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2014 Episcopate Congress
Dates: Friday, Sept. 5 - Sunday, Sept. 7, 2014
Location: Vatra Romanesca, Grass Lake, MI

Library of Congress Receives Romanian Liturgical Books

During a visit to the Library of Congress a short while ago, His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel in company with members of the OCL was given a special tour of the European Reading Room of the Library of Congress. During the tour, various old Orthodox books in ethnic languages were on display. Unhappily, there were no Romanian language books present, nor it seems in the Library.

Mr. Harold Leich introduced His Eminence to Mr. Grant G. Harris who expressed delight to have Romanian liturgical books for the Library. Returning to the Vatra, His Eminence made an inventory of the Episcopate’s Liturgical Books Archive and was able to select a number of duplicate volumes to offer the Library.

Over a recent visit to the Capital, His Eminence, assisted by Mr. Richard Grabowski, presented the following volumes to the Library of Congress in the name of the Episcopate: 12 volumes of Minetul, Bucuresti, 1908, 1909, 1910 Second Edition, King Carol I; Octoihul Mare, 1916, Third Edition, Bucuresti, King Ferdinand I; Triodul, 1922, Bucuresti, Third Edition, King Ferdinand I; Penticostarul, 1912, Bucuresti, Third Edition, King Carol I; Orolog, 1896, Second Edition, Bucuresti, King Carol I; Liturghierul, 1902, Sibiu, Francis Iosif I; Ciaslov, 1925, Sibiu, Dr. Nicolae Balan; Antologion, 1956 Arad; Psaltierea, 1931, Bucuresti; Evhologiou Bogat, 1920, Bucuresti, Fourth Edition, King Ferdinand I; Apostol, 1924, Sf. Man. Cernica, Fifth Edition; King Ferdinand I; Cantorul si Apostolul Crestin, 1918, Detroit.

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Moral Injury – The Invisible Wounds of Our Soldiers

by Psa. Lillian Lupu

“When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, ‘The Lord is with you, mighty warrior’” (Judges 6:2).

Our countries have honorable soldiers who are trained to be warriors to defend our freedom. Our Holy Orthodox Church has powerful Saints who were soldiers, such as St. George, St. Demetrios and more recently, St. Evgeny who was martyred defending his Christian Faith in 1996 in Chechnya. There are, however, consequences of this calling.

“Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” (PTSD) is a relatively new term, used to describe some of the behavioral symptoms that war can have on soldiers returning from conflict. The symptoms of PTSD have been around as long as war itself, just not labeled as such. Homer described the adverse effects of combat on the warrior when he wrote The Iliad in 500 BC. During World War I, this ailment was called “shell shock” or “battle fatigue,” and the diagnosis was given to a soldier who was psychologically incapacitated because of his experiences on the battlefield. Combat experiences of fallen comrades and the witnessing of unimaginable horrors by vulnerable young men and women can cause profound inner pain and confusion. This torment may not go away. PTSD occurs when someone experiences a horrific event and relives that event over and over again in the mind. This constant reminder or replaying of the events causes the individual to withdraw and eventually detach himself from reality. The effects of PTSD start as psychological but then manifest themselves behaviorally and physically, in which case a soldier can become a “walking wounded.”

As more studies are done with regard to PTSD, researchers are discovering that there are other injuries beside the psychological: those of the soul and spirit. These are collectively being referred to as “Moral Injury,” an injury that does not always have behavioral identifiers, and thus is more difficult to diagnose and treat. Though closely connected, we might say that Moral Injury has to do with the conscience, the questioning guilt that someone retains from the unavoidable circumstances of war.

Two thousand years ago, Homer knew about this kind of injury. He gave some examples of what might cause it, such as “heavy continuous combat and then betrayal of what’s right by a commander.” The Iliad is the story of the undoing of Achilles’ character, once a righteous and good man who had deep values and love for people. Moral Injury occurs when the soldier experiences a wound of a moral nature, such as a perceived wrong-doing (done by the soldier himself) or suffering a wrong, such as a deep betrayal after a long period of combat and psychological exhaustion. We might take an example form the book Achilles in Vietnam by Jonathan Shay, MD, in which a Vietnam veteran describes an incident with a fishing boat stationed on a quiet dock in Vietnam, which was said to contain enemy personnel. The Captain gave the command to kill everyone on board, which the soldier carried out swiftly. The next morning it was revealed that the information that had been received about the inhabitants was wrong, and simply women, children and civilians were on the boat. The soldier who killed them was understandably remorseful and psychologically pained (the first Moral Injury), but when his Captain received decorated honors for the event, the soldier felt deeply betrayed and morally hurt, because he knew what had happened was morally wrong (a second Moral Injury). The sting of remorse, and then of betrayal, is the Moral Injury which cuts to the very core of the victim’s soul, as he feels he has betrayed or been betrayed by God Himself.

Certainly, betrayal has occurred since the beginning of time (Joseph and his brothers, the Garden of Gethsemane, in homes where spouses are betrayed by unfaithful spouses, and many other incidents). However, even though this pain runs deep, with soldiers it can be constantly re-lived. Many of these soldiers have an upright moral character, as did Achilles. They love their country, their friends and their families. They are honorable citizens who stand for righteousness, so injustices affect them intensely. Actions required in combat and horrific scenes witnessed therein cannot but traumatize the soul and good character. They can force a Christian into behaviors that are wrong and can result in tragedy. In the United States, it is estimated that twenty-two veterans...
CHICAGO, IL [ACOB] - The fourth annual meeting of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America closed with the release of the following press release.

[September 20, 2013] In the final day of its annual meeting, the Assembly agreed to issue two statements—one on the Church’s unchanging position on marriage and one expressing grave concern over the escalating violence in the Middle East. The Assembly also released a message to the faithful on the conclusion of Assembly IV.

The three statements, Statement on Marriage; Statement on Violence in the Middle East; and Message to the Faithful, follow this report. In other business, the Assembly voted unanimously to re-elect Bishop Basil as secretary and Metropolitan Antony as treasurer. Archbishop Demetrios recognized and commended them for their devotion to the Assembly over the past three years. The Assembly also reviewed and approved the 2014 budget. The Assembly expects to hold its next meeting in September 2014. More documents pertaining to the Assembly, including the minutes and 2014 budget, will be forthcoming on the Assembly’s web site.

The hierarchs concluded the meeting by singing the Apolytikion of Pentecost: 

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them didst draw the world into Thy net. O Befriender of man, glory be to Thee.

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

1. We, the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, representing millions of Orthodox Christians in the United States of America, Canada and Central America, express our deep concern over recent actions on the part of our respective governments and certain societal trends concerning the status of marriage in our countries, in particular the legalization of same-sex unions.

2. The Orthodox Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality, firmly grounded in Holy Scripture, two millennia of Church Tradition, and Canon Law, holds that the sacrament of marriage consists in the union of a man and a woman, and that authentic marriage reflects the sacred unity that exists between Christ and His Bride, the Church.

3. Persons with homosexual orientation are to be cared for with the same mercy and love that is bestowed on all of humanity by our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, the Church is a spiritual hospital, where we all are called to find the healing of our fallen humanity through Jesus Christ, who assumed human nature in order to restore it. All of us struggle with various passions, and it is only within the Church that we find the means of overcoming these passions with the assistance of God’s grace. Acting upon any sexual attraction outside of sacramental marriage, whether the attraction is heterosexual or homosexual, alienates us from God.
GRASS LAKE, MI - The 81st Annual Episcopate Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, a Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America, took place September 5-7, 2013 at the Diocesan Center “Vatra Romaneasca” (Romanian Hearth). This year marked the 75th Anniversary of the inaugural events which took place here in 1938, when services were held and the property blessed by Bishop Policarp (Morusca), the first ruling bishop of the Episcopate, and Archbishop Athenagoros (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America). Saint Elias Mission, Anjou, Quebec, Canada hosted the Congress.

This year, the Congress events were blessed with the presence of our special guest, the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, His Beatitude The Most Blessed Tikhon, who attended all meetings and Congress Sessions. The three days of events began at the Valerian D. Trifa Romanian-American Heritage Center on Thursday September 5 with the Clergy Conference. After the meeting, the Akathist Hymn to Bishop Policarp was chanted in the Pioneer Chapel.

At 7:00 pm, the Episcopate Council met in session (also at the Heritage Center) to review the Report to Congress and other matters related to the Congress Sessions to take place the following day, as well as the usual work of the Council.

On Friday, September 6, the Congress began at 9:30 a.m. with the Invocation to the Holy Spirit. The meeting opened with over 120 Clergy and Lay delegates in attendance, including Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop Nathaniel and Bishop Irineu. The meetings continued throughout the day and concluded at 6:00 p.m. Highlights of the presentations, discussions and decisions of the Congress include the following:

• Archbishop Nathaniel opened the Congress by noting that 2013 marks the 130th anniversary of Bishop Policarp’s birth (he made the delegates aware of the newly-completed Akathist Hymn to Bishop Policarp), the 75th Anniversary of the Inauguration and Dedication of the Vatra, and we look forward in 2014 to the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Archbishop Valerian. He then welcomed and introduced His Beatitude Tikhon, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America.

• Metropolitan Tikhon greeted the Congress in Romanian, French and English. He reviewed his participation in the Congress events to that point (Clergy Conference and Episcopate Council) and spoke of his travelling to many of the dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America during his first year as Metropolitan. He spoke of the various challenges that the dioceses face and how the Episcopate has the opportunity to do good work and bear witness throughout the whole continent to the universal beauty and truth of the Church in the name of Christ.

• Following the Metropolitan’s comments, Archbishop Nathaniel spoke on the fact that we have a call as Orthodox Christians to love one another as the Lord indicated in his references to the kingdom of God. He also spoke about the fact that so many of the clergy have insignificant salaries, no health coverage for their families, and for that reason have to appeal to

Cont. on page 10
Continued from page 4

4. We exhort the clergy and faithful of the Orthodox Church to bear witness to the timeless teachings of Christ by striving for purity and holiness in their own lives, by instructing their families and communities in the precepts of the Holy Gospel, and by placing their trust in our Lord, who “has overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

5. Finally, we encourage our faithful to approach their parish priest or spiritual father with any questions or concerns about this statement and its practical repercussions in their daily lives.

Statement on the Middle East

1. We, the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, representing millions of Orthodox Christians in the United States, Canada and Central America, express our grave concern over the escalation of political unrest and ongoing violence in countries throughout the Middle East, especially in Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and more recently in Syria.

2. Our Assembly repudiates any and all attacks on human beings, irrespective of race and religion, by means of violence, kidnapping, torture and killing. Moreover, we deplore the destruction of all places of worship. We are especially disheartened at the inexcusable indifference and unjustifiable inaction of authorities, which have failed to protect the Christian population and the broader public in these regions.

3. We implore all involved parties and political authorities, especially those of the countries we represent, to pursue vigorously all peaceful means for the resolution of the conflicts and the termination of the murder of men, women and children.

4. Finally, we appeal once more to the responsible persons for the release of all those kidnapped, especially the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Boulos Yazigi (brother of His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch) and the Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim, both of Aleppo, Syria.

5. The Assembly of Bishops urges people to remember that Christians in the Middle East, Egypt, and Syria have peacefully coexisted with all people in the region for two thousand years. As such, they must be respected and included in all decisions toward social and political justice.

Message of the Assembly of Bishops

To our beloved Orthodox Christian faithful throughout North and Central America:

All things should be done decently and in order. (1 Cor. 14:40)

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord,

We, the members of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, gathered in Chicago for our fourth annual meeting on September 17-19, 2013, greet you with paternal love, as we offer glory and thanks to our Triune God.

Forty-three Hierarchs convened in the unity of our holy Orthodox faith, mindful of our responsibility to each other and to the whole Church as the Body of Christ. We recognize our responsibility to “do all things decently and in order” as our foremost duty towards His holy Church and the people of Christ, especially the youth. We belong to the Church, which believes in and manifests the grace of the Triune God and the power of our Lord’s passion and resurrection.

We opened our Assembly with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the sharing of the Holy Eucharist at the Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral (ROCOR) in Des Plaines IL. In professing our common witness and love for one another and the faithful entrusted to us by God, we shared the Holy Eucharist on a day when we also commemorated the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan and proclaimed the importance of religious freedom, especially for religious minorities throughout the world. We expressed our sorrow that, seventeen centuries after its promulgation, the Ecumenical Patriarchate today does not enjoy fundamental religious freedoms guaranteed by the Emperor St. Constantine’s edict.

In this regard, we urge people to remember that the Christians in Turkey, the Middle East and Egypt have peacefully coexisted with all people in the region for two thousand years. Furthermore, we appeal once again for the release of all those kidnapped, especially the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Boulos Yazigi (brother of His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch) and the Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim, both of Aleppo, Syria.

However, during this intense period of conflict throughout the Middle East, inasmuch as we represent millions of Orthodox Christians in the United States, Canada and Central America, we express our grave concern over the escalation of political unrest and ongoing violence in Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and more recently in Syria, but also the continuing threats and crimes against churches and people in Kosovo. In this regard, we repudiate any and all attacks on human beings, irrespective of race and religion, by means of violence, kidnapping, torture and killing. Moreover, we deplore the destruction of all places of worship. We are especially disheartened at the inexcusable indifference and unjustifiable inaction of authorities, which have failed to protect the Christian population and the broader public in these regions. Moreover, following the example of Jesus Christ, who blessed the peacemakers in his Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:9), we implore all involved parties and political authorities, especially those of the countries we represent, to pursue vigorously all peaceful means for the resolution of the conflicts and the termination of the murder of men, women and children.

We have also been apprised and are deeply concerned about the arrest and detention of Archbishop Jovan of Ohrid in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
(FYROM) as a result of exercising his fundamental human right of religious freedom. We urge our faithful to stand in prayer and solidarity for a prompt and positive resolution to this issue.

In his report as Chairman of the Assembly, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios raised the critical issues of a rising militant Islam marked by violence against ancient Christian communities throughout the world, including the Middle East, Nigeria, and the Philippines. He also referred to challenges created by the expanding secularism and scandalous poverty that characterize our contemporary world, emphasizing: “The sight of social injustice should trouble us. We should be worried if we find ourselves becoming ‘mere spectators’ in our world.” We commend the prompt and practical response by the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) as the Assembly’s agency to people suffering under conditions of war, famine and natural disaster. We also express our prayers in support of the families involved and for the repose of the souls of the victims in the Naval Yard tragedy last Monday in Washington DC.

Throughout the meeting, we had a candid and fraternal evaluation of achievement hitherto and work that remains outstanding in our ministry as Orthodox in this region, observing that, despite the geographical expanse of our regional assembly, we are nevertheless bridged by our love for God. Therefore, mindful of our obligations as well as the challenges in order for us to affirm and realize the vision of the Assembly of Bishops for our Church in the Americas, and cognizant of the diversity and unique issues in our traditions, cultures and administrations, we reviewed and deliberated on ideas and possibilities for canonical restructuring of the Church in America, which was presented by the Committee forCanonical Regional Planning under the leadership of Archbishop Nicolae. In this regard, we reflected on and reaffirmed our commitment to the decisions and expectations of the Primates of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches and the Pan-Orthodox Preconciliar Conferences.

Among the items on the agenda were reports from the Assembly’s Secretariat, its 13 committees, and 14 agencies and endorsed organizations. We praise God for the open and sincere spirit of deliberation and cooperation that prevailed during the sessions of the Assembly and celebrate the larger vision of unity that lies before us.

Upon hearing the report from the Committee for Youth, we were delighted to bless a proposal to plan a conference of Orthodox youth on the local, regional, and national levels from across all jurisdictions of the Assembly of Bishops in order to foster closer relationships among our youth, create common programs and ministries in response to their shared challenges, and advance a common witness toward greater unity throughout our territory.

For all these things, we ask for your prayers as the precious people of God and our beloved Orthodox faithful, while we pray that the abundant blessings of our merciful God be always with all of you.

Archbishop Demetrios, Chairman; Archbishop Justinian, 2nd Vice Chairman; Bishop Basil, Secretary; Metropolitan Antony, Treasurer; Metropolitan Iakovos; Metropolitan Isaiah; Metropolitan Alexios; Metropolitan Nikitas; Metropolitan Nicholas; Metropolitan Savas; Metropolitan Gerasimos; Metropolitan Evangelos; Bishop Andonios; Bishop Ilia; Bishop Daniel; Bishop Demetrios; Bishop Sevastianos; Bishop Pankrati; Bishop Gregory; Bishop Thomas; Bishop Alexander; Bishop John; Bishop Nicholas; Metropolitan Hilarion; Archbishop Alypy; Archbishop Kyrill; Bishop Peter; Bishop Theodosy; Bishop George; Bishop Longin; Bishop Maxim; Archbishop Nicolaie; Bishop Ioan Casian; Bishop Danil; Metropolitan Tikhon; Archbishop Nathaniel; Archbishop Nikon; Archbishop Benjamin; Bishop Melchisedek; Bishop Michael; Bishop Alexander; Bishop Irineu; Bishop Mark

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**EPISCOPATE SHARES ROMANIAN-AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS WITH ROMANIAN EMBASSY**


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**MOVING?**

Send your old and new addresses to:

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or e-mail to: addresses@roea.org
This glorious and wonderworking saint was born in Thessalonica of noble and devout parents. Implored of God by childless parents, Demetrius was their only son, and so was raised and educated with great care. Demetrius’s father was a commander in Thessalonica.

When his father died, Emperor Maximian appointed Demetrius as commander in his place. As he appointed him, Maximian, an opponent of Christ, particularly recommended that he persecute and exterminate the Christians in Thessalonica. Demetrius not only disobeyed the emperor but openly confessed and preached the Lord Jesus Christ in the city of Thessalonica. When the emperor heard of this he became furious with Demetrius. Then, when he was returning from battle against the Sarmatians, Maximian stopped at Thessalonica to investigate the matter.

The emperor summoned Demetrius and questioned him about his faith. Demetrius openly acknowledged his Christian Faith to the emperor and also denounced the emperor’s idolatry. Maximian cast Demetrius into prison. Knowing what was awaiting him, Demetrius gave all his goods to his faithful servant Lupus to distribute to the poor, and joyfully awaited his imminent suffering for Christ the Lord.

An angel of God appeared to him in prison, saying: “Peace be to you, O sufferer of Christ; be brave and be strong!” After several days, the emperor sent soldiers to the prison to kill Demetrius. The soldiers found the saint of God at prayer and ran him through with lances. Christians secretly took his body and honorably buried it. Healing myrrh flowed from the body of the martyr of Christ, curing many of the sick. Soon, a small church was built over his relics.

An Illyrian nobleman, Leontius, was afflicted with an incurable illness. He hastened, with prayer to the relics of St. Demetrius and was completely healed. In thanks-giving, Leontius erected a much larger church on the site of the old church. The saint appeared to him on two occasions.

When Emperor Justinian wanted to translate the relics of the saint from Thessalonica to Constantinople, flaming sparks sprang from the tomb and a voice was heard: “Stop, and do not touch!” And thus, the relics of St. Demetrius have remained for all time in Thessalonica.

As the protector of Thessalonica, St. Demetrius has appeared many times, and on many occasions has saved Thessalonica from great calamity. His miracles are without number. The Russians considered St. Demetrius to...
be the protector of Siberia, which was conquered and annexed to Russia on October 26, 1581.

**Miracle One of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica**

Demetrius was a commander of Thessalonica during his life and remained so after his repose. People have felt his presence in Thessalonica, especially in times of great calamities. He protects the city, wards off misfortunes, repels invaders, and helps all who invoke his name.

Here is a wonderful example of his unusual aid to people in need.

Once, the barbarians attacked Thessalonica and were unable to overtake it. Infuriated at this, they pillaged the countryside and bound and carried off two beautiful maidens whom they gave as a gift to their prince. These maidens knew how to embroider well. When the prince saw their handiwork, he said to them: “I hear that there is a great god in your land, Demetrius, and that he works great miracles. Embroider his face on this linen.”

The maidens told him that St. Demetrius was not a god but rather God’s servant and the helper of Christians. At first, they refused to embroider the face of the saint, but when the prince threatened them with death, they carried out the command and completed the task by St. Demetrius’s Day. On the eve of the feast, they looked at their embroidery and wept sorrowfully, as they had to spend the feast day in slavery and had to give that embroidered image of their beloved saint to an impious barbarian. Both maidens prayed to St. Demetrius to forgive them. Then St. Demetrius appeared to them and took them both away, as an angel had once taken the Prophet Habakkuk. He brought them to Thessalonica and set them in his church. A solemn all-night vigil was being celebrated, and many people were there. When they learned of the miraculous rescue of these Christian maidens, all glorified God and St. Demetrius, His great servant and commander.

**Miracle Two of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica**

That the saints of God live, clothed in great glory and might in the heavens, Orthodox Christians know, not by their own reasoning, but by the true help and visitations of the saints. At times the saints appear so that men may see and hear them; at times, only to be either seen or heard; at times, though unseen and unheard, they influence our thoughts, our dispositions and our actions.

Among the many miracles of St. Demetrius in Thessalonica the following is recorded:

A young man named Onesiphorus was appointed to the service of sacristan in the Church of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica. His primary task was to keep an account of the candles and lampadas. This young man began to steal candles, take them home, and then resell them. St. Demetrius appeared to him and said: “Brother Onesiphorus, your action is not pleasing to me, for you are stealing candles. By this, you bring harm to others and especially to yourself. Cease doing this and repent!”

Onesiphorus was frightened and ashamed and, for a time, stopped stealing candles. But he eventually forgot himself, and again began to steal candles. One morning, a distinguished man brought some large candles to the tomb of the saint, lit them, prayed and left. Onesiphorus approached the candles and stretched forth his hand with the intention of taking them, but at that moment a voice like thunder roared: “Are you doing that again?!”

As though struck by lightning, Onesiphorus fell to the ground, unconscious. When someone came into the church he found him and lifted him up off the floor; he gradually came to himself and related all that had happened. Everyone was astonished, and glorified God.

*Posted on MYSTAGOGY (johnsanidopoulos.com).*

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**SOLIA**

October 9, 2012 - September 25, 2013

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society for aid. Many clergy work outside the parish and are limited in what they can do because of other obligations. Regarding the Vatra facilities, the Archbishop noted that maintenance of the structures is extremely costly due to their age, and the administration is limited in what it can do by finances. He said that to maintain the Vatra, we need growth in the parishes. He ended the presentation with the assistance of Bishop Irineu by sharing some passages from the gospel of St. Matthew in English and Romanian.

• In the report on Religious Education, Fr. Dan Hoarste commented on the Vatra Summer Camps and their positive impact on the students, visible at the closing of the camps in their “bright, shining faces.” He encouraged the clergy and delegates to spread the word about the camps so that the maximum amount of students may participate. He ended the presentation with an appeal for new mattresses for the dormitory. At this point, a number of parishes and individuals pledged support for the project, including Metropolitan Tikhon and Archbishop Nathaniel who offered a matching challenge of one full room (5 beds). Within minutes, the entire project was close to completely pledged.

• After a review of the many reports included in the Annual Report to the Episcopate Congress, delegates discussed and debated the topic of the Proposed Budget for 2014 and its Income Deficit Requirement of nearly $72K. The result was that delegates approved a special assessment for 2014: each parish will give the Episcopate $1000 and each mission $500 which will cover the deficit for one year (2014).

• Following the approval of the budget, Archbishop Nathaniel addressed the delegates on the issue of the Vatra property. He noted that while the buildings are beautiful, the majority are past one hundred years old, are not very functional and extremely expensive to insure and maintain. The Vatra campus is part of each parish in the sense that it exists to serve the parishes. It’s up to the Congress to determine what it wants the Episcopate to maintain.

• Preoteasa Mary Lynn Pac-Urar made a special report accompanied by a slide show on the Family Life & All-Auxiliaries Conference held at the Vatra in July 2013. The event was successful on many levels including financial, resulting in a check for $1500 to the Episcopate to help cover site-hosting costs.

• The following delegates were elected to the Episcopate Council for 2013-2015: Frs. David Subu, Ionel Cudritescu, Calinic Berger, Remus Grama, Laurence Lazar, Chesarie Bertea (Alternate); Emil Sicoe, Nick Jones, Paul Laroque, George Fatsy, Ionel Maiogian, Psa. Mary Ellen Rosco, Gregory Thetford, Ovidiu Vatamanu, Georgie Washington, Daniel Wilson, and Alternates: John Morgavan, Corina Philips.

• The delegates also elected the lay members to the Church Tribunal for 2013-2015: Axinia Lucia (Lucy) Pop, Virgil David Maxim, Alternates: Nicholas Cocoa, George Cantor.

At the end of the sessions, Sts. Peter & Paul Church in Dearborn Heights, Michigan offered to host the Congress at the Vatra in 2014. Also, Fr. George Oanca, Chaplain (Captain, US Army) was recognized and offered a moving presentation to the assembly. The meeting was followed by a dinner and musical performance in the Vatra Pavilion Hall.

On Saturday, September 7, clergy processed to the Nativity of the Ever-Virgin Mary Hierarchal Chapel from the Bishop’s Residence. The Hierarchal Divine & Holy Liturgy was concelebrated by His Beatitude Tikhon, His Eminence Nathaniel and His Grace Irineu, with a sobor of some 35 priests and 3 deacons. The responses were given by a collection of clergy and laypeople, led by Subdeacon John Lazar. After sermons from His Beatitude and His Eminence, a special gift of an icon and holy relics of Saint Andrei Saguna (Metropolitan of Transylvania) were presented to His Beatitude. The weekend’s events concluded with a festive banquet.

Participant
The Lives of the Four Evangelists

These brief Lives, written by Saint Sophronius of Jerusalem, are traditionally included in the introductory sections of the liturgical Gospels of the Orthodox Church in Greek and Church Slavonic. St. Sophronius I was Patriarch of Jerusalem (634-638; feast day March 11) and as a patristic writer is also known as Sophronius the Sophist. His extant writings, including liturgical hymns, poetry, accounts of lives and miracles of the saints, and dogmatic works, have been published in Migne’s Patrologia Graeca. He is also co-author, with John Moschos, of the Lemonarium, a classical collection of accounts of the ancient desert fathers.

The Life of the Evangelist Matthew

Matthew, also known as Levi, tax collector turned apostle, was the first to compose the Gospel of Christ, in Judea in the Hebrew language for those of the circumcision who believed. It is unknown by whom it was later translated into Greek. The Hebrew text is preserved to this day in the library of Caesarea that was most diligently assembled by the Martyr Pamphilus. The Nazarenes of Berroia in Syria, who use this text, gave me permission to copy it. From this, one is easily convinced that where the evangelist makes use of the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures, either himself, or in the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he does not follow the authority of the Seventy (i.e. The Septuagint), but of the Hebrew text. It is from the latter that these two passages come: “Out of Egypt have I called My Son” (Mt.2:15) and “He shall be called a Nazarene” (Mt 2:23).

The Life of the Evangelist Mark

Mark was the disciple and interpreter of Peter, and, at the urging of the brethren in Rome, Mark wrote his short Gospel, following exactly what he had heard Peter tell. When Peter saw it, he gave it his approval, and directed that it be read in the Church, as Clement says in Book VI of his Outline. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, makes mention of this same Mark. Peter, in his first Epistle, refers to Rome metaphorically by the name “Babylon”: “The church that is at Babylon, chosen together with you, salutes you; and so does Mark my son” (I Pet. 5:13). Taking with him the Gospel which he himself had written, Mark went to Egypt, and was the first to preach Jesus Christ in Alexandria, where he established the Church. So highly did he excel both in teaching and in a life of steadfast endurance, that all those who came to believe in Christ, followed his example. And Philo [an Alexandrian Jewish philosopher of the first century AD], the most eloquent of the Jews, was so impressed when he saw the first church in Alexandria while it was still made up primarily of Jews, that he wrote a book about the life of those Christians, praising, as it were, his own race. Luke relates that the believers in Jerusalem held everything in common; likewise Philo preserved the memory of what he had seen occurring in Alexandria under the guidance of Mark. Mark reposed in the eighth year of Nero’s reign [63 A.D.]. He was buried in Alexandria, where Ananias succeeded him as bishop.

The Life of the Evangelist Luke

Luke, a physician of Antioch, was not unacquainted with Greek culture, as is shown by his writings. He was a companion of the Apostle Paul and followed him in all his journeys to foreign lands. Luke wrote the Gospel to which Paul himself refers when he says, “And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches” (II Cor. 8:18). And in his letter to the Colossians he says, “Luke, the beloved physician, greets you” (Col. 4:14). And to Timothy he says, “Only Luke is with me” (II Tim. 4:11).

Luke wrote another excellent book entitled The Acts of the Apostles, a history which ends with Paul’s two-year stay in Rome, that is, in the fourth year of Nero’s reign. This leads us to believe that The Acts of the Apostles was written in Rome. The tale of the journey of Paul and Thecla, and every other fable, such as the baptism of the lion, should not be counted among the canonical Scriptures. For it is not possible that he who was inseparable from the Apostle should not have known of this act among all his other acts. Tertullian also mentions a certain elder in Asia at that time, a companion of the Apostle Paul, who, when it was proven in the presence of John that he was the author of this book, confessed that he had written it out of love for Paul. Some say that this is why Luke does not mention himself as the author. Whenever Paul says in his own Epistles, “according to my Gospel” (Rom. 2:16, etc.), it is clear that he means the Gospel written by Luke. But Luke learned the Gospel not only from the Apostle Paul, who was not with the Lord in the body at that time, but from the other Apostles as well. He himself clearly states this at the beginning of his work, saying, even as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses. Therefore he wrote the Gospel as he had heard it. But he wrote The Acts based on what he himself had experienced. Luke’s relics were taken up and carried to Constantinople, together with the relics of the Apostle Andrew, in the twentieth year of the reign of Constantius.

The Life of the Evangelist John

John, “the beloved disciple” [see Jn. 13:23], was the son of Zebedee and the brother of James, who was beheaded by Herod after the Passion of the Lord [see Acts 12:1-2]. John was the last of the Evangelists to write a Gospel. At the request of the bishops of Asia, he wrote his Gospel to combat the teachings of Cerinthus and other heretics, and especially the newly-appeared doctrine of the Ebionites, who claimed that Christ did not exist until Mary gave birth to Him. This prompted John to expound on Christ’s divine generation. There is another

Cont. on page 14
Not since George Pomutz was appointed Brevet Brigadier General on March 13, 1865, when he was a Provost Marshal of the 17th Iowa Infantry in the American Civil War, did any naturalized American of Romanian descent ever attain the rank of **Major General** as my cousin **Simeon G. Trombitas** has achieved, in the United States Army. Brigadier General Pomutz was born in Gyula, Hungary to Romanian ethnic parents. Simeon's grandparents, George and Paraschiva (Ziga) Trombitas, were born in the small town of Beclean, Romania near the city of Fagaras. Now many of you who are reading this may question my reasoning for putting together this information on Simeon. My reason is very simple. No other American Romanian has ever achieved this rank in the U.S. Army since General George Pomutz, and I felt this story had to be told. As a matter of fact, I am perplexed that this information on Simeon has not appeared anywhere in a Romanian American periodical. So with this preamble in mind, I want to tell you “the rest of the story” about Simeon G. Trombitas, starting with some background information on his family tree.

Simeon’s parents are John and Dorothy Trombitas who are very humble and unpretentious parents and never boastful about the accomplishments of their sons. They are also two of the nicest people we have ever known. They have resided in Warren, Ohio, where they raised their sons Simeon and John. Both boys were baptized in the Holy Resurrection Romanian Orthodox Church in Warren, and I remember that Simeon attended a summer camp at the Vatra with my oldest son Terry.

Simeon’s brother John just completed 26 years of distinguished service in the U.S. Coast Guard. Simeon and John come from a family of true American patriots. Their father John enlisted in the Army Air Corps on December 8, 1941, the day after Pearl Harbor was bombed. Their Uncle Charles Trombitas who lives in Niles, Ohio was an M-boat driver that deposited soldiers and supplies during the Normandy Invasion of France during WWII. Their other uncle, George Trombitas was also in WWII fighting in the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium and had some very narrow escapes during his tour of duty there. I can still remember listening to the radio with Simeon’s

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I served in the armed forces of our country as a Marine. After I was discharged from the Marines, I joined the American Legion and have remained an active member for the past forty-five years. During my tenure in the Legion, I held a number of positions. This past year, with the blessings of His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, I was asked to serve as the State Chaplain for the Ohio American Legion. This was an honor that I did not wish to take lightly. I conferred with His Eminence to outline specific services that I would be in charge of during the course of the year. During my years of membership, I was not aware of any Eastern Orthodox Christian Clergyman having served in this position in Ohio. I felt strongly that I had the opportunity to set an example for other Eastern Orthodox Clergy who might follow in my footsteps.

The Preamble to The Constitution of The American Legion begins with: “For God and Country, we associate ourselves together.” My goal was to reinvigorate these words into the everyday activity of the American Legion members and provide a model for the Chaplains who would follow me in the American Legion.

I requested and received permission from the Ohio American Legion Convention Corporation Committee to hold a training session for the chaplains at various levels to better assist them in their position of service. It is my understanding that this, too, was the first offering of an in-service training ever conducted at the American Legion of Ohio State Convention. The session covered areas of the chaplaincy that would be helpful to those working as a Chaplain. Topics included: the length of visitation, keeping an active dialogue with the member, and showing genuine concern for the patient’s well-being, and offering prayer. This provides the Chaplain with the opportunity to identify areas of assistance from which the individual member could benefit.

The American Legion is comprised of individuals from many different faiths. It is the Chaplain’s responsibility to embrace and include all of these beliefs in interactions so that someone is not offended by his words. The attendees at the training session were provided with a compilation of training materials I compiled from training manuals. The session was well attended and provided almost two hours of good discussion and an exchange of shared experiences on a number of topics.

On the final day of the Convention each year, a Memorial Service is conducted. The final closing session this year was attended by approximately sixty individuals for the Memorial Service. This was a satisfying highlight for me, even though I am not sure there were any Eastern Orthodox Christians in attendance. Those in attendance did participate in the responses to the petitions as they were chanted, and the service was concluded in an inspiring manner.

The fact that an Eastern Orthodox Christian had never held the position of Chaplain and that an Orthodox memorial service was offered and completed, was a different experience to those in attendance. Afterwards, a number of the participants approached to tell me they were very appreciative for the opportunity to participate in the service.

I thank His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, for his continued confidence, support, and encouragement to allow me to serve in this capacity.

Rev. Deacon Wayne Paul Wright
Past Department Chaplain, 2012-13
The American Legion Department of Ohio
Parish Deacon - Presentation of Our Lord Church,
Fairlawn, Ohio

“So Proudly We Hail”

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grandparents in Ellsworth, Ohio, on June 6, 1944, for the reports of this action which was quite frightening and apprehensive for them as parents of soldiers on the battlefront. When George came back from the war, he was graduated from The Ohio State University on the G.I. Bill and later became Superintendent of Schools for the Leetonia, Ohio School System.

In summary, I sincerely hope that this article will generate some acknowledgment of the success, commitment and dedication that Major General Simeon G. Trombitas has exemplified by his actions and comportment and which makes our entire family so proud of him. Simeon is married to the former Kellie Snyder, and they have two sons, Paul and Simeon. Without Kellie’s help in providing me with this information, no one would have known about the achievements of Major General Simeon G. Trombitas. To us, he is a hero who not only brings honor and glory to his extended family and friends but also to our country.

Solia

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Edmund/Carolyn Sunday, Uniontown, OH
Ann Tyler, Fort Wayne, IN
Mariana Vajda, Toms River, NJ
Vestal Publishing, Cliffwood, NJ
V. Rev. Fr. Dimitire Vincent, Redford, MI
John DeMintici, Toronto, ON
George Galat, Burlington, ON
Allan/Arlene Lucas, Ft. McMurray, AB
Willis Soprovich, Hairy Hill, AB
Dumitru Stan, Toronto, ON
Moral Injury ...

Continued from page 3

commit suicide every day; that is a staggering 8,000 men and women every year, almost triple the number killed in the 9-11 attacks. In Canada, those numbers are much lower, but even one death is one too many. Suicide is but the ultimate symptom of the illness. It is the tragic end of a walk down a very troubled and lonely road with no relief.

The symptoms of PTSD and Moral Injury affect more than just the soldier, and may include the inability to relate, severe depression, drug or alcohol abuse, mood swings, and violent behavior. They affect friends, family and colleagues adversely. Families are usually at a loss as to how to help their loved one. They have not shared in the experiences; and as much as they try, they cannot understand the wounds. They are limited and do not have the tools to help, nor is their help usually accepted. Consequently, they too feel hurt, helpless and alone.

What can be done? The key to dealing with Moral Injury is to recognize its spiritual nature and that it is not something that can be solved by normal medical means. We Christians have great resources in coping with our sins and the ensuing guilt, confusion and shame that follow: prayer, confession, and the all-encompassing forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ. These resources are all the more important and necessary in the healing of Moral Injury.

The first step is prayer: for our soldiers, for their families, and for peace.

Secondly, we need to understand that the way war causes mental and spiritual trauma also affects the way soldiers can receive treatment. Here, the role of the military chaplain is all-important, and needs to be expanded in a proactive manner, having systems in place to support the combatants and especially those returning home. Preparations should be made for the young soldiers before they get deployed. A network of chaplains and experts should be in place and accessible for them at all times. Even if the government has resources, if they do not get to the soldier, the resources are empty promises. These resources could include a period of “detox”: a safe place away from society, where they can cleanse themselves of this poison. Professional chaplains and medical doctors, who are trained, trusted and understand this trauma, need to be available for help.

Most importantly, our Holy Orthodox Church has the Sacrament of Confession and Holy Communion for the relieving of sins and medicine towards true inner cleansing. These sacraments, and our tradition of Spiritual Fatherhood, should also be seen as an essential component of healing for Orthodox Christian soldiers.

Finally, healing our soldiers through understanding, respect and love, is something that all of us can do. They need this from us. They have put themselves in the horrific situations for our continued freedom and safety. We shouldn’t question how or why they feel like they do, nor discuss political policies with them. They have no say in the decisions made by leaders. It is difficult enough to suffer a Moral Injury, but to have to justify one’s actions to strangers just adds to the pain the soldier is suffering. Young men and women who go to war will find themselves in morally ambiguous and even evil situations, situations that have no purely righteous way out. They can only do so much by themselves in handling the injustices they encounter. We have a moral responsibility to help them.

Four Evangelists ...

Continued from page 11

reason why he wrote. After examining the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke from beginning to end, John confirmed that they had recorded the truth [in contrast to authors of other, so-called gospels then in circulation]. Then he composed his own Gospel, focusing on the final year of the Lord’s earthly ministry and on His Passion. John omitted most of the events of the previous two years, because these had already been faithfully recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke. A careful study of the four Gospels will resolve the apparent discrepancies between John’s narrative and the narratives of the other three Evangelists. John also wrote an epistle, which begins, “That which was from the beginning”. This epistle is accepted as John’s by all ecclesiastical and scholarly authorities. The other two epistles bearing his name—the first, beginning, “The elder unto the elect lady”; and the second, “The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius”—are considered by some to be the work of a certain John the Elder, whose tomb (one of two bearing the name John) still exists in Ephesus to this day. Others, however, maintain that these two epistles are also the work of John the Evangelist. ... Now in the fourteenth year of his reign, the emperor Domitian initiated the second major persecution of Christians (Nero’s persecution was the first). John was banished to the island of Patmos and there wrote the Apocalypse, later translated by Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. After Domitian was murdered, his decrees were annulled by the Senate on account of their inhuman cruelty. Nerva ascended the throne, and John was allowed to return to Ephesus, where he lived until the fourth year of Trajan’s reign [101 AD]. During this time, John founded and built up churches throughout Asia. In the sixty-eighth year of our Lord’s Passion, John reposed in great old age near Ephesus.

Originally posted in MYSTAGOGY - The Weblog of John Sanidopoulos (johnsanidopoulos.com).

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FINANCIAL REPORT

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Metropolitan Tikhon’s Grandmother Falls Asleep in the Lord

SYOSSET, NY [OCA] (September 18, 2013) - Marie-Hélène Appollonia Mollard (nee: Stevenin), paternal grandmother of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, fell asleep in the Lord on Wednesday, September 18, 2013, at the age of 106. A resident of Les Contamines-Montjoie in the French Alps, she was born in Gaby (Aosta Valley), Italy on December 8, 1906. She was the beloved wife of Fernand Mollard, who reposed in 1980. She is survived by four children—Francois, father of Metropolitan Tikhon—Marie-Therese, Madeleine and Firmin and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Metropolitan Tikhon attended her funeral abroad. May her memory be eternal!
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Thank you and may God repay you! Mulțumim și Dumnezeu să vă răsplătească!
La sfârșitul lunii iulie și începutul lunii august, s-a ținut la Vatra Românească tabăra de vară pentru juniori – copii cu vârste cuprinse între 11 și 13 ani. Cu binecuvântarea Înalt Preasfântului Părinte Nathaniel, continuând cu venerabilă tradiție a taberelor de vară de peste 60 de ani, tinerii din toată întinderea episcopiei au venit la Vatra pentru două săptămâni pentru a beneficia de un program de educație religioasă de excelență organizat de Doamna Preoteasă Mary Ellen Rosco – directoarea acestei tabere și de echipa sa. Anul acesta am avut 29 de elevi din parohiile din apropierea Vetrei – de la Detroit, Cleveland și Chicago, dar și de mai departe, din Philadelphia, și chiar din California.

Timp de două săptămâni programul taberei a fost structurat în jurul activităților duhovențești fiind de asemenea îmbodobit și cu diverse activități pe măsura și placul tinerilor. Inaugurarea taberei s-a facut duminică seara, 28 iulie, când s-a slujit slujba Aghiazmei Mici în biserica de jos urmată apoi de sfințirea dormitoarelor și a clădirilor folosite pe parcursul taberei, urmând mai apoi cina și sesiunea de introducere a „viții de tabără de Vatra” unde Doamna Preoteasă a urat bun venit tuturor. În zilele ce au urmat, activitățile zilnice începeau cu rugăciunea de dimineață, slujbă scurtă nu mai mult de 25 de minute fiind urmată de un scurt cuvânt de învățătură, același lucru fiind făcut la rugăciunea de seară. La aceste două momente importante din viața taberei copii participau cu entuziasm, cântând împreună toată slujba și trăind cu adevărat experiența vie a laudei lui Dumnezeu. Apoi, în fiecare dimineață, după micul dejun, timp de o oră și jumătatea se desfășura cursul de educație religioasă intitulat „Viața Ortodoxă.” Anul acesta am vorbit despre facerea Omului de către Dumnezeu și legătura importantă a Omului cu Creatorul Său. A fost un curs interactiv și informativ pentru copii care au învățat fiecare câte ceva nou. Alte activități zilnice erau clasele de lucru manual și creație unde tinerii lucrau la proiecte de artă religioasă, apoi o oră de istorie și spiritualitate învârdand despre vieți ale sfinților, iar seara clasa de muzică și ora de „discuție cu preotul” unde am avut ocazia să abordăm subiecte de interes din viața unui tânăr școlar.

Pe lângă aceste componente duhovențești au fost o serie de activități recreaționale, sport și timp liber zilnic, jocuri de echipe organizate, excursii la parc, la înot la lacul Portage din apropiere, la terenul de mini golf, la popice și desigur indulcirea la faimoasa înghețată din Jackson – the Parlour. Am organizat o ieșire la cinema cu tot grupul. S-au organizat două pelerinaje la mănăstirile din zonă. Primul, duminică 4 august, la Mănăstirea Înălțarea Domnului din Clinton unde am fost primiți de către Prea Sfântul Episcop-Vicar Irineu, Starețul acestei mănăstiri unde am participat la Sfânta Liturghie și poșta un gustos prânz cu mâncare de post tradițională. Peste două zile, în 6 august, de sârbătoarea Schimbării la Față, am participat la Sfânta Liturghie la Mănăstirea Adormirea Maicii Domnului din Rives Junction fiind primiți de Maica Stareță Gabriela, care, după masa de prânz, le-a vorbit tinerilor despre vocația monahală și viața duhovențească plăcută Domnului.

La tabără, tinerii au avut ocazia de se cunoaște unii pe alții, de a forma prietenii și dar mai ales de a cunoaște pe Dumnezeu și de a se apropia de El. Dacă tabăra de vară de la Vatra oferă ceva unic este acest lucru – cunoașterea lui Dumnezeu prin experiența directă în sfintele slujbe și mai apoi în cursul de religie împletit cu comuniunea vie trăită și cu alții tineri ortodocși de aceeași vârstă. Zâmbetul și lumina de pe chipul copiilor de la sfârșitul taberei este confirmarea ceea ce am urmată de experienței trăite la Vatra. Datorită programului frumos organizat, al personalului calificat și prin dragostea și jertfelnicia Doamnei Preoteasă Mary Ellen Rosco ca directoare, a preoților slujitori, a personalului medical, al bucatelor și al tuturor celor implicați, tinerii au avut parte de momente frumoase și de neuitat. Bucuria aceasta curată și sfântă care vine și crește pe parcursul taberei este cea ce va rodi în inima lor o mai adâncă dorință de a-l cunoaște
De 372 de ani de când moaștele Cuvioasei Parascheva se află la Iași, sărbătoarea din 14 octombrie are o însemnătate cu totul aparte pentru români, sute de mii de credincioși venind să se închine la racla celei pe care o știu "mult folositoare". Cei care ajung la "Cuvioasa" - așa cum o numesc prietenii ei - o roagă pentru soluționarea problemelor de zi cu zi, îi cer alinare pentru necazurile care s-au năpustit asupra lor, sănătate, spor în casă și bucurii. Iar Sfânta îl ascultă pe fiecare în parte și nu întârzie să le vină în ajutor celor ce își pun speranța în puterea ei și o roagă cu credință. Minunile Cuvioasei sunt nenumărate. Multe sunt cunoscute din povestirile celor care le-au primit, dar multe au rămas în taina celor care le-au trăit.

Sfânta Parascheva de la Iaşi se bucură în ţară de un cult deosebit, mai mult decât toți ceilalți sfinți care au moaște în România. În fiecare zi, la Catedrala mitropolitană din Iaşi, de dimineață până seara târziu, se face un mic pelerinaj continuu, cu credincioși de toate vârstele și din toate locurile, veniți la rugăciune. În mod deosebit, în sărbători, în posturi și în fiecare vineri, considerată ziua Cuvioasei Parascheva, vin mulți credincioși și se închină la racla cu credință, aducând flori, daruri și îmbrăcăminte, pe care le ating de racla ei, pentru a primi ajutor, sănătate și binevântare. Se spune că atâtea minuni a săvârșit Sfânta Parascheva, multe chiar decât numărul stelelor și nisipul mării. Pentru că Sfânta vindecă şchiopi, surzi, ciungi, ologe și tot felul de boli, chiar și cele mortale; depărtează toată neputința, numai cu atingerea racla. Și în zilele noastre, Cuvioasa nu conținește a face minuni pentru cei care au credință alegărată la ea, nu numai în Epivata, unde casa părintelui a fost transformată în biserică închitată, ci și în Catedrala mitropolitană de la Iași, în toată lumea. Vă prezentăm în continuare câteva dintre minunile săvârșite de Cuvioasa Parascheva, povestite de credincioși în scrisorile trimise preoților slujitori de la Catedrala mitropolitană din Iași, consemnate în „Patericul românesc”:

- **O minune care a uimit Moldova și țara noastră a fost izbăvirea fără nici o vătămare a moaștelor Sfintei Parascheva din incendiul izbucnit în noaptea de 26 spre 27 decembrie 1888, în paradiisul mănăstirii Sfintii Trei Ierarhii, din Iași. Căci, aprinzându-se de la un sfeșnic catafalcul Cuvioasei, s-a topit argintul care îmbrăca racla, dar lemnul și sfintele ei moaște, deși erau învăluite în jericie, au rămas întregi și nevătămate spre întărirea credincioșilor și uimirea tuturor. Ca o mărturie a acestei mari minuni, se păstrează până astăzi racla dogorită de foc, în care se aflau moaștele Sfintei Parascheva. În dată după această minune, moaștele Cuvioasei au fost strămutate în noua Catedrală Mitropolitană din apropiere.

- **Vindecări de boli**: Într-o zi, o femeie de 40 de ani a intrat în Sfânta Mitropolie, alergând prin biserica și plângând în hohote. Un preot slujitor care se afla atunci în biserică a întrebat-o ce are. Aceasta i-a spus că a făcut sinuzită, dar, neavând timp să se trateze, s-a pomenit cu dureri grozave de cap și apoi s-a umflat tot capul. Morgând în cele din urmă la medic, acesta i-a spus că tot creierul este acoperit cu puroi și că trebuie să-i facă operație foarte grea, dar că ea nu va rezista la această operație, și de aceea să șteafe moartea. Preotul a întrebat-o dacă crede în Dumnezeu, iar ea a spus că da, dar la biserică vine rar, având serviciu, copii și sărace mare. Atunci, el i-a făcut pomelnic și a dus-o la Cuvioasa, unde s-a închinat. Preotul povestește că peste trei luni a întâlnit-o pe stradă, sănătosă și voioasă. Femeia i-a spus atunci slujitorului Domnului că „la vreo trei săptămâni după ce am dat pomelnicul, a început să-mi curgă puroi din nas și a curs mult timp. S-a scurs toată infeția de pe creier și m-am făcut sănătoasă”.

- Un inginer bolnav de plămâni a fost internat în spital la Iași pentru operație. Mama sa a mers atunci la moaștele Cuvioasei Parascheva și i-a cerut cu credință sănătate fiului ei. Timp de două săptămâni doctorii au amânat operația. Atunci au zis bolnavului: - Domnule inginer, ați scăpat de operație. Întoarceți-vă sănătos acasă. Este cineva care se roagă lui Dumnezeu pentru dumnevoastra!

- Un șofer bolnav de plămâni a fost internat în spital la Iași pentru operație. Mama sa a mers atunci la moaștele Cuvioasei Parascheva și i-a cerut cu credință sănătate fiului ei. Timp de două săptămâni doctorii au amânat operația. Atunci au zis bolnavului: - Domnule șofer, ați scăpat de operație. Întoarceți-vă sănătos acasă. Este cineva care se roagă lui Dumnezeu pentru dumnevoastra!
Ocritoarea studenților: Printre cei care alegă la ajutorul maicii noastre Parascheva sunt studenții. Mai ales în luniile de exame, racla Cuvioasei este plină de cărți, caiete de școală și pomelnice. O fată voia să dea la medicină. A venit la Mitropolie foarte necăzătă că toată vara nu s-a pregătit așa cum trebuie și îi e frică că nu va putea intra, căci din ce a învățat nu poate ține minte decât structura splinei. A fost sfătuită de preotii de aici să se ducă la racla Sfintei Parascheva, să se roage cum știe, iar ea o va ajuta. Tânăra, stând în genunchi în fața sfintei racle, s-a rugat: „Sfânta Parascheva, nu sunt pregătită, știi bine numai splina” La examen au intrat trei candidați. Li s-a întins cutia cu bilețele, au tras primii doi bilețele și la urmă a tras și ea, cu strângere de inimă, și mare i-a fost mirarea când a văzut pe bilețel: „Splina”. A știut perfect și a luat zecă. A doua zi a venit să-i mulțumească Cuvioasea Parascheva. De la ușă a început să plângă și să strie: „Cuvioasă, tu ai luat zece, tu ai știut, tu ești studență..., nu eu...“. Intorcându-mă acum cu gândul la cele peste două luni de rugăciuni speciale pentru plooie, tămăduiri și îndreptarea vieții, la participarea zinică a numeroșilor credincioși veniți ca la Mântuitorul Iisus Hristos, cu bolnavii și suferinții lor, cu adâncă smierterie înălțată măriei lumii Dumnezeu, Care Și-a arătat puterea adâncă ca viața de încredere și de încredere, nevrednici slujitori. Din ofrandele credincioșilor s-au oferit ajutoare căminelor de orfani, după recomandarea preotilor locului”, mărturisea, în urmă cu câțiva ani, la hramul Cuvioasei de la Iași, vrednicul de pomenire Teoctist patriarhul, în 1947 marellele eclesiar în Catedralele mitropolitane ieșene.

Mărturisesc părinții bătrâni care au fost martori ocru-lari, că, odată, de hramul ei, pe când oamenii au aşteptat la rând să se închine la racla Cuvioasei Parascheva, au venit și două creștine bătrâne din Focșani. Văzând lume multă, au zis preotului de la raclă: „Părinte, dă-ne voie să ne închinăm la Cuvioasă fără să mai stăm la rând și să-i punem sub cap această pernă nouă pe care le-am adus-o de acasă drept mulțumire pentru ajutorul ce ni-a dat”. „Dumnezeu să vă binecuvânteze, credincioșii, și să-i punem sub cap această pernă nouă pe care i-am adus-o de acasă drept mulțumire pentru ajutorul ce ni-a dat”. ”Dumnezeu să vă binecuvânteze, creștinii, și să-i punem sub cap această pernă nouă pe care le-am adus-o de acasă drept mulțumire pentru ajutorul ce ni-a dat”. „Dumnezeu să vă binecuvânteze, credincioșii, să-i punem sub cap această pernă nouă pe care le-am adus-o de acasă drept mulțumire pentru ajutorul ce ni-a dat”. 

În ultima zi, sâmbătă, 10 august, am slujit Sfânta Liturghie în biserică mare, în prezența Înalt Prea Sfintitului Părinte Nathaniel, cu Părintele Diacon David Oancea, cancelarul Episcopiei noastre, la care au participat copii împletiți pentru părintii lor – mai de dimineață am făcut cu ei o lecție interactivă despre pregătirea Sfintelor Daruri la Sfânta Proscomidie. Bucuria cea mare a fost când toți aceștia copiii au venit la împărății și au primit Darul cel de mare preț – adică Sfântul Trup și Scumpul Sânge al Domnului și fiind pregătiți pentru a se închină la racla Cuvioasei. Cuvioasa se încheie cu o mișcătoare procesiune în jurul Catedralei traian nevoi, audiența de doar câteva minute, iar după aceea se așază împreună cu clericii și credincioșii, cu lumânări în mâini, la moaștele sfintei, în suncetul clopotelor și al frumoaselor cântări bisericești. După aceea se așază în iernul și binecuvântează credincioșii veniți la racla locului, se cântă paracelsul Sfintei Parascheva, apoi fiecare se întoarce la ale sale cu bucuria marelui praznic în suflet și cu mângâierea Duhului Sfânt în inima

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**Tabăra Juniori**  *Cont. de la pag 17*

pe Dumnezeu și pe semenii lor, de a I urma Lui și a fi buni fii.

În ultima zi, sâmbătă, 10 august, am slujit Sfânta Liturghie în biserică mare, în prezența Înalt Prea Sfintitului Părinte Nathaniel, cu Părintele Diacon David Oancea, cancelarul Episcopiei noastre, la care au participat copii împreună cu părinții lor – mai de dimineață am făcut cu ei o lecție interactivă despre pregătirea Sfintelor Daruri la Sfânta Proscomidie. Bucuria cea mare a fost când toți aceștia copiii au venit la împărății și au primit Darul cel de mare preț – adică Sfântul Trup și Scumpul Sânge al Domnului și fiind pregătiți pentru a se închină la racla Cuvioasei. Cuvioasa se încheie cu o mișcătoare procesiune în jurul Catedralei traian nevoi, audiența de doar câteva minute, iar după aceea se așază împreună cu clericii și credincioșii, cu lumânări în mâini, la moaștele sfintei, în suncetul clopotelor și al frumoaselor cântări bisericești. După aceea se așază în iernul și binecuvântează credincioșii veniți la racla locului, se cântă paracelsul Sfintei Parascheva, apoi fiecare se întoarce la ale sale cu bucuria marelui praznic în suflet și cu mângâierea Duhului Sfânt în inima

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Pr Dan Hoarște

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SOLIA SEPT/OCT 2013

RUGĂȚI-VĂ ȘI LUCRAȚI PENTRU UNITATEA ORTODOXĂ ÎN AMERICA DE NORD
Sâmbătă, 28 septembrie 2013, credincioșii români din Colorado au trăit cu mare bucurie momentul sfântirii bisericii cu hramul "Sf. Ioan Iacob Hozevitul." Noua biserică ce a fost sfântită, a fost cumpărată în luna februarie a acestui an fiind mai apoi repede amenajată pentru a servi cerințelor și necesităților liturgice și pastorale ale comunității românilor ortodoxi de la poalele Munților Stâncoși din statul Colorado.


În ziua sfântirii, în duh de sărbătoare, credincioșii români din Colorado, îmbrăcați în costume naționale și cu flori în mână, i-au întâmpinat pe ierarhi așa cum este tradiția noastră românească cu pâine și sare, participând cu toți la slujba de sfântire a Sfintei Mese și a noii biserici. Momentele unice ale slujbei, cântările, precum și cuvintele frumoase de învățătură ale ierarhilor le-au înălțat sufletele tuturor celor prezenți la această mare sărbătoare. Un moment aparte și de-a dreptul emoționant a fost când ierarhul, lovind de trei ori în ușile bisericii, a cerut deschiderea lor prin cuvintele Sfintei Scripturi: "Ridicați căpetenii porțile voastre și vă ridicați porțile cele veșnice și va intra Împăratul măririi", după care s-a intrat în biserica frumos împodobită, ca o mireasă gata de sărbătoare pentru a sluji Sfânta Liturghie pentru prima dată în noul locas sfântit

Părintele paroh Bogdan Nichitean, în numele întregii comunități și a credincioșilor prezenți a mulțumit înalților prelați pentru binecuvântarea adusă bisericii, oferindu-le în dar câte o icoană cu ocrotitorul noului sfânt locas, Sf. Ioan Iacob Hozevitul de la Neamț.
Această zi istorică va rămâne în sufletele celor care au participat la sfântirea bisericii Sfântul Ioan Ungerea cu Sfântul și Marele Mir și stropirea cu Apă Sfântă pe exterior

Cont. la pag 24
“Spune-voi fraților mei numele Tău, în mijlocul Bisericii Te voi lauda” (Evrei 2:12)

De douăzeci de ani, fără încetare, numele Domnului este lăudat în marea metropolă americană Atlanta din statul Georgia.

La praznicul Înălțării Sfintei Cruci, în zilele de 13, 14 și 15 septembrie, frumoasa noastră comunitate a trăit la intensitate maximă bucuria de a sărbători douăzeci de ani de existență. Sărbătoarea a fost împodobită de prezența în mijlocul nostru a Înalt Prea Sfințitului Părinte Arhiepiscop Nathaniel.

După cum Înalt Prea Sfinția Sa a menționat în cuvântul de învățătură, vârsta parohiei noastre nu este o vârstă prea mare, însă cu siguranță este momentul când comunitatea noastră a ajuns la maturitate. Rolul Bisericii a fost deplin înțeles și înrădăcinat în mijlocul credincioșilor.

Acest lucru a fost în mod special prin ajutorul lui Dumnezeu și prin dragostea și jertfelnicia preoților care au slujit această comunitate în acești douăzeci de ani. Mulțumim tuturor slujitorilor acestei sfinte biserici pentru toată strădania - în mod special Prea Cuviosului Părinte Protosinghel Chesarie Bertea de la care am preluat această comunitate de oameni deosebiți, care știu pe deplin ce înseamnă să te jertfești pentru Biserică.

Stim că nu sunt ani mulți de când proslăvim pe Dumnezeu aici în parohia din Atlanta, dar îl rugăm pe Bunul Dumnezeu să ne țină în pace și sănătoși pentru mulți ani de acum încolo, să putem să ne păstrăm credința noastră strămoșească, să putem să fi pildă bună urmașilor noștri care vor moșteni o biserică frumoasă și plină de Duhul cel Sfânt.

Arhiereilor noștri le dorim să fie cu noi ani mulți și să ăibă parte numai de vești bune din Atlanta de acum înainte. Mulțumim Înalt Prea Sfințite Părinte pentru marea binecuvântare de a fi în mijlocul parohiei noastre la acest ceas aniversar! Preoții care vor urma în această parohie să se roage și pentru noi păcătoși și să înțeleagă că am făcut și noi ce am putut pentru prosperitatea și bunul mers al parohiei noastre. Iar, enoriașilor acestei parohii le mulțumim pentru atășamentul față de biserica noastră și le urăm să se bucure de ceea ce au realizat în acești frumoși ani de pionerat ortodox pe aceste meleaguri.

Întru mulți și fericiti ani, iubită parohie!

Părintele Paroh George Acsente
„DE CÂTE ORI VEI CĂDEA, SCOALĂ-TE ȘI TE VEI MÂNTUI”

În Biserica Ortodoxă dimensiunea penitențială există în fiecare slujbă, taină sau ierurgie, pentru că mereu cădem și mereu ne ridicăm, cel puțin așa ar trebui să fie. Acest vers din Sfânta Scriptură, parcă ne-ar spune la timpul viitor că de căzut vom cădea, dar că în căderea noastră să nu ne complacem, să nu lângă-cinz, ci să ne ridicăm. Aceleși vers conține îndemnul „scaloă-te” și nu „să te scoli, să te ridici”, la viitor, pe de o parte arătând că acum, în timpul prezent, vrea Dumnezeu să te ridici și nu în viitor, adică nu mâine, poină, ci acum în momentul prezent, iar pe de altă parte, îndemnul se referă la noi, care suntem niște „căzuți” din Raiul cel veșnic și nu putem spune vreo dată că suntem mântuți, așa cum spun protestanții, că ei sunt deja mântuți, ori credința „fără de fapte moartă este”(I- acov 2, 20). Și tot noi suntem cei care tot timpul cădem, de aceea și îndemnul se referă la timpul prezent. De fapt întreaga noastră viață se află în cădere și ridicare, de aceea și Apostolul Pavel spune că: „cei ce i se pare că stă neclintit, să ia aminte să nu cadă” (I Cor. 10, 12).

Deci Sfânta Scriptură ne spune într-un verset că de vom cădea, să ne ridicăm, iar în altul să luăm aminte să nu cădă. De ce asta? Pentru că Dumnezeu în bunătatea Sa „nu vrea moartea pacătosului, ci să se întoarcă și să nu cădea” (Iez.18,23). Iar despre deznădejde avem viața Sfântului Silu- an Athonitul, care deznădăjduit de faptul că Harul lui Dumnezeu l-a părăsit, pentru vreun gând de mândrie, cade în genunchi înaintea icoanei Mântuitorului și aude o voce care îi spune: „Ține mintea ta în iad și nu deznădăjdu”. Un mesaj ce ne adresează și nouă tuturor: „Ai căzut. Nu te scoli. Scoală-Te și Te Vei mântui”

Revenind la problema noastră de zi cu zi, avem un exemplu și chiar mai multe, în patericul egiptean, pe un călugăr care de multe ori cădea în desfrânare, el timp de zece ani repeta același păcat și de căte ori cădea, de atâtea ori se pochăia, se tânguia și cerea iertare de la Dumnezeu, iar după atâția ani de zile, se întâmplă cea, un dialog cumplit: dialogul invidios, îi reproșeză lui Dumnezeu că el o dată a căzut și a fost pedepsit, iar acesta de atâtea ori cade și nu este pedepsit. Urmează apoi replica lui Dumnezeu în care diaoloul este blestemat pentru îndrăzneala lui, el care a căzut și nu s-a mai pocăit, iar sufletul călugăului, aflat la rugăciune după ce iarăși căzuse, este pe loc luat de Dumnezeu în Împărăția Sa cea Veșnică, pentru râvă și pocânta sa.

Iar despre deznădejde, avem viața Sfântului Silu- an Athonitul, care deznădăjduit de faptul că Harul lui Dumnezeu l-a părăsit, pentru vreun gând de mândrie, cade în genunchi înaintea icoanei Mântuitorului și aude o voce care îi spune: „Ține mintea ta în iad și nu deznădăjdu”. Un mesaj ce ne adresează și nouă tuturor: „Ai căzut. Nu deznădăjdu. Așa este, asta se întâmplă când te umfli în pene, dar Eu sunt cu tine!” Și noi să răspundem: „Doamne fără Tine nu pot face nimic”

Se mai întâmplă ceva din căderile și ridicările noastre: învățăm să nu mai judecăm, învățăm smerenia și să-i iertăm pe cei de lângă noi, pentru că altfel vom auzi cu-vintecele: „Slujă vieleană, toată datoria aceea ți-am iertat-o fiindcă m-am rugat. Nu se cădea oare, ca și tu să ai milă de c -el împreună slabă cu tine, precum și eu am avut milă de tine?. Și mâniindu-se stăpânul lui, l-a dat pe mâna chiu- itorilor, până ce-i va plăti toată datoria.” (Mt. 18, 23-35)


de ego-ul nostru (nu la modul impersonal cum se întâmplă în budism, unde tu parăci fi un „alter ego” și negi propriile neputințe, patimi, de parcă nu ar fi ale tale), care crede că poate face ceva, nici Dumnezeu nu are de unde să înceapă, pentru că El a fă cut lumea din „nimic” și dacă noi credem că suntem ceva și nu „nimic-ul” cu care să înceapă El, atunci în zadar...
SFÂNTUL IOAN GURĂ DE AUR: MÂNIA ŞI FURIA DIN MINE

Când ne apărăm prin mânie, nu biruim, ci suferim cea mai mare înfrângere. Biruieşti doar atunci când întâmpini răul cu blândeţe. Te-a supărat cea mai degrabă? Trebuie să avem apună peste mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26). Trebuie să avem mânia voastră (Efes. 4, 26).
tu cazi sub săgeata mâniei aruncată de diavol, cine vă va ridica pe amândoi? Nici tu nu-l mai poți ajuta pe el, nici el pe tine.


(Sfântul Ion Gură de Aur, Problemele vieții, Editura Egumenița, Galați, p. 260-262)

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**Sfântirea Primei Biserici ...**

*Cont. de la pag 20*

Iacob Hozevitul din Colorado, ziua ce a pus în lumină milostivirea Domnului, dărnica atât inimi generate în realizarea noii loc de întâlnire divino-umană, puntea între cer și pământ, o nouă scară a lui Iacob pe care urcă rugăciunile, aspirațiile, bucuriile și necazurile credincioșilor.

Din predica Înalt Prea Sfințitul Nathaniel de la sfârșitul sărbătorii, au rămas spre luare aminte si mai ales de împlinit cuvintele: ”această Biserică este moștenirea pe care o lăsăm copiilor și nepoților noștri” și a îndemnat pe toți cei prezenți de față: ”Nu vă îndepărtați copiilor de Biserică și de Dumnezeul!”

**Pr. Bogdan M. Nichitean**

Parohul Bisericii Sfântul Ioan Iacob Hozevitul – Denver, Colorado