"He called all to unity"

The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church 2016

Held in Crete, June 17-26, offered a message of hope to the Orthodox world and opened new horizons for pastoral dealings and the theological word of the Church of God.
Encyclical
Of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church
Crete 2016

9 Message of the Holy and Great Council
12 Bishop Mitrophan 25th Anniversary Celebration
13 Eastern Diocese to Welcome New Archpastor
15 Patronal Feast Celebration in Eugene, OR
16 Obituary Protinica Ljubica Matejic
17 Ordinations
18 Dear Diary —Reflections on Another Year
19 Orthodox Catechism

21
ОКРУЖНА ПОСЛАНИЦА
Светог и Великог Сабора Православне Цркве

26 ПОРУКА Светог и Великог Сабора Православне Цркве
29 Православни Катихизис
30 Вести из Цркве
31 Кроз хршћански свет

COVER: Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church, Crete 2016

With the Blessings of the Episcopal Council
The Path of Orthodoxy
The Official Publication of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America

Editorial Staff
V. Rev. Milovan Katanic
1856 Knob Hill Road
San Marcos, CA 92069
Phone: 442-999-5695
frmilovan@hotmail.com

V. Rev. Dr. Bratso Krsic
3025 Denver Street
San Diego, CA 92117
Phone: 619-276-5827
FrBratso@aol.com

V. Rev. Thomas Kazich
P.O. Box 371
Grayslake, IL 60030
Phone: 847-223-4300
tkazich@owc.net

Technical Editor
Vesna R. Meinert
Phone: 304-842-2927
vgtm1103@gmail.com

The Path of Orthodoxy is a quarterly publication. Issues are available in PDF format at www.serborah.org.
Letters to the Editor are welcome. All letters and manuscripts submitted for publication must be signed and contain the author’s name and address and may be edited for purposes of space and clarity. Material must be submitted via email in MS Word format.
The Path is available at no charge to all stewards of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA. Please contact your church board to insure you receive The Path.
Annual Subscriptions are also available (US Funds only):
USA, $12.50
Canada, $15.00
Overseas, $25.00
Single issue price, $5.00

Business and Circulation Address:
P.O. Box 883, Bridgeport, WV 26330
Email: webmaster@serborah.org
In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

With a hymn of thanksgiving, we praise and worship God in Trinity, who has enabled us to gather together during the days of the feast of Pentecost here on the island of Crete, which has been sanctified by St. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, and his disciple Titus, his “true son in the common faith” (Tit. 1.4), and, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to conclude the sessions of this Holy and Great Council of our Orthodox Church – convened by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, by the common will of Their Beatitudes the Primates of the most holy Orthodox Churches – for the glory of His most holy Name and for the great blessing of His people and of the whole world, confessing with the divine Paul: “Let people then regard us thus: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. 4.1).

The Holy and Great Council of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church constitutes an authentic witness to faith in Christ, the God-man, the Only-begotten Son and Word of God who, through His Incarnation, through all His work on earth, through His Sacrifice on the Cross and through His Resurrection, revealed the Triune God as infinite love. Therefore, with one voice and one heart we address this message of “the hope that is in us” (cf. 1 Pet. 3.15) not only to the sons and daughters of our most holy Church, but also to every human being, “whether near or far off” (Eph 2.17). “Our hope” (cf. 1 Tim. 1.1), the Savior of the world, was revealed as “God with us” (cf. Matt. 1.23) and as God “for our sake” (Rom. 8.32), who “desires that all people may be saved and come to the knowledge of truth” (1 Tim. 2.4). Proclaiming His mercy and not concealing His great blessings, in remembrance of the Lord’s words that “heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Matt. 24.35) and “filled with joy” (1 John 1.4), we announce the Gospel of faith, hope and love, looking forward to that “day without evening, without succession and without end” (Basil the Great, On the Hexaemeron II, P. 29.54). The fact that we have “our citizenship in heaven” (Phil. 3.20) in no way negates, but rather strengthens our witness in the world.
In this we follow the tradition of the Apostles and of the Fathers of our Church who proclaimed Christ and the saving experience through Him of the Church’s faith, and who spoke of God in the “manner of fishermen casting a net,” that is to say in an apostolic manner, to the people of every age in order to transmit to them the Gospel of freedom “for which Christ has set us free” (cf. Gal. 5.1). The Church lives not for herself. She offers herself for the whole of humanity in order to raise up and renew the world into new heavens and a new earth (cf. Rev. 21.1). Hence, she gives Gospel witness and distributes the gifts of God in the world: His love, peace, justice, reconciliation, the power of the Resurrection and the expectation of eternal life.

***

I. The Church: Body of Christ, image of the Holy Trinity

1. The one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is a divine-human communion in the image of the Holy Trinity, a foretaste and experience of the eschaton in the holy Eucharist and a revelation of the glory of the things to come, and, as a continuing Pentecost, she is a prophetic voice in this world that cannot be silenced, the presence and witness of God’s Kingdom “that has come with power” (cf. Mark 9.1). The Church, as the body of Christ, “gathers” the world (Matt 23.37) to Him, transfigures it and irrigates it with “the water welling up to eternal life” (John 4.14).

2. The tradition of the Apostles and Fathers – following the words of the Lord, the founder of the Church, who at the Last Supper with his disciples, instituted the sacrament of the holy Eucharist - highlighted the Church’s characteristic as the “body of Christ” (Matt 25, 26; Mark 14.22; Luke 22.19; 1 Cor 10.16-17; 11.23-29), and always connected this with the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son and Word of God from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. In this spirit, emphasis was always placed on the indissoluble relation both between the entire mystery of the divine Economy in Christ and the mystery of the Church, and also between the mystery of the Church and the mystery of the holy Eucharist, which is continually confirmed in the sacramental life of the Church through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

The Orthodox Church, faithful to this unanimous apostolic tradition and sacramental experience, constitutes the authentic continuation of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, as this is confessed in the Symbol of faith and is confirmed in the teaching of the Fathers of the Church. Thus, she is conscious of her greater responsibility not only to ensure the authentic expression of this experience in the ecclesial body, but also to offer a trustworthy witness to the truth to all humankind.

3. The Orthodox Church, in her unity and catholicity, is the Church of Councils, from the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15.5-29) to the present day. The Church in herself is a Council, established by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, in accord with the apostolic words: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (Acts 15.28). Through the Ecumenical and Local councils, the Church has proclaimed and continues to proclaim the mystery of the Holy Trinity, revealed through the incarnation of the Son and Word of God. The Conciliar work continues uninterrupted in history through the later councils of universal authority, such as, for example, the Great Council (879-880) convened at the time of St. Photios the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, and also the Great Councils convened at the time of St. Gregory Palamas (1341, 1351, 1368), through which the same truth of faith was confirmed, most especially as concerns the procession of the Holy Spirit and as concerns the participation of human beings in the uncreated divine energies, and furthermore through the Holy and Great Councils convened in Constantinople, in 1484 to refute the unionist Council of Florence (1438-1439), in 1638, 1642, 1672 and 1691 to refute Protestant beliefs, and in 1872 to condemn ethno-phyletism as an ecclesiological heresy.

4. The holiness of man (anthropos) cannot be conceived apart from the Body of Christ, “which is the Church” (cf. Eph 1.23). Holiness proceeds from the One who alone is Holy. It is participation of mankind in the holiness of God, in “the communion of the Saints,” as is proclaimed by the words of the priest during the Divine Liturgy: “The Holy Gifts for the holy,” and through the response of the faithful: “One is Holy, one is Lord. Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.” In this spirit, Saint Cyril of Alexandria underscores that Christ, “Being holy by nature as God (...) is sanctified on our behalf in the Holy Spirit (...) and (Christ) performed this on our behalf, not on his own behalf, so that from him and in him, who first received this sanctification, the grace of being sanctified may thus pass to all humanity ...” (Commentary on the Gospel of John, 11, PG 74, 548).

According to St. Cyril, Christ is our “common person” through the recapitulation in his own humanity of the entire human race, “for we were all in Christ, and the common person of humanity comes to life again in him” (Commentary on the Gospel of John, XI, PG 73, 157-161), and hence also he is the sole source of man’s sanctification in the Holy Spirit. In this spirit, holiness is man’s participation both in the sacrament of the Church and also in her sacred mysteries, with the holy Eucharist at the center, which is “a living sacrifice, holy, and pleasing to God” (cf. Rom 12.1). “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ But rather, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Rom 8.35-37). The saints embody the eschatological identity of the Church as an eternal doxology before the earthly and heavenly Throne of the King of Glory (Ps 23.7), providing an image of the Kingdom of God.

5. The Orthodox Catholic Church comprises fourteen local Autocephalous Churches, recognized at a pan-Orthodox level. The principle of autocephaly cannot be allowed to operate at the expense of the principle of the catholicity and the unity of the Church. We therefore consider that the creation of the Episcopal Assemblies in the Orthodox Diaspora, comprising all the recognized canonical bishops, who in each area are appointed to their respective assembly, and who remain under their canonical jurisdictions, represents a positive step towards their canonical organization, and the smooth functioning of these assemblies guarantees respect for the ecclesiological principle of conciliarity.

II. The mission of the Church in the world

6. The apostolic work and the proclamation of the Gospel, also known as mission, belong at the core of the Church’s identity, as the keeping and observation of Christ’s commandment: “Go and
make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28.19). This is the “breath of life” that the Church breathes into human society and makes the world into Church through the newly-established local Churches everywhere. In this spirit, the Orthodox faithful are and ought to be Christ’s apostles in the world. This mission must be fulfilled, not aggressively, but freely, with love and respect towards the cultural identity of individuals and peoples. All Orthodox Churches ought to participate in this endeavor with due respect for canonical order.

Participation in the holy Eucharist is a source of missionary zeal for the evangelization of the world. By participating in the holy Eucharist and praying in the Sacred Synaxis for the whole world (oikoumenē), we are called to continue the “liturgy after the Liturgy” and to offer witness concerning the truth of our faith before God and mankind, sharing God’s gifts with all mankind, in obedience to the explicit commandment of our Lord before His Ascension: “And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1.8). The words of the Divine Liturgy prior to Communion, “Dismembered and distributed is the Lamb of God, who is dismembered and not divided, ever eaten, yet never consumed,” indicate that Christ as the “Lamb of God” (John 1.29) and the “Bread of Life” (John 6.48) is offered to us as eternal Love, uniting us to God and to one another. It teaches us to distribute God’s gifts and to offer ourselves to everyone in a Christ-like way.

The life of Christians is a truthful witness to the renewal in Christ of all things – “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor 5.17) – and an invitation addressed to all people for personal and free participation in eternal life, in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the love of God the Father, in order to experience the communion of the Holy Spirit in the Church. “For the mystery of salvation is for those who desire it, not for those who are being coerced” (Maximus Confessor PG 90.880). The re-evangelization of God’s people in contemporary secularized societies, as well as the evangelization of those who have not yet come to know Christ, is the unceasing duty of the Church.

III. The Family: Image of Christ’s love towards the Church

7. The Orthodox Church regards the indissoluble loving union of man and woman as a “great mystery” … of Christ and the Church (Eph 5.32) and she regards the family that springs from this, which constitutes the only guarantee for the birth and upbringing of children in accord with the plan of divine Economy, as a “little Church” (John Chrysostom, Commentary of the Letter to the Ephesians, 20, PG 62.143), giving to it the appropriate pastoral support.

The contemporary crisis in marriage and the family is a consequence of the crisis of freedom as responsibility, its decline into a self-centered self-realization, its identification with individual self-gratification, self-sufficiency and autonomy, and the loss of the sacramental character of the union between man and woman, resulting from forgetfulness of the sacrificial ethos of love. Contemporary society approaches marriage in a secular way with purely sociological and realistic criteria, regarding it as a simple form of relationship – one among many others – all of which are entitled to equal institutional validity.

Marriage is a Church-nurtured workshop of life in love and an unsurpassed gift of God’s grace. The “high hand” of the “conjoining” God is “invisibly present, harmonizing those being joined together” with Christ and with one another. The crowns that are placed on the heads of the bride and groom during the sacramental rite refer to the dimension of sacrifice and complete devotion to God and one another. They also point to the life of the Kingdom of God, revealing the eschatological reference in the mystery of love.

8. The Holy and Great Council addresses itself with particular love and care to children and to all young people. Amid the medley of mutually contradictory definitions of childhood, our most holy Church presents the words of our Lord: “Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 18.3) and “whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it (Luke 18.17), as well as what our Savior says about those who “prevent” (Luke 18.16) children from approaching Him and about those who “scandalize” them (Matt 18.6).

To young people the Church offers not simply “help” but “truth,” the truth of the new divine-human life in Christ. Orthodox youth should become aware that they are bearers of the centuries-old and blessed tradition of the Orthodox Church and also the continuers of this tradition who will courageously preserve and will cultivate in a dynamic way the eternal values of Orthodoxy in order to give life-giving Christian witness. From among them will come the future ministers of the Church of Christ. The young people thus are not simply the “future” of the Church, but also the active expression of her God-loving and human-loving life in the present.

IV. Education in Christ

9. In our time, new tendencies can be observed in the realm of upbringing and education in regard to the content and aims of education as well as in the way childhood, the role of both teacher and student and the role of the contemporary school are viewed. Since education relates not only to what man is, but also to what man should be and to the content of his responsibility, it is self-evident that the image we have of the human person and the meaning of existence determine our view of his education. The dominant secularized individualistic educational system that troubles young people today is of deep concern to the Orthodox Church.

At the center of the Church’s pastoral concern is an education that looks not only to the cultivation of the intellect, but also to the edification and development of the whole person as a psycho-somatic and spiritual being in accordance with the triptych, God, man and world. In her catechetical discourse, the Orthodox Church caringly calls on the people of God, especially the young people, to a conscious and active participation in the life of the Church, cultivating in them the “excellent desire” for life in Christ. Thus, the fullness of the Christian people finds an existential support in the divine-human communion of the Church and experiences in this the resurrectional perspective of theosis by grace.

V. The Church in the face of contemporary challenges

10. The Church of Christ today finds herself confronted by extreme or even provocative expressions of the ideology of secular-
ization, inherent in political, cultural and social developments. A basic element of the ideology of secularization has ever been and continues to be the full autonomy of man from Christ and from the spiritual influence of the Church, by the arbitrary identification of the Church with conservatism and by the historically unjustified characterization of the Church as an alleged impediment to all progress and development. In contemporary secularized societies, man, cut off from God, identifies his freedom and the meaning of his life with absolute autonomy and with release from his eternal destiny, resulting in a series of misunderstandings and deliberate misinterpretations of the Christian tradition. The bestowal on man from above of freedom in Christ and his advancement “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4.13) is thus seen to go against man’s tendencies for self-salvation. Christ’s sacrificial love is regarded as incompatible with individualism while the ascetic character of the Christian ethos is judged as an unbearable challenge to the happiness of the individual.

The identification of the Church with conservatism, incompatible with the advancement of civilization, is arbitrary and improper, since the consciousness of the identity of the Christian peoples bears the indelible imprint of the diachronic contribution of the Church, not only in their cultural heritage, but also in the healthy development of secular civilization more generally, since God placed man as steward of the divine creation and as a co-worker with Him in the world. The Orthodox Church sets against the “man-god” of the contemporary world the “God-man” as the ultimate measure of all things. “We do not speak of a man who has been deified, but of God who has become man” (John of Damascus, An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith iii, 2 PG 94.988). The Church reveals the saving truth of the God-man and His body, the Church, as the locus and mode of life in freedom, “speaking the truth in love” (cf. Eph 4.15), and as participation even now on earth in the life of the resurrected Christ. The divine-human character “not of the world” (John 18.36) of the Church, which nourishes and guides her presence and witness “in the world,” is incompatible with any kind of conformation of the Church to the world (cf. Rom 12.2).

11. Through the contemporary development of science and technology, our life is changing radically. And what brings about a change in the life of man demands discernment on his part, since, apart from significant benefits, such as the facilitation of everyday life, the successful treatment of serious diseases and space exploration, we are also confronted with the negative consequences of scientific progress. The dangers are the manipulation of human freedom, the use of man as a simple means, the gradual loss of precious traditions, and threats to, or even the destruction of, the natural environment.

Unfortunately, science, by its very nature, does not possess the necessary means to prevent or address many of the problems it creates directly or indirectly. Scientific knowledge does not motivate man’s moral will, and even though aware of the dangers, he continues to act as if unaware of them. The answer to man’s serious existential and moral problems and to the eternal meaning of his life and of the world cannot be given without a spiritual approach.

12. In our age, there is a very prevalent enthusiasm for the impressive developments in the fields of Biology, Genetics and Neurophysiology. These represent scientific advances, the wide-ranging applications of which will, in all likelihood, create serious anthropological and moral dilemmas. The uncontrolled use of biotechnology at the beginning, during, and at the end of life, endangers its authentic fullness. Man is experimenting ever more intensively with his own very nature in an extreme and dangerous way. He is in danger of being turned into a biological machine, into an impersonal social unit or into a mechanical device of controlled thought.

The Orthodox Church cannot remain on the sidelines of discussions about such momentous anthropological, ethical and existential matters. She rests firmly on divinely taught criteria and reveals the relevance of Orthodox anthropology in the face of the contemporary overturning of values. Our Church can and must express in the world her prophetic consciousness in Christ Jesus, who with His Incarnation assumed the whole man and is the ultimate prototype for the renewal of the human race. She projects the sacredness of life and man’s character as a person from the very moment of conception. The right to be born is the first of human rights. The Church as a divine-human society, in which each human constitutes a unique being destined for personal communion with God, and she resists every attempt to objectify man, to turn him into a measurable quantity. No scientific achievement is permitted to compromise man’s dignity and his divine destination. Man is not defined only by his genes.

Bioethics from an Orthodox point of view is founded on this basis. At a time of conflicting images of man, Orthodox bioethics, in opposition to secular autonomous and reductionist anthropological views, insists on man’s creation in God’s image and likeness and his eternal destiny. The Church thus contributes to the enrichment of the philosophical and scientific discussion of bioethical questions through her scriptural anthropology and the spiritual experience of Orthodoxy.

13. In a global society, oriented towards ‘having’ and individualism, the Orthodox Catholic Church presents the truth of life in and according to Christ, the truth freely made incarnate in the everyday life of each man through his works “till evening” (Ps 103), through which he is made co-worker of the eternal Father “[We are co-workers with God” (1 Cor 3.9) and of His Son “[My Father is working still, and I am working” (John 5.17)]. The grace of God sanctifies in the Holy Spirit the works of the hands of the man who works together with God, revealing the affirmation in them of life and of human society. Christian asceticism is to be placed within this framework; this differs radically from all dualistic asceticism that severs man from life and from his fellow man. Christian asceticism and the exercise of self-restraint, which connect man with the sacramental life of the Church, do not concern only the monastic life, but are characteristic of ecclesial life in all its manifestations, as a tangible witness to the presence of the eschatological spirit in the blessed life of the faithful.

14. The roots of the ecological crisis are spiritual and ethical, inhering within the heart of each man. This crisis has become more acute in recent centuries on account of the various divisions provoked by human passions – such as greed, avarice, egotism and the insatiable desire for more – and by their consequences for
the planet, as with climate change, which now threatens to a large extent the natural environment, our common “home”. The rupture in the relationship between man and creation is a perversion of the authentic use of God’s creation. The approach to the ecological problem on the basis of the principles of the Christian tradition demands not only repentance for the sin of the exploitation of the natural resources of the planet, namely, a radical change in mentality and behavior, but also asceticism as an antidote to consumerism, the deification of needs and the acquisitive attitude. It also presupposes our greatest responsibility to hand down a viable natural environment to future generations and to use it according to divine will and blessing. In the sacraments of the Church, creation is affirmed and man is encouraged to act as a steward, protector and “priest” of creation, offering it by way of doxology to the Creator – “Your own of your own we offer to You in all and for all” – and cultivating a Eucharistic relationship with creation. This Orthodox, Gospel and Patristic approach also turns our attention to the social dimensions and the tragic consequences of the destruction of the natural environment.

**VI. The Church in the face of globalization, the phenomenon of extreme violence and migration**

15. The contemporary ideology of globalization, which is being imposed imperceptibly and expanding rapidly, is already provoking powerful shocks to the economy and to society on a worldwide scale. Its imposition has created new forms of systematic exploitation and social injustice; it has planned the gradual neutralization of the impediments from opposing national, religious, ideological and other traditions and has already led to the weakening or complete reversal of social acquisitions on the pretext of the allegedly necessary readjustment of the global economy, widening thus the gap between rich and poor, undermining the social cohesion of peoples and fanning new fires of global tensions.

In opposition to the levelling and impersonal standardization promoted by globalization, and also to the extremes of nationalism, the Orthodox Church proposes the protection of the identities of peoples and the strengthening of local identity. As an alternative example for the unity of mankind, she proposes the articulated organization of the Church on the basis of the equality of the local Churches. The Church is opposed to the provocative threat to contemporary man and the cultural traditions of peoples that globalization involves and the principle of the “autonomy of the economy” or “economism,” that is, the autonomization of the economy from man’s essential needs and its transformation into an end in itself. She therefore proposes a viable economy founded on the principles of the Gospel. Thus, guided by the words of the Lord, “man shall not live by bread alone” (Luke 4.4), the Church does not connect the progress of mankind only with an increase in living standards or with economic development at the expense of spiritual values.

16. The Church does not involve herself with politics in the narrow sense of the term. Her witness, however, is essentially political insofar as it expresses concern for man and his spiritual freedom. The voice of the Church was always distinct and will ever remain a beneficial intervention for the sake of humanity. The local Orthodox Churches are today called to promote a new constructive synergy with the secular state and its rule of law within the new framework of international relations, in accordance with the biblical saying: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” (cf. Matt 22.21). This synergy must, however, preserve the specific identity of both Church and state and ensure their earnest cooperation in order to preserve man’s unique dignity and the human rights which flow therefrom, and in order to assure social justice.

**Human rights** are today at the center of political debate as a response to contemporary social and political crises and upheavals and in order to protect the freedom of the individual. The approach to human rights on the part of the Orthodox Church centers on the danger of individual rights falling into individualism and a culture of “rights”. A perversion of this kind functions at the expense of the social content of freedom and leads to the arbitrary transformation of rights into claims for happiness, as well as the elevation of the precarious identification of freedom with individual license into a “universal value” that undermines the foundations of social values, of the family, of religion, of the nation and threatens fundamental moral values.

Accordingly, the Orthodox understanding of man is opposed both to the arrogant apotheosis of the individual and his rights, and to the humiliating debasement of the human person within the vast contemporary structures of economy, society, politics and communication. The tradition of Orthodoxy is an inexhaustible source of vital truths for mankind. No one has honored man and cared for him as much as the God-man Christ and his Church. A fundamental human right is the protection of the principle of religious freedom in all its aspects—namely, the freedom of conscience, belief, and religion, including, alone and in community, in private and in public, the right to freedom of worship and practice, the right to manifest one’s religion, as well as the right of religious communities to religious education and to the full function and exercise of their religious duties, without any form of direct or indirect interference by the state.

17. We are experiencing today an increase of violence in the name of God. The explosions of fundamentalism within religious communities threaten to create the view that fundamentalism belongs to the essence of the phenomenon of religion. The truth, however, is that fundamentalism, as “zeal not based on knowledge” (Rom 10.2), constitutes an expression of morbid religiosity. A true Christian, following the example of the crucified Lord, sacrifices himself and does not sacrifice others, and for this reason is the most stringent critic of fundamentalism of whatever provenance. Honest interfaith dialogue contributes to the development of mutual trust and to the promotion of peace and reconciliation. The Church strives to make “the peace from on high” more tangibly felt on earth. True peace is not achieved by force of arms, but only through love that “does not seek its own” (1 Cor 13.5). The oil of faith must be used to soothe and heal the wounds of others, not to rekindle new fires of hatred.

18. The Orthodox Church follows with much pain and prayer and takes note of the great contemporary humanitarian crisis: the proliferation of violence and military conflicts; the persecution, exile and murder of members of religious minorities; the violent displacement of families from their homelands; the tragedy of human trafficking; the violation of the dignity and fundamental rights of individuals and peoples, and forced conversions. She condemns unconditionally the abductions, tortures, and abhorrent
executions. She denounces the destruction of places of worship, religious symbols and cultural monuments.

The Orthodox Church is particularly concerned about the situation facing Christians, and other persecuted ethnic and religious minorities in the Middle East. In particular, she addresses an appeal to governments in that region to protect the Christian populations – Orthodox, Ancient Eastern and other Christians – who have survived in the cradle of Christianity. The indigenous Christian and other populations enjoy the inalienable right to remain in their countries as citizens with equal rights.

We therefore urge all parties involved, irrespective of religious convictions, to work for reconciliation and respect for human rights, first of all through the protection of the divine gift of life. The war and bloodshed must be brought to an end and justice must prevail so that peace can be restored and so that it becomes possible for those who have been exiled to return to their ancestral lands. We pray for peace and justice in the suffering countries of Africa and in the troubled country of Ukraine. We reiterate most emphatically in conciliar unity our appeal to those responsible to free the two bishops who have been abducted in Syria, Paul Yazigi and John Ibrahim. We pray also for the release of all our brothers and sisters being held hostage or in captivity.

19. The contemporary and ever intensifying refugee and migrant crisis, due to political, economic and environmental causes, is at the center of the world’s attention. The Orthodox Church has always treated and continues to treat those who are persecuted, in danger and in need on the basis of the Lord’s words: “I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, and was a stranger and you took me in, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to me”, and “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these my brethren, you did for me” (Matt 25.40). Throughout its history, the Church was always on the side of the “weary and heavy laden” (cf. Matt 11.28). At no time was the Church’s philanthropic work limited merely to circumstantial good deeds toward the needy and suffering, but rather it sought to eradicate the causes which create social problems. The Church’s “work of service” (Eph 4.12) is recognized by everyone.

We appeal therefore first of all to those able to remove the causes for the creation of the refugee crisis to take the necessary positive decisions. We call on the civil authorities, the Orthodox faithful and the other citizens of the countries in which they have sought refuge and continue to seek refuge to accord them every possible assistance, even from out of their own insufficiency.

**VII. Church: witness in dialogue**

20. The Church manifests sensitivity towards those who have severed themselves from communion with her and is concerned for those who do not understand her voice. Conscious that she constitutes the living presence of Christ in the world, the Church translates the divine economy into concrete actions using all means at her disposal to give a trustworthy witness to the truth, in the precision of the apostolic faith. In this spirit of recognition of the need for witness and offering, the Orthodox Church has always attached great importance to dialogue, and especially to that with non-Orthodox Christians. Through this dialogue, the rest of the Christian world is now more familiar with Orthodoxy and the authenticity of its tradition. It also knows that the Orthodox Church has never accepted theological minimalism or permitted its dogmatic tradition and evangelical ethos to be called into question. Inter-Christian dialogues have provided Orthodoxy with the opportunity to display her respect for the teaching of the Fathers and to bear a trustworthy witness to the genuine tradition of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. The multilateral dialogues undertaken by the Orthodox Church have never signified, and do not signify, nor will they ever signify, any compromise in matters of faith. These dialogues are a witness to Orthodoxy, grounded on the Gospel message “come and see” (John 1.46), see, namely, that “God is love” (1 John 4.8).

***

In this spirit, the Orthodox Church throughout the world, being the revelation of the Kingdom of God in Christ, experiences the entire mystery of the divine Economy in her sacramental life, with the holy Eucharist at its center, in which she offers to us not nourishment that is perishable and corruptible, but the very life-streaming Body of the Lord, the “heavenly Bread” which “is a medicine of immortality, an antidote for not dying but living in God through Jesus Christ, and a purgative expelling evil” (Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians, 20, PG 5.756). The holy Eucharist constitutes the innermost core also of the conciliar functioning of the ecclesial body, as well as the authentic confirmation of the Orthodoxy of the faith of the Church, as Saint Irenaeus of Lyon proclaims: “Our teaching is in accord with the Eucharist and the Eucharist confirms our teaching” (Against Heresies, 4. 18, PG 7.1028).

Proclaiming the Gospel to all the world in accord with the Lord’s command and “preaching in His name repentance and remission of sins to all the nations” (Luke 22.47), we have the obligation to commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God and to love one another, confessing with one mind: “Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Trinity consubstantial and undivided.” Addressing these things in Council to the children throughout the world of our most holy Orthodox Church, as well as to the entire world, following the holy Fathers and the Conciliar decrees so as to preserve the faith received from our fathers and to “uphold good ways” in our daily life in the hope of the common resurrection, we glorify God in three hypostases with divine songs:

“O Father almighty, and Word and Spirit, one nature united in three persons, God beyond being and beyond divinity, in You we have been baptized, and You we bless to the ages of ages.” (Paschal Canon, Ode 8.)

† Bartholomew of Constantinople, Chairman
† Theodoros of Alexandria
† Theophilos of Jerusalem
† Irinej of Serbia
† Daniel of Romania
† Chrysostomos of Cyprus
† Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece
† Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland
† Anastasios of Tirana, Durrës and All Albania
† Rastislav of Presov, the Czech Lands and Slovakia
To the Orthodox people and to all people of good will

To God, “the Father of mercies and all comfort,” we address a hymn of thanksgiving and praise for having enabled us to gather during the week of Pentecost (18-26 June 2016) on Crete, where the Apostle Paul and his disciple Titus preached the Gospel in the early years of the life of the Church. We give thanks to the Triune God who was well pleased that in one accord we should bring to a conclusion the work of the Holy and Great Council that was convoked by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew by the common will of their Beatitudes the Primates of the local Orthodox Autocephalous Churches.

Faithfully following the example of the Apostles and our god-bearing Fathers we have once again studied the Gospel of freedom “for which Christ has set us free” (Gal. 5: 1). The foundation of our theological discussions was the certainty that the Church does not live for herself. She transmits the witness of the Gospel of grace and truth and offers to the whole world the gifts of God: love, peace, justice, reconciliation, the power of the Cross, and of the Resurrection and the expectation of eternal life.

1. The key priority of the Council was to proclaim the unity of the Orthodox Church. Founded on the Eucharist and the Apostolic Succession of her Bishops, the existing unity needs to be strengthened and to bear new fruits. The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is a divine-human communion, a foretaste and experience of the eschaton within the Holy Eucharist. As a continuous Pentecost, she is a prophetic voice that cannot be silenced, the presence of and witness to the Kingdom of the God of love. The Orthodox Church, faithful to the unanimous Apostolic Tradition and her sacramental experience, is the authentic continuation of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as confessed in the Creed and confirmed by the teaching of the Church Fathers. Our Church lives out the mystery of the Divine Economy in her sacramental life, with the Holy Eucharist at its center.

The Orthodox Church expresses her unity and catholicity “in Council”. Conciliarity pervades her organization; the way decisions are taken and determine her path. The Orthodox Autocephalous Churches do not constitute a federation of Churches, but the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Each local Church as she offers the holy Eucharist is the local presence and manifestation of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. In regard to the Orthodox Diaspora in various countries of the world, it was decided to continue with the institution of Episcopal Assemblies until

Continued on Page 10
Continued From Page 9

such time as canonical rigor can be implemented. These assemblies are composed of the canonical bishops appointed by each Autocephalous Church and these bishops continue to remain subject to their respective Churches. The due function of these Episcopal Assemblies guarantees respect for the Orthodox principle of conciliarity.

During the deliberations of the Holy and Great Council the importance of the Synaxes of the Primates which had taken place was emphasized and the proposal was made for the Holy and Great Council to become a regular Institution to be convened every seven or ten years.

2. Participating in the Holy Eucharist and praying for the whole world, we must continue the “liturgy after the Divine Liturgy” and give the witness of faith to those near and those far off, in accordance with the Lord’s clear command before His ascension, “And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth (Ac. 1: 8). The re-evangelization of God’s people in modern, secularized societies and the evangelization of those who have still not come to know Christ remain an unceasing obligation for the Church.

3. In response to her obligation to witness to the truth and her apostolic faith, our Church attaches great importance to dialogue, primarily with non Orthodox Christians. In this way the remainder of the Christian world comes to know more precisely the authenticity of the Orthodox Tradition, the value of patristic teaching and the liturgical life and faith of the Orthodox. The dialogues conducted by the Orthodox Church never imply a compromise in matters of faith.

4. The explosions of fundamentalism observed within various religions represent an expression of morbid religiosity. Sober inter-religious dialogue helps significantly to promote mutual trust, peace and reconciliation. The oil of religious experience must be used to heal wounds and not to rekindle the fire of military conflicts. The Orthodox Church unequivocally condemns the extension of military violence, persecutions, the expulsion and murder of members of religious minorities, forced conversions, the trafficking of refugees, the abductions, torture and abhorrent executions. She denounces the destruction of churches, religious symbols and cultural monuments. Very particularly, she expresses her deep concern about the situation of Christians and of all the persecuted minorities in the Middle East. She calls on the governments in the region to protect the indigenous Orthodox and other Christians and all the populations who have an inalienable right to remain in their countries as citizens with equal rights. Our Council appeals to all parties involved to make systematic efforts without delay to bring to an end the military conflicts in the Middle East and wherever armed hostilities persist and to enable all those displaced to return to their homes.

We address our appeal particularly to those in positions of power to act so that peace and justice may prevail in the countries of origin of the refugees. We urge the civil authorities, the citizens and the Orthodox Christians in the countries in which the persecuted are taking refuge to continue to offer help to the limit or even beyond the limit of their abilities.

5. Modern secularization seeks the autonomy of man (anthropos) from Christ and from the spiritual influence of the Church, which it arbitrarily identifies with conservatism. Western civilization, however, bears the indelible mark of the diachronic contribution of Christianity. The Church, moreover, highlights the saving significance of Christ, the God-man, and of His Body, as the place and mode of life in freedom.

6. In contrast to the contemporary approach to marriage, the Orthodox Church regards the indissoluble loving relationship of man and woman as “a great mystery... of Christ and the Church”. Similarly, she calls the family which springs from this and which constitutes the only guarantee for the upbringing of children a “little church”. The Church has always emphasized the value of self-restraint. Christian asceticism, however, differs radically from every dualistic asceticism, which severs man from life and from his fellow man. On the contrary, she connects this with the sacramental life of the Church. Self-restraint does not concern only the monastic life. The ascetic ethos is a characteristic of Christian life in all its manifestations. Apart from the specific topics about which it decided, the Holy and Great Council notes in brief the following important contemporary issues:

7. In regard to the matter of the relations between Christian faith and the natural sciences, the Orthodox Church avoids placing scientific investigation under tutelage and does not adopt a position on every scientific question. She thanks God who gives to scientists the gift of uncovering unknown dimensions of divine creation. The modern development of the natural sciences and of technology is bringing radical changes to our life. It brings significant benefits, such as the facilitation of everyday life, the treatment of serious diseases, easier communications and space exploration, and so on. In spite of this, however, there are many negative consequences such as the manipulation of freedom, the gradual loss of precious traditions, the destruction of the natural environment and the questioning of moral values. Scientific knowledge, however swiftly it may be advancing, does not motivate man’s will, nor does it give answers to serious moral and existential issues and to the search for the meaning of life and of the world. These matters demand a spiritual approach, which the Orthodox Church attempts to provide through a bioethics, which is founded on Christian ethics and Patristic teaching. Along with her respect for the freedom of scientific investigation, the Orthodox Church at the same time points out the dangers concealed in certain scientific achievements and emphasizes man’s dignity and his divine destiny.

8. It is clear that the present-day ecological crisis is due to spiritual and moral causes. Its roots are connected with greed, avarice and egoism, which lead to the thoughtless use of natural resources, the filling of the atmosphere with damaging pollutants, and to climate change. The Christian response to the problem demands repentance for the abuses, an ascetic frame of mind as an antidote to overconsumption, and at the same time a cultivation of the consciousness that man is a “steward “ and not a possessor of creation. The Church never ceases to emphasize that future generations also have a right to the natural resources that the Creator has given us. For this reason, the Orthodox Church takes an active part in the various international ecological initiatives and has ordained the 1st September as a day of prayer for the protection of the natural environment.

9. Against the leveling and impersonal standardization that is promoted in so many ways, Orthodoxy proposes respect for the particular characteristics of individual peoples. It is also opposed the making of the economy into something...
autonomous from basic human needs and turning it into an end in itself. The progress of mankind is not connected only with an increase in living standards or with economic development at the expense of spiritual values.

10. The Orthodox Church does not involve herself in politics. Her voice remains distinct, but also prophetic, as a beneficial intervention for the sake of man. Human rights today are at the center of politics as a response to the social and political crises and upheavals, and seek to protect the citizen from the arbitrary power of the state. Our Church also adds to this the obligations and responsibilities of the citizens and the need for constant self-criticism on the part of both politicians and citizens for the improvement of society. And above all she emphasizes that the Orthodox ideal in respect of man transcends the horizon of established human rights and that “greatest of all is love”, as Christ revealed and all the faithful who follow him have experienced. She insists also that a fundamental human right is the protection of religious freedom—namely, freedom of conscience, belief, and religion, including, alone and in community, in private and in public, the right to freedom of worship and practice, the right to manifest one’s religion, as well as the right of religious communities to religious education and to the full function and exercise of their religious duties, without any form of direct or indirect interference by the state.

11. The Orthodox Church addresses herself to young people who seek for a plenitude of life replete with freedom, justice, creativity and also love. She invites them to join themselves consciously with the Church of Him who is Truth and Life. To come, offering to the ecclesial body their vitality, their anxieties, their concerns and their expectations. Young people are not only the future, but also the dynamic and creative present of the Church, both on a local and on a worldwide level.

12. The Holy and Great Council has opened our horizon towards the contemporary diverse and multifarious world. It has emphasized our responsibility in place and in time, ever with the perspective of eternity. The Orthodox Church, preserving intact her Sacramental and Soteriological character, is sensitive to the pain, the distress and the cry for justice and peace of the peoples of the world. She “proclaims day after day the good tidings of His salvation, announcing His glory among the nations and His wonders among all peoples” (Psalm 95).

Let us pray that “the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory in Christ, will, after we have suffered a little, Himself restore, establish, and strengthen and settle us. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 5.10-11).

† Bartholomew of Constantinople, Chairman
† Theodoros of Alexandria
† Irinej of Serbia
† Daniel of Romania
† Chrysostomos of Cyprus
† Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece
† Sava of Warsaw and All Poland
† Anastasios of Tirana, Durres and All Albania
† Rastislav of Presov, the Czech Lands and Slovakia

The Delegation of the Church of Serbia

† Jovan of Ohrid and Skopje
† Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral
† Porfirije of Zagreb and Ljubljana
† Vasilije of Sirmium
† Lukijan of Budim
† Longin of Nova Gracanica
† Irinej of Backa
† Hrizostom of Zvornik and Tuzla
† Justin of Zica
† Pahomije of Vranje
† Jovan of Sumadija
† Ignatije of Branicevo
† Fotije of Dalmatia
† Athanasios of Bihac and Petrovac
† Joankikije of Niksic and Budimlje
† Grigorije of Zahumlje and Hercegovina
† Milutin of Valjevo
† Maksim in Western America
† Irinej in Australia and New Zealand
† David of Krusevac
† Jovan of Slavonija
† Andrej in Austria and Switzerland
† Sergije of Frankfurt and in Germany
† Ilarion of Timok
Clergy and faithful of the Eastern American Diocese were already beginning to think about doing something to honor their Bishop Mitrophan on his 25th Anniversary as bishop of the Diocese. But a special urgency was added when word was received in late May that their long-time archpastor had been elected as Bishop of Canada, and would soon be leaving them.

The Diocesan Council, spearheaded by Council vice-president Milan Mrkal, and the Diocesan Federation of Circles of Serbian Sisters headed by Millie Radovick immediately began to work on an event which would be not only a celebration of their Bishop’s 25 years of service in their Diocese, but also a farewell. And it would have to be done within weeks.

The result was a truly moving and beautiful tribute to their beloved Bishop Mitrophan held on Saturday, August 13 at St. Elijah Church in Aliquippa, PA. The day began with the greeting of the hierarchs at the doors of the church, and it was immediately apparent that this was going to be a special day. As the bishops were led by the clergy into the full church, the St. Elijah Choir began to sing with a beauty and power which truly helped transport those present into the Kingdom of Heaven. After the services many, many people remarked on the special feeling of love and God’s presence which permeated the Liturgy.

Leading the liturgical gathering was His Grace Bishop Longin of the New Gracanica-Midwest Diocese, who is a long-time friend and colleague of Bishop Mitrophan. Serving with them were nearly 30 priests and deacons from all over the far-flung Diocese, who had come to honor and thank their Father in Christ for his years of faithful service to God and His people. The faithful who gathered for the service also represented all geographic areas of the Diocese, from Maine to Florida and from Massachusetts to Ohio. A large number of those faithful communed of the Holy Mysteries, one sign of the spiritual growth which has taken place under Bishop Mitrophan’s leadership.

In his moving and spiritually uplifting homily, His Grace Bishop Mitrophan used the feast of the Procession of the Life-Giving Cross which was being celebrated that weekend as his inspiration for elaborating on the place of the Precious Cross in the dispensation of our salvation, and how each of us is called to find our salvation in bearing the cross given to us with perseverance, faith and love, knowing that we do this not on our own, but with constant faith in Christ and the Grace of the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father.

A banquet, or better said, an agape meal of love, followed at the St. Elijah Serbian Center. The program was overseen by
News

Master of Ceremonies Milan Mrkal, Vice-President of the Diocesan Council. Each of the speakers highlighted a different facet of Bishop Mitrophan’s ministry and service. President John Martich of the Serb National Federation and President Mary Lynn Ricci of the Serbian Singing Federation each spoke about His Grace’s interaction and cooperation with these two vital organizations. President Millie Radovick of the Diocesan Federation of Circles of Serbian Sisters spoke movingly of His Grace’s close working relationship with the Kolo’s, especially of their work together for the St. Sava Children’s Camp at Shadeland. Jovana Zaremba as a longtime camper and now a counselor spoke representing the St. Sava Campers and staff, focusing on Bishop Mitrophan’s great love and devotion for the campers, which they freely returned for their Bishop. Over the years His Grace made great efforts to visit the camp each week, to interact with the campers, answer their questions and to get to know them and their needs and concerns as they got to know him. Dusan Kolundzic spoke on behalf of the Diocesan Council, emphasizing His Grace’s true concern for his flock, his wise and discerning leadership, and his ability to take decisive action. Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Dragoljub Malich, Episcopal Deputy and senior active priest of the Diocese, reflected on Bishop Mitrophan’s great care and concern for his clergy and the faithful entrusted to him, and the many advances that have been made in the Diocese during His Grace’s quarter century as its Archpastor. His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek of the Pittsburgh Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America spoke on Bishop Mitrophan’s calling as a bishop and archpastor. Finally, His Grace Bishop Longin gave a touching personal reflection of his many years of friendship with Bishop Mitrophan going back to 1970 when they were both students at the seminary at Monastery Krka and Bishop Mitrophan’s support and counsel as Bishop Longin went through the difficult time of the 1990’s wars in the former Yugoslavia as bishop of Dalmatia and as he came to America and the former New Gracanica Metropolis. He rejoiced that, although Bishop Mitrophan is leaving the Eastern Diocese, he is not going far and will continue to be involved in the life of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North America as Bishop of Canada.

At this point in the program Bishop Mitrophan was presented with the gift of a beautiful set of bishop’s vestments from the clergy of the Diocese, while the Diocesan Kolo Federation presented him with a hand-made cross and panagia set, and the Shadeland Camp presented him with a hand-carved staff.

Finally, His Grace Bishop Mitrophan spoke, humbly thanking everyone for their love and prayers and support over the years. He recognized a number of people present who had worked with him closely in various facets of the Diocesan life, and remembered those who have passed on before, particularly his predecessors as bishop of Eastern America. He thanked God for his blessings both upon himself and upon the diocese. In closing he asked all to continue to pray for him as he assumes his new duties in Canada, and assured all of his continuing prayers for them. All spontaneously stood with a rousing ovation and the singing of Many Years.

This was truly a heartfelt tribute given out of love to their spiritual father by his grateful spiritual children. There were reminiscences, many smiles, laughter, and a few tears. But above all there was gratitude to God for all things, as there always should be.

May God grant His Grace Bishop Mitrophan health, wisdom and strength that he may continue to wisely shepherd the flock of Christ under his care for many, many years.

Bishop Irinej of Australia and New Zealand, Bishop-Elect of Eastern America

Eastern Diocese to Welcome New Archpastor

Enthronement of Bishop Irinej October 1 in Pittsburgh

The faithful of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America are busily preparing to welcome their new Archpastor, His Grace Bishop Irinej (Dobrijevic). His Grace, who was elected in May by the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church to head the Eastern American Diocese, will be enthroned at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Pittsburgh on Saturday, October 1.

The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30 AM, with the welcoming of the hierarchs by the clergy and faithful. It is anticipated that numerous hierarchs and other guests will be in attendance. Leading the list of dignitaries will be Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Alexander and Crown Princess Katherine of Serbia, who made adjustments to their busy schedule to be present.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy His Grace Bishop Irinej will be led to the cathedra, or throne of the Bishops of the Eastern American Diocese by His Grace Bishop Longin of New Gracanica-Midwest America as the senior Serbian Orthodox hierarch in North America. There Bishop Irinej will take his place as the fifth Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Eastern America, and deliver his first archpastoral message to his new flock. Following the services all will be welcomed for a short reception at the Cathedral.

The celebration will then continue at the elegant marble Carnegie Art Museum Music Hall Foyer and Balcony in the Oakland cultural center of Pittsburgh, with a banquet and program honoring our new Bishop beginning at 1:30 PM. A highlight of the banquet will be special performances by two outstanding artists. The well-known “Talija” Folklore Ensemble, visiting from Serbia on a tour of the United States, will present a program of Serbian

Continued on Page 14
music and dance. “Talija” specifically requested to perform at His Grace’s enthronement celebration. Joining them on the program will be operatic baritone Dimitrie Lazich. Mr. Lazich has performed important roles in numerous operatic productions and has agreed to lend his considerable talents to the day’s celebration.

**Full schedule and ticket information appear on page 15.**

This will be a homecoming for Bishop Irinej, who was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Born Mirko Dobrijevic in 1955 to his late parents Djuro and Milica (nee Svilar), he completed his elementary and secondary education in Cleveland. After studying at the Cleveland Institute of Art from 1973-1975, he attended St Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania from 1975-1979, where he graduated with a Licentiate in Theology with the academic distinction *maxima cum laude*. In 1980 he enrolled in St Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York and graduated in 1982 with a Master of Divinity degree with Honorable Mention for his master’s thesis *Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich: A 1921 Mission to America*. He then continued his studies at the Athens Center in 2000 and 2003, receiving levels I and II certificates in contemporary Greek language.

The future Bishop spent most of his early career in the field of education, lecturing at Loyola University in Chicago and at the Theological Faculty of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade. For many years he was the co-editor of *The Path of Orthodoxy*, the official publication of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada.

His Eminence Metropolitan Christopher of Midwestern America of blessed memory ordained him to the Holy Diaconate on 15 January 1994 at the Holy Resurrection Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Chicago. He was tonsured a monk on 18 January 1995 at the St Sava Monastery in Libertyville, Illinois, receiving the monastic name Irinej after St Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons. Soon after, on St. Sava’s Day, 27 January 1995 he was ordained hieromonk at the St Sava Cathedral in Parma, Ohio. He was elevated to the dignity of Archimandrite on 18 June 2006 by His Grace Bishop Justin of Timok (presently of Zhicha) at the request of Patriarch Pavle of blessed memory.

His Grace was elected by the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church as Bishop of the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand in 2006. He was consecrated bishop on 15 July 2006 in the Holy Archangel Michael Cathedral in Belgrade at the hands of His Eminence Dr Amfilohije, Archbishop of Cetinje, Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral, together with 16 other bishops. The consecration of Bishop Irinej was witnessed by the single largest gathering of Belgrade’s Diplomatic Corps to date. Later that year he was enthroned as Bishop of the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand with his see in Sydney. His Grace simultaneously took up duties as the Bishop-Administrator of the Diocese for Australia and New Zealand, New Gracanica Metropolitanate. One of his major accomplishments during his time in Australia was the unification of the two dioceses into a single Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand.

Before his election to the episcopate, His Grace served as Consultant to the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church on International and Inter-church Affairs and Coordinator of the newly created Kosovo and Metohija Office of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate in Belgrade. Among his numerous recognitions, especially for his exemplary work in improving ties between the Serbian state and the Serbs of the Diaspora, and for his work in advancing relations between Church and State, he was awarded the Order of Vuk Karadzic III Degree by President Svetozar Marovic of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2005. He is a 2007 recipient of the International Heraldic Order of the *Fleur de Lys*; the 2008 Major Feldman Award of the Serbian Bar Association for merit; 2009 recipient of the Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Eagle of Georgia and the Seamless Tunic of Our Lord Jesus Christ; 2009 Grand Cross of the Order of the Eagle of Georgia and the Seamless Tunic of Our Lord Jesus Christ; 2011 Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Eagle of Georgia and the Seamless Tunic of Our Lord Jesus Christ; 2011 Senator of the Grand Badge in the Order of Saint Queen Tamar; 2012 The Medal of Merit of the Royal House of Georgia by HRH Prince Davit Bagrationi Mukhran Batonishvili; 2013 Knight Commander of The Imperial Order of St Anne of the Imperial House of Russia; and 2013 The Imperial Medal “Jubilee of the All National Effort”, honoring the 400th Anniversary of the Imperial House of Romanov, 1613-2013 by HIH Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna.

Among his many appointments, Bishop Irinej represents the Serbian Orthodox Church on the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee; is a member of the Jasenovac Committee and the Permanent Missions Board of the Holy Synod of Bishops; the Advisory Council of the Njegos Endowment for Serbian Studies at Columbia University; the Editorial Board of the Tesla Memorial Society; the Communications Committee of the Board of Directors of St Vladimir’s Seminary; a member of the Serbian-American Center in Belgrade; and an honorary Board Member for ZOE for Life! He is the Episcopal Patron for the Milosh Obilich Society of Serbian Chivalry and the Center for the Study of Orthodox Monarchism, both in Belgrade, Serbia. Until his move to the United States he also served as Protector and Spiritual Advisor of Australia and New Zealand for the Order of the Eagle of Georgia and the Seamless Tunic of Our Lord Jesus Christ and Chairman of the National Heads of Churches of Australia.

Previously, Bishop Irinej served at various times as Editor-in-Charge of the Information Service of the Serbian Orthodox Church; Executive Director of the Office of External Affairs of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada, located in Washington, DC; co-chaired the Orthodox Advisory Committee of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in Metropolitan Washington; was a member of National Council of the Churches of Christ Environmental Justice Task Force (NCCCEco-Justice); and served on the Board of Directors of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC); the Executive Council of The United States Conference of Religions for Peace (USCRP), the Conference of European Churches (CEC-KEK), the Serbian Unity Congress, the Mayor’s Advisory Council on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs in Chicago, and the Chicago Human Rights Commission.

The clergy and faithful of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America look forward to welcoming their new Archpastor as he follows in the footsteps of his predecessors on the diocesan throne: His Grace Bishop Stefan (Lastavica), His Grace Bishop Sava (Vukovic), His Eminence Metropolitan Christopher, all of blessed memory, and His Grace Bishop Dr. Mitrophan, who is to shortly take up his new duties as Bishop of Canada. May God grant Bishop Irinej many years, rightly defining the word God’s truth and wisely governing the God-protected Diocese of Eastern America. Eis polla eti, Despota!
Enthronement Schedule — Saturday, October 1

9:30 AM: Greeting of Hierarchs, Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, Enthronement of His Grace Bishop Irinej and short reception
Holy Trinity Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA 15236
Phone: 412-882-3900

Honored Guests: Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Alexander and Crown Princess Katherine of Serbia

1:30 PM: Grand Banquet and Program
Music Hall Foyer and Balconies
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Phone: 412-622-3131

Special Guest Performers: “Talija” Folk Ensemble of Serbia
Mr. Dimitrie Lazich, operatic baritone

Banquet Reservations:
$100 per person. Mail check payable to “Serbian Orthodox Diocese”, together with your name and address and the names of those for whom reservations are being ordered to:
Bishop Irinej Enthronement Banquet, c/o Darlene Defebo, 1241 Prospect Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15227. For reservation information contact: D. Defebo at (412) 885-3739 or djdefebo@gmail.com
OR
Make your reservation by credit card or bank draft online by visiting the website: https://secure.etransfer.com/SLSOC/BishopIrinejEnthronement.cfm

Reservations MUST be ordered no later than September 23. Place cards will be distributed at the door. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Hotel Information:
Special rate of $99/night has been procured at the Pittsburgh Airport Marriott, 777 Aten Road, Coraopolis PA. Call 412-788-8800 and mention “Diocesan Event”.
Room reservation deadline Sept. 9.

Patronal Feast Celebration in Eugene

Eugene, OR – “When you visit a certain place, your visit, in fact, begins when you leave for then the place begins to visit you!”

With these words of our father and Bishop Maxim addressed to the sons and daughters of the Orthodox Church, the People of God, gathered at the Church of St. John of Shanghai, of San Francisco and all Orthodoxy, began the visit of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, held recently in Crete, in liturgical communities worldwide.

And as the Spirit “blows where he will” we cannot plan or foresee His actions, the process of the reception of the Council began, by God’s Providence, not there where by human logic we would expect it to, in great church centers or diocesan cathedrals near Crete, but in a geographically far and distant parish in the small town of Eugene in southern Oregon in the small parish which with its leader and father, Bishop Maxim, celebrated its Parish Slava on Saturday, July 2, 2016.

St. John of Shanghai, as a true “Homo Universalis”, or we can actually even say a “pan-human” (as St. Abba Justin called Dostoevsky), demonstrated anew his universal dimension on Saturday in Eugene when in beauty and love (Ps. 132:1) he gathered brothers and sisters of various different nationalities as well as clergy from different jurisdictions. This universality of his is surely a result of his life-long following of the God-man Christ and the opening of himself up for the Holy Spirit, as our Bishop Maxim noted in his homily, for the joyful submission to the will of Him as well as the humble and sacrificial service to God’s Church.

Following the Holy Eucharist, as the Icon of the Kingdom of “eternal good things” but also its living presence “here and now” the Slava Banquet followed for the nearly 150 who were present, participants of this heaven-earthy celebration. Then, spontaneously and without any prior planning (the nicest things and events often times occur like this), Bishop Maxim, in an inspiring address, related his impressions and a fragment of the atmosphere from the recent Great and Holy Council (Αγία και Μεγάλη Σύνοδος) in Crete. And just as the very meaning of the word “Σύνοδος” (joint trip) implies, the People of God, co-travelers on the journey to the Heavenly Fatherland, showed their living and unadultered interest for the Council conscious of the fact that it checks, directs and orients our journey through the rough waters of this world.

Many questions followed on the theme of fasting, jurisdictions, the council procedures, reception of the Council documents, etc. In a country where time is very valuable, by the will “from above”, it was as if it stopped! No one was in a rush, the children played without having to be attended by their parents whose attention, instead of being on them, was directed on themes of existential significance. A calmness and a priestly experience dominated the gathered. And how would it not? The Council visited us.
I am writing this short biography of the late protinica Ljubica Matejic as a tribute to her in recognition of her selfless love, loyalty to our Holy Church, and bravery that she showed during her difficult life. She left a legacy of an exemplary Christian, loving mother, a devoted wife, and the right hand of her husband, an outstanding priest, proto Mateja. While she had never been publicly recognized for her work, her character and her deeds are the greatest testimony and witness of her achievements; they certainly speak more loudly than any material reward.

Protinica Ljubica was born in Kraljevci, Srem, of parents Lazar Nebregic and mother Vida nee Vlagic. After she completed elementary school in Ruma and high school in Ruma and Belgrade, she enrolled in Belgrade University to study medicine. However, World War II, which broke out soon after, interrupted her schooling and split her family. Since the region of Srem belonged to Austro-Hungary at that time, protinica’s father was drafted in the Austro-Hungarian army. Not wanting to fight against his own people, he escaped to Serbia. There he joined the Serbian army and fought against the Austro-Hungarians. Sadly, close to the end of the war, being suspected for his views and as a potential leader of anti-communists, he was executed in July 1944 by communist partisans.

Along with her mother, Vida, brother, Milenko, and sisters, Gordana and Djurdjica, Protinica Ljubica had to flee her home. For a short time the she and her family settled in Belgrade, but because of the difficult and dangerous situation, she had to retreat to Slovenia, and later to Italy, where she settled in a camp in Eboli, Italy. Due to the fact that Eboli had a seminary and a Theological Academy, Protinica used this opportunity to enhance her education. She enrolled in the seminary and successfully completed the coursework in theology.

From Eboli, Protinica Ljubica was transferred to Germany, where she lived in different camps. There she continued to hold on firmly to her religious and cultural roots. In addition to her interest in theology, protinica also loved music, which she cherished through her participation in the folklore group in a camp in Lingen. It is here she met the future proto Mateja and where their inseparable life began. Proto and Protinica were betrothed in May of 1948 and a year after, on June 13, 1949, they got married. When Proto Mateja was ordained in Munich on June 13, 1951, he served as a chanpil for Serbian watchmen units attached to the British Army on the Rhine. As a chaplain, he had to travel to different locations, including hospitals and camps, where displaced persons lived, all together 21 such locations, and had to be away from protinica for most of the month. Their oldest son, Predrag was born on August 2, 1952, in the camp in Lingen on Ems. After numerous transfers from one camp to another, eventually the family was settled in Blakenese at the Headquarters, a section of Hamburg, where Milica was born on May 22 1954.

Soon after, in April 1956, protinica, Fr. Mateja and their two children moved to Monroe, Michigan. Fr. Mateja became the parish priest of St. George Serbian Orthodox parish. Here, Father with his Proteica immediately initiated the building of a new church and a parish home. In spite of a very meager salary and no benefits, they managed to focus all their energies and efforts on the construction of the new church, which was completed shortly after they came to Monroe. This was only possible with the selflessness of the entire family that cared more for the church then itself.

Here, in Monroe, Proto had a salary of 250 dollars. Of these 250 dollars, 50 were deducted for the rental of the house. With the remaining 200 the family had food for 20 days. For the rest 10 days, thanks to one generous baker, who provided Proto with stale bread, the family was able to manage until the end of every month.

Although this was a bitter experience, proto persevered thanks to protinica Ljubica’s loyalty and continual support. Not only had she taken care of the children, Predrag, Milica, and the newly born, Vida, and later Nenad and Dragana, and continually looked after the church, but also she was very knowledgeable about the order, the services and church music. In addition to singing during the feast days as a cantor, and the church choir on Sundays, she supported the church as a devoted member of the Circle of the Serbian Sisters. During this time Proto was able to complete his Ph.D. in August 1967, and dedicate himself to both church and academic work. For one year while living in Cleveland, Ohio, where he taught at the Western Reserve University, Protinica, along with the children, soon accompanied him during his weekly commute to Columbus, Ohio. There, he served a parish, which consisted of eight families. After he was offered a teaching position at The Ohio State University in 1968, the family permanently moved to Columbus. There, in 1978, Proto Mateja, along with protinica Ljubica, initiated and built one more church, dedicated to Saint Stevan of Dechani, and established the parish that grew from eight to over one hundred families. When Proto was absent due to travels for the benefit of the Hilandar Research Project, it was protinica who was his substitute as much as possible extant in the church and the family.

It must be pointed out that Protinica Ljubica’s outstanding loyalty, generosity and dignity made all this possible. Not only were the two of them able to make a living with their children and managed to survive, but also were able to make a tremendous contribution to our Holy Church.

For this reason the children and the family should take pride and feel honored for having had such a mother and a friend. This is important to emphasize, particularly due to the fact that many children grow without their mothers, and, as such suffer grave consequences, by continuing to wonder and stumble throughout their lives looking for such row model. It is not without reason that Bishop Nikolaj, who by no means underestimated a mother’s role, so well and so truthfully said, that because of her sacrifice, and her immense love, a mother is a single human being on this earth that resembles God the most.

Continued on Page 17
Ordination of Deacon Zoran Aleksic to the Holy Priesthood

Alhambra, CA - Axios and many years to Deacon Zoran Aleksic, who was ordained to the holy priesthood on June 6th, 2016 by His Grace Bishop Maxim during the Heirarchical Divine Liturgy held at Saint Steven’s Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Alhambra, California.

Also concelebrating the Liturgy were Very Rev. Nicholas Ceko, Dean of the Cathedral, Rev. Norman Kosanovich, Assistant Priest, Rev. Milan Unkovic, parish priest at the Saint Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church in Las Vegas, and Deacon Paul Gercmain from the St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in San Diego.

The Youth Choral of the Cathedral added to the festive occasion by prayerfully and joyfully singing the beautiful responses and hymns under the direction of the Cathedral’s Lay Assistance, Jonathan Braun.

Following the Divine Liturgy everyone gathered in the Cathedral Pavilion to enjoy the annual Festival of Learning, where students of the Church School displayed and presented their school work, answering questions and providing explanations about what they learned throughout the year. The Youth Choral provided musical entertainment throughout the event and gave a special performance at the closing of the festival.

The festivities then continued with a luncheon in the main hall, during which the Fr. Nicholas, on behalf of the faithful of the Cathedral, extended prayers and best wishes to Fr. Zoran as he begins his new ministry, and congratulations to his family, Popadija Nada, Pavle, and Anna.

Fr. Zoran has been the Episcopal Deacon of the Western American Diocese since August 2014 and will soon become the parish priest at the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church in Seattle, Washington.

Protinica Ljubica Matejic Nee Nebrigic

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

In spite of all the tribulations, both Proto and Protinica remained extremely generous people. Some of their contributions include support of the Saint Sava church in Vracar, many Serbian orphans and refugees, and numerous churches. Their hardship taught them and moved them to generosity and gratefulness. Proto Mateja and Protinica Ljubica confirmed the fact that even if the couple starts without anything but has faith in God and love for each other; the material will follow on its own. Proto Mateja indeed was blessed to have such a friend and a companion in his life. In his accurate and beautiful words: “In my absence, Protinica was the guardian of the family and the bulwark of the parish. I was fortunate to have her as my spouse. Our children were fortunate to have such a wonderful mother. The Monroe and the Columbus parishioners were fortunate to have such an exemplary Protinica.”

V. Rev. Dr. Zivojin Jakovljevic

Ordination in Elizabeth

Elizabeth, NJ - On Tuesday, June 28th, His Grace Bishop Dr. Mitrophan served the Holy Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at St George Serbian Orthodox Church. On the Feast of Vidovdan, commemorating the Great-Martyr Tsar Lazar of Kosovo and the New Serbian Martyrs, His Grace ordained seminarian Vedran Grabic to the rank of Deacon. Also present at Liturgy were Fr. Zoran Radovic of St George (Elizabeth, NJ) and Fr. Vladimir Radujkovic from St John the Baptist (Paterson, New Jersey).

Dn. Vedran is a recent graduate of St Sava School of Theology in Libertyville, Illinois. He will be staying at the diocesan residence, serving with His Grace Bishop Dr. Mitrophan.

Through the intercessions of the Great-Martyr Tsar Lazar, and all new Serbian Martyrs, may God grant the newly ordained Dn. Vedran Grabic a fruitful ministry in the vineyard of the Lord!
Dear Diary —Reflections on Another Year

Even though it seems that summer has just started, it’s time to prepare for another Sunday Church School year. Let’s see, here’s my list: I’ve got to make sure that— all the teachers are coming back, classes are covered, books and supplies are inventoried and ordered, registration information is publicized, welcome back letters are written and mailed, prepare for registration, plan to meet with the teachers and Fr. Rade, plan our yearly calendar…. Oh my, it’s overwhelming! I can’t stop myself from asking, is it all worth it?? Our initial registration is great, but then as the year progresses only half of those enrolled come on a Sunday- soccer, sporting events, dance, tennis, etc. - take precedence over attending class and even Liturgy!

Goodness! I forgot that I need to prepare for our ‘Look what we did last year bulletin board’- finding photos and information and producing an attractive display of all the activities we held last year… Well, I think I’ll start with our last event and go backwards; that would be our Preslava celebration with end-of-the-year awards given and graduating seniors recognized.

It was a very nice celebration. Fr. Tom Kazich joined us this year celebrating our Slava, blessing our kolach- and all of us there - with his presence. We handed out awards for Church School Attendance, Liturgy Attendance, Altar Boy and Epistle Reader Service, Saint of the Month Stars and, oh my favorite part, recognizing and honoring our graduating seniors.

Seven graduates were honored this year; seven teens who have participated in Sunday Church School since they were in kindergarten. Actively involved as Altar Boys and Epistle Readers, visiting shut-ins (“Bozic Blessings”), singing in the choir, volunteering at parish events, dancing in folklore… Amazing young people. Not to mention their lengthy list of academic awards and participation in extracurricular activities, sports, volunteer work in public school and their awesome future plans!

Each of them was called up and stood in front of their parents, friends and younger students, blushing while I read about their accomplishments and activities throughout their Sunday Church School and public school careers.

Each of them was introduced and stepped up to the podium to address the children and adults in the audience:

Michael Beckman, son of Wayne and Juliana Beckman: Altar Boy Captain, portrayed St. Sava at our annual celebration, Choir member, state champion swimmer, scholarship winner, National Honor Society member… said: “Sunday school has taught me much of what I know about my cultural background, Faith and religion. I am also blessed to have made so many friendships that will last a lifetime through the program.”

Katarina Fischer, daughter of Michael and JuDee Fischer: Epistle Reader, outstanding Sunday Church School attendance, 4 year participant in “Bozic Blessings”, outstanding varsity soccer player, scholarship winner, National Honor Society member… said: “Sunday school has helped me become a balanced and well-rounded person. The Sun-

day school program and the St. Sava community in Milwaukee has established a strong faith in Serbian Orthodoxy for me that I will continue to build on for years to come!”

Natasha Ignatowski, daughter of Richard and Milka Ignatowski; outstanding Sunday Church School attendance, SPLASH volunteer, soccer team captain, National Honor Society member… said: “By attending Sunday School for a majority of my life, not only was I able to connect with like-minded peers and form friendships, but I learned about the history of my Faith and ways to apply it to my life. I’m thankful for all the lessons I have been taught that will guide my future”.

Lena Marinkovich, daughter of Dragomic and Donna Marinkovich: outstanding Sunday Church School attendance, Epistle Reader, 4 year participant in “Bozic Blessings”, Camp counselor, Choir member, National Honor Society member… said: “Sunday school has helped me grow and learn more about my Faith. Mrs. Markovina has been an amazing teacher and her devotion to our faith is inspiring. I can take what I learned in Sunday school and apply it to my everyday life.”

Eva Oklobdzija, daughter of Jovo and Annie Oklobdzija: Epistle Reader, Parish volunteer, Tennis team captain and coach, scholarship winner, National Honor Society member… said: “Sunday School allowed me to appreciate my Faith, which is a constant in this ever-changing world.”

Mile Sever, son of Nikola and Daro Sever: Altar Boy Captain, Parish Volunteer, youth soccer coach, soccer team captain, scholarship winner, National Honor Society member… said: “Sunday school allowed me to gain an in depth understanding of my Faith by not only teaching me the Faith, but also allowing me to question it and learn more about it. I am very appreciative of the things that I have learned from all of my Sunday School Teachers, Fr. Dragan, Fr. Rade, Mr. & Mrs. Markovina as well as the late Ms. Sylvia Kesich.”

Aleksandar Stojasavljevic, son of Mike and Ann Stojsavljevic: Altar Boy Captain, Emcee St. Sava Program, Camp counselor, outstanding varsity soccer player and volunteer, scholarship winner, National Honor Society member and someone who has endured three spinal cord surgeries… said: “I will be eternally grateful for the love and prayers that were given by the families of St. Sava during my surgeries and recovery. This experience has strengthened my faith which will never be questioned. I truly believe this experience will carry me into the future to do great things as I believe this was God’s plan.”

Tears were shed and hugs were shared at the end of this celebration.

As I remember the words spoken by these seven graduates, I now realize why it is all worth it! The joy, true joy from our Lord and the Faith He has blessed us with, ills my heart as I realize that as teachers we may not see how our sharing of God’s words, His teachings and the love He has for His Church touches these young people, but it does. And even if our attendance is low, our Lord said: “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20) We gather and let the Lord do the rest.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

I am looking forward to another year!

Mrs. Diane Markovina
Superintendent St. Sava Sunday Church School, Milwaukee, WI
The word catechism (κατηχέω, meaning - to teach orally) derives from the Greek language. It refers to a summary or exposition of teachings (doctrine) and serves as a learning introduction to the Mysteries (Sacraments) traditionally used in catechesis, or Christian religious teaching of children and adults. The book No Faith is More Beautiful than the Christian Faith, written by Bishop Danilo Krstich, was published in 1982, and for the first time, Sebastian Press of the Western American Diocese, published it in English and it is available for purchase at: www.westsrbdio.org.

No Faith Is More Beautiful Than The Christian Faith

Bishop DANIGO KRSTICH
Hieromonk AMFILOHIJE RADOVICH
Belgrade 1982

Copyright ©Sebastian Press 2015

Which prophet prepared the people for the immediate coming of the Son of God?

This is the wonderful John, the Forerunner and Baptist. He preached in the desert the coming of the Savior of the world with the words: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

Where did Saint John the Baptist live, and what did he eat?

John the Forerunner, who baptized Christ in the Jordan River, lived in the desert as an ascetic. He fed on desert vegetation and wild honey.

How did his life end?

After John the Baptist criticized King Herod for marrying his sister-in-law, Queen Herodias hated him and convinced the King to behead St. John. This he did, killing this greatest prophet, and the one whom the Savior Himself said is the greatest man born of woman. We remember his martyrdom on the feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29 according to the old calendar, September 11 on the new). Out of great respect for the strict ascetic and martyr John the Forerunner, all Orthodox hold to a strict fast that day.

What did St. John the Baptist say the first time he saw Jesus Christ?

He said the prophetic words, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”

Saint John the Baptist knew that Christ was without sin and did not need to be baptized (immersed in water). Why then did he baptize Him in the Jordan?

Christ is sinless in two ways: both as God and as Man, born of the Most Pure Virgin. But he voluntarily wished to humble Himself and come to be baptized, as though He were a sinner, “to fulfill all righteousness,” as He Himself tells the Forerunner. And at that very moment of voluntary humiliation the glory of God was manifested, God revealed Himself on the waters of the river Jordan.

How was God revealed at the Jordan?

When John immersed Christ in the water of the Jordan river, the voice of God the Father was heard from the heavens saying: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Standing in the Jordan was the second person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, as the God-Man, and descending upon the Son of God in the form of a radiant dove was the Holy Spirit. This was the Theophany. There God revealed Himself to the world as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as the Holy Trinity. God revealed Himself and illumined the universe. The feast of Theophany or Epiphany is celebrated on January 6 (January 19 when the Old Calendar date is celebrated on the New Calendar). On that day water is blessed and then taken home and partaken of the health and illumination of soul and body. This Theophany holy water never goes bad, because the power of the Holy Spirit resides in it.

How did the Devil tempt Christ?

The first temptation was by bread. Christ fasted for forty days and forty nights. He experienced great hunger. The tempter then approached Him and said: “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.” But Christ answered the Devil: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Many sell their souls to Satan for this transitory, earthly bread, and forget the eternal bread, the Word of God, who is the Bread of life. The second temptation was working miracles. The Devil led Christ to the pinnacle of the Jerusalem temple and said to Him: “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will give his angels charge of you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” But Christ answered him: “Again it is written: ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”

The third temptation was earthly power. The Devil led Christ to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of this world and said to Him: “All these I will give you if you will fall down and worship me.” Christ answered him: “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.’” Satan places these same three temptations before each person and before all people of all times; he tempts them with pleasures, miracles and power. Only those that are faithful to Christ are able to resist them and reply to him: “Get away from me, Satan! I worship the Lord my God, and Him alone do I serve!”

Why is the Lord Jesus Christ called the God-Man?

The Lord Jesus Christ is the God-Man because He has in Himself two natures: the divine nature from God the Father, and the human nature from His Mother, the Most Holy Virgin Mary. She gave birth to God in a human body. In the words of the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (AD 451) the divine and human natures are united in the one and same Christ, the Son of God, the Only begotten, “without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.” Thus Christ is at the same time both God and Man, and that is why He is called the God-Man.

How many Apostles were there, and who were the first to be called?

There were twelve Apostles. The first called was the Apostle Andrew, and then his brother Peter (who was called Simon earlier). “Apostle” is a Greek word that means — Christ’s ambassador, a proclaimer of Christ and His divine teaching.
У име Оца и Сина и Светога Духа!
Песму благодарења узносимо Богу Којем се у Тројици клањамо што нас је удостојио да се у дане Свете Педесетнице састанемо на острву Криту, освештаном од стране Апостола народâ Павла и његовог ученика Тита, “правога сина по заједничкој вери” (Тит. 1, 4), и да, уз помоћ Светога Духа, окончамо заседање Светог и Великог Сабора наше Православне Цркве који је сазвао Његова Светост Васељенски Патријарх г. Вартоломеј уз сагласност Блажењних Предстојатеља најсветијих Православних Цркава, у славу благословеног имена Његовог, а на добро Народа Божјег и свега света, исповедајући заједно са божанственим Павлом: „Тако да нас људи у мислима својим виде као слуге Христове и управитеље тајни Божјих” (IКор. 4, 1).

Свети и Велики Сабор Једне, Свете, Саборне (Католичанске, свобохвапне) и Апостолске Цркве представља аутентично сведочење вере у Боговини, у острву Криту, који се назива Критом, и лично умјетнику, који је радо обогаћен извором, који је великом славом. Свети и Велики Сабор Једне, Свете, Саборне представља аутентично сведочење вере у Боговини, у острву Криту, који се назива Критом, и лично умјетнику, који је радо обогаћен извором, који је великом славом.

1. Једна, Света, Саборна и Апостолска Црква јесте богочовечанска заједница на слици Свете Тројице, предокушање и доживљај Есхатона (коначне реалности будућег века) у божанственој Евхаристији и откривање будуће славе. Као трајна Педесетница она је неућутни пророчки глас у свету, присуство и сведочење Царства Божјег које је дошло у силу (ср. Марк. 9, 1). Црква као Тело Христово сабира (ср. Мат. 23, 37) око Њега, преображава свет и напаја га водом „која тече у живот вечни” (Јов. 4, 14).

2. Апостолско и светоотачко Предање, следујући речима установљени свете Тајне Евхаристије које је изрео Његов Господ и Основач Цркве на Тајној Вечери са ученицима својим, истицао је ознаку Цркве као Тела Христова (Мат. 26, 26; Марк. 14, 22; Лук. 22, 19; Ј Кор. 10, 16 – 17 и 11, 23 – 29) и
узев ју је повезивало са тајном Очевечења Сина и Логоса Божијег од Духа Светог и Марије Деве. У том духу свагда је наглашаван нераскидиви однос како целокупне Тајне Божанскоуговора у Христу са Тајном Цркве тако и Тајне Цркве са Тајном свете Евхаристије, која се стално потврђује у светотајинском животу Цркве дејством Светога Духа.

Православна Црква, верна овом једнолазном апостолском Предању и светотајинском искуству, представља автентични продужетак „Државе“. Свети Саборке и апостолске Цркве како је исповедавао у Символу вере и како је потврђује учење Оца Цркве. Тако она још више осећа своју одговорност не само за автентично доживљавање овог искуства од стране црвеног Тела него и за веродостојно сведочење истине пред свим људима.

3. Православна Црква јесте, у свом јединству и у својој саборности (католичности, унверзалности, светобухватности), Црква Сабора, од Апостолског сабора у Јерусалиму (Дела ап. 15, 5 – 29) до данас. Црква сама по себи јесте Сабор који је Христос установио, а Дух Свети њиме руководи, сагласно апостолском начелу: „Угодно би Светоме Духу њему руководи, сагласно апостолском Предању и светотајинском искуству, представља сама по себи јесте Сабор који је Сам Христос, као један, а Дух Свети, као једини извор човековог освећења у Светоме. У овом смислу схваћена, светост јесте човековог освећења у Духу Светоме. У овом смислу схваћена, светост је автентично учење како у Тајни Цркве тако и у њеним светим Тајнама, са центром у божанственој Евхаристији, која представља „жртву живу, свету, угодну Богу“ (Римл. 11, 1). „Ко ће нас раставити од љубави Христове? Жалост или тескоба, или гоњење, или глад, или голодиња, или опасност, или мач? Као што је написано: Ради Тебе нас убијају ваздан, сматрају нас овцама за клање. Али у свему овоме побеђујемо кроз Онога Који нас је заволео“ (Римл. 8, 35 – 37). Свети оваплоћују есхатолошки идентитет Цркве као вечно славословље пред земаљским и небеским престолом Цара славе (Пс. 23, 7) и изобразивују (иконизују) Царство Божје.

5. Православна Католичанска Црква се састоји од четрнаест помесних, свеправославно признатих, аутокефалних Цркава. Начело аутокефалности не може, међутим, да функционише на уштрб напредности и еклсиолошке функционисање тих сабрања представља канонским јурисдикцијама којима улазе сви епископи признати као канонских, припадајући и даље оним митрополитским епископским сабрањима (иконизују) Царство Божје.

4. Човекова светост је незамислива ван Тела Христова које је Црква (види Еф. 1, 22 – 23). Светост изиђе из Личности Јединога Светога. Она је човеково учење у светости Божијој унутар „забележење светих“, као што се објављује када свештеник на божанственој Литургији углажава: „Светиње светима!“ и када верни на то одговарају речима: „Један је Свети, један Господ, Исус Христос, на главу Бога Оца! Амин.“ У том духу свети Кирил Александријски наглашава да се Христос, „Који као Бог јесте по природи Свети, (...) нас ради освећење у Светоме Духу (...). Христос је исходиште светости за нас, а не за Себе, да би тако од Њега и у Њему, Првом Примаоцу првине освећења, благодат освећења прелазила на сав род наш“ (Коментар на Јеванђеље по Јовану, 11: PG 74, 548).


II Мисија Цркве у свету

6. Апостолски делење и проповедање Јеванђеља, познато као мисионарство, спада у само језгро заједнице светих, која се у историји наставља преко познијих Великих Сабора одржаних у Цариграду: Сабор од свеобухватности), Сабор одржан 879/880. године, одржан ради поништавања одлука унионистичког Флорентинског сабора (1438 – 1439), па Сабори из година 1638, 1642, 1672. и 1691, сазвани у циљу побијања протестантских веровања, као и Сабор одржан године 1872. ради осуде етиофилицитама као екслусивошком јереси.

Наставак на 22. стр.
Наставак са 21. стр.

који Црква удахњује у људско друштво и њиме оцрквењу свет оснивајући свуда нове помесне Цркве. У овом смислу православни верници сматрају њиховим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сматрају својим уметницима у комуци и прагматичним критеријумом у којем је прецизно и обично прецизно, и тако у уметничком и моралном смислу, православни верници сма...
12. У наше време широко је распрострањено одушевљење за импресивни развој на пољу биологије, генетике и неурофизиологије мозга. Ради се о научним достигнућима чија широко примена може да изазове веома обилне антрополошке и етички дилеме. Немогуће примена биотехнологије на почетку, у току и на крају живота доводи у опасност његову аутентичну пуноћу. Човек све интензивније, на екстремам и опасан начин, експериментира са властитом природом. Зато је у опасности да се претвори у некакву биолошку машину, у безличну друштвени јединицу или у механизам контролисане мисли.

Православна Црква не може да остане на маргини дискусије о тако важним антрополошким, етичким и егзистенцијалним питањима. Она се ослања на критеријуме које је научила од Бога да би показала актуелност православне антропологије наспрам савременог рушења свих вредности. Наша Црква може и мора да пред светом изрази своју пророчку свет и савест у Исусу Христу, Који је при Очовечењу Свом узео на Себе – или у Себе – читавог човека и Који је аутентични узор обнове људскога рода. Он истиче светнићу живота и карактер човека као личности од самог зачећа. Право на право жење прво је у његовим правима. Црква као богочовечанска заједница – у којој сваки човек представља јединствено биће, непреокретно сведочење Божња и да има вечно назначење. Она тако, помоћу библијске антропологије и духовног искуства Православља, обогаћује философску и научну расправу на биоетичке теме.

13. У глобалном друштву, оријентисаним према поседовању и индивидуоцентризму, Православна Католичанска Црква ставља у први план истину о животу и жињу Богом  и показује их као афирмацију живота и људског божанско назначење. Човека не дефинишу само његови гени. На овом основу је утемељена екологија како би обезбедила свакодневни живот човека. Она се ослања на критеријуме који научила од Бога да би показала актуелност православне антропологије наспрам савременог рушења свих вредности. Она тако, помоћу библијске антропологије и духовног искуства Православља, обогаћује философску и научну расправу на биоетичке теме.

14. Корени еколошке кризе су духовне и етичке природе, а крију се у срцу свакога човека. Та криза је у последњим вековима свакога човека. Та криза је у последњим вековима свакога човека, уз велики промени у животу човека кроз генетичке и биолошке промене. Она тако, помоћу библијске антропологије и духовног искуства Православља, обогаћује философску и научну расправу на биоетичке теме.
Наставак са 23. стр.

људским страстима – као што су похлепа, грамзивост, себичност и отимачко расположење – и њиховим последицама по планету, као што је промена климе, која већ увелико угрожава природну околину, тај наш заједнички дом. Раскид односа између човека и природе није ништа друго до одступање од аутентичне употребе творевине Божје. Решавање еколошког проблема на основу начелâ хришћанске традиције изискује не само покајање за грех бездушног искоришћавања природних ресурса планете – а покајање значи корениту промену начина мишљења и понашања – него и аскезу као лек за потрошачки менталитет, за обоготворење људских потреба и за поседнички став према природним добrima. Жеља да се превазиђе еколошка криза предводи и нашу највећу одговорност према природи, што ће користити нашу обавезу да долазећим нараштајима предамо природну средину у којој се може животи и да је оставимо у аманет да је користе онако како Бог хоће и благосиља. У светим Тајнима Цркве однос према Божјој творевини јесте катапатички (афирмативни, позитивни) однос. Оне укрепљују човека како би функционисао – или литургиски служио – као њен управитељ, чувар и „свештеник” који је доксологијски приноси Творцу – „Твоје од Твојих Теби приносећи због свега и за све...” – и тако негује евхаристијски однос са творевином. Овим православним јеванђељским и светоотачким приступом Црква нам такође скреће пажњу на друштвене димензије и на трагичне последице уништавања нашега природног окружења.

VI

Црква пред глобализом, екстремним појавама насиља и миграцијама

15. Савремена идеологија глобализма – која се тихо намеће и муњевито шири – већ је почела да изазива тешке поремећаје у економији и друштву у светским размерама. Њено наметање је створило нове облике систематске експлоатације и социјалне неправде. У њено име је испланирана постепена неутрализација препрекâ које могу да приреде националне, верске, идеолошке, па и разне друге традиције које јој се супротстављају. Она је већ довела до слабљенja или, штавише, до коначног разграђивања социјалних тековина, и то под изговором да је, наводно, потребно извршити ревитализациju светске привреде и економије. Тиме она заправо није одступа од између богатих и сиромашних, подмеће динамит под темеље друштвене компактности и изазива нове пожаре затгнутих односова у свету.

Насупрот булдожеру безличне хомогенизације, стављеном у погон кроз процес глобализације, али и крајностима етнофилетизма, Православна Црква предложе заштиту идентитета свих народа и јачање њихове самосвојности. Кao алтернативни образаз за јединство човечанства она нуди структуру и организацију саме Цркве, засновану на равноправности помесних Цркава, као и културама и традицијама народа, иза којих стоје глобализам и начело „самосталности економије” или „економизам”, односно одвајање економије од човекових животних потреба и њено претварање у сврху саме себе. Она, напротив, предлага животно оријентисану и одрживу економију, утемељену на начелима Јеванђеља. Напротив, предложи животно оријентисану и одрживу економију, утемељену на начелима Јеванђеља. Та најначин она, користећи као компас реч Господњу по којој , не живи човек само о хлебу“ (Лук. 4, 4), не повезује напредак људског рода само за подизањем животног стандарда или са економским развојем на уштрб духовних вредности.

16. Црква се не меша у политику у уском значењу тога термина, али њено сведочење, као брига за човека и његову духовну слободу, ипак има у суштини политички карактер. Овај однос треба да чува засебност идентитета Цркве и државе и да обезбеђује њихову унапређење и функције заштите његове идентитета и његових права која одатле проистичу, као и ради остваривања социјалне правде.

Људска права се данас налазе у средишту политике као одговор на савремене социјалне кризе и политичке преврате
и у циљу заштите слободе појединца. Став Православне Цркве према људским правима узима у обзир и опасност да се индивидуално право срза на крајњи индивидуализам, заправо на индивидуоцентризам и праваштво. Таква, извршена функција људских права на штету друштвеној слободи води ка њиховом произвољном претварању у едемодички, хедонистичке претензије. Тако се, међутим, варљиво понизовење слободе са бескоруплозним самоволом индивидуе уздиже до висине „ Васељенске вредности”. Она пак „вредности” потпава темељи социјалних вредности, породице, религије и нације, а уједно представља и претњу темељним етичким вредностима.

Православно поимање човека противи се, тако, како горељивој апогео индивидуе, тојест појединци и њихових права, тако и понизавању неподвожановања људске личности у савременим гигантским економским, друштвеним, политичким и комуникацијским структурама. Свето Предање Православља неисцрпно је врело истине од животне важности за човека. Није није тако поштовао човека и побрио се за њега као Богочовек Христос и Црква Његова. Текољу људско право јесте заштита наслеђа верске слободе у свим њеним перспективама, односно слободе савести, веровања, култа и свих индивидуалних и колективних начина изражавања религијске слободе. Тиме је, даље, обухвата право свакога верника да несметано, без икакве државне интервенције, виже своје верске дужности, као и право на слободну јавну веру, како и свим индивидуалним и колективним начинах изражавања религијске слободе. Она, свесна да представља живо Христово Свето Предање, истину је, уједно и свештеник, разумејући њен глас.

Истински хришћани, по примеру Распетога Господа, жртвују своје животе, а не друге. Са тог разлога он је најстражнији судија песимизма већ и сам његов божански Домострој спасења од циља заштите човечности.

Православна Црква са болом и молитвом посматра права јесте заштита начела верске слободе у свим њеним жељама, а ова поставка представља живо Христово Свето Предање, истину је, уједно и свештеник, разумејући њен глас.

Православна Црква је особито забринута због положаја хришћана и других проговрених националних и верских мањина на Блиском и Средњем Истоку. Ова позиција доприносити је узрастању истине у друштву, проповиђује индивидуалну и групну веру, као и праве на случаје и у унуташи стазе.

Православна Црква је особито забринута због положаја хришћана и других проговрених националних и верских мањина на Блиском и Средњем Истоку. Ова позиција доприносити је узрастању истине у друштву, проповиђује индивидуалну и групну веру, као и праве на случаје и у унуташи стазе.
Следујемо светим Оцима и саборским одредбама како Цркве, где год их има широм света, и свеколикој васељени. Сабора свој деци Најсветије Мајке, наше Православне јереси (ортодоксије) вере Цркве, као што објављује и свети црквеног Тела (Против јереси 4, 18: РG 7, 1028).

Благовестећи, дакле, ту веру, по заповести Господњој, васеломе свету и провећајима „у Његово име показање и опроштење грехова по свим народима“ (Лук. 24, 47), дужи смо да сами себе, једни друге и сав живот свој предајемо Христу Богу и да љубимо једни друге исповедајући у једномислији „Оца, Сина и Светога Духа, Тројицу једносушну и неразделиву“. Ово поручујемо са Сабора свој деци Најсветије Мајке, наше Православне Цркве, где год их има широм света, и свеколикој васељени. Следујемо светим Оцима и саборским одредбама како бисмо сачували веру коју нам Оци предао и како бисмо усвојили духовно користан етос у свом свакодневном животу. Најзад, у нади на ошите васкрсење, славимо Трнгостасно Божаство богонађахтом поесом:

Оче Сведенречи и Логосе и Душе, у Трима ипостасима Једна природо, Надсуштавени и Надбожин, у Тебе смо се крстили и Тебе благосиљамо у све векове.

(Канон Пасхе, песма 8)

† Константинопољски Варшомеј, председник
† Александријски Теодор
† Јерусалимски Теофил
† Српски Иринеј
† Румунски Данило
† Нове Јустинијане и света Кипра Хризостом
† Атински и све Јеладе Јероним
† Варнихски и све Пољске Сава
† Тиране и све Албанци Анастасије
† Првашевски и све Чешке и Словачке Растислав
апостолском Предању и светогајинском искуству, Православна Црква представља аутентични пролажетак Једне свете, саборне и апостолске Цркве, као што исповедамо у Символу вере и као што нам потврђује учење Отца Цркве. Наша Црква доживљава Тајну божанског домостроја (икономије) спасења у свом светогајинском животу чије средиште јесте божанствена Еванхиристија. Православна Црква изражава своје јединство и своју саборност (католичност, свебухватност) помоћу сабора. Саборско на чело (синодалност) пружа њену организациону структуру, као и начин на који се у њој доносе одлуке и одређује њен даљи историјски ход. Аутокефалне Православне Цркве не представљају конфедерацију Цркава него сачињавају Једну свету, саборну и апостолску Цркву. Свака локална Црква, служећи свету Еванхиристији, јесте присутство и пројављивање Једне, свете, саборне и апостолске Цркве на једном месту, односно у одређеном месту. У погледу православне дијаспоре у различитим земљама широм земљога шара, на Сабору је одлучено да буде продужено функционисање епископских сабора, надлежних за једину земљу или за више земаља, све док не буде могућа примена канонске аквирисање (пуног поштовања канонског поретка). У саставих сабора улазе канонски епископи које одређује свака аутокефална Црква понаособ и који и даље припадају својој матичној Цркви. Доследним функционисањем епископских сабора јемчи се поштовање православног начела синодалности (саборског начела).

У току Светог и Великог Сабора гледан је значај досадашњих сабора Представио је и формулисана је предлог да Свети и Велики Сабор постане установа која се понавида у одређеним временским размацима.

2. Учествујући у божанственом Еванхиристији и молећи се за васељену, дужи смо да после свет Литургије наставимо Литургију и сведочимо веру пред блиском и далеким, у складу са јасном заповешћу Господа Христа пред Вашесење Његово: „И бићите ми сведочи у Јерусалиму и у свој Јудеи и Самарији и до краја земље” (Дела ап. 1, 8). Поновна евангелизација Народа Божјег у савременим секуларизованим друштвима и евангелизација оних који још нису познали Христа представља непреокидну обавезу Цркве.

3. Одазивајући се на дужност да сведочи истину и своју апостолску веру, наша Црква придаје велики значај дијалогу, поглавито дијалогу са невојничким хришћанима.

На тај начин се и остали хришћански свет тачније упознаје са правим православним Светим Предањем, са вредношћу светоотачког учења, са литургијским искуством и вером православних хришћана. Дијалози које Православна Црква води никада не значе компромис у питањима вере.

4. Експозиције фундаментализма, учљиве у криву разних религија, представљају израз болесне религиозности. Тривести поступци дијалога значи допринише изградњи узаконjenог поверенja, мира и помирења. У савременом доживљају њега потребујемте да би се посебно влагајуше у великом издвоjиву и могуће убицање припадника верских јединица, принудно превратање, гранање одгледацама, мучењу и одржавању ликвидације. Она овде глас тешке оптужбе против оних који руше храмове, верске символе и споменике културе. Изражава своју посебну забринутост због положаја хришћана и свих прогонених мајина на Средњем Истоку и другде. Упућује апел светских заједница да заштити православне староседеседе тамошњих страна и друге тамошње хришћане, као и укупно становништво тога подручја, које има ненарушено право да остане у својој јединици у статусу равноправних грађана. Наш Сабор позива све негове чинове да без одлагања упознаће у посебно манифесте напоре да се прежни ратни сукоби на Средњем Истоку, као и свuda где даље буке и да се омогућу повратак прогонених на њихова огњишта.

Посебан апел упућујемо мочнима Земље да се потруде да мир и права превладају у земаљама из којих потичу избеглице. Желимо да подстакнемо политичке власти, грађана и православне хришћане земаља у којима оваје избеглице траже утучишта да им даље посмртни помоћ по својом могућностима, од свога сувишика или мањка. 5. Савремена секуларизациja тежи ка аутономизациji човека од Христа и од духовног утицаја Цркве, коју иначе самодобно посветују са конзервативизmom. Западна цивилизација, мијутним, носи на себи неизбрасиви печат допринеса хришћанства у великим временским трајањима. Уз то Црква показује спасоносни значај Богочовека Христа и Тела Његова као места и национа живота у слободи. 6. У оквиру савременог приступа браhu Православна Црква смatra нераскидиви однос љубави између муслимана.
и жене „Тајном великом” која нас упућује на однос Христа и Цркве. Исто тако, „малом Црквом” назива породицу, која произилази из брака и представља једино јемство за васпитање деце.

Црква стално наглашава вредност уздржана. Хришћанско подвиживство се корени разликује од било каквог душолистичког аскетизма, који отуђује човека од живота и од другог човека. Оно га, напротив, повежује са светотајским животом Цркве. Уздржана се не тиче само монашког живота. Аскетски етос је одлика хришћанског живота у свим његовим појавним облицима.

Свети и Велики Сабор, осим конкретних тема о којима је одлучивао, указује, сакето, и на следећа онтологија и актуелна савремена питања:

7. Што се тиче теме односа хришћанске вере и позитивних наука, Православна Црква избегава туторство над научним истраживањем и не заузима став по сваком научном питању. Она благодари Богу што начинцима даје благодатни дар да откривају непознате стране Божје творење. Савремени развој позитивних наука и технологије доноси корените промене у нашем животу. Он нам пружа значајне услуге као што су олашкан свакодневни живот, суочавање са озбиљним болестима, лакша комуникација међу људима, истраживање свемира и тако даље. И поред твога тега, има и разноврсне негативне последице као што су манипулација слободом, постепено губљење драгоценних традиција, упропашћивање природне околине и оспоравање моралих вредности.

Научно знање, макако се развијало најбржим могућим темпом, не покреће човекову вољу нити даје одговор на озбиљне етичке и егзистенцијалне проблеме, на трагање за смислом живота и света. Они проблеми изискују духовни приступ, што Православна Црква и чини уз помоћ биоестетичко засноване на хришћанској етици и на светотаочком учењу. Напоредо са поштовањем слободе научног истраживања Православна Црква указује на опасности које се крију иза одређених научних достигнућа и наглашава човеково достојанство и његово божанско назначаје.

8. Очигледно је да су данашњу еколошку кризу изазвали духовни и етички узрости. Она је уколо у незаситој грамативности и себичности које воде у нераузимно искоришћавање природних богатстава, оштећености атмосфере шетним загађењима и промену климе. При хришћанском сагледавању проблема тражи се поклањање за злоупотребе, уздржљивост и аскетски етос као лек за прекомерну потрошњу.

Човек становништво мора да негује у себи свест о томе да је само „економ” (управитељ у име домаћина), а не власник творење Божје. Православна Црква непрестано наглашава да и будући нарашијај имају право на природна добра која нам је поверно Творац. Из тог разлога и она активно се уздиже у разним междуправним еколошким подручјима, а први септембар је одредила за дан молитве за заштиту природне околине.

9. Насупрот силини уравниловке и безличној хомогенизацији, спровођеној на разноразне начине, Православље се заузима за поштовање идентитета и самосвојности људи и народа. Оно се противи осамостаљивању економије у односу на човекове основне потребе и њеном претварању у циљ по себи. Напредак људског рода не зависи само од раста животног стандарда или пак од напретка економије на уштрб духовних вредности.

10. Православна Црква се не меша у политику. Њена реч остаје препознавала, али је и пророчка иер испуњава дужност заузимања за човека. Људска права се данас налазе у средишту политике као одговор на савремене друштвени кризе и политичке преокрете, а за циљ имају заштиту грађанина од државне самовоље. Наша Црква придоја да том циљу такође обавезе и одговорност грађана, као и потребу сталне самокритике политичара и грађана ради суштинског болита друштва.

Она превасходно наглашава да, кад је реч о човеку, православно „треба” превазилазити видокрус усталих људских права. Јер, „већа од свега” јесте љубав какву нам је открио Христос и каквом су живели они који су Му верно следили. Инстиници још и на томе да темелно људско право јесте и заштита верске слободе, односно слободе савести, веровања, богослужења и свих његових индивидуалних и колективних израза, а то обухвата и право сваког верника и сваке верске заједнице да своје верске дужности врши слободно од сваког државног уплитања, као и право на јавно религијско поучавање.

11. Православна Црква се обраћа младима, који тражу за пуноћом живота, за животом пуном слободе, правде и стваралаштва, али и љубави. Она их позива да се свесно прикупље њој, Цркви Онога Који је Истина и Живот.

Позива их да доводе и да са собом донесу црквеном Телу своју виталност, своје немире и недуоумице и своја очекивања. Млади не представљају просто будућност Цркве него и њену динамичку, стваралашку садашњост на локалном и уназаљном нивоу.

12. Свети и Велики Сабор је пред нама отворио хоризонт за савремену многобројну васељену. Нагласио је нашу одговорност у простору и времену, притом свагда у перспективи вечности.

Чувајући неокреним свој светотајски и сотирошлочи карактер, Православна Црква је осетљива за бол и егзистенцијалну узнемиреност народа и за њихов вапац за правдом и миром. Она „из дана у дан” благовести спасење Господње и објављује јединство мешком славу његову, „у свим народима чудеса Његова” (ср. псалм 95).

Молимо се да вас „Бог сваке благодати, Који вас позива у вечну славу у Христу Исусу, ... пошто мало постигнуте, усаврши, утврди, укрепи, утемени; Њему слава и сила у векове векова. Амин” (І Пет. 5. 10 – 11).
Нема лепше вере од хришћанске
Епископ Данило Јеромонах Амфилохије

Који пророк је непосредно припремио људе за долазак Сина Божјег?

То је био дивни Јован Претеча. Он је проповедао хришћанско већ неки године пре захтевања мале крчењације. Још у првим десет годинама немао је ни већег учителя него Сам Господ Исус Христос.

Где је живео и чиме се хранио свети Ђован Крститељ?

Свети Ђован Крститељ је живео у пустињи као испосник. Хранио се пустињским биљем и дивљим медом.
Свечани опроштај у Кабрамати

У истоству недељу по Духовима, 31. јула 2016. године, у Историјском саборном храму Светог Великомученика Георгија у Кабрамати, свету архијерејску Литургију служио је Немања Преосвештенство Владика Иринеј, на прошлом Архијерејском сабору изабран за новог Епископа источноамеричког.

Састуђивали су протонамесник Немања Мрђењовић, други пашио Кабраматски, и Џакон Александар Ивановић, секретар Митрополије, а на челу мале војске чечева присуствовао је ипофрах Вељко Мркић. Службу је дивним појачањем њеног кабраматског хора предвођен мр Даријом Галић.

Владика Иринеј поучио је верни народ о значају вере и молитве, туменео прочитано Јеванђеље. Епископ је истакао значај нашег личног труда и делатне вере, која увек мора бити окићена молитвом. Много је видљивих и сакривених поука у овом јеванђељском тексту, истакао је Владика Иринеј, а једна од најважнијих је она која говори о значају наших заједничких молитава и наших молитава једних за друге у благословеном, односно једнодушном многогласју.

На крају Литургије Епископ Иринеј обратио се сабраном верном народу топлим речима захваљности за све што су чунски за свету Цркву и за њега лично за ових претходних десет година колико је столовао у Аустралији и Новом Зеланду. Владика је у врло емотивном обрађивању испричо својим верницима како је дошло до промене и како му је једина утока у одласку из Аустралије то што га на трону замењује управо син Српске Цркве из Аустралије.

"Он је ваш син и долази сада да буде ваш отац, волите га, поштујте га и слушајте као што сте и мене, и ако сам се о кога у било чему огрешио, молим вас опростите, помените њега у вашим молитвама и чувајте јединоство наше Цркве", закључио је своје обрађивање Владика.

Отац Немања се затим у име Црквене општине, свих верника и у име старешине храма проте Ђурђевића и протојакона Петра Мрақић који су отпутовали у Отадбину да би присуствовали хиротонисању новог Епископа, својим поздравом обратио Владици Иринеју. Слово оца Немање преносимо у целости:

"Им се Вама захваљујемо Владику и од срца Вам желимо срећан и благословен пут на нови задатак који је Црква пред Вас ставила. Ми смо ове заиста ваше чедо, и то смо можда једно од највећих међу овима које имате у Аустралији. Као познати већи од своје браће и сестара сигурно смо понекада били и мало распустенији од осталих. Али смо сигурно били и једно од оних који најбоље зна да цени љубав и да ухвати. Као и у свакој породици, ми смо знали да будеме немирни и Ви сте знали некада да будете строги, али је увек и у свему превладала наша породична љубав, која ће да влада и даље. Ви сте били и остаћете наш отац, иако нам долази наше горе лист кога такође волимо и једва чекамо, у нашем срцу један велики део остало. Завуек Ваш. Хвала Вам на свему што сте чинили за нас, опростите ако смо се на било који начин огрешили. Вас и помените нас у Вашим молитвама, будући сигурни да ћemo и ми Вас увек споминати."

Сабран и народ прилизао је затим у реду за Архијерејски благослов и уједно за поздрав са Епископом од кога су многи тражили да ово не буде последња његова Литургија и канонска посета Кабрамати, уједно му желили сваки успех и у новој Епархији у Америци. Посебно је био држављ сусет породице Мраћић, родитеља и сестре новозабраног Епископа аустралијско-новозеландског Силуана, са Владиком Иринејем. Загрлајћи измењени са сузама невеселости радост говорили су више од речи којима су се поздравили и опраштали.

У послеподневним часовима Епископ Иринеј посетио је 30. Фестивал Српског Фолклора који се протеклог викенда одржал у Српском центру Бонири. На Фестивалу који је Владика свечано отворио, окупило се неколико хиљада наших људи и нарочито много српске омладине из свих крајева Аустралије али и са гостима из Србије, фолклорним ансамблом "Ризница" из Краљева.

Извор: Митрополија аустралијско-новозеландска

Саопштење за јавност Митрополије црногорско-приморске

Поводом забране и онемогућавања од стране Управе полиције Црне Горе свечанства Митрополије црногорско-приморске да на Преображење обележи Литургију у цркви на Ивановим Коритима, достављамо Вам сљедеће сопштеница:

Управа полиције Црне Горе је са ове године најпре забранила, а потом и онемогућила свечанство и вјерном народу да обележи Литургију Преображења обележи Литургију у цркви на Ивановим Коритима, достављамо Вам сљедеће сопштеница:

Управа полиције Црне Горе је са ове године најпре забранила, а потом и онемогућила свечанство и вјерном народу да обележи Литургију Преображења обележи Литургију у цркви на Ивановим Коритима, достављамо Вам сљедеће сопштеница:

Наставак на 31. стр.
Управа полиције Црне Горе је незаконитим поступањем и незаконитим решењем заправо покупила да изједначи вјековну Цркву Црне Горе са групом канонима. Управа полиције је својим незаконитим решењем суспендовала на одредицу свете Цркве Преображења Господњег у храму на Ивановим коритима и да тако атакује на вјековну Цркву Црне Горе и њене власнике.

Имајући у виду да се налазимо у сателитним земљама, управа полиције је дужна најдубљим осјећањима православних вјерника. Управа полиције је дужна постајати санационом организацијом Црногорског политичког система, а не да забрањује преображењско богослужење у православном храму Црне Горе.

Православна Црква у Црни Гори.
Inside this issue:
- Work of the Great and Holy Council, pp. 3-11
- Bishop Mitrophan Feted, p. 12
- New Archpaster for Eastern Diocese, p. 13
- Reflections on another year, p. 18
- Serbian Section, pp. 20-31

Visit us online: www.serborth.org
Follow us on Twitter: @serborthorg

Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America
Bishop Irinej’s Enthronement

Saturday 1st October 2016
Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
Holy Trinity Cathedral
450 Maxwell Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15236

Luncheon Banquet & Program
1:30 - 5:30 pm
Carnegie Music “Marble” Hall Foyer and Balcony
4400 Forbes Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Ticket Price: $100.00
Includes 4 Course Menu with Desert and Cocktail Hour Prior to Banquet
Banquet Ticket Deadline September 23rd or until sold out. Parking not included.*

Ticket contact Darlene DeFebo at djdefebo@gmail.com or 412.885.3739
or On-Line
https://secure.etransfer.com/SLSOC/BishopIrinejEnthronement.cfm

Hotel/Lodging - Pittsburgh Airport Marriott
777 Aten Road, Coraopolis Pennsylvania 15108
Call 412-788-8800 mention Diocese Event for $99.00 Group Rate until September 9th