sinod al Episcopilor Bisericii Ortodoxe în America s-a întâlnit, în colaborare cu întronarea Preafericirii Sale, Mitropolitul Tihon la Catedrala Sfântul Nicolae, în zilele de 26 și 27 ianuarie 2013.

Printre hotărârile Sfântului Sinod, menționăm:

- a ales pe Preasfințitul Episcop Mihail din New York și New Jersey pentru a servi ca secretar al Sfântului Sinod.

- a stabilit componența Sinodului Permanent al Episcopilor, care va include pe Mitropolitul Tihon, Episcopul Mihail, secretar, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel al Detroitului și al Episcopiei Române; și pe Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Benjamin de San Francisco și de Vest.

- a audiat raportul Arhimandritului Alexander Pihach privind viața Bisericii Reprezentantei OCA la Moscova, Sf. Mare Muceniță Ecaterina, și munca lui ca recent reprezentant al OCA pe lângă Patriarhul Moscovei.

- a audiat raportul Protoiereului Leonid Kishkovsky, directorul OCA al Afacerilor Externe și al Relațiilor Interbisericești, în privința relațiilor externe ale OCA..

- a revăzut diverse probleme ale clerului și acțiuni de interes reciproc.

De o importanță majoră, a spus Părintele Eric Tosi, a fost înființarea Departamentului de Educație Continuă a clerului, în conformitate cu recomandările planului strategic de la al 16-lea Consiliu al OCA.

“Departamentul va fi responsabil pentru coordonarea programelor de educație continuă pentru clerul OCA în Episcopii și pentru stabilirea îndrumărilor și cerințelor pentru clerul OCA,” a spus Părintele Eric. “Membrii Departamentului vor lucra în colaborare cu eparhiile OCA, Seminariile și alte instituții în exercitarea mandatului Sfântul Sinod ca fiecare preot și diacon să urmeze 20 de ore de educație continuă în fiecare an, dintre care cinci se vor concentra pe probleme profesionale și etice, inclusiv pe probleme de abatere sexuală.”

“Fondurile pentru acest efort vor fi ridicate prin diferite mijloace, în scopul de a oferi un program care să se auto-finanțeze ulterior,” a adăugat Părintele Eric Tosi, Secretarul Cancelariei OCA. “Un accent deosebit va fi acordat dezvoltării și furnizării de programe în

Cont. la pag. 24

PAPA BENEDICT AL XVI-LEA A ANUNȚAT CĂ RENUNȚĂ LA MINISTERUL PETRIN

În timpul consistoriului pentru trei canonizări din dimineața zilei de 11 februarie 2013, Papa Benedict al XVI-lea a anunțat că renunță la ministerul petrin cu începere de la 28 februarie, ora 20:00, ora Romei. Redăm în continuare declarația Suveranului Pontif:

“Iubiți frați,

V-am convocat la acest Consistoriu nu numai pentru cele trei canonizări, dar și pentru a vă comunica o decizie de mare importanță pentru viața Bisericii. După ce mi-am examinat în mod repetat conștiința în fața lui Dumnezeu, am ajuns la certitudinea că puterile mele fizice, din pricina vârstei înaintate, nu mai sunt potrivite pentru a-mi exercita în mod adecvat ministerul petrin. Sunt foarte conștient că această slujire, datorită esenței sale spirituale, trebuie să fie îndeplinită nu numai prin fapte și cuvinte, dar și suferind și în

rugăciune. Cu toate acestea, în lumea de astăzi, supusă schimbărilor rapide și agitată de chestiuni de mare importanță pentru viața de credință, pentru a conduce barca Sfântului Petru și pentru a vesti Evanghelia este necesară și vigoarea atât a trupului, cât și a sufletului, vigoare care, în ultimele luni, a scăzut în mine, așa încât trebuie să-mi recunosc incapacitatea de a administra bine slujirea încredințată mie. De aceea, conștient de gravitatea acestui lucru, în deplină libertate, declar că renunț la ministerul de Episcop al Romei, Succesor al Sfântului Petru, încredințat mie prin cardinali la 19 aprilie 2005, așa încât, de la 28 februarie 2013, la ora 20:00, ora Romei, scaunul Sfântului Petru va fi vacant și va trebui convocat Conclavul, de către cei care au competența, pentru alegerea noului Suveran Pontif.

Cont. la pag. 20

ORTODOXIA DIN SUA LUPȚĂ PENTRU STATUTUL PATRIARHULUI ECUMENIC

Imaginați-vă indignarea întregii lumi dacă, după demisia Papei, guvernul italian ar fi insistat să aibă un rol în a decide cine va fi va lua acestuia locul.

Liderii Bisericii Ortodoxe Grecești din Statele Unite încearcă să atragă atenția asupra amestecului guvernului turc în capacitatea Bisericii Ortodoxe de a-și alege liderul propriu, ecumenic.

Într-o conferință de presă ținută duminică, 17 februarie 2013, la Biserica grec-ortodoxă Sfântul Nicolae din Oak Lawn, Episcopul Dimitrie, cancelar al Mitropoliei Ortodoxe Grecești de Chicago, a solicitat Legislativului din Illinois să adopte o rezoluție de sprijinire a libertății religioase. "Toți din această țară suntem liberi să ne închinăm așa cum ne place", a spus Prea Sfințitul Episcop Dimitrie. "Nu ca în Istanbul".

Începând cu anul 1922, Turcia a adoptat legi care interzic școlile religioase, a explicat episcopul. De asemenea, a obligat ca Patriarhul Ecumenic al Bisericii Ortodoxe să fie născut în Turcia și cetățean al Turciei. Patriarhul Bartolomeu I, actualul Patriarh Ecumenic, nu doar că s-a născut în Turcia, dar a fost și în armata țării.

Iar, odată ce guvernul secular al Turciei a confiscat terenurile Bisericii, practicarea religiei creștine a devenit dificilă, a explicat Demetrios, în prezent existând doar aproximativ 2,000 de creștini ortodocși rămași în țară, din sute de mii, care au reușit să supraviețuiască chiar și în timpul Imperiului Otoman.

În esență, dacă legea turcă nu se va schimba, ar putea veni o vreme când Biserica Ortodoxă se va găsi în imposibilitatea de a-și alege un Patriarh, în țara pe teritoriul căreia creștinismul este de origine apostolică. SUA trebuie să adopte o rezoluție care să îndemne Turcia să îi acorde Bisericii Grec-Ortodoxe mai multă libertate.

Există aproximativ 6 milioane de creștini ortodocși în SUA, mai mult de 1 milion în Illinois - al treilea stat cu cea mai mare populație, după California și New York. Aproximativ 250,000 de creștini ortodocși trăiesc în zona metropolitană Chicago, iar 350 de familii sunt membre ale parohiei Sfântul Nicolae.

Prezenți la conferința de presă a Prea Sfințitului Dimitrie au fost și Primarul Oak Lawn, David Heilmann, părintele Michael Constantinides, de la Biserica Sf. Nicolae, și senatorul statului Illinois, Billy Brady (R-Bloomington), susținătorul principal al Rezoluției 70 a Senatului.

În 2007, Congresul Statului Illinois a adoptat o rezoluție similară, dar nu a reușit să ajungă în Senat, din motive care rămân neclare.

Guvernul turc nu numai că are drept de veto asupra

alegerii Patriarhului Ecumenic, dar de asemenea, el îi poate controla și pe cei care îl votează, pe ierarhi, prin obligația ca aceștia să fie, de asemenea, cetățeni turci.

Orice rezident turc, care dorește să devină preot, trebuie să meargă la școală în afara granițelor țării, limitând și mai mult capacitatea Turciei de a genera candidați proprii pentru funcția de patriarh.

Episcopul Dimitrie a declarat că guvernul turc, în ultimii ani, și-a slăbit oarecum îngrădirile, permițând unui număr de aproximativ 15 episcopi ai Patriarhiei Ecumenice de Constantinopol din întreaga lume să dețină cetățenie turcă, astfel calificându-i drept candidați potențiali pentru postul de lider al Bisericii. De asemenea, a revenit asupra deciziei de confiscare a unei suprafețe de teren din jurul unui orfelinat al Bisericii.

Dar, guvernul turc refuză, în continuare, să recunoască statutul ecumenic sau de lider religios, patriarhului. Patriarhia Ecumenică, în sine, nu are identitate juridică. Prin urmare, nici nu poate deține propriile biserici. De-a lungul ultimilor 80 de ani, guvernul turc a confiscat numeroase proprietăți, inclusiv mănăstiri, clădiri bisericești, un orfelinat, case particulare, școli și terenuri care au aparținut Bisericii Ortodoxe.

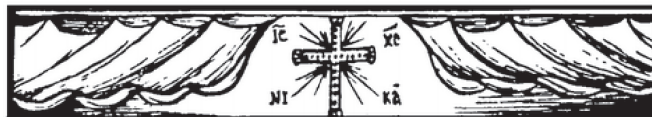
"Comunitatea grec-ortodoxă din Constantinopol (astăzi, Istanbul), moștenitoare culturală a Imperiului Bizantin, va fi amenințată cu dispariția", se arată într-un comunicat de presă emis de Mitropolia Grec-Ortodoxă din Chicago.

Totuși, nu se știe exact ce impact ar avea aprobarea unei asemenea rezoluții de susținere a libertății religioase în Turcia, odată ce, chiar dacă guvernul SUA ar putea exercita o presiune politică mai mare, totuși Turcia rămâne un aliat strategic al SUA, având în vedere poziția sa geografică și frontierele cu Siria, Irak și Iran.

Episcopul Dimitrie a mai remarcat faptul că, în prezent, există doar 8 senatori ai statului Illinois care au fost de acord să susțină rezoluția.

Cel puțin 30 de voturi sunt necesare pentru ca ea să se aprobe.

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MITROPOLITUL TIHON A FOST ÎNSCĂUNAT CA PRIMAT AL BISERICII ORTODOXE ÎN AMERICA LA CATEDRALA SFÂNTUL NICOLAE DIN WASHINGTON, DC



De la stânga la dreapta: Episcopul Irineu, Episcopul Mark, Arhiepiscopul Alejo, Episcopul Michael, Episcopul George (ROCOR), Arhiepiscopul Nikon, Mitropolitul Dimitri (Biserica Georgiei), Arhiepiscopul Benjamin, Mitropolitul Primat Tikhon, Episcopul Melchisedek, Arhiepiscopul Justinian (Biserica Rusiei), Episcopul Irine, Episcopul Nicholas (Patriarhia Antiohiei), Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel.

27 ianuarie 2013

Duminică, 27 ianuarie 2013, Preafericirea Sa, Tihon, Arhiepiscop de Washington, Mitropolit al întregii Americi și al Canadei, a fost înscăunat ca Primat al Bisericii Ortodoxe în America, la Catedrala Sfântul Nicolae din Washington, DC.

La întronarea au participat membrii Sfântului Sinod al Episcopilor Bisericii Ortodoxe în America și invitați reprezentând mai multe Biserici Ortodoxe din America de Nord și din străinătate.

Papa Benedict ...

Cont. de la pag. 18

Preaiubiți frați, vă mulțumesc din adâncul inimii pentru toată iubirea și munca cu care ați purtat alături de mine povara slujirii mele, și vă cer iertare pentru toate defectele mele. Acum, încredințăm Sfânta Biserică grijii Supremului Păstor, Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos, și o implorăm pe Preasfânta Sa Maică Maria ca să-i asiste cu bunătatea sa maternă pe Părinții Cardinali în alegerea noului Suveran Pontif. În ce mă privește, și în viitor voi sluji Sfânta Biserică a lui Dumnezeu cu toată inima, cu o viață dedicată rugăciunii.”

Articol preluat din Buletinul săptămânal de informare religioasă “VIAȚA CULTELOR”, Anul XXI, nr. 973-974, 15 Februarie 2013



NOUL PATRIARH AL ANTIOHIEI A FOST ÎNTRONIZAT

Duminica, 10 februarie 2013, în Biserica Înălțarea Sfintei Cruci din Damasc, a avut loc ceremonia de întronizare a noului Patriarh al Antiohiei. Preafericitul Ioan Yazigi, în vârstă de 57 de ani, este succesorul Patriarhului Ignatie Hazim al Antiohiei și a tot Răsăritul, trecut la cele veșnice în decembrie 2012.

Creștinii reprezintă aproximativ 5% din populația Siriei, unde rebelii și forțele loiale Președintelui Bashar Assad sunt implicate într-un război civil în cadrul căruia și-au pierdut viața până în prezent aproximativ 60,000 de persoane.

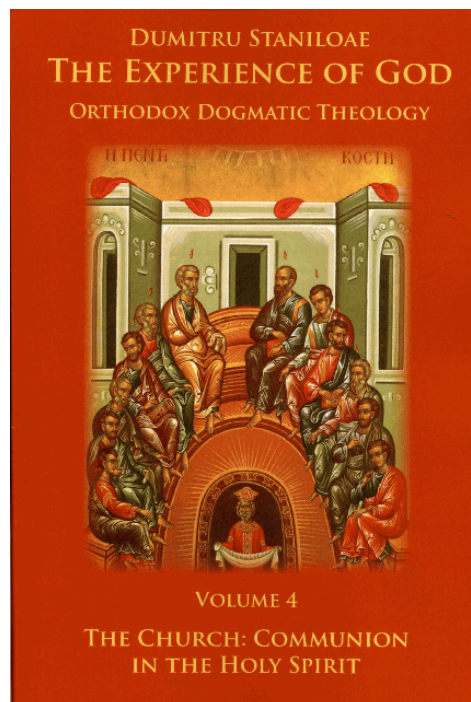
În timpul ceremoniei de întronizare, Noul Patriarh a subliniat că activitatea sa se va desfășura în slujba păcii și a unității. Ceremonia s-a desfășurat în Biserica "Sfântul Nicolae" din Beirut, în prezența reprezentanților Bisericilor Ortodoxe și ai altor confesiuni, a arhiereilor din Patriarhia Antiohiei, precum și a autorităților politice ale țării.



TEOLOGIA DOGMATICĂ A PĂRINTELUI STĂNILOAE, TRADUSĂ ÎN ENGLEZĂ

La Editura Holy Cross Orthodox Press din Brookline, SUA, a apărut volumul 4 al seriei "The Experience of God", dedicat Dogmaticii părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae, în limba engleză. Volumul se numește "The Church: Communion in the Holy Spirit" și prezintă capitolul despre Ecclesiologie din Sinteza de Teologie Dogmatică a părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae. Traducerea în limba engleză a fost făcută de părintele Ioan Ioniță.

"După cum vedem în acest volum, ca și în celelalte care constituie Teologia sa Dogmatică, părintele Stăniloae este adâncit în tradiția veche și îndeaproape familiarizat cu contemporanii. Rezultatul în acest volum este o lucrare teologică ce pune accentul pe Biserică și se folosește de vocile tradiției sale, studiază reflexiile contemporanilor săi și construiește o sinteză tradițională care este unică și actuală. Lucrarea părintelui Stăniloae se caracterizează prin acea fidelitate dublă - față de trecut și față de prezent -, un lucru care se cere fiecărui teolog din orice epocă. Dar ea este îmbibată și de un sens de inspirație care este greu de găsit în scrierile teologice moderne. Cititorii părintelui Stăniloae vin față-n față cu o voce care este plină de încredere prin faptul că este atât de erudită și de fidelă. Este însă o voce profund personală, creatoare și uluitor de liberă care te dezarmază", a spus părintele Peter Bounteneff de la Seminarul "Sfântul Vladimir" din New York, în



prefața noului volum în limba engleză.

Articol preluat de pe website-ul Agenției de știri Basilica

RUGĂCIUNILE PENTRU CEI ADORMIȚI ÎNTRU DOMNUL

Rugăciunile și pomenirile pentru cei răposați se întrepătrund și cu faptele de milostenie, pe care trebuie să le săvârșim. Biserica este comuniune de iubire, iar în această comuniune sunt cuprinși vii și adormiți. Sfânta Scriptură ne arată că “dragostea nu cade niciodată” (*I Cor. 13, 8*), deci manifestarea dragostei nu poate fi oprită de moarte. Iar manifestarea dragostei pentru cei adormiți în Domnul se face prin rugăciuni, slujbe, milostenii pentru ei și prin îngrijirea mormintelor lor. Cei care tăgăduiesc folosul rugăciunilor pentru morți, tăgăduiesc, de fapt, porunca iubirii față de Hristos, căci dragostea față de cineva nu se oprește la piatra mormântului, după cum ne arată clar însăși Sfânta Scriptură, când relatează venirea femeilor mironosițe la mormântul Domnului. Ar însemna, de asemenea, să desconsiderăm cuvântul Mântuitorului: “Orice veți cere de la Tatăl în numele Meu, El vă va da” (*Ioan 16,23*), precum și activitatea Sa, căci Evangheliile ne arată cum Domnul a ascultat și a îndeplinit dorința celor care s-au rugat pentru cei morți: învierea fiicei lui Iair (*Luca 8,41*), și învierea lui Lazăr (*Ioan 11, 21-22*).

Motivul principal al obiecțiilor privitoare la rugăciunile și celelalte practici recomandate de Biserică pentru cei adormiți, este legat de o concepție individualistă despre mântuire, din care decurge respingerea rugăciunii obștești și a dragostei frățești sincere pentru toți semenii de pretutindeni și totdeauna. Este, în ultimă instanță, un semn al greșitei înțelegeri a noțiunii de uniune, de solidaritate în Hristos, o respingere a Bisericii ca Trup tainic al lui Hristos, o răstălmăcire a învățăturii întemeietorului Ei. În Vechiul Testament, David prorocul și poporul care era cu el “au plâns și s-au tânguit, și au postit până seara după Saul și după Ionatan, după poporul Domnului și după casa lui Israel, care căzuse de sabie” (*II Regi 1, 11-12*). Tobit îl îndeamnă pe fiul său: “Fii darnic cu pâinea și cu vinul la mormântul celor drepti!” (*Tobit 4, 17*).

Rugăciunile pentru morți s-au practicat în Biserică încă din perioada Sf. Apostoli (*I Cor. 15, 29*) Istoria Creștinismului ne arată că, în vremea persecuțiilor, creștinii se adunau să se roage în catacombe, la mormintele martirilor. Necesitatea rugăciunilor pentru cei adormiți, precum și confirmarea că această practică a fost rânduită de Apostoli, sunt exprimate astfel de către Sf. Ioan Gură de Aur: “Cum și în ce mod îi putem ajuta? Să ne rugăm pentru cei morți, punând și pe alții să se roage și dând săracilor milostenii pentru sufletele lor. Căci nu degeaba s-a rânduit de către Apostoli ca să se facă pomenire la Sfintele și înfricoșătoarele Taine pentru cei mutați de la noi; au

știut ei că mult folos vor avea, mult ajutor vor căpăta. Pentru că atunci întregul popor stă cu mâinile ridicate către Dumnezeu când clerul întreg se roagă, când înfricoșata Taină stă de față, apoi cum să nu înlănzim pe Dumnezeu, rugându-L pentru ei?” (*Sf. Ioan Hrisostom, Omilia a IV-a la Filipeni*)

Iubirea și credința în cuvântul Domnului formează temelia rugăciunilor noastre pentru morți. Uitarea și nepăsarea față de sufletele celor adormiți este un semn de nrecunoștință, pentru că uităm pe cei care ne-au fost binefăcători, părinți și rude, sau pe cei care ne-au iubit și și-au manifestat această dragoste cât timp au fost în viață. Urmând învățăturii Mântuitorului, Sfinților Apostoli și Sfinților Părinți, precum și practicii creștine din cele mai vechi timpuri, Sfânta Biserică ne îndeamnă să înălțăm rugăciuni de pomenire pentru cei care au adormit în nădejdea învierii și a vieții de veci.

Pentru cei adormiți sunt de un real folos și parastasele, și rugăciunile făcute acasă, și faptele bune făcute în numele lor, ca milostenia și jertfele pentru biserică, dar cele mai folositoare sunt pentru ei pomenirile la Sf. Liturghie, când particелеle scoase pentru vii și pentru morți se cufundă în Sângele Domnului, preotul rostind atunci: “Ridică, Doamne, păcatele celor pomeniți aici, cu cinstitul Tău Sânge, pentru rugăciunile sfinților Tăi”. Cei adormiți au nevoie întotdeauna de rugăciunile Bisericii, dar mai ales în cele patruzeci de zile în care sufletul celui adormit parcurge drumul către veșnicele lăcașuri.

Îndatoririle rânduite de Biserică pentru cei adormiți sunt parastasele la 3, 9, 40 de zile, la 1 an, la 3 ani și la 7 ani. Parastasul de 3 zile se săvârșește în cinstea Sfintei Treimi sau în amintirea coborârii și rămănerii Domnului Iisus în iad timp de 3 zile. Parastasul de 9 zile se face în cinstea celor 9 cete îngerești, cu nădejdea ca sufletul să fie numărat printre îngeri. Parastasul la 6 săptămâni se face în amintirea doliului poporului lui Israel pentru moartea lui Moise sau pentru cele 40 de zile dintre înviere și înălțare, când Domnul a rămas pe pământ. La parastasele și pomenirile de 7 ani, coliva care se face preînchipuie mormântul și învierea, căci trupurile morților vor învia într-o zi din morminte.

În “Mărturisirea de credință” a lui Mitrofan Critopulos se arată, așa cum am spus mai sus: “Ne rugăm pentru cei adormiți, pomenind pe fiecare în parte în prima zi, în a treia, a noua, a douăzecea, a patruzecă, apoi la trei luni, la șase luni și, în sfârșit la un an; și de câte ori rudele celui ce a plecat vor să facă aceasta, nu sunt împiedicate. Dar și în fiecare sâmbătă din tot timpul anului se fac rugăciuni de către Biserică, pentru toți cei adormiți întru credință. Și aceasta se face în toate bisericile. Și ori de câte ori se

săvârșește Sfânta Liturghie, totdeauna se pomenesc și aceștia”. În afară de acestea Biserica noastră mai are două Sâmbete ale morților, în care se pomenesc toți dreptii din Legea Veche și creștinii din toate vremurile. (Moșii de vară și de iarnă), precum și sâmbetele din Postul Mare.

Sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur îndeamnă: “Să nu te îndoiești deloc că cei morți se vor folosi duhovnicește, căci preotul nu se roagă zadarnic fie la Proscomidie, fie la Sfânta Masă, pentru cei adormiți în Hristos, cu credință în Dumnezeu Omul”.

În finalul ecteniei pentru morți, preotul liturghisitor rostește rugăciunea pentru iertarea păcatelor celor adormiți: “Dumnezeul duhurilor și a tot trupul, Care ai călcat moartea și pe diavolul l-ai surpat și ai dăruit viață lumii Tale, însuși, Doamne, odihnește și sufletele adormiților robilor Tăi (N), în loc luminat, în loc cu verdeață, în loc de odihnă, de unde a fugit toată durerea, întristarea și suspinarea, și orice greșală au săvârșit ei cu cuvântul, cu fapta sau cu gândul, ca un Dumnezeu bun și iubitor de oameni, iartă-le lor. Că nu este om care să fie viu și să nu greșescă; numai Tu singur ești fără de păcat; dreptatea Ta este dreptate în veac și cuvântul Tău este adevărul”, întrucât Hristos este “învierea și viața și odihna adormiților robi.” Preotul cere odihnă, întru veșnică pomenire pentru adormiți de la Stăpânul mult-îndurat Hristos, rugându-L să treacă cu vederea orice au greșit, ca oameni, în această viață: “și-i iartă lui toate câte a păcătuit cu cuvântul, sau cu lucrul, sau cu gândul, dezlegându-l și de legătura pusă în orice chip asupra lui, cu care el însuși din mânia sau din altă pricină s-a legat pe sine, sau de la arhieru, sau de la altcineva a suferit o alunecare ca aceasta, prin invidia și prin lucrarea diavolului. Binevoiește, Preabunule și mult-îndurate, ca sufletul lui să se așeze cu sfinții, care din veac eu bineplăcut ție, iar trupul să se dea firii celei zidite de Tine.” Biserica a rânduit și slujba Litiei pentru morți, care se săvârșește în toate zilele de peste an, seara după Vecernie și dimineața după Utrenie, cu excepția zilelor de sărbătoare sau a duminicilor în care se cântă polieleu și doxologie, precum și a sărbătorilor mari.

În concluzie, rugăciunile pentru cei adormiți au fost practicate de Biserică din veacul apostolic, fiind fundamentate biblic și patristic, fiind conform învățaturii ortodoxe despre starea provizorie a sufletelor după judecata particulară. Astfel, rugăciunile pentru cei adormiți le sunt balsam duhovnicesc, bazându-se pe comuniunea iubirii dintre cei vii și cei adormiți, ceea ce stă la temelia învățaturii și trăirii creștine.

Preot Anton Frunză



Family Life Conference

**Conferința “Viața de Familie” a celor 3 organizații Auxiliare
“Cu dragoste și cu credință să vă apropiați”**

**Va avea loc în perioada 4-7 iulie 2013
la VATRA ROMÂNEASCĂ,
Grass Lake, Michigan, USA**

Cu binecuvântarea Înalt Prea Sfințitului
Arhiepiscop NATHANIEL și cu aprobarea și
sprijinul Consiliului Episcopesc
credincioșii Episcopiei noastre sunt invitați la:

Conferința inaugurală “Viața de familie”

care va avea loc odată cu

Adunările generale ale celor 3 organizații auxiliare:

ARFORA: Asociația reuniunilor femeilor ortodoxe
române din America

AROY: Asociația tineretului ortodox român din
America

Orthodox Brotherhood: Frăția ortodoxă

Credință - Familie - Societate - Cultură

Tineri - Studenți - Necăsătoriți - Tineri căsătoriți -
Familii cu copii - Văduvi – Bătrâni
babysitting este inclus

Preoți - Consilii parohiale - Școli duminicale –
Coruri

Discuții despre viața în parohie, oportunități pentru
înalțare duhovnicească

Evenimente sociale

+ Rânduiala Liturgică completă +

Programati-vă concediul în așa fel încât să puteți
participa, îmbogățindu-vă spiritual și social în
cadrul marii familii din Episcopie

4-7 iulie 2013 VATRA ROMÂNEASCĂ

Sfântul Sinod s-a întrunit ...

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probleme juridice și etice pentru cler, - mai ales în ceea ce privește abaterile sexuale ale clerului - și de conducere și de management pentru clerici și liderii mireni.”

Detalii și informații suplimentare în acest sens vor fi oferite în viitorul apropiat.

Înainte de încheierea sesiunii, membrii Sfântului Sinod au început stabilirea planurilor pentru Sesiunea de primăvară a Sfântului Sinod, programată a fi convocată în martie 2013.



A DOUA ÎNTÂMPINARE A DOMNULUI

După ce a părăsit templul,
Fecioara Născătoare,
cu Pruncul înfășat în axion,
cerca s-ascundă ce-i spuse Simeon,
în special, partea a doua.

Urmă a doua-ntâmpinare -
ce I-o aduse roua -
stropi cățărați
pe-o streășină de floare,
care în limba lor
grăiau numai cu ochii ei,
profeticul amar despre Lumină.

“Cu cine vorbeai
Prea Sfântă noastră Maică?”
a întrebat-o Iosif
cu vocea blajină,
nebănuind necazul.

Nimic nu i-a răspuns, nu a spus,
privindu-și vedenia drept,
dar dintre stropii
ce-i înfloriseră obrazul,
unul căzând
sărută mânușa Pruncului Iisus.

...și Prea înrourata
îl strânse, mai tare, la piept.

LA CEAS DE DOR ÎNALT

De pe cornișa pildei Tale,
eu sunt acela care către Ierihon
se cobora din dorul lui la vale
și a căzut între tâlhari.
Nici chiar acum nu bănuiesc
din ce motiv,
la stârvul meu aproape mort
a zăbovit acel Străin
(samariteanul milostiv)
spălându-mi rănila cu vin.

Când întâlnești Străinul după-un an,
(prea milostivul meu Samaritean)
era pe cruce între doi tâlhari.
L-am auzit cum binecuvânta,
încet,
și-mi zise-aproape mort
Străinul de pe lemn:
“E prea târziu de vin și untdelemn,
dar caută-un burete
și adă-mi mult oțet,
de poți chiar un ulcior,
cât încă am putere să le șterg
cele trei zile de pe neagra tablă
din inimile lor.”