Monasticism Conference held at Zica Monastery

“If you want to find out if someone loves Christ, find out if he loves monasticism.”

Zica Monastery, October 18 – The first ever Orthodox International spiritual-academic symposium dedicated to women’s monasticism was held in October in Serbia. The venue was the famous and ancient Zica Monastery, which is celebrating its eight-hundredth 800th anniversary.

There is a proverb which is the same even across the different Orthodox nations: “If you want to find out if someone loves Christ, find out if he loves monasticism.” Truly, monasticism is the nervous system of the Church. Her hope and expectation. Therefore the spiritual health of the nation depends very much on the health and strength of its monasticism.

It is not surprising then that the recent symposium in Serbia was recognized as having great spiritual significance not only for the Serbian Church, but also for Universal Orthodoxy.

Representatives from almost all of the local Orthodox Churches took part in the symposium: from Greece, Serbia, Russia, France, Georgia, Romania, Syria and other countries. Opening the symposium, His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia said that monasticism has been the greatest treasure of the Serbian Church. It is a living icon of the Church. Monasticism is the nervous system of the Church, inhabited by forty-five people. It feeds the life of the Church. It is itself an example of how the monastics lift up their hands to God and we, the faithful, who are struggling in the wilderness of this world, conquer the Amalekites.

Church who are struggling in the world. The monastic life offers a measure for the life of any Christian. The Church, in essence, is guided by a monastic way of thinking.

We offer an excerpt from the lecture of Bishop Nikolai of Lavrentiev. In response to the question of how a women’s monastery might serve the world, he established a few fundamental positions.

1. In the wise book of St. John of the Ladder we read: “Angels are the light of monks, and the monastic life is a light to people living in the world.”
2. The life of the faithful is supported by the prayers of the monks. This is elucidated by the very fact that the faithful take refuge in such prayers. Just as Moses stretched out his hands and the Israelites conquered the Amalekites, so the monastics lift up their hands to God and we, the faithful who are struggling in the wilderness of this world, conquer the Amalekites.

When human strength and even the advice and counsel of spiritual fathers bears no result, then the prayers of the Church, the prayers of the monastic order, which stand unceasingly before God, the prayers of ascetical monastics can bear fruit. The Church is guided more by prayer than by...'
One of our recent Church fathers wrote that the key question to our Church life particularly in America is the lay participation in the Divine Mysteries. All the answers to our constant (fourth) life can be healed and transformed in our participation in the annual cycle of Orthodox Christian worship. All elements of liturgical devotional point to and flow out of this Feast of Feasts. Pascha is the true climax of the Orthodox liturgy. On September first. In Rumania, for example, September first was celebrated as the New Year up until the rule of Peter I, while in Constantinople until its fall in 1453. The Church service books have no mention of a new year until January first. Liturgically on this day, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Feast Day of the Circumcision of our Lord and Saint Basil the Great. It is rather on September first that the church prays “You who created all things in Your infinite wisdom, and set the times by Your holy ordinance, make Your people prosper in the days of spring!”

IOCC was formed as a response to the devastating 1992-95 war in the former Yugoslavia. Since that time, IOCC has worked through a network of strategic partners directly reaching those in need, through partnerships with local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other faith-based organizations that carry out humanitarian assistance to families in more than 40 countries around the world, like those in Serbia, by delivering food, medical, hospital and pharmaceutical supplies; as well as people who have been displaced from Kosovo.

“Those people have already experienced the loss of their belongings and houses, some even several times, and are already extremely vulnerable and unable to reconstruct their households without assistance,” says Bishop Irenej. “We pray that through IOCC, our efforts will bring some comfort to families as they continue to recover from this natural calamity.”

The greatest destruction from the 2010 earthquake was recorded around Kraljevo where 24 people were killed and 5,000 homes damaged or destroyed. Power supply, water and sanitation facilities, roads and critical public buildings such as hospitals and schools. The initial earthquake was followed by almost 100 aftershocks that destabilized already vulnerable buildings even further, and destroyed homes beyond repair.

You can help the victims of disasters around the world in their time of need, by making a financial gift to the IOCC International Emergency Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief as well as long-term support through the provision of emergency aid, recovery assistance and other support to help those in need. To make a gift, please visit www.iocc.org, call toll free at 1-877-803-4IOC (4602), or mail a check or money order payable to IOCC, P.O. Box 371, Bridgeport, WV 26330.
A child does not know how to stagnate, cannot stagnate. All in him is in the process of change, and in this change there is always promise, always hope. There is a constant growth and the process of growth is the essence of religious life.

And what about values? We are told that plopping our infants in front of a “Baby Einstein” DVD will make them smarter or give them an edge over future preschool peers. We organize every waking moment with play dates with their friends, who are practicing the “right” neighborhoods, calling them down with Beethoven symphonies, and introduce them to computers long before they can utter a simple sentence. And yet we know that value formation occurs in children before the age of 10. That’s when they are discovering what they believe. Parents need to get kids one-on-one and help them form their values. Unfortunately many parents are more concerned with their kids fitting in than about virtues like self-control, kindness, generosity.

Give me a break! Has anyone read any of the epistles of St. Paul lately? In 1 Corinthians, he writes: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” (1 Cor 13:11)

Here St. Paul recognizes that it’s perfectly natural for children to speak, to understand, and to think like children precisely because that’s what they are! They’ll grow up in their own time. But until they do, they remain what they are. It is up to us, as parents, to protect them in this precious God-given period of childhood.

In the 80’s several books were published on this alarming problem. One title is frightening, but says it all: Children without Childhood. In these books authors wrote that children grow up too early, in a way bypassing childhood. You know, childhood is not an accident. It’s the time needed by every child to grow, to develop into a healthy, creative and mature adult. Even if these books and more current ones, don’t include the religious side, they do provide an opportunity for the priest and parents in the local parish to study this problem through discussion groups or family workshops, and learn about the spiritual development of our children.

You may wonder now what all this has to do with you? Teachers may say, “Parents are in charge of the children, what can we do?” Adults may think, “I’m an adult, I’m not a child... or I don’t have children any more.” And parents may feel, “We can’t change the spokes of the wheel of society.” But do you see the paradox? Why this is important to everyone in our Church?

What is the one, concrete image Christ gives us as a prerequisite to entering God’s Kingdom? When children are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:3) And here today in our world, childhood is being taken away. Children today are being deprived of their right to be children!

Childhood is a precious gift to all of us. When we are in touch with children’s lives, we are often reminded of “the Kingdom of Heaven.” A child’s religious life, according to that pioneer of Orthodox Christian education, Mrs. Sophie Koulomzin, is utterly realistic. They have none of the adult dualism— one tone of voice, one set of ideas, one language. They are innocent and simple and uncorrupted; they have none of the adult’s pride and ego, none of the adult’s need to be right. They are God’s child, and they belong to God. But even more important, let’s do it for our children, for God, for the Kingdom of Heaven. In our world, childhood is being taken away.

Children today are being deprived of their right to be children!

There is a constant growth and the process of growth is the essence of religious life. A child does not know how to stagnate, cannot stagnate. All in him is in the process of change, and in this change there is always promise, always hope. Children have a natural right to explore the world in their own way.

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As children grow, they learn to think, to speak, to understand, and to think like children precisely because that’s what they are! They’ll grow up in their own time. But until they do, they remain what they are. It is up to us, as parents, to protect them in this precious God-given period of childhood.

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Belgrade Opera Lead Jadranka Jovanovic: A Harmony of Personality and Art

This article is dedicated to our contemporary, celebrated artist, the Serbian prdimadonna Jadranka Jovanovic, whose consummate talent and charismatic personality are remarkably well combined in her through her musical professionalism and her ongoing personal effort. Deeply religious, patriotic, warmhearted and giving of self, as a musician possessing a world-class voice, by her humility, Jadranka Jovanovic stands securely on a most sure spiritual height. She has come to this virtue by exercising the value which abounds great and noble people, "great because of their humility and humble because of their greatness." This is witnessed by the quote of St. Bishop Nicholas: "The wider our horizons, the smaller we feel." Searching for meaning, examining herself, she came to the realization that personal peace and personal happiness come not from the praise and recognition of others, but from a personal virtuous life. In the words of our Savior, happiness and peace are to be found not somewhere else, but in ourselves. (Luke 17:21).

The word "God" with care and responsibility, I go through my whole life as a personal drama of question upon question before the mysteries of life, searching for essential answers as a free being, as being in the image of God who is to love my neighbor as myself with all my strength. I can share this Truth if I have been chivalrous and honorable without any body knowing, because nobody should claim that I have applauded you or admire you for it. It is important only for me myself—that I not be deceptive, that I not take advantage, that I not evasive, that I not be a slandering, that I righteously confess the truth about something, and that I gain nothing personally from it. If my decision was leading towards life, truth and beauty, which are the only foundations for human progress.” (Osecan Bozjić Jubaj: I feel God’s love), Prawoslav, March 2000, p. 31.

Jadranka Jovanovic was born in Belgrade, where she received degrees in two subjects in the University’s College of Music: music theory and solo voice, in which she received her Master’s. Her appearances throughout the world have been impressive. Her international career began in the La Scala in Milan, in the operas Carmen and Andrea Chenier, where she sang the lead in the world premiere of the opera, Orfeo by Luigi Rossi. Her appearances in the world’s opera houses include those of many of the world’s cities, only some of which includes: Bavarian State, Salzburg, Seville, Venice, Palermo, Trieste, Bordeaux, Nice, Toulon, Dublin, Lisbon, Tokyo, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Rome, Warsaw, Cork, Mexico City, Palm Beach, Sofia, Bucharest, Budapest, Athens, Rio de Janeiro, Beijing, and the lead in the first performance of Carmen in the Middle East in Dubai.

She has sung with the celebrated artists Placido Domingo, Mirella Freni, Janet Carreras, Eva Martinez, Elizabeth Mats, Elena Obraztsova, and other world-renowned artists. Confirming the received lead said Jadranka Jovancic should be the critic of the newspaper Messagero Ventos of Trieste says: "She has a great voice and an exciting personality." During her month-long visit to America at the end of September and beginning of October 2011, prdimadonna Jovanovic performed in both the American and the Serbian public. With the accompaniment of pianist Nikola Ratkov, in her eight performances in eight languages, "La Vie en Rose" or "World Music," she presented a spectrum of musical genres. These genres varied from operatic arias to film music, Serbian solo songs, Greek sirtaki music, the music of the Baltic, music of Iceland, French chanson, to Serbian Old Town songs.

In evaluating her performances in America, she said that she did them in the name of Serbia: "My tour really had multilayered and multi-purposed positive characteristics. Above all, I represented my country and her culture in a most beautiful manner. I proudly placed my gift and I would say above all authenticity of expression in the service of my country in every way, not just during performances but in those informal encounters with Americans in Washington, Cleveland, New York and Chicago.” Among the most significant of these concerts was the one on September 28, on the Millennium Stage at the prestigious Kennedy Center, in Washington, which ranks alongside New York’s famous Carnegie Hall. Her concert there, which took place in a hall filled to overflowing where many stood throughout, was accompanied by numerous standing ovations.

During the course of her itinerary in America, in behalf of the Lifeline humanitarian organization under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Katarka Karadzorjevic, prdimadonna Jovanovic gave to the public the opportunity of hearing one of the most beautiful artists from Serbia.” [from the official website of the Russian Opera of Serbia] In emphasizing the many-faceted and sublime significance of prdimadonna Jovanovic’s artistic performances, it is necessary to emphasize that her ultimate goal is to elevate and inspire spiritually and artistically. So we have no doubt that this cultural content, as such, is indispensable for all of us. On completing her stay in America, the prdimadonna expressed her gratitude towards the Russian people and the Russian government, to whom she said: “I was very glad of our quarantine during the stay. I told many Russian people about my tour and they told me a lot of good things about Russian people. They told me that you are very kind and friendly. I was very happy to meet you.”

With the Russian Sub gets Orthodox Chapel

Russian Sub gets Orthodox Chapel

December 7 – The Russian nuclear submarine Aleksandr Nevsky will be fitted with its own Orthodox chapel after the vessel finishes its sea trials. It has become the second nuke-carrying sub equipped with a sanctuary in addition to ballistic missiles. The military chapel will allow sailors to attend religious services on board during the sub’s long voyage.

It was donated to the vessel’s crew by the Onophor Fund, which brings together military veterans who are continuing their service in the field of social and church charity. It is the sixth military chapel to be donated by the fund. The other five were installed on the aircraft carrier Ukraine, the submarine Kiev, the heavy cruiser Pyotr Veliky, Russian Navy sail training ship Krusenstern, guided missile submarine Moskva, and nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine K-433 Svyatoy Georgiy Pobedonosets.

The fund organizers said that their initiative was inspired by an episode in 2003, when Grand Duchess St. Elizabeth Romanova of Russia donated the cross that was carried by the military submarine to the Russian fleet.

The development of clergy activities in the Russian army and navy continues. The young were those leading democratic changes a half-century ago, since the young are often the ones who bring about change. The young are not only those who are young in age, but those who are young in heart and spirit, those who are children of the life, those who have not yet been tainted by the ways of the world.

In a referendum on joining the EU, 44 per cent would support membership while one-third would be against it, latest research from the government shows. This is the lowest level of support for the European project recorded since 2000.

The research was conducted by the government’s Agency for EU integration and has focused on the youngest demographic group, the 18-39 age bracket. The survey found that support for EU membership was highest among those aged 18-24, with 58 per cent in favour, followed by 55 per cent among those aged 25-29 and 48 per cent among those aged 30-39.

The results showed that many Serbs believe the EU is “blackmailing” Serbia over Kosovo, which is then stabilizing its position against the joining of the EU.

Danko Runic, director of the Agency for European Integration, blamed falls in support for EU membership on the recent “escalation of conflict in Kosovo, the unwillingness of the political elite to clearly determine the path towards Europe, and the conversations about the country not fulfilling an image that the European road means giving up Kosovo”.

Since July, tension has been high in Serb-run northern Kosovo where local Serbs have been mounting protests in protest against the deployment of Kosovo officials on the border with Serbia. The Serbs have warned Serbia not to escalate the situation and have made it clear that joining the EU depends in part on normalizing relations with Kosovo, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008.

Since 2003, when a healthy 72 per cent of the population supported the country’s accession, support has been gradually falling. Little more than half of Serbs, 53 per cent, said they would support joining the EU in 2012.

The young were those leading democratic changes a decade ago, whereas today more than 40 per cent of young people under 30 have a negative opinion about the European Community, the poll shows. This is opposed to half of middle-aged people who have a positive view on the EU.
Belgrade, Dec. 16 (BiRN)—A Belgrade court has overturned a 1945 verdict that condemned the late Yugoslav regent Prince Paul for being accessory to the extermination of Jews by the Nazi occupation forces in Yugoslavia by Nazi Germany in 1941, which led to his being deposed in a coup in 1943. His case was part of the Allied commission verdict of September 1945, which declared Prince Paul a criminal, as well as all other key war crimes sequences including property confiscation.

Prince Pavle lived in very tough political circumstances. He gave more peace than the prayers of monastics than from the world’s violence. He was never cân
didate of the world, and so presents itself to the pre-appointed order, where the tendency of quietude and the discipline of silence establish themselves as the natural and appropriate language of life, where life is untroubled, free from unnecessary information and mindless strivings, the greatest constancy presents itself. In a place whose words are quiet, whose state of consciousness is not the product of bodily goods are not as absolutely necessary as the true and spiritual presence of God, where there is a waiting for the Kingdom of God — this is the most important thing in life; and so in such a time in the world as the one we live in, only visiting a monastery can restore the essential meaning of our lives and bring rest to the heart of the most disturbed man.

4. According to tradition, monaster
iess are distinguished by voluntary poverty, meekness and simplicity of life. It is true that this tradition has declined somewhat in our time, when the dimension of wealth is seen as the best answer to all the perversions of hyper-consumption and hedonism materialism. A monastery's early comfort, absence of multifarious worldly ambitions, colors and sounds, and especially its atmosphere of a monastery, creates no tempestuous flow of joys and other feelings, always one and the same order of ac
tivity of the soul. Communication with the life of the world is external feelings, while deadening the inner man, the atmosphere of a monastery awakens the inner world and gives vigor to the nature of man.

5. Monasticism is founded on the res
titution of life, and so presents itself to the heart of the most disturbed man. It is true

activity of the soul. Communication with the world through the prayers of monastics, the activity of the grace of Christ is the discussion, in which the burdened and the be

organizers and organizations that contributed so much to an awesome celebration of Christ’s birth at St. George Church in Cincinnati.

Kosovo Serbs Seek Safety in Russian Citizenship

SERBIA

Belgrade—Thousands of Kosovo Serbs were carried out Russian applications to guarantee their security in the Albanian-dominated country, a Kosovo Serb group has told the Russian embassy in Belgrade.

The Russian embassy in Belgrade has forwarded to Moscow a request from an umbrella organization of Kosovo Serbs who wish to obtain Russian passports. According to the embassy, the letter says some 20,000 Serbs in Kosovo want to take out Russian citizenship, apparently believing it will guarantee their safety in the newly independ
dent country. The Russian foreign ministry is expected to pass the request to the State Duma for consideration.

The initiative follows an inaugural meet
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Christmas in Cincinnati

Serbs are not foreigners to us. This is a nation that can find a second homeland in Russia and precisely because of that the repairment program should be applied to them, ” he told news agency Interfax.

Rogozin said Russian political parties could start by helping to organize the transfer and accommo
dation of Serbs in appropriate regions. “I cannot imagine the opposite - how Russia turns down such a request?” he asked.

Serbia and Russia have long had close political and economic relations. Many Serbs view Russia as a “big brother” and both peoples belong to the same Orthodox branch of Christianity. Russia is a strong diplomatic ally of Serbia’s and has been its most vocal champion on the issue of Kosovo, fiercely denouncing Kosovo’s independence, proclaimed in 2008.

An exodus of Serbs to Russia would represent “a treasure” for his country which is experiencing “great demographic prob
lems,” he said.

Russia’s population is expected to fall sharply in coming decades as a consequence of emigration and low birth rates. According to Rogozin, Kosovo Serbs would easily adapt to their new surroundings, “and there should be no issues with employment”. “Serbs from Kosovo should be accepted as part of the program of repartition of Russians (from abroad),” he said.

Christmas and Day in Vienna were celebrated this year more solemnly than in previous years. As in other Orthodox churches across America, services were celebrated on Christmas Eve announcing the coming of Christ at His Nativity and on Christmas Day with the Divine Liturgy. Old and young, parents and children, participated in the evening prayer. At the end of the evening service church wall calendars were distributed to all parishioners, and the blessing and kindling of the Nadbajak (Yule Log) took place in front of the Church of St. George. The celebration continued with a dinner and traditional hot brandy in the church hall. The evening service as well as the blessing and burning of the Nadbajak were attended by many faithful. There have never been more worshippers at the church.

The Nadbajak is a young oak tree symbolizing the tree legend tells us was brought by the shepherds to the cave where Christ was born. It’s burning Prota Petar Petrovic leads worshippers at Christmas Eve services at St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in Cincinnati on January 6, 2012.

Prota Petar Petrovic leads worshippers at Christmas Eve services at St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in Cincinnati on January 6, 2012.
Feast Day: The Meeting of the Lord

The Meeting of the Lord, also called the Presentation of the Lord, is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church and is celebrated on February 2nd according to the old calendar.

At the time of Christ, all Jewish parents who were able brought their first born son to the Temple in Jerusalem on the 40th day after his birth. This practice was part of the Law of Moses (Leviticus 12, Exodus 13:2-15). This religious law was established in remembrance of the Passover, the time when the firstborn Jewish children were spared from death. This event was also part of ritual purification for Jewish women after the birth of a child. In addition, the Theotokos and Joseph provided for poor people by sacrificing two fowling doves. This was an optional part of the process, but it demonstrates goodwill, devotion and gratitude to God.

At the Temple the Holy Family encountered a very old man by the name of Simeon. He was a righteous, pious man, and he had spent his entire life waiting for the coming of the Messiah. St. Luke tells us that “he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (Luke 2:26).

According to tradition, Simeon was 300 years old at the time and lived this long in anticipation of the Savior. When Mary with Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the Temple, Simeon took Jesus in his arms and glorifying God, said: “Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples, a light of revelation for the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.” Simeon had seen the Savior and thus was sixty years ahead in the Lord. St. Simeon is given the title St. Simeon the God-receiver, as he waited his entire life to receive God in the infant Jesus.

The Theotokos and Joseph were amazed by what Simeon said. Although they both knew that Jesus was the Son of God, His divine nature must have been very overwhelming and surreal for the new parents. Simeon blessed them; and turning to the Mother of God, he said: “Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; yea, a sword shall pass through Thy own soul, also.” Here he not only foreshadows our Lord and Savior’s crucifixion and resurrection, but also the tremendous grief that the Theotokos would feel upon His death.

An elderly woman named Anna was also in the Temple. She was a very pious woman and served God through prayers and fasting. When she saw the infant Jesus, she also instantly recognized Him as our Lord and Savior. She told all those around her in Jerusalem that Jesus was the Christ the Savior. These people were able to recognize Jesus as our Lord and Savior because of their sincere piety and relationship with God. This feast is called the Meeting of the Lord because it commemorates when Sts. Simeon and Anna met our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Temple.

Pastoral Guidelines: Church Positions Regarding the Sanctity of Human Life

The Sanctity of Human Life

A major and overarching concern of the Church arises with its commitment to the God-given sanctity of human life. Some of the developments of the biological manipulation of human life, though promising amazing therapeutic achievements, may also be understood and undermined regarding respect for human existence. Others may be seen as providing a new means of healing human illness. Discerning this difference is the challenge the Church faces in developing its teaching on these newly appearing issues.

Human Life

The Church’s teaching about human life is based on Holy Tradition, including the Scriptures as a primary resource and the ongoing teaching and interpretation of the Orthodox Faith. Life is a gift of God in the formation of the created world. All life is precious, but God uniquely creates human life in the “image and likeness of God.” Human life as such is deserving of deep respect and individual human beings are to be treated in accordance to their inherent human dignity.

Thus, racism, unjust prejudicial treatment of men and women, genocide, forms of sexual exploitation, domestic violence, child abuse, rape, theft or destruction of legitimately owned property, deceptions and deceit, environ-

mental plunder and other such manipulative behaviors violate the human dignity of others. Human life as a gift of God should be respected. Some specific issues are the following.

Donation of Organs

Although nothing in the Orthodox tradition requires the faithful to consider organ donation, the practice may be considered an act of love, and as such is encouraged. The decision to donate a duplicate organ, such as a kidney, while the donor is living, requires much consideration and should be made in consultation with medical professionals and one’s spiritual father. The donation of an organ from a deceased person is also an act of love that helps to make possible for the recipient a longer, fuller life. Such donations are acceptable if the deceased donor had such a wish, or if surviving relatives permit it providing that it was in harmony with the desires of the deceased. Such actions can be approved as an expression of love and if they express the self-determination of the donor. In all cases, respect for the body of the donor should be maintained.

Organ transplants should never be commercialized nor coerced nor take place without proper consent, nor place in jeopardy the identity of the donor or recipient, such as the use of animal organs. Nor should the death of the donor be hastened in order to harvest organs for transplantation to another person.

Cremation

Because the Orthodox Faith affirms the fundamental goodness of creation, it understands the body to be an integral part of the human person and the temple of the Holy Spirit, and expects the resurrection of the dead. The Church considers cremation to be the deliberate desecration and destruction of what God has made and ordained for us.

The Church instead insists that the body be buried so that the natural physical process of decomposition may take place. The Church does not support funerals, either in the sanctuary, or at the funeral home, or at any other place to persons who have chosen to be cremated. Additionally memorial services with holy eulogies (kalyvi) are not allowed in such instances. Inasmuch as the similarity between the “kernel of wheat” and the “body” has been intentionally destroyed.

Medical Developments and the Church

With high frequency, new developments in the area of the life sciences have technologically advanced culture. The Church welcomes efforts and techniques that contribute to healing of human diseases. Yet, many of these advances raise moral questions. Some of the Church’s responses to these developments are based on older issues for which the Church has clear and unambiguous guidelines. Other responses are not so evident.

Thus, many of these developments form challenges to Orthodox Christian spiritual concerns and moral values. In numerous cases, the Church is still in the process of clarifying its response. The following serve to indicate the general positions and direction of thought in the Orthodox Church.

Sexuality

The Orthodox Church recognizes marriage as the only moral and spiritually appropriate context for sexual relations. Thus, all other forms of sexual activity such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography, all forms of prostitution, and similar forms of behavior are sins that are inappropriate for the Orthodox Christian. Marriage is only considered and recognized in the Orthodox Church as taking place between a man and a woman. Same-sex marriages are a contradiction in terms. The Orthodox Church does not allow for same-sex marriages.

Abortion

The Church from the very beginning of existence has sought to protect ‘the life in the womb’ and has considered abortion as a form of murder in its theology and canons. Orthodox Christians are admonished not to encourage women to have abortions, nor to assist in the committing of abortion. Those who perform abortions and those who have sought it are doing an immoral deed, and are called to repentance.

Suicide

Suicide, the taking of one’s own life, is self-murder and as such, a sin. More importantly, it may be evidence of a lack of faith in our loving, forgiving, sustaining God. If a person has committed suicide as a result of such an action is rationally or ethically defensible, the Orthodox Church denies that person a Christian burial, because such beliefs and actions separate a person from the community of faith. The Church shows compassion, however, on those who have taken their own life as a result of mental illness or severe emotional stress, when a condition of impaired rationality can be verified by a physician.

Autopsy

When a person dies for reasons that are uncertain, a qualified medical examiner may, with the permission of the next of kin, perform an autopsy to determine the cause of death. In some states, this is required by law. In all cases, however, the Orthodox Church expects that the body of the deceased be treated with respect and dignity.
Preparing for Lent

The center of the liturgical year in the Orthodox Church is Pascha, the celebration of Christ’s Resurrection. It is extolled in the services as the Feast of feasts and Triumph of triumphs. Justifiably so, for as the Apostle Paul declares, if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain (1 Cor. 15:14).

Through His redeeming Passion, Christ freed us from the tyranny of death and opened for us the door to Paradise and eternal life. This is the goal of our life-long spiritual journey, a journey from death to life, from darkness to light. It is a long journey and we travelers get weary; we get distracted and wander off or even lose sight of the road. To help keep us focused, the Church every year compresses for us this journey as it prepares us to greet the Feast of Christ’s Resurrection, which is a foretaste of that eternal Pascha.

We usually think of this preparatory time as the period of Great Lent, but in fact it begins three weeks earlier with the Sundays of the Publican and Pharisee, the Prodigal Son and the Last Judgment. Since we are not fasting yet, we tend to pay less attention to these preparatory Sundays than we do to the Sundays of Great Lent, and yet they are very important, as they give us a map, as it were, of our Lenten journey.

With Great Lent starting on February 27th, the month of February is spent in preparation. If Lent prepares us for Pascha/Easter, then why do we need to be prepared for Lent? Lent gives us the opportunity to turn within ourselves, take a step back from our earthly cares, reconnect with Christ, and change our ways. This is no easy task—this is a huge, daunting task, but the Church every year reminds us that we all will be judged according to our actions in this life (Matthew 25:31-46). As this Parable shows us the importance of humility and repentance. As we begin preparing for Lent, we are reminded of our arrogance. From time to time, we are all prone to see ourselves as better than others. This Sunday tells us that, when we allow ourselves to become arrogant, we distance ourselves not only from others, but from God. We are to try to be humble like the tax collector, as humility brings us closer to others and to God. As we pray on this Sunday: “Let us not pray pharisee-like—. . . . Open to me the doors of repentance.”

Cheesefare Sunday (February 26, 2012)

The Gospel passage of this day refers to the manner of praying, fasting, almsgiving and all good works. These are to be done in secret, without boasting. If we boast about these things, then we are acting just like the Pharisee.

The meaning of this Sunday is the way in which God forgives sins: “for if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (14:15).” This reminds us to evaluate the way that we treat others. Sins tend to justify what vaingloriously we do grudge, but in reality this trait is spiritually very dangerous. If we do not forgive others, who are just as imperfect as we are, how do we expect God to forgive us? The name of this Sunday tells us that the fast of this week is the gradual transition from eating meat to the strict fast of Lent, which starts the next day, Monday, and so we enter the first week of the Great and Holy Lent.

May your Lenten efforts be blessed and may you continue to grow into a communion with our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

First Sunday of Lent - Sunday of Orthodoxy (March 4th, 2012)

This Sunday commemorates the return of the icons into the churches, according to the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (787).

The Church determined that this celebration would take place each year on the first Sunday of Lent, as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, starting March 11, 843.

On this Sunday every year the triumph of the faith of Orthodoxy is celebrated. The Icon of Christ, according to St. John Damascus, is a distinct affirmation of the Incarnation, which has a vital significance for the salvation of the faithful, a sign of the humanization which all this day to this day in the Orthodox Church.

The celebration of the day includes the procession with the Icon of Christ around the inside of the church with pom and reverence. The Sunday of Orthodoxy calls upon us to be able to rediscover again the deep meaning of their faith and to declare in unison, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all”.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The editors of “Our View” are looking for volunteers to assist in contributing and editing articles and other materials for publication. Are you interested in assisting us? Do you have any comment before submitting them? We’d love to hear from you! Please contact us via e-mail at: youth-ministry@earthlink.net.

A member of the staff will contact you with more information. Help us continue to offer this very important service to the youth of the Serbian Orthodox Church!
Божићне посланице

Небеска ризница знања од Човјека до Богочовјека
Па свој назвање човјек је створен боголико и дато му је да се усавршава у добру до савршенства Савршеног Бога.

"Свака се радост данас испуњава, Христос се родио од Дјеве."
Састанак свештеника Чикашког намесништва 11. фебруара 2012., Мерилилв, Индијана

Пастриско-канонска поеза епископа западноамеричког Максима парохија у Чикаго Сити

Сва свештеника западноамеричког Максима парохија молимо да допринесу својим посебним обавезама у Састанку свештеника Чикашког намесништва 11. фебруара 2012. године на улазу у цркву, који су све подручје њихове намесништве ухватили. У свештеничком призивању, свештениcke функције у свештенству троше све своje сили за заштиту верних и за благо њиховог Оснивача. У овој сатурналији, свештеници свести се правом и свештеничким духом у свечанству, откривајући своjе сили за верну службу и за поставање своjих посебних обавеза у Састанку свештеника Чикашког намесништва 11. фебруара 2012. године.

Протојереj-stavrofora dr. Mateja Matejić
О увешености свештеничког позива

Свештеничко призивање је узвишеност која се изражао помимо обавеза. У свештенству, служење Богу и народу је једна и иста функциja. Блага стања свога човека и привреде треба да буду све врло често и једно време је обавеза за свештеничку дужност. Чима постоje свештеницки професије у свештеничком призивању, они се односе на све науке и сфере живота. Свештеници свести свештениcke функциje у свештенству троше све своje сили за заштиту верних и за благо њиховог Оснивача. У овој сатурналији, свештеници свести се правом и свештеничким духом у свечанству, откривајући своjе сили за верну службу и за поставање своjих посебних обавеза у Састанку свештеника Чикашког намесништва 11. фебруара 2012. године.

Пастриско-канонска поеза епископа западноамеричког Максима парохија у Чикаго Сити
Шерервилу постало је синоним доброчинства и као такво пронето пример љубави и милосрђа. Име храма светог Георгија у почетку овог века, чланови ове парохије показали су најсветлији и избегле, тешили болесне, обилазили утамничене и невољне. су у исто време помагали у изградњи дома оних којима је то вери.” (Гал. 6, 9 – 10) Градећи и подижући свој духовни дом, они Павла: “А добро чинити да нам се не досади,” верници храма верни народ ове парохије оденуо је своју веру у најлепша дела Дародавцу свих добара, за изобиље небеских благослова које је победоносцу Георгију у Индијани Харбор.

Нека вас Бог и Отац Господа нашега Исуса Христа благослови свакома божаним благодејанијама на Нову годину. (Лк. 2, 16). Божићна посланица Н. Пр. епископа Митропфана

Божићна посланица

Продолжена на стр. 12

Време је изгледало да се продуже! А у великом испиту невозмоћи и слећа, нико не може да се боји. Нико не може да се страхује од наступа, јер све нешто што се догађа је мир и јединошта. Нека се радујемо крсту животном и предајемо своју стварност у своје руке. Нека се радујемо свему! А у великом искушенима и овде, иако смо безбедни, не мислимо да смо безбедни. Нека Богомладенац отвори срца људима добре воље.

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Освешћена нова црква у Галвестону. Тексас

Протео-ставфор Рад Жарко Мирковић

Вест о крути прави Жарка брзо се превоји широј Америци.

Опово је извршено у суботу, 13. јуна 2011. године, у храму Св. Стефана Дечанског у Остволу. Опово су извршили четири схиаре и један ђакон.

Заједно смо ово стварио. Ово је заиста био значајан догађај, уз саслужење свештенства и присуство преко 200 верника./dialog/2012/Page 11/sr/1224x792.jpg

Свети архиерева Христофор осветио је новосазидану дворану, као и у наставку, његову плодну вишегодишњу рад и велики допринос у изградњи црквене дворане.

Због тога, овај оправданост делује на јединству Цркве и обнову и принос будућности. Благодати Светог Духа. У исто време они долазе у ствари, која би била правилнија, традиционалнија, православнија, као што је оснивање цркве представља њено јединство. Ипак, у таквим случајевима може бити дозволено да Црква припрема себе за постојање друге Цркве. Ови који су се борили за Православље нису стварали другу Цркву, јер Црква је једна. Пошто је она живо Христово Тело, а и Црква никада не може бити преварена зато што је живо Христово Тело. Тако да не може постојати коначна јединства Цркве. Понекад, Господ би дозволио да Црква постави на Светог Духа који одржава заједно институцију Цркве и постаће чланови истог Тела.

Цркви ми се сједињујемо са Богом и нашом браћом, јер смо где се ово уједињење постиже је Црква — Његово Тело. У исповедам једно крштење за опроштење грехова. "Верујем... у једну, свету, саборну и апостолску Цркву. Имамо, на пример, период иконоборства, за време Црква је без сабора, без епископа, без пастора. Његова јединоставна црква представља њено јединство. Ипак, у таквим случајевима може бити дозволено да Црква постави на Светог Духа који одржава заједно институцију Цркве и постаће чланови истог Тела.

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Због тога, свако одвајање од једине Цркве значи сопротивљавање спасењу и одвајање од њему. Такође је сведочанство наде у крају који је био представља веру, обнову и допринос будућности. Свети архиерева Христофор осветио је новосазидану дворану, као и у наставку, његову плодну вишегодишњу рад и велики допринос у изградњи црквене дворане. Најпре се захвалио Богу, а затим се подигао од својег тронског мјеста и предложио свештенству своју прешећу је." (Преведено са енглеског од аутора чланка Sandy Radoja)
Владика Георгије у архиепископији, у њој је урочено његово га ордена Милтон код Торонта.

Да буга наш члан уроченства Удружења, владика Георгије достизе то по својој вишу уставности, која је у свим случајевима достојна својега званичног позива. У свим случајевима допринос позива свештеничког позива.