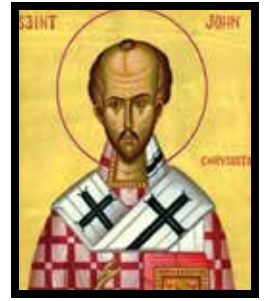


# Light of the East

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



Volume 11, Numbers 1-2

Summer 2016

## Easter / Pascha traditions explored, shared

By Jim Trageser

The different — and also common — ways the mystery of Pascha is observed in the ancient churches, east and west, was the theme of the May presentation of the Society of St. John Chrysostom - Western Region.

Held at San Rafael Roman Catholic parish in Rancho Bernardo, the May 21 gathering featured Father Bratso Krsich and Monsignor Dennis Mikulanis exploring the varied ways Easter is celebrated.

The presentation began a half hour earlier than the normal 10 a.m. start time to allow Father Bratso to leave early to celebrate a wedding at his parish of St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in San Diego.

Father Bratso opened by giving a short overview of the theological implications of Easter.

"It is the most anticipated feast of the Church's calendar, the Feast of Feasts, the Pascha or Resurrection of our Lord and Savior,



Photos by Jim Trageser

**Father Bratso Krsich, left, and Monsignor Dennis Mikulanis, share traditions of Easter in the different branches of the Church at the May 21 presentation.**

Jesus Christ. The Pascha of the Old Testament for the Israelites was the Passover - the passage from slavery to a new life. Our Pascha is our passage to a eternal life.

"On the Great and Holy Saturday, every Orthodox Christian community gathers around their bishop and begins the service by exiting the Church and making

the procession three times while singing hymns and carrying candles."

Father said when the procession comes to the west door of the church the third time, they enter while singing a hymn dedicated to the feast.

"Pascha is not a re-enactment of the Resurrection in any way;

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### Happenings!

#### **SSJC-WR Presentation:**

#### **"Faith Formation of the Young"**

Presented by Father James Bankston, pastor of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church in La Mesa, and Father George Morelli, assistant pastor of St. George

Antiochian Orthodox Church in San Diego. Presentation is at 10 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 17 at St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in San Diego (3025 Denver Street, near Mission Bay). Contact Father George Morelli at 760-920-6530 or see flyer on Page 3 of this issue of Light of the East.

## 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 Archpriest George Morelli, PhD.

*Vice President:* The Reverend Father James Bankston

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Very Reverend Ramon Merlos (Orthodox)

Fr Cavanaugh Wallace (Roman Catholic)

### Light of the East

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## Message from the President of SSJC-Western Region



# Global changes offer chance at unity in love

*By the Very Reverend Archpriest George Morelli PhD*

One of the major cultural, economic, social, political and religious features in today's world is globalization.<sup>1</sup> A sociological view of this trend notes that it includes "...all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society."<sup>2</sup> One of the predicted consequences of globalization is homogenization of culture and religion.<sup>3</sup> This would imply the equal worth and preeminence of all the religious teachers and their teachings throughout the history of mankind.

Now, there have been serious challenges to globalization and its consequences accompanying this trend, among them attempts by various groups to maintain their way of life, and worse, forcibly impose it on others – and who have sought to do so by intensification of violent conflict. The proliferation of worldwide terrorism and torture by radical fundamentalist groups are salient examples that typify this reaction.

On the other hand, there is the development of global "non-religion," sometimes referred to as *nonism*. One recent report indicated: "Around the world, when asked about their feelings on religion, more and more people are responding with a *meh*. The religiously unaffiliated, called 'nones,' are growing significantly".<sup>4</sup>

What is the Christ-like reaction to this? As Christians we know that Jesus at His discourse at the Last Supper stated: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me." (Jn 13: 6) – which makes Our Lord the apex of all religious teachers. Not as the globalists would maintain: one teacher among equal teachers.

Furthermore, another question can be posed: What is the relation between globalism and its reactionary movements and the dictum Christ gave to His disciples just prior to the Ascension: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the

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THE SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM  
-Western Region-  
*presents*

**FAITH FORMATION  
FOR THE YOUNG**

**10 A.M.  
SATURDAY, SEPT. 17**

**ST. GEORGE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

3025 Denver Street, San Diego, CA 92117  
619-276-5827 | [www.stgeorgeinsd.org](http://www.stgeorgeinsd.org)  
SSJC-WR Contact: Fr. George Morelli 760-920-6530

**SPEAKERS**

**Fr. George Morelli**

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

**Fr. James Bankston**

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

Directions: I-5 Freeway (N. or S.) Exit: Clairemont Drive. Go East for a hundred yards or so, turn left on Denver Street – go north 2 blocks, church is at Edison Street on the right.

**A freewill offering will be taken to benefit our host congregation**

*For For For For For For*

A business meeting of the Society of St. John Chrysostom follows at approx 1 p.m.  
All are welcome. Please bring your own 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.*

# Lent and Easter marked differently in the East and West

*Continued from Page 1*

for Orthodox Christians, it is more than that - it is the encounter with the Risen Lord. We are meeting the Lord Himself.

"Services in the Orthodox Church are written in the present tense — we don't just celebrate events from the distant past. We participate in the Feast Day itself; we don't just remember something from the past.

"The Orthodox Church life, and the life of the Orthodox Christian, is always dynamic, not static.

"The question is, 'Who IS Christ?' "

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the faithful bring forth food to be blessed, and then take it home for a feast to end 49 days of fasting.

Among the traditions associated with breaking the Lenten fast is to have red-dyed eggs. "The egg represents the tomb of Christ, the shell represents the seal over the tomb - in other words, the stone is rolled away" when the egg is cracked and eaten, Father explained.

He said that the color red comes from a tradition that holds that Mary Magdalene traveled to Rome and met Tiberius Ceasar, and greeted him with "Christ is Risen" giving him a gift of a white egg. The emperor was taken aback at this, and asked, "How could anyone rise from the dead.? It is impossible, just as it is for that white egg to turn red." As she was holding it, the egg was slowly turning red in color.

Msrgr. Dennis pointed out that in the Western Church, Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring Equinox. The Eastern Church

uses the Julian Calendar, so that our Easters can be as much as 5 weeks apart.

But more importantly, he said, "We can't talk about Easter without the Lenten period before."

In the Catholic Church, the ashes for Ash Wednesday are taken from the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday being burned.

"Lent is counted 40 days, but we don't count Sundays — because Sunday is a mini-Easter; it's always celebrated as Easter."

One Lenten tradition in the West is the devotion of the stations of the cross. Monsignor said this tradition was begun by St. Francis of Assisi to assist those who couldn't make the journey to the Holy Land but wanted to meditate on the Resurrection.

On Holy Thursday, there is no morning Mass — only an evening Mass. "The priests and the deacons wash the feet of parishioners as a sign of service we have to Christ's people. The bells are silenced from Holy Thursday on. Even musical instruments are not supposed to be played

until Holy Saturday.

"On Good Friday, there's really only one service - the service of the Lord's Passion."

Tradition for the Good Friday service is that each parish should only celebrate once, preferably at noon. The service is done without music, and there is no Eucharist.

"After that, everything is quiet. Nothing takes place in the church on Saturday. Mass is not cele-

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*Photo by ΙΣΧΣΝΙΚΑ-888, used courtesy of Wiki Commons*  
**Red Paschal Egg with Cross, blessed and distributed on Pascha 2013, at St. Kosmas Aitolos Greek Orthodox Monastery, Bolton, Ontario.**



## Stewardship focus of 20<sup>th</sup> Orientale Lumen conference

By the Rev. Msgr.  
George E. Dobes

WASHINGTON, DC — “I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all” (*Laudato Si'*, 14).

With that earnest plea of Pope Francis as motivation, the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Orientale Lumen Conference convened on June 21 for four days at the Washington Retreat House on the theme: “Creation: Our Shared Inheritance.” The Conference brought together Orthodox and Catholic laity and clergy for discussion of the ecumenical dimensions of the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the environmental statements and symposia of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

“The theme of the Conference is one close to the Holy Father’s heart, for he is convinced that the common commitment of Catholics and Orthodox to respect God’s creation and promote an integral ecology is a privileged path of growth in dialogue and cooperation.” So wrote Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Papal Secretary of State, conveying Francis’ cordial blessings on the Conference.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, via a video message, sent his congratulations and his fervent paternal prayers to the conference attendees and organizers, commenting that we need to be united in our concern for the Earth.



Photo courtesy Orientale Lumen

**Attendees of the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Orientale Lumen conference gather for a commemorative photo.**

Video messages conveying gratitude and greetings from other hierarchs of both the Orthodox and Catholic Churches were viewed by the participants.

Presenters at the conference included: Father John H. Erickson, former dean of St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Father John T. Ford, CSC, professor at The Catholic University of America; Dr. Elizabeth Theokritoff, an Orthodox lay theologian; and Mr. Paolo Puccini, CSP, a Paulist seminarian.

Video presentations came from Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia and Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ, both unable to attend in person. Father Ronald G. Roberson, CSP, of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, was the moderator.

Mr. Jack Figel, founder and organizer of the Orientale Lumen Conference and Foundation, was recognized at the conclusion of the conference for his 20 years of devotion and dedication to ecumenical education and dialogue.

*This article reprinted with the generous permission of Orientale Lumen.*

# Presentation reveals similarities as well as differences

Continued from Page 4

brated anywhere in the world on Holy Saturday or Holy Thursday. The only Eucharist given is to those on death's door."

The Easter Vigil will begin at dark on Saturday; each diocese usually gives a suggested time. A candlelit procession begins the service, and the Gloria is sung for the first time since before Lent.

"The main symbols we have are, first, the fire. The Easter season goes from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. At the last Vesper on Pentecost, the Paschal candle is put out. It is used then at baptisms and funerals."

A question and answer session followed the main presentation. As per custom, questions were submitted during a break on index cards, then read by SSJC Western Region president Archpriest George Morelli.

The first question had to do with years when Easter happens to fall on the same date in both the

East and West. Msgr. Dennis said he doesn't recall any joint Paschal celebrations between Orthodox and Catholic, because each parish is busy with its own congregation.

He did point out that in the Holy Land, all the ancient apostolic churches celebrate Easter on the date the Orthodox observe it, with Christmas celebrated according to the Western calendar.

Another question was what would need to happen for a common date to be selected for Easter for all of Christianity (nearly all Protestant churches follow the Catholic lead on Easter). Father George said it would take a full council of all the ancient apostolic churches.

The final question asked if Jesus was different after the Resurrection. Father George said, "Yes, we know he had a glorified body from the Acts of the Apostles.

"But we don't know what that means."

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**'Mass is not celebrated anywhere in the world on Holy Saturday or Holy Thursday. The only Eucharist given is to those on death's door.'**

– Monsignor Dennis Mikulanic

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## Morelli

Continued from Page 2

consummation of the world." (Mt 28 19-20)

The answer is we must maintain unity *in love* with Christ and, in Christ, with each other. Let us remember that one of the basic teachings God has revealed to us is that we are made in His image and called to be like Him. Furthermore, one of the basic gifts given to us by God is that we have free will.

Therefore, we must respect (while not condoning) the choices made by others, especially when their choices go against Christ's commandment: "That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (Jn 13:34)

Christians, and especially the members and friends of the Society of St. John Chrysostom, must preach and teach "love one another as I have loved you" by their loving prayer and demeanor toward all around them. The bullying, crudeness and rudeness creeping into society through some

television programming (Morelli, 2006),<sup>5</sup> and now even a mainstay of some who are political leaders or aspiring to political leadership, is totally incompatible with Christ.

The measure of our own lives and the lives of others is the rule of love given to us by St. Paul: "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil" (1Cor 13: 4-5)

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1. Ritzer, G. & Dean P., (2015). *Globalization*. NY: John Wiley & Sons
  2. Martin, A. & King, E. (Eds.) (1990). *Globalization, Knowledge and Society*; London: Sage
  - 3 Tomlinson, J. (1999). *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago: Chicago University Press
  4. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/04/160422-atheism-agnostic-secular-nones-rising-religion>
  - 5 <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/OT/view/smart-parenting-iv-cuss-control>

# From the editor: Sharing our message of Christian unity

By Jim Trageser

We know that those of you who come to the presentations of the Society of St. John Chrysostom, and who receive and read *Light of the East* share in the belief that Christians are called to unity.

The Society exists to study and work toward healing the schisms between the historic Apostolic Churches — the Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox (Coptics, Armenians, and the Syriac), and the Assyrian Church of the East.

All of these ancient Churches were founded by the Apostles, and recognize the validity of one another's sacraments.

And yet, beginning in 431 when the Assyrian Church of the East broke with the rest of the Church, continuing through 451 when the Copts, Armenians and Syriac Churches broke following the Council of Chalcedon, and culminating in 1054, when Constantinople and Rome broke off relations with one another, our shared vision of "one holy catholic and apostolic Church" has existed only in the dreams and hopes of Christian faithful.

There is a large audience receptive to our message of paving the way for reconciling all the ancient liturgical Churches to full Communion - and they are your fellow parishioners. They are in the pew next to you at Mass or Divine Liturgy.

Why not share this newsletter with one of them? Or refer them to our Website at [www.lightoftheeast.org](http://www.lightoftheeast.org)? Invite them to one of our upcoming presentations?

And stay tuned — the Executive Committee of the SSJC-Western Region is discussing on new programs and initiatives to help bring together Orthodox and Coptic, Tewahedo and Catholic, Armenian and Assyrian, and hopes to be unveiling them in the months to come.

We can not yet celebrate the sacraments together, but we *can* work side by side to help speed the day that happens.

A Society such as this will be as successful in its mission as it is in sharing its message.

Our message is Christian love and unity.

As the radio commercial puts it, pass it on.

## Pan-Orthodox Council proceeds minus four Churches

By Jim Trageser

Despite the absence of four local Orthodox Churches, the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church took place as scheduled in June on the island of Crete.

Discussions were held by those in attendance — and official statements issued in conclusion — on the issues of autonomy, the Orthodox diaspora, challenges to marriage and family, the mission of the Orthodox Church in the modern world, and of most interest to non-Orthodox, ecumenical relations with the rest of Christendom.

However, the absence of the Patriarchs of Moscow, Bulgaria, Serbia and Antioch created uncertainty about the standing and validity of those documents.

Of interest to the Catholic Church, the Oriental Orthodox Communion and the Assyrian Church of the East, was the statement that the Orthodox Church approaches ecumenical talks with consideration of other Churches' "more general teachings on sacraments, grace, priesthood, and apostolic

succession." All the official documents can be found at [www.holycouncil.org](http://www.holycouncil.org).

The 200-some Orthodox bishops who did attend expressed hope that such Councils become a regular feature of Orthodox life, and urged that they be held every seven to 10 years to help foster unity — arguing that the Orthodox Church is not a "federation," but a single Church.

*The Society of St. John Chrysostom  
Western Region*

**WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS**

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*and ask for Fr. James, or e-mail  
secretary Diane Alves at:  
[secretary@lightoftheeast.org](mailto:secretary@lightoftheeast.org)*



## Briefly ...

### Pope Francis visits Armenia



**Pope Francis and Catholicos Karekin II sign final documents at the conclusion of Francis' visit to Armenia on June 26.**

Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church, made a fraternal visit to Holy Etchmiadzin, the spiritual center of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Francis was welcomed to Armenia by Catholicos Karekin II, who celebrated a Divine Liturgy in Francis' honor.

The June 24-26 visit also included an outdoor Mass, as well as meetings with elected and other civic leaders — as well as Francis' usual visits with people from all walks of life.

During his homily, Kerekian II told the faithful that he and Francis "reconfirmed that the Holy Church of Christ is one in the spreading of the gospel of Christ in the world, in taking care of creation, standing against common problems, and in the vital mission of the salvation of man who is the crown and glory of God's creation. The inseparable mission of the Church of Christ is the strengthening of solidarity among nations and peoples, reinforcing of brotherhood and collaboration."

### Coptics host Assyrian Church of the East bishop in meeting in California

On May 28, Bishop Mar Awa Royel, bishop of California and secretary of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East, met with Anba Raphael, bishop of Central Cairo and general secretary of the Coptic Orthodox Church. The meeting was held at St. Antonios Coptic Orthodox Church in Hayward, Calif.

Mar Awa formally presented his Church's request for future dialogue with the Coptic Orthodox Church — a request Anba Raphael said he would personally deliver at the Coptic Holy Synod.

Mar Awa also presented a dossier of inter-faith dialogue documents to the Coptic bishop, and explained that the late Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV had wanted to open a dialogue before he fell asleep in the Lord.

### New Catholic representative for Jerusalem

Pope Francis has named Franciscan Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa the new Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.



**Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa**

Fr. Pizzaballa is the former "Custos" of the Holy Lands — supervising all Franciscans throughout the Middle East, including their monastery in Cairo.

The former Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fouad Twal, tendered his resignation to Pope Francis last fall upon turning 75, the mandatory age for retirement.

Pizzaballa will serve until a new patriarch is named, and will be made a bishop as part of his temporary appointment.

### Repairs begin on Edicule of the Tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Staff from the National Technical University of Athens have begun a restoration of the Edicule of the Tomb in the jointly supervised Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City.

Under the Status Quo agreement of 1852, the church is overseen and operated by the Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and Armenian Orthodox Churches — with the Coptic, Ethiopian and Syriac Churches also having a say.

The restoration was first proposed in 2000, but it took a decade and a half to get all the parties to agree on the nature of the work, and the schedule — and there was also significant prodding by the Israeli government, which briefly shut down the Church in 2015 over concerns of the safety of pilgrims.

The current edicule was built by the Greek Orthodox in 1810, replacing one destroyed by fire.