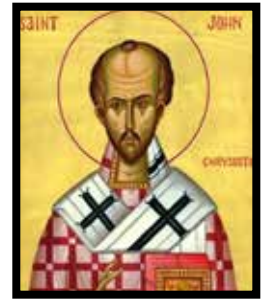


# Light of the East

Newsletter of the Society of Saint John Chrysostom  
Western Region Edition  
Website: [www.lightoftheeast.org](http://www.lightoftheeast.org)



Volume 9, Number 2

Fall 2014

## Historic meeting in Constantinople



**Pope Francis is embraced by Patriarch Bartholomew after asking for his blessing at the close of a three-day visit to Turkey.**

By Jim Trageser

Pope Francis' recent ecumenical visit to Patriarch Bartholomew (Nov. 28-30) in Istanbul put on global display the current Bishop of Rome's desire for full communion with the sister Churches of the East – a desire shared by Bartholomew (who has served as Ecumenical Patriarch since 1981).

To the right is an analysis of this historic visit by Fr. Dwight Longenecker, and on Page 4 you can read the full text of the joint proclamation from Francis and Bartholomew.

Exciting times for the faithful, East and West!

### *Christendom needs both East and West*

Fr. Dwight Longenecker

*(This analysis originally appeared in Aleteia, and is reprinted with their permission. Copyright 2014 Aleteia, [aleteia.org](http://aleteia.org).)*

When referring to the Eastern Orthodox churches, Pope St. John Paul II used to say the church needed to “breathe with two lungs.” Given Pope Francis' physical condition of having only one lung, perhaps it is best to discover a new analogy. Looking at the cross, we can say that Christ needs two arms to reach out to embrace the whole world.

In his trip to Turkey last month, Pope Francis celebrated the liturgy with Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Historically, the Patriarch of Constantinople has represented the confederation of Eastern Orthodox Churches. He also stands symbolically for the apostle Andrew who evangelized the East, while his brother Peter went to Rome. St Andrew's feast day at the end of November is therefore a time for “Peter”

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### Happenings!

**SSJC-WR Presentation:**

**Canon Law – East & West**

**Presented by Fr. Anthony Bahou, Pastor of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church; Fr. James Bankston, Pastor of St. John the Baptizer Ukrainian**

**Catholic Church and Fr. Michael Ravenkamp, Defender of the Bond, Tribunal, Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego - Saturday, Jan. 17, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Our Lady of Kazan Russian Orthodox Church, 3703 Central Ave., San Diego.** Archpriest George Morelli will moderate. Call 760-920-6530 for information.

## The Society of Saint John Chrysostom

The Society of Saint John Chrysostom is an Ecumenical group of clergy and lay people that promotes Eastern Christianity and Ecumenical Dialogue between the Eastern and Western Churches. It has sponsored the Eastern Churches Journal and the annual Orientale 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 that present information about the Eastern Churches
- Organize and conduct pilgrimages and conferences that encourage ecumenical dialogue
- Contribute to fundraising activities that 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 and Orthodox Seminaries.

### Western Region

*President:* The Very Reverend Fr. George Morelli, PhD.

*Vice President:* Very Reverend Ramon Merlos

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Very Reverend Ramon Merlos (Orthodox)

Fr Cavanaugh Wallace

### Light of the East

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## Message from the President of SSJC-Western Region



## Allies in the battle to stop criminalizing of Christianity

*By the Very Reverend Archpriest George Morelli, PhD*

The work of Satan, the great divider, or separator, is not new – it goes back to Christ Himself, His Apostles and disciples and many early Christians. They were criminals in the eyes of the law, the state. We know from the Holy Gospels and from historical accounts that real possession by Satan can occur. However, as one Christian author, C.S. Lewis<sup>i</sup>, has pointed out, most of the work of Satan is not done by him or his demons, but by us – that is to say, people like you and me.

Lewis writes a fictional account of an experienced devil or demon named Screwtape who teaches a novice devil, his nephew, called Wormwood, to adopt a “war aim” that would entail a “world in which Our Father Below has drawn all other beings to himself ...” (p. 38). The moral of the story boils down to this: “You don’t have to do much, you can more or less stand back and people will do the Devil’s work for you.” This is due to the brokenness, weaknesses, biases, foibles, prejudices and passions we all have, which, of course, we have inherited from our ancestral parents. Therefore, first let us first look among ourselves for the criminalization of Christianity.

Many of us would think that considering Christians as criminals today would be the case only for third world countries or under radical Islamic control. How many would think that the criminalization of Christians is now being promoted in the West and in the United States as well?

This fall, 2014, I came across an advertisement for a book, almost a decade old now, titled “The Criminalization of Christianity.”<sup>ii</sup> The attack on Christianity leading to criminalization started one small step at a time, almost innocently at first. Prayer in public schools was banned, portrayals of the Ten Commandments were forbidden in courts, public buildings and, of course, public schools.

There was, and still is, an outcry by atheists and

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# THE SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

~Western Region~

[www.lightoftheeast.org](http://www.lightoftheeast.org)

## Canon Law: East & West

Saturday January 17, 2015

10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**Our Lady of Kazan Russian Orthodox Church**

**3703 Central Ave., San Diego, CA 92105**

(Corner of Central and Landis)

(619) 281-6446 [www.ourladyofkazanchurch.org](http://www.ourladyofkazanchurch.org)

Speakers:

**Orthodox: Fr. Antony Bahou,**

Pastor, St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, San Diego, CA

**Eastern Catholic: Fr. James Bankston,**

Pastor, St. John the Baptizer Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, La Mesa, CA

**Roman Catholic: Fr. Michael Ravenkamp, S.J., J.C.L.**

Defender of the Bond. Tribunal, Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego

**Moderator and Contact: Fr. George Morelli (760) 920-6530**

**A freewill offering will be taken.**

Directions: 15 Fwy. Exit: University. West on University 1 block to 41<sup>st</sup> St.

South on 41st to Landis. East on Landis 2 blocks to Central.

**Business meeting of The Society of St. John Chrysostom-Western Region immediately follows the program. If staying for the meeting please bring a packed lunch.**

*The Society of St. John Chrysostom-Western Region, is an ecumenical organization of laity and clergy of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Eastern Catholic and Roman Catholic Churches which was established to make known the history, worship, spirituality, discipline and theology of Eastern Christianity, and to work for the fullness of unity desired by Jesus Christ.*

# Joint Declaration of His Holiness Pope Francis and His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

We, Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, express our profound gratitude to God for the gift of this new encounter enabling us, in the presence of the members of the Holy Synod, the clergy and the faithful of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to celebrate together the feast of Saint Andrew, the first-called and brother of the Apostle Peter. Our

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**This is the full text of the Common Declaration issued by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and Pope Francis at the conclusion of Francis' Nov. 28-30 visit.**

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remembrance of the Apostles, who proclaimed the good news of the Gospel to the world through their preaching and their witness of martyrdom, strengthens in us the aspiration to continue to walk

together in order to overcome, in love and in truth, the obstacles that divide us.

On the occasion of our meeting in Jerusalem last May, in which we remembered the historical embrace of our venerable predecessors Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, we signed a joint declaration. Today on the happy occasion of this further fraternal encounter, we wish to re-affirm together our shared intentions and concerns.

We express our sincere and firm resolution, in obedience to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to intensify our efforts to promote the full unity of all Christians, and above all between Catholics and Orthodox. As well, we intend to support the theological dialogue promoted by the Joint International Commission, instituted exactly thirty-five years ago by the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios and Pope John Paul II here at the Phanar, and which is currently dealing with the most difficult questions that have marked the history of our division and that require careful and detailed study. To this end, we offer the assurance of our fervent prayer as Pastors of the Church, asking our faithful to join us in praying "that all may be one, that the world may believe" (*Jn 17:21*).

We express our common concern for the current situation in Iraq, Syria and the whole Middle East. We are

united in the desire for peace and stability and in the will to promote the resolution of conflicts through dialogue and reconciliation. While recognizing the efforts already being made to offer assistance to the region, at the same time, we call on all those who bear responsibility for the destiny of peoples to deepen their commitment to suffering communities, and to enable them, including the Christian ones, to remain in their native land. We cannot resign ourselves to a Middle East without Christians, who have professed the name of Jesus there for two thousand years. Many of our brothers and sisters are being persecuted and have been forced violently from their homes. It even seems that the value of human life has been lost, that the human person no longer matters and may be sacrificed to other interests. And, tragically, all this is met by the indifference of many. As Saint Paul reminds us, "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together" (*1 Cor 12:26*). This is the law of the Christian life, and in this sense we can say that there is also an ecumenism of suffering. Just as the blood of the martyrs was a seed of strength and fertility for the Church, so too the sharing of daily sufferings can become an effective instrument of unity. The terrible situation of Christians and all those who are suffering in the Middle East calls not only for our constant prayer, but also for an appropriate response on the part of the international community.

The grave challenges facing the world in the present situation require the solidarity of all people of good will, and so we also recognize the importance of promoting a constructive dialogue with Islam based on mutual respect and friendship. Inspired by common values and strengthened by genuine fraternal sentiments, Muslims and Christians are called to work together for the sake of justice, peace and respect for the dignity and rights of every person, especially in those regions where they once lived for centuries in peaceful coexistence and now tragically suffer together the horrors of war. Moreover, as Christian leaders, we call on all religious leaders to pursue and to strengthen interreligious dialogue and to make every effort to build a culture of peace and solidarity

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# Longenecker: Grass-roots healing is future of Church

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to meet his brother "Andrew".

This year's meeting between Pope and Patriarch took a fresh direction. Rather than calling the Eastern Orthodox Christians to engage in yet more theological and ecumenical dialogue, Pope Francis called on Catholics and Orthodox to work



**Fr. Dwight Longenecker**

together to relieve poverty and fight for justice and peace in the world. This, the pope claimed, would show the world the goodness and beauty of the Christian faith, inspiring the young to embrace a genuine goodness that leads to Christ.

Both Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew would agree that the Christian faith is more than simply helping the poor and working to end war and injustice. Repeatedly, Pope Francis has warned against the church becoming no more than another humanistic do-gooding charity.

The idea that the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches might reach out with two arms to embrace the world is a positive way forward in the steady, but sure road to unity. To do this effectively, the Christians of the East and West must not only roll up their sleeves and work together, but they must also drop their suspicions and learn from one

another.

A Lutheran convert and blogger, Billy Kangas, found his way to the Catholic faith through a detour into Eastern Orthodoxy. In a pair of blog posts ([www.patheos.com/blogs/billykangas](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/billykangas)) he outlines what Eastern Christians can learn from the West and vice versa. The Western church, Kangas claims, is better at inculturation and therefore has a wider and deeper tradition of spirituality. Paralleling this, the Western church has a more thorough understanding of incarnation. Kangas writes, "This can be seen in the use of the crucifix as a central symbol in worship, it can be seen in the West's willingness to change their calendar to better reflect the actual position of the earth in relationship to the sun, it can be seen in the West's more realistic art and statuary, it can be seen in the West's spirituality that is focused more on the historic events in the life of Jesus through prayers like the rosary and Ignatian contemplation."

Because of a deeper incarnational approach, Kangas claims the Western church also has a more consistent theory of peace, justice, and socio-political involvement. He observes, "The West has thought deeply about how to live out Christ's love in the world, and they have lived lives that reflect that love in powerful ways. The religious life of the West tends to be a bit more action-oriented. Catholic monks and nuns are often at the forefront of

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## Common Declaration from Bartholomew and Francis

*Continued from Page 4*

between persons and between peoples. We also remember all the people who experience the sufferings of war. In particular, we pray for peace in Ukraine, a country of ancient Christian tradition, while we call upon all parties involved to pursue the path of dialogue and of respect for international law in order to bring an end to the conflict and allow all Ukrainians to live in harmony.

Our thoughts turn to all the faithful of our Church-

es throughout the world, whom we greet, entrusting them to Christ our Saviour, that they may be untiring witnesses to the love of God. We raise our fervent prayer that the Lord may grant the gift of peace in love and unity to the entire human family.

"May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you" (2 Thess 3:16).

From the Phanar, 30 November 2014

## Longenecker

*Continued from Page 5*

Justice movements in the world.”

In his praise of the West, Kangas does not disparage the East, for just as West has much to offer East, so the Eastern tradition has much to offer the West. He acknowledges that the East has maintained a liturgical authenticity and integrity that has been too often lost in the West. “The Eastern liturgy teaches us about God,” Kangas says, implying that the Western liturgy is too often man-centered. From the East comes a deep understanding and experience of the Holy Trinity as a dynamic unity. For the Orthodox, the Holy Trinity is not a theological theory, but a dynamic experience.

The “Jesus Prayer” is another light from the East. This intensely personal prayer locks the individual into a profound experience of God, while the unique iconography of the East opens windows to the transcendent.

Popes and Patriarchs may meet and embrace, but the two arms of Christ’s church will only be able to reach out to the world when Christians on both sides of the divide stop blaming one another and start learning from one another. Converts like Kangas, who come to the historic church from Protestantism, often have unique insights because they have explored both the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions before making their choice.

The immediacy and mobility of the modern world means an increasing number of Christians are opening out from their narrow understanding of the faith. This grass roots, lived ecumenism involving Christians of East and West, Catholic and Protestant, is what will take Christians into the future together and empower all those who follow Christ to do so with the courage and faith of Peter and his brother Andrew.

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**The Rev. Dwight Longenecker** is the parish priest of Our Lady of the Rosary in Greenville, South Carolina. His latest book is “The Romance of Religion: Fighting for Goodness, Truth and Beauty.” Learn more at his website, [dwrightlongenecker.com](http://dwrightlongenecker.com).

## Coptic Pope meets with Russian Patriarch Kirill



**Coptic Pope Tawadros II, left, is greeted in Moscow on Oct. 29 by Russian Patriarch Kirill.**

*From news reports*

The Moscow Patriarchate reported that on Oct. 29, Patriarch Kirill met with Coptic Pope Tawadros II in Moscow to discuss both theological issues and the dire situation in the Middle East regarding ISIS persecution of Christian populations. It was the first meeting between the top leaders of the two faith communities in 26 years.

Tawadros spoke of the importance of such meetings between different branches of Christianity, saying, “Collaboration between our Churches will be of great value to our people, both in Egypt and Russia, and a symbol of proactive unity to the whole world.”

The Eastern Orthodox Churches, of which the Russian Orthodox Church is a member, and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, of which the Coptic Church is by far the largest, are not in communion with one another. The Copts (founded in Egypt by the Apostle Mark) and other Oriental Orthodox Churches became estranged from what are now the Eastern Orthodox and the Catholic churches following the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD over differences in theology on the nature of Christ.

Kirill mentioned the Christological differences between the Oriental Orthodox Church and Eastern Orthodox, and proposed future talks on promoting understanding between the Churches.

# Eastern Catholics approved for married clergy in N.A.

*From news reports*

The Vatican approved allowing married men to be ordained as priests in Eastern Catholic churches in North America. Earlier this year, the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation had voted to recommend overturning a 1929 Vatican decree that required all Catholic priests in

North America to be celibate.

The order from Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, was signed in June, although it was only published some time later. The new rule does request that Eastern Catholic bishops notify the local Roman Catholic bishop when ordaining a married man.

## Morelli

*Continued from Page 2*

secularists to remove the words “In God we Trust,” from our national motto and to remove the words “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance.

A couple of decades ago some individuals were saying that the ultimate goal of the gay-rights movement was the “criminalization of Christianity.” I would not have believed it if I had heard of it at that time – but I surely know it is true now. A recent example of this: a self-proclaimed lesbian mayor of a major Texas city recently tried to subpoena the homilies of pastors in her jurisdiction. She was looking for any criticism of so-called “gay-marriage” as it would be a hate-crime subject to prosecution. Her office was flooded with books of the Sacred Scriptures,<sup>iii</sup> and because of the public outcry the investigation has been temporarily halted.

However, in Europe, supposedly an enlightened area of the world, church leaders who preached on homosexuality have already been prosecuted. A Swedish court sentenced a pastor to a month in prison for inciting hate by quoting Scripture and thus offending gays and lesbians. A news account reported that the prosecutor said the homilist crossed the line when he recited Scriptural verses referencing homosexuality (Folger, 2005).

By the way, the term “gay marriage” is an oxymoron – a contradiction of terms. The Apostolic Churches<sup>iv</sup> have taught that the marital commitment is a reflection of the love of the persons of the Holy Trinity amongst themselves, and that the potential for procreation between the male and female united in a blessed marriage reflects God’s

creation of the cosmos and specifically mankind. “Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh.” (Gn 2:24).

As Christians, we are to pray for the spiritual healing of all, and we know that we can never judge the individual. Only the merciful God can do that.

However, we can judge an action or deed, proclaiming it is wrong, recalling Christ’s words, spoken through His angel to St. John (Rev. 2:6): “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaites, which I also hate.”

However, out of charity, we must also never socially or economically discriminate against anyone based on gender, race, religion, and/or sexual orientation.

The segment of secular and politically correct society, and even among those who identify themselves as Christian, that seeks to persecute and criminalize orthodox Christians for proclaiming the teachings of Christ and His Church is in dire need of healing. The unique diaconia of the SSJC is to witness the solidarity of the Apostolic Churches on such moral matters. The grace to do this springs from our entry into the Royal Priesthood of Christ that was bestowed on us at Holy Baptism. Let us all exercise this gift according to our state of life.

I. Lewis, C.S. (1961). “The Screwtape Letters.” NY: Macmillan.

II. Folger, J.L. (2005). “The Criminalization of Christianity.” Sisters, OR: Multnomah.

III. <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/10/28/guess-how-many-bibles-have-arrived-at-the-office-of-the-houston-mayor-after-she-subpoenaed-pastors-sermons/>.

IV. Those Churches tracing back to Christ and His Apostles, and whose communicants are eligible for SSJC membership: Eastern Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholic jurisdictions.

Briefly ...

**Correction**

The front-page article in the September edition on the Orientale Lumen Conference mischaracterized the family history of Father Patrick Viscuso, as well as his own views on his calling within the Church.

We apologize for the error.

**New leaders elected**

The Fall Session of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America elected three new leaders on its opening day, Oct. 21, in Syosset, N.Y:

- Igumen Daniel (Brum) was named Bishop of Santa Rosa, and Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of the West, serving under Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco.

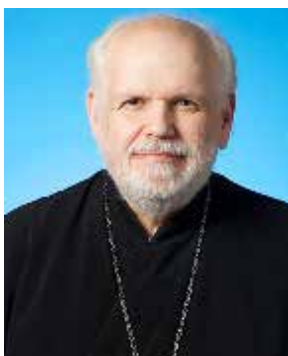


**Bishop Daniel**

A native of Fresno, Fr. Daniel was originally ordained a Roman Catholic priest, but 17 years ago requested to be received into the Orthodox Church in America, where he was

vested as an Orthodox priest.

- Igumen Paul (Gassios) was named Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest.



**Bishop Paul**

The Detroit native earned his BA in history and psychology in 1976 from Wayne State University, and pursued a career in social work, particularly devoted to abused children.

It was not until 1994 that he was ordained a priest.

- Bishop Irénée of Québec City was elevated to the Episcopal See of Canada. The Montréal native had been serving as Administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada.



**Bishop Irénée**

He was tonsured a Rasophore monk in 1974, and two years later a Stavrophore monk, taking the name Irénée. Two years later, he was ordained first to the diaconate in Belgium, then to the priesthood in Switzerland. In 1982, he returned home to Canada, where he served Francophone communities. In 2009 he was named Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Canada, and a year later was appointed Administrator.

**San Diego's bishop falls asleep in the Lord**

On Sept. 6, San Diego Roman Catholic Bishop Cirilo Flores fell asleep in the Lord after a short bout with cancer. Flores was first admitted to the hospital after suffering a stroke in April. At that



**Bishop Flores**

time, it was discovered that he was suffering from an aggressive form of cancer.

The native of Corona, California, originally entered the novitiate in 1968, but left to return to school, earning his bachelor's from Loyola Marymount in 1970.

In 1976, he earned his law degree from Stanford. For the next decade, he pursued a career as an attorney, before returning to school at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo in 1986.

He was ordained in 1991, serving parishes in Santa Ana and Costa Mesa.

In 2009, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Orange, and in January 2012, Coadjutor Bishop of San Diego, where he succeeded Bishop Robert Brom on Sept 18, 2013.

Flores was remembered by his flock for his humility and his common touch with people from all walks of life.