

## Happenings!

### **Music & Chant Part I, Western Theory, Development & Praxis**

**Saturday, November 13, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.** A Society of St. John Chrysostom Western Region workshop. St. Michael Norbertine Abbey, 19292 El Toro Road, Silverado, CA 92676. Presenters: Prior Hugh Barbour, Fr. Jerome Molokie, and Fr. Chrysostom Baer. A free will offering will be taken. A SSJC-WR meeting will follow. Lunch will be provided by the Abbey following the celebration of Sext. A question and answer program will follow after lunch.

### **Mary, Mother of God: Bridge to Unity A conversation on the Virgin Mary in Eastern & Western Christianity**

**Wednesday, November 17, 6 p.m.: Reception; 7 p.m.: Lecture.** Loyola Marymount University, University Hall 1000—Ahmanson Auditorium, 1 LMU Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045

Free and open to the public, however Registration is required: [bellarmine.lmu.edu/ecumenical/Fall2010.htm](http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/ecumenical/Fall2010.htm). Complimentary parking available in University Hall. For more information, call 310 228 1917 or email [hei@lmu.edu](mailto:hei@lmu.edu).

### **Eastern Orthodoxy & Mysticism: The Trans- formation of the Senses**

**Friday, Nov. 5, 5-7 p.m. & Saturday, Nov. 6, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.** Presenter: Hieromonk Irenei Steenberg, PhD. St. Barnabas Orthodox Church, 3505 Cadillac Ave. Bldg.G-3, Costa Mesa CA 92626  
Limited space, register now: Call 714 429 0587 or [info@stbaranabsoc.org](mailto:info@stbaranabsoc.org)  
Admission: Fri. \$5 per person; Sat. \$10 includes lunch.

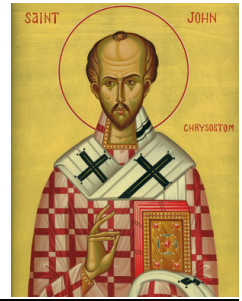
**Additional Happenings  
on page 5**

# Light of the East

*Newsletter of the Society of Saint John Chrysostom  
Western Region Edition*

Volume 5, Number 1

Fall, 2010



## Steps to Unity, Steps to Common Witness

### **Catholic/Orthodox *Light of the East* Conference set for February, 5, 2011 at St. Paul Orthodox Church, Irvine**

A "Light of the East" Society of St. John Chrysostom, Western-Region Conference, *Steps to Unity; Steps to Common Witness*, featuring nationally known participants in Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, Fr. Ron Roberson, Associate Director of the USCCB Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and Fr. Thomas Fitzgerald, Dean of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA and Secretary of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation will take place on Saturday Feb. 5, 2011 at St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church, 4949 Alton Parkway, Irvine. CA. The Conference, open to the public, is co-sponsored by St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church, Irvine, and the Society of St. John Chrysostom-Western Region.

Advance registration is required. A \$20 donation is requested for the day, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., which includes lunch..

Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, Roman Catholic Bishop Tod Brown of Orange, and Melkite-Greek Catholic Bishop Nicholas Samra will be in attendance.

The two national speakers will discuss *Steps to Unity* in the morning session. Metropolitan Gerasimos and others will offer responses to their presentations. A panel of local speakers will discuss *Steps To Common Witness* in the afternoon session and the Conference will conclude at 3 p.m. with a Service of Prayer for Christian unity, incorporating the choirs of St. Cecilia Roman Catholic and St. Paul's Greek Orthodox choirs with various bishops in attendance.



Lorna Holt, St. Margaret Parish Photographer  
Fr. Cavanaugh Wallace, pastor of St. Margaret's parish, Oceanside, prepares to lead a tour of the church following the SSJC-WR workshop, "The Sense of Transcendent, Art and Architecture."

**SSJC-WR  
Workshop  
Report, *The  
Sense of  
Transcendent,  
Art and Archi-  
tecture, East &  
West, held at  
St. Margaret  
Church in  
Oceanside on  
page 5***

## **The Society of Saint John Chrysostom**

The Society of St. John Chrysostom is an ecumenical group of clergy and lay people which promotes Eastern Christianity and Ecumenical Dialogue between the Eastern and Western Churches. It sponsors the *Eastern Churches Journal* and the annual *Oriente Lumen* Conference. It has been in existence since 1997 in the United States and for over 70 years in England.

### **THE GOALS OF THE SOCIETY ARE TO:**

- Make known the history, worship, spirituality, discipline and theology of Eastern Christendom.
- Work and pray that all Christians, particularly the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, will attain the fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires.
- Develop educational programs which present information about the Eastern Churches.
- Organize and conduct pilgrimages and conferences that encourage ecumenical dialogue.
- Contribute to fund-raising activities which support Eastern Christian communities and other programs in need of financial aid.
- Publish books, brochures, and other information which help explain Eastern Christianity.
- Encourage and support the study of the writings and liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.
- Promote scholarships for the study of Eastern Churches in Catholic and Orthodox seminaries.

### **WESTERN REGION**

President,  
The Very Rev. Fr. George Morelli, PhD.  
Vice President, The Rt. Rev. James Babcock  
Secretary, Anne Petach  
Treasurer, Robert Greenwell  
Sgt. at Arms/Parliamentarian,  
Major Frank Scialdone USMC Ret.

### **Light of the East**

Official newsletter of the Society of Saint John Chrysostom Western Region is published quarterly by the Western Region of the SSJC and is distributed free of charge to all SSJC members and through churches throughout the Western Region of the USA.

#### **Editorial contact:**

**Editor:** Rt. Rev. Archimandrite James Babcock, [hcmelkite@holycrossmelkite.org](mailto:hcmelkite@holycrossmelkite.org)  
**Distribution:**

451 W. Madison Ave., Placentia CA 92870

#### **Membership:**

Robert Greenwell  
2700 Katherine Street, El Cajon, CA 92020  
[rjgreenwell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rjgreenwell@sbcglobal.net)

### **A message from the President of SSJC-Western Region**

# **Stormy weather commitment**

*By the Very Reverend Father George Morelli, Ph.D.*

Most all who keep up with current news about the spiritual leaders of the Apostolic Churches know of the recent visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Great Britain. One influential American newspaper reported that even before the papal visit the attacks on the Holy Father, called by one Vatican official the "aggressive new atheism," were so vicious that there was a consideration of cancelling the papal visit before it even occurred. The article rightly poses the question that it is hard to imagine the use of words such as "disgusting" and "repellent" by British pundits about a prominent foreign Jewish or Muslim religious leader. Inasmuch as I have written before about the marginalization of God and His Church in the modern world, I cannot agree more. In fact, the worst of Vatican fears did occur. The Holy Father was subject to the jeers of groups hostile to the pope and his policies: "on the role of women in the church, abortion and contraception, homosexuality. . . ." and other issues. Nevertheless, he stood fast.

Previously (Morelli, 2010) I noted: "based on the Catholic and Orthodox Churches' common reliance on Sacred Tradition (and Scripture in Tradition; (Morelli, 2009), apostolic succession, recognition of the Holy Mysteries and, as Archbishop Hilarion so eloquently phrases, 'the solidarity between the Catholics and the Orthodox on major points of moral teaching, including questions of family ethics, human sexuality, bioethics, etc., . . . . It is against this background that I have repeatedly suggested that a Catholic-Orthodox Alliance should be formed.' The purpose of the alliance would be a united confrontation against Godless secularism, morality and values in the global world of the 21st Century."

Now is the time for all members of the Society of St. John Chrysostom to follow the spiritual leadership of our orthodox Bishops and our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI, in witness and action, standing next to Christ who was crucified on the Cross for our salvation. It is so difficult and rare to be a stormy-weather follower of Christ, that is to say, being committed when it is disadvantageous or difficult. Let us reflect on those at the foot of the Cross: Mary, the Theotokos, the faithful women and the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John. They put their own lives on the line. After all, they could be accused of being followers of the 'criminal' Jesus and suffer His same fate: Crucifixion. However, they **were and remained** at the foot of the cross until the end. They did not hide; they were there. Their very presence was a witness of their commitment to Christ during the worst of times: 'stormiest of weather.' Thank you, Holy Father, for witnessing the Orthodox-Catholic alliance proposed by Archbishop Hilarion. You placed yourself at the foot of the Cross that exists in the modern world. May we all follow your lead. May we all join together in an alliance in witnessing and announcing a 'true' Christ-like lifestyle.

### **REFERENCES**

- Morelli, G. (2009c, November 17). *The Power of the Name: Implications for Orthodox Psycho-Theology*. [www.orthodoxytoday.org/OT/view/morelli-the-power-of-the-name-implications-for-orthodox-psycho-theology](http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/OT/view/morelli-the-power-of-the-name-implications-for-orthodox-psycho-theology).
- Morelli, G. (2010, April 30). *Toward Healing Church schism: Overview and Psycho-theological Reflection*. <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/OT/view/toward-healing-church-schism-overview-and-psycho-theological-reflection>.

# Patriarch Bartholomew: All-Orthodox Council Will Be Held Soon

## Halki Seminary to reopen?

Patriarch Bartholomew has expressed optimism that Turkey will reopen, next year, the historic seminary that was shut down nearly four decades.

The Greek Orthodox seminary, located on Heybeliada island off Istanbul, was a main center of theological education for more than a century before Turkish authorities closed it in 1971 under a law designed to bring universities under state control.



Ecumenical Patriarch  
Bartholomew

2 September 2010, (RISU)

His All Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople expressed confidence that the long-expected All-Orthodox Council will be held soon. According to him, in the beginning of 2011, the penultimate meeting of the preparatory committee will probably be held in the patriarchal center of the Constantinople Patriarchate in Geneva. "...and it will become a great event," stressed His All Holiness.

"The Faith is alive and Orthodoxy is alive. Orthodoxy will live and the Holy and Great Council, the preparation of which is coming to the end, will be held," stated the Patriarch of Constantinople

Patriarch Bartholomew noted that the All-Orthodox Council is not only long-expected and needed by world Orthodoxy but also for the relations between Orthodoxy and other Christian Churches and confessions.

The last, 7th Ecumenical Council was held in Nicea in 787, that is 1212 years ago under Empress Irene. It was attended by 367 fathers and is also known as the "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

## Catholic-Orthodox Commission Statement

*We "Commend the continuing work of the Dialogue to the prayers of the faithful"*

VIENNA, Austria, Sept.. 29, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)).- Here is a communiqué released at the conclusion of the 12th plenary session of the International Mixed Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, which took place Sept. 22-27 in Vienna.

The twelfth meeting of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church took place in Vienna, Austria, a city with a long history, a bridge between West and East, with a rich ecumenical life. The meeting, generously and fraternally hosted by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vienna, was held from 20-27 September 2010, in the Cardinal König Haus.

Twenty-three Catholic members were present, a few were unable to attend. All the Orthodox Churches, with the exception of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria, were represented, namely the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Patriarchate of Alexandria, the Patriarchate of Antioch, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Patriarchate of Moscow, the Patriarchate of Serbia, the Patriarchate of Romania, the Patriarchate of Georgia, the Church of Cyprus, the Church of Greece, the Church of Poland, the Church of Albania and the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia.

The Commission worked under the direction of its two

co-presidents, Archbishop Kurt Koch and Metropolitan Prof. Dr John of Pergamon, assisted by the co-secretaries, Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Ecumenical Patriarchate) and Rev. Andrea Palmieri (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity).

At the opening plenary session on Wednesday, 22 September, the Commission was welcomed very warmly by the host, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna, and by Metropolitan Michael of Austria of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on behalf of all Orthodox Churches present in Austria. Both emphasized the importance of holding the meeting in Vienna, which occupies a particular place in the history of the whole of Christianity. In the evening a reception was given by the Mayor of Vienna, Dr. Michael Häupl, at the Vienna Town Hall. The co-presidents announced that His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI had urged intense prayer for the Commission meeting at his Wednesday General Audience and they read a Message to the participants from His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. A letter was sent by the co-presidents on behalf of the Joint Commission to the former President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and co-president of the dialogue, Cardinal Walter Kasper, expressing gratitude and appreciation for his service

*Continued on page 5*

## SSJC-WR Workshop Report

# The Sense of the Transcendent in Art & Architecture East & West

Sept. 18, 2010, Oceanside, CA

Program notes by Anne Petach, SSJC-WR Secretary

Fr. Cavanaugh Wallace, pastor of St. Margaret's parish, Oceanside (host parish) and builder of its now ten-year old church, presented the Western perspective; Fr. Michael Courey, Dmin, pastor of St. Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church, Redondo Beach, CA, the Eastern Church. Both presentations were illustrated.

Fr. Cavanaugh focused on architecture which, by relational handling of space, height, depth, objects, etc., "creates environments with the power to influence on every level, spiritual and emotional." God, as first and greatest architect, designed creation with all its related parts, including the first identifiable sacred place of encounter with His Transcendence, Eden. Sinful, exiled mankind longs always to return to that Garden place of encounter with God. In his mission to restore relationship with mankind God instructed the design, materials and decor for a place of encounter, the Temple in Jerusalem, built in the midst of the city – He desires to be "in the midst of men (as Cathedrals even to this day are built mid-city). In the Temple, carvings of trees and fruit reminiscent of the Garden were overlaid with gold, "symbol of their divinization," an invitation to Adam and Eve to return to the Garden.

In general, Fr. Cavanaugh noted, every medium used in church architecture is to reveal not just the beauty of God but its own intrinsic beauty, i.e., "what it can become in the presence of God;" the overlay of gold on natural materials signifies "their being transformed into their redeemed nature." He quoted St. Thomas Aquinas' three elements of the truly beautiful: that it be "complete; articulate its purpose; and correspond in order, and in a balanced way, to its purpose."

"Architecture is always renewing itself," he noted, "responding both to culture and to technological advances," and in every age found ways to convey the transcendent. In early basilicas straight lines of the archways focused the eye on the "place of encounter," the altar. In the compact, fortress-like stone churches of the time of barbarian invasions the clear glass of upper window-rows allowed shafts of light to interplay with rising incense, conveying a sense of transcendence. The high-ribbed arches and brilliantly colored glass of Gothic churches, which drew men's minds and senses toward heavenly transcendence, also represented advances in technology. Baroque churches, irregular, over-decorated, though a reaction against a perceived severity of the classical style, were rich in emotional decoration expressing "a fullness of grace and movement. . . and a reaching for God." The vividly painted stories on the interiors were to "silently teach" the faithful at the time of the Protestant Reformation and Council of Trent. Succeeding ages have revived styles in many "neo" ways. Queried about "modern" church architecture, he noted the need to be patient with it. Some churches we now revere, he noted, "were highly criticized when first built."

Fr. Michael Courey, himself an iconographer, highlighted the sense of the transcendent in representative works from four periods of Eastern Church history. The Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, (Justinian, 527-565), unpretentious in exterior, has a complex interior dominated by a dome characteristic of Byzantine architecture which, due to the clear circle of windows



Lorna Holt, St. Margaret Parish Photographer  
Fr. Michael Courey Ph.D. Pastor of St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, Redondo Beach

beneath it, "seems to float on a halo of light like the radiant heavens . . . "transcending into the Kingdom"

In the Byzantine churches of southern Italy the walls are covered with hieratic (priestly) style mosaic icons in which the transcendent is conveyed through a two dimensional style - the body is de-emphasized rather than patterned on classical perfection; spiritual man in his celestial, angel-like

body is seen, recognized, communicated, but with no suffering; there are no cast shadows. As in the Temple,

the beauty of precious, light-reflecting, untarnishable gold, symbol of glory and eternity, is on every side. Icons of the Transfiguration of that period show the transcending, timeless, eternal, motionless radiance of Christ in his human nature, calling us to be one with Him, to participate in transfiguration.

In later basilicas some synthesis of East and West occurred. Though still in Greek-cross shape, they are higher, more vertical, with enhanced with apses and more ornamented exteriors, e.g., St. Mark's, Venice, and the Cathedral of St. Dimiti, Russia. The apse mosaics of the latter, as also of the modern-day San Francisco Russian Cathedral (Geary St.) communicate an uplifting to the transcendent. Crucifixion icons of this period, by absence of landscape and limited pathos, show the eternal significance of Christ's passion and death. In the well-known "Vladimir" Theotokos, a procession icon of this period, the love shown "transcends all human experience."

In the mural of the Harrowing of Hell in the Church of the Resurrection (Anastasis) in Constantinople, the figures are smooth, levitating; with no mass or shadows - they transcend nature.

Continued on page 5

## Catholic/Orthodox dialogue

*Continued from page 3*

and for his significant contribution.

On Thursday, 23 September, the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria met the members of the Joint Commission at Kardinal König Haus. On Saturday, 25 September, the Catholic members celebrated the Eucharist in the Stephansdom in Vienna presided over by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, in the presence of the Orthodox members. In his homily he said that "we have and we need a primacy in the canonical sense, but above all there is the primacy of charity. All canonical dispositions in the Church serve this primacy of love (agape)". Afterwards a reception was offered in the Courtyard of the Archbishop's Palace of Vienna.

On Sunday, 26 September, the Orthodox members celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity of the Greek Orthodox Metropolitanate of Austria in Vienna, presided over by Metropolitan John of Pergamon, in the presence of the Catholic members. In addressing those present, Metropolitan Michael of Austria conveyed "the greetings of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and underlined the role and the contribution of the Greek Metropolitanate to the history of Vienna with great eminent personalities". He also referred to "the close collaboration between Orthodox and Catholics in Austria and in Vienna in particular, expressing the wish that the Lord's prayer 'that all may be one' (Jn 17:21) be a reality in the search for the unity of His Church".

During the afternoon, the members paid a visit to the Cistercian Abbey of Heiligenkreuz and attended the service of Vespers. Later in the evening, they visited the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Nikolaus.

On the first day of the meeting, as is customary, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox members met separately to coordinate their work. The Orthodox meeting discussed among other things the unfinished draft text produced by the 11th plenary session in Paphos, Cyprus last year, and much time was given to the methodology of the dialogue. The Catholic meeting also considered the draft text, seeking specific ways to improve the text, and reflected on methodological questions.

As was decided at the 10th plenary session in Ravenna, 2007, the Commission is studying the theme "The Role of the Bishop of Rome in the Communion of the Church in the First Millennium", on the basis of a draft text prepared by the Joint Coordinating Committee, which met in Aghios Nikolaos/Crete, Greece, 2008. During its meeting in Vienna, the Commission continued the detailed consideration of the text which began at last year's plenary session at Paphos, Cyprus. At this stage, the Commission is discussing this text as a working document and it decided that the text must be further revised. It was also decided to form a sub-commission to begin consideration of the theological and ecclesiological aspects of Primacy in its relation to Synodality. The sub-commission will submit its work to the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Commission which will meet next year.

## Workshop report...

*Continued from page 4*

The first martyr Stephen is shown in hell among the Old Testament figures awaiting redemption - a sign of Time transcended. The Rublev "Trinity" icon of this period, is the finest blend, he noted, "of mystical theology and artistic expression in one work."

"In general," he said, "Eastern church architecture is a synthesis of simplicity (exteriors) and complexity (interiors). One must enter *into* the Kingdom before seeing the splendor of its complexity and beauty." As to trends over time in the East, he said that architecture seems to be moving from simple exteriors to more complex, while iconography seems to be moving from more complex to simpler.

In answer to audience questions, he used the Rublev Trinity to explain the way reverse perspective in icons draws viewers into the scene. Asked names of other iconographers, he only noted St. Luke (of the Theotokos), and Christ Himself (the Mandylyon).

## *Additional happenings!!!*

### **Music & Chant Part II, Eastern Theory, Development and Praxis,**

**Saturday, January 29, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.** A Society of St. John Chrysostom Western Region workshop. **St. George Serbian Orthodox Church, 3025 Denver Street, San Diego, CA 92117. Presenter: Vladimir Morosan.** A free will offering will be taken. Bring your own lunch. A SSJC-WR meeting will follow.

### **Mary, Mother of God: Bridge to Unity**

**Wednesday, Nov. 17, 6 p.m. reception; 7 p.m. lecture. Presented by the Huffington Ecumenical Institute: Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045. Presenters: Fr. Deacon Nicholas Denysenko, Theological Studies LMU & Fr. Dorian Llywelyn, S.J.** Free and open to the public - advance registration required. [Bellarmine.lmu.edu/ecumenical/Fall2010.htm](http://Bellarmine.lmu.edu/ecumenical/Fall2010.htm)

### **Retreat: Luminous Darkness; Knowing beyond knowledge with St. Dionysius the Areopagite**

**Friday, Jan. 1-3, 2011 at Holy Resurrection Greek Catholic Monastery at St. Andrew's Abbey, 31001 N. Valyermo Rd., Valyermo CA 93563** **Presenter: Fr. Maximos Davies.** Advance registration required. Room & Board and tuition: Single \$260, Shared \$170 Phone 661 944 2178 or [Retreats@valyermo.com](mailto:Retreats@valyermo.com). Additional information at [www.saintandrewsabbey.com](http://www.saintandrewsabbey.com). Are you baptized? Guess what, that makes you a mystic! St. Dionysius can help show you how to live that mystical vocation we call the Christian life. By a careful study of his famous Mystical Theology, in the context of his other writings, we will look at one of the most profoundly optimistic visions of what it means to be a follower of Christ.

# Nicodemus, Sicily's Forgotten Saint

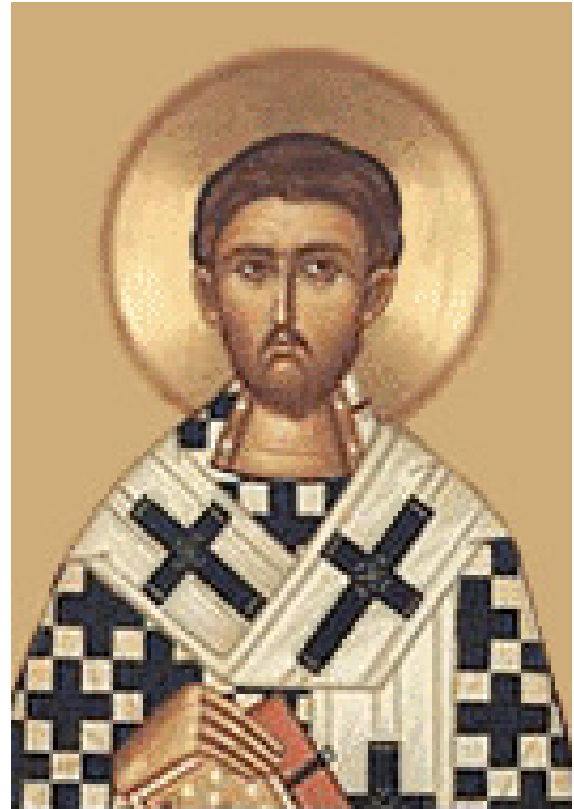
By Vincenzo Salerno, *Best of Sicily Magazine*

Amid the recent Catholic devotion to more controversial personages, such as Padre Pio (whose likeness abounds in southern Italy), many of Sicily's medieval religious figures have been all but forgotten. One of them is Nicodemus, leader of Sicily's Christians during the last decades of Muslim rule. The early (Orthodox) church of Sicily was distinctly Byzantine, and indeed part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. From around 827 until the 1060s, Christians in Sicily, like Jews, became a subjugated people, mildly persecuted and highly taxed but allowed, in most cases, to practice their religion and professions. There were Orthodox Christian monasteries and churches, and some Christians were permitted land ownership. Yet Sicily's population almost doubled during over two centuries of Saracen (Arab) rule under Muslim law. Clearly, some Christians converted to Islam, and Arabic greatly influenced the vernacular language of Sicily, which previously had been closer to Greek.

The Normans arrived in 1061, reaching Palermo, the capital, by early 1072. The last Arab areas, such as Enna, were not conquered until two decades later. Under the Normans, the Sicilian language became more Latinised, and so did the Church.

In Palermo there were twenty Orthodox churches (and hundreds of mosques and dozens of synagogues) when the Normans besieged and captured the city. They found its bishop, Nicodemus, with his congregation. The old Church of Saint Mary, which had been turned into a mosque some two hundred and forty years earlier, was quickly reconsecrated and Nicodemus celebrated a prayer service there. He was known for his kindness and humility, but the new rulers, after establishing their position, sent him to live outside the city in the area now called Mezzomonreale. The precise reasons are unknown, but it is clear that Roger and Robert de Hauteville wished to install bishops loyal to Rome following the Schism of 1054.

In the chronicles of Christianity, the Schism played out at its most dramatic in Sicily, which in the eleventh century was the wealthiest region of Europe and the Mediterranean. By the twelfth century, the tax revenues derived from Palermo alone



exceeded those collected by the Norman king of England in his entire realm. Nowhere was ecclesiastical and temporal power contested as in Sicily. Nicodemus, Count Roger, and even the contemporary popes were minor players in this spectacle, whose ideology transcended human vanity.

Bishop of Palermo from 1065, Saint Nicodemus died in 1083. His body is buried in a stone sarcophagus which today can be found in the crypt of the Norman era Palermo Cathedral.

*About the Author: Palermo native Vincenzo Salerno has written biographies of several famous Sicilians, including Frederick II and Giuseppe di Lampedusa.*

## Letters

I just finished reading the "Light of the East" Newsletter. It was wonderful! Also, sent my renewal subscription in this morning. Thank you for all that you do to promote the Unity of East and West.

Blessings

Mary Ann Gould

***The Society of St. John Chrysostom - Western Region  
welcomes everyone to become a members  
Dues are \$50 per year. For additional information call  
714 985 1710 and ask for Fr. James.  
Your support funds our newsletter and workshops.***

## **SSJC-WR launches a new website!**

It's been a long time coming but our new website is finally online! We hope to improve our communications with members, introduce SSJC-WR to a wider audience, and most important better announce the fine retreats and seminars we sponsor in Southern California. Please take our new site for a spin. We would love to hear from you — especially on how to make the site even better.

**<http://ssjc-wr.org>**

## Orthodox Patriarch says he often sees eye-to-eye with Pope of Rome on moral issues

*Zenit, July 19* - Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia says he and Benedict XVI often see eye-to-eye on many issues, especially with regard to those of a moral nature.

The Patriarch said this in statements on the occasion of his trip to Ukraine, reported today by the Russian agency Interfax.

"I must say that the position of the present Pope, Benedict XVI, leaves room for optimism," he said in an interview on Ukrainian television channels, on the eve of his visit to that country.

He reminded journalists that the Pope is often criticized by "liberal theologians and the liberal mass media in the West" for his opinions.

"However, in his approach on many public and moral issues, the Pope coincides fully with the approach of the Russian Orthodox Church. This gives us an opportunity to promote Christian values with the Catholic Church, in particular in international organizations and in the international arena," he asserted.

At the same time, the Patriarch acknowledged that "very dangerous phenomena" are taking place in contemporary Protestantism, in which Christians "let sinful elements of the world enter their interior and justify these elements that the secular society offers them."

As a result, he said, "liberal secular philosophical slogans are repeated within the Protestant churches and grow roots in religious thought."

In this connection, Patriarch Kirill referred to the question of the ordination of women, which appears in the West when "the secular notion of human rights is incorporated to theology, to ecclesial practices," he said.

"Another similar issue is the attitude toward homosexuality. The Word of God is distorted to please the liberal secular standard. It is very clearly written that it is a sin," he added.

Patriarch Kirill addressed the Ukrainian media reminding them also of the importance that both countries, Russia and Ukraine, be integrated in Europe preserving their "national, cultural and spiritual identity."

"It is a great challenge in conditions of globalization," he said. "We must preserve the diversity and beauty of God's world and at the same time promote good international cooperation and peaceful relations between nations."

In his opinion, if Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians reject their "basic values," the probable destruction of the "national matrix" will be "a great catastrophe of civilization -- just as if other nations lose their identity."

"The world would be unified and horrible," the Patriarch added. "The world would be easily manipulated. Why? Because this traditional spiritual culture of the majority of the population is the main criterion to distinguish good from evil."

*Publication of this issue of The Light of the East was made possible thanks to a gift from Holy Resurrection Monastery*

## Orthodox, Catholics share parish church

ZALAU, Romania, JULY 7, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)).- Greek Catholics celebrated on July 4 their first Mass in 62 years in the parish church of Bocsa, with what was described as a "festive and moving" atmosphere. The Bocsa parish is unique because, thanks to an agreement between Orthodox and Greek-Catholics, it will be shared between the two Churches. The parish has been hailed as an example of conflict resolution between the two Churches, often at odds over patrimonial issues in former Soviet countries.

The Bocsa parish was confiscated by the Communist authorities in 1948 and given to the Orthodox Church, after the forced abolition of the Greek-Catholic Church. Catholics went underground until legalization was regained. Pope John Paul II re-established their hierarchy in 1990. Since then, the Greek-Catholic community has worked legally for the devolution of confiscated churches (some 2,600 properties), whereas the Orthodox requested that the new balance of faithful be kept in mind, given that the Greek-Catholics have decreased significantly in numbers over the last decades. In the specific case of Bocsa, the Greek-Catholic community asked the Orthodox to return the parish, or to seek an alternative over the use of the church.

The case was taken to court, while the Greek-Catholics continued to propose an agreement. At the beginning of 2010 the court decided in favor of the Greek-Catholics, though they continued to offer an agreement to the Orthodox. The court proceeded last July 1 with the execution of the sentence, returning the church to the Catholics. A few hours later, the Orthodox accepted the proposal of an agreement, which was subsequently signed before the judicial authorities of Salaj.

Now both communities have committed themselves to share the use of the church with different timetables. The first Greek-Catholic Mass was celebrated at 9 a.m. last Sunday. It was presided over by Father Valer Parau, dean of the Greek-Catholic Church of Zalau. Father Valer insisted on forgiveness "to be able to heal wounds," the Romanian Catholic agency *Catholica.ro* reported. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God," he recalled. "We believe that with this realistic, pragmatic relationship in accord with the spirit of the Lord's Gospel, other cases can be resolved in which Greek Catholics are obliged by the circumstances to pray in inadequate places. There is space for one another in the same church."

### ***Attention SSJC members: Did you remember to pay your dues?***

*Membership is \$50. Associate membership (non-voting) is \$40. \$10 is sent to the National Society of St. John Chrysostom while the remainder is used to fund this newsletter and all of our local events.*

## Pope welcomes growing interest in Orthodox meeting

### Christian leaders reflect on Communion/Solitude

ROME, SEPT. 9, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org))- A papal message to an annual meeting on Orthodox spirituality noted growing participation in the event and praised the choice for this year's theme.

A message signed by Benedict XVI's secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, commended the 18th International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality. The four-day symposium was held at the Bose monastery in Italy on September ninth.

This year's theme is "communion and solitude," and the scholars -- representing Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants -- are considering insight offered by Christian tradition into these polar opposites, which are vital dimensions of the spiritual life. The Holy Father noted the theme, saying it is "rich in ideas for further reflection and also of great pastoral and cultural timeliness."

The papal message also invited the participants to "turn their gaze to the Blessed Virgin Mary and, guided by her, to contemplate Christ the perfect model of harmony between communion and solitude, in whom subsists the One and True God."

#### Voice of other leaders

Several messages came from other high-ranking Orthodox and Catholic leaders, including the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I. The patriarch also praised the theme, noting that "solitude and silence ultimately instruct us in the proper way of relating to and being in communion with others."

He reflected: "As a community that is monastic in nature and ecumenical at heart, we recognize that the two elements that will be discussed at this year's annual conference are at once your experiences and expectations as you lead a life of fellowship and prayer. In many ways, your monastic life demonstrates the yearning and understanding of monks and nuns through the centuries, from the early desert fathers and mothers to the cenobitic and eremitic practitioners of the undivided Church of the first millennium, down to the priories and nunneries across confessional borders in our own day."

For his part, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia recalled in his message that "both solitude, withdrawing from the world, and openness to communion with one's neighbor have always been considered necessary spiritual practices in the way of salvation. The Savior himself gave us the example of the harmonious union of common life and solitude."

"In Russian monasticism, a balance has always been sought between common life and solitude, because of the awareness that both withdrawal from the seductions of the world as well as community service are of equal importance in the life of the Christian," he continued. "The world must see that the gifts of the Holy Spirit transfiguring human life abound also today among those who seek to live according to the Gospel, as they did among the men of prayer of past centuries."

## **BOOK RECOMMENDATION** ***Ecumenical Reflections***

*Publisher: Eastern Christian Publications, P.O. Box 146, Fairfax, VA 22030*

*Author: Archbishop +Elias Zoghby*

*Translated by Bishop Nicholas Samra*

*ISBN: 1-892278-06-5*

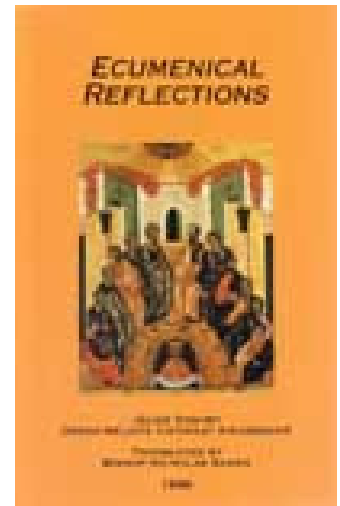
*Length: 73 pages*

*Edition: Paperback*

*Available from: Eastern Christian Publication*

*Price \$15*

His Excellency Elias Zoghby of blessed memory was known for his Ecumenical Interventions at the Second Vatican Council. *We are all schismatics*, was his principal work. In *Ecumenical Reflections* he reflects on the sins of our past, particularly human pride, which is the source of the divided church of Jesus Christ. He bluntly states that our disunity is a scandal within Christianity. Here is a brief example of his take on events which led to the disunity of the Church of Christ:



"When the church of the East found itself drowning in a world hostile to the religion of Jesus and while it struggled to preserve the faith of the fathers and needed the fraternal assistance of the prosperous Latin West, it was then that its Latin Catholic sister tortured it during the Crusades by dismissing its Orthodox patriarchs and bishops, and substituting a Latin hierarchy for them. Taking advantage of the prestige of the Catholic nations of Europe and the Ottoman occupation of the East, the Roman Church would dismember Orthodoxy by creating uniate Eastern Churches. This would bleed again in the heart of Orthodoxy, when Vatican Council I presented the papacy, the traditional enemy of the Christian East for more than a millennium, as having by divine right, the immediate and direct solicitude of the Churches of the East and the West, conferring on the popes an ordinary and universal jurisdiction over all patriarchs, bishops, priests and faithful of the East as well as the Latin West..."

Although this book was issued in 1998 and lacks any mention of the more recent ecumenical work that has been accomplished, the reader can greatly benefit from gaining a clear understanding of what led to the tragic divisions and what can be or needs to be done to heal them. He doesn't mince words and he tells it like it is. The book contains a preface from an Orthodox Perspective by Bishop +Vsevolod of blessed memory. Hopefully the reader of this book will become on fire to end the scandal of disunity.