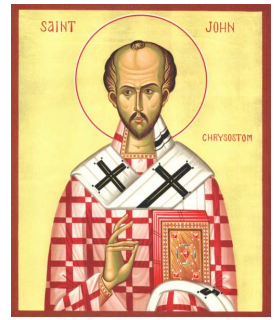


Light of the East

Newsletter of the Society of Saint John Chrysostom

Western Region Edition

Website: www.lightoftheeast.org



Volume 8, Number 1

Fall, 2013

North American Orthodox-Catholic Statement on Christian Suffering in the Middle East

Here is a statement from the North American Orthodox Catholic Theological Consultation on the plight of Christians in the Middle East. The statement was issued Saturday at the group's meeting in Mississauga, Ontario. The group meets every five years in Canada.

In 2011 we, the members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation[1] Deplore the devastating losses in the Christian communities of the Middle East in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring." Today the situation of many of the Christian communities in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine has become catastrophic.

Together with the 2013 Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, we repudiate all violence and demand action by responsible authorities to end the kidnapping, torture, and killing of Christians and all civilians. We also appeal for the release of Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Boulos Yazigi and Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim, both of Aleppo, Syria.

With regard to Syria in particular, together with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, we join Pope Francis in exhorting the international community "to make every effort to promote clear proposals for peace without further delay, a peace based on dialogue and negotiation... May no effort be spared in guaranteeing humanitarian assistance to those wounded by this terrible conflict, in particular those forced to flee and the many refugees in nearby countries."

As the Canadian Council of Churches has stated, "We are concerned for the safety and security of all the people in the region, but in particular, the weak, vulnerable and powerless. The spread of sectarian violence puts all generations throughout the region at risk and is a menace to the hopes and dreams of the younger generations."

With the Clergy-Laity Conference of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston, we "deplore the wanton destruction of Christian Churches, monasteries, convents, orphanages and hospitals throughout the Middle East....We call upon the leaders of our nation to protest these unspeakable acts of terror and to work unceasingly to bring to an end the heinous genocide of our brethren."

When one part of the body suffers, all suffer (cf. 1 Cor. 12:26). As Orthodox and Catholic Christians, we therefore have the responsibility to respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters. We call upon our communities to continue to pray for the Churches and for peace in this part of the world. We urge the leadership of our churches to continue to intervene vigorously in behalf of the Christians of the Middle East, who live in fear for their lives, their communities, and the very future of Christianity in the region.

[1] *The Orthodox members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation are appointed by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America and, on the Catholic side, by both the Canadian and United States Conferences of Catholic Bishops.*

Happenings!

SSJC-WR Workshop: The Spirit of Fasting in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality - Saturday, November 16, 10 a.m./12 noon at Our Lady of Kazan (Russian) Patriarchal Orthodox Church, 3703 Central Ave, San Diego, 92105.

Presenters: Fr. Antony Bahou, Pastor of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, San Diego and Fr. Hugh Barbour, Prior, St. Michael Norbertine Abbey, Silverado. A brief meeting of SSJC-WR will follow the

presentation. A free will offering will be taken. Contact Person: Fr. George Morelli, gmorelli@fdu.edu.

"Religious Liberty" - A Joint Catholic-Orthodox Celebration of The Anniversary of the Edict of Milan, 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 2, at St Leon Armenian Cathedral, 3325 N. Glenoaks Blvd. Burbank 91504. Roman Catholic Archbishop Jose Gomez preaching. Contact: Fr. Alexei Smith, Frsmith@la-archdiocese.org

ADDITIONAL HAPPENINGS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 8

The Society of Saint John Chrysostom

The Society of Saint 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 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 fulness 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.

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Light of the East

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A message from the President of SSJC - Western Region

The Apostolic Church speaking with one voice

By the Very Reverend Archpriest George Morelli, PhD.



My President's message for this issue should be understood in the context of St. Paul's instruction to the Romans (12: 4-6). "For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office: So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. And having different gifts, according to the grace that is

These comments should also be looked at in terms of the petitions in the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, as said in the Eastern Churches: "Be mindful, O Lord, of the Priesthood, the Diaconate in Christ and every priestly rank, [and by implied extension to the laity as well] and put not to confusion any one of us who stand about thy holy Altar." The proper teaching role of the Churches is for those specifically ordained to teach, the bishops and the priests in union with them and the laity, as Orthodox theologian Paul Evdokimov (1998, p. 226)[i] writes, do so as "defenders of the Faith." We each have our own part to play.

At this point in time it has to be acknowledged that there are different ecclesial models of Church governance among the Apostolic Churches. These models range from the papacy and magisterium of the Catholic Churches to the conciliar model of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches. We fervently pray that the International and National official dialogues under the guidance of the Holy Spirit bring about a common ecclesial understanding, practice and full unity of the Apostolic Churches. It may even be possible that at such a time a single voice may 'reflect' the mind of the entire Church, which would only help in strengthening Christ's message.

Until, God willing, something like this happens, it is so important that we be undivided in the core teaching of Christ and His Church and proclaim these core principles either by our gifts as ordained teachers (the bishops and priests) or baptized "defenders" of Christ. Christ Himself warned: "And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand." (Mk 3: 25). How unfortunate to see the media report division among some who claim to be members of one of the Apostolic Churches on core issues such as abortion, female ordination or same sex marriage. Some individuals in public life even proudly endorse programs contrary to Christ's teaching.

At the very least our SSJC members can pray for and vigorously prompt those whom they encounter around them to rise to the gifts they have been given to use and not bury them. Let us recall the Parable of the Talents, as told to us by St. Matthew, to the person who squandered his gift: "But he that had received the one, going his way dug into the earth, and hid his lord's money," (25:18) and the dire consequences of this waste: "And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness.

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SSJC-WR Workshop Report

The State of the Christian Churches in the Middle East

Editor's note: This workshop was held on October 5 at St. John Maron Maronite Catholic Church in Anaheim. Three reports were given. A fourth report on the situation in Egypt was not given due to the cancellation of the presentation by Coptic Orthodox priest Fr. Joseph Boulos who, due to urgent pastoral needs, was not able to be present.

Syria

Presented by His Grace,
Bishop Nicholas Samra
Melkite-Greek Catholic
Eparch of Newton

An attempted extermination of Christianity has been taking place in Syria, Bishop Nicholas said, especially in the last two years. In support, he detailed the targeting of Christian (Orthodox and Catholic) sites in the cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Dareya, Raqqa, and Homs, and attacks on 95 % of the Syrian villages that are historically Christian: shellings, bombings, sieges, kidnappings, ambushes, beheadings of priests and lay. The US media underreport or ignore these to an extent that suggests a "controlled" press. The initial attack on the village of Ma'aloula was somewhat reported in US media, but the continued hardships of the Christians still hiding in its mountain caves has not been.

As religious background, he reminded that the Koran may not be translated from its ancient Arabic, thus can only be understood by scholars of that language. As there is no hierarchy in Islam, interpretations based on translations are, he said, "stretchable" to accommodate and justify varied, even violent agendas.

As political background, he recounted specific episodes that showed that in recent decades under the secular government under the Assad family, members of the Alawite, or most secular, branch of Shiite Muslims, Christianity, if not favored, was at least tolerated and accorded a measure of respect. The "anti-government" forces now attempting to overthrow the secular government

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Iraq

Presented by Chorbishop
Samuel Dinkha, Pastor of St.
Paul Assyrian/Chaldean
Church, North Hollywood

His generation, he said, grew up in a pluralistic society in Iraq, hearing tales of persecution from their elders, but were taught to forget the past, to forgive and live in peace, little imagining that they would one day be victims of ignorant aggressors driven by blind conviction to arrogantly deny the rights of others resulting in massacres and floods of refugees fleeing the violence. At first, they had faith in the protection of Western powers, but now, he said, they have lost that confidence. The West does not help them and they are butchered. Christians in Iraq are now considered collaborators with the West. It is hard to discern the true motives of Western powers. In the past, 'carving up the Middle East' was such a motive.

Each modern interference by Western powers, apparently fueled by self-interest, has only led to more violence and more refugees fleeing to Western countries. The United States, he noted, has resisted resettlement of refugees.

Since 1900, the Christian population of Iraq has dropped from 20 % to 2%. Before the Gulf War there were 1.5–2 million Christians, now there are 250,000–400,000, and they live "like foreigners in their own land." This largest persecution and mass movement of people in history is not being covered by traditional media. As Islamicisation of Iraq continues, victimization of Christians has included forcing those fleeing violence to settle near the Kurdish regions, as a buffer between ancient enemies, the Kurds and Iraqis, where they are considered enemy collaborators.

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Holy Land

Presented by the Rev. Mitri
Raheb, Christmas
Evangelical Lutheran
Church, Bethlehem
Palestine

Noting that, at present, other countries are "burning more than Palestine," Dr. Raheb, author of 16 books on Palestine-related topics, described his several organizations' work of gathering facts and figures for their goal of negotiating for "Human Security" rather than "State Security." He summarized the two largest waves of emigration of Christians (1907 (mostly to Latin America) and 1948), and stressed that there are now only about 50,000 Arab Christians left in the West Bank and Gaza, half of them in the Bethlehem area - the few in Gaza being mostly elderly - and that all are second-class citizens under Israel Occupation. Much of the agricultural land they depended on has been confiscated or made inaccessible by the Security wall. Persons "blacklisted," as he has been, may not travel freely, even the short distance from Bethlehem to Jerusalem.

He contends, however, that the present time is "a critical moment." Young people are disenchanted. "Ugly things have gotten their attention." They are no longer fearful of government, are "fed up with politicians" and with "too much religion- even Islamist." He encourages them not to be fearful, wanting to leave, but to stay, to be proactive, strategic, to engage - that there can be "life after." (And encourages that outsiders not urge Christians to leave, even for "Biblical" reasons). He promotes programs for

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Syria

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and replace it with an Islamist state are Sunni Muslims, joined by an influx of foreign radicals many of whom do not speak Arabic.

Iraq

Continued from page 3

But, he stressed, Christians simply want to be treated as equal citizens in their own country. He asked attendees to "keep telling others about your brothers and sisters; to wake the sleeping consciousness of those who are naively closing their eyes. Before it is too late."

Holy Land

Continued from page 3

young adult future leaders - Christian and Muslim theologians - through the Diyar Consortium, such as the "Seizing the Moment: Envisioning the Future of the Middle East" workshop held recently in Amman Jordan. This "envisioning" includes bringing Christian values into public debates on: Constitutions; Rule of Law; Human Security (rather than State Security); the Role of Religion in public life; the Role of Women; and the Management of Material Resources. ("Poor policies," he noted in this regard, "make the region poor when it is not really poor."). The workshop also stressed negotiating for human values: the dignity and sanctity of life; the interrelation of human and divine rights; equal rights for all citizens, and full political participation. (see: http://www.diyar-consortium.org/media/Amman_Conference_December_2012.pdf) In conclusion, he stressed the need to "think strategically" in this time of hope and to proclaim Christ not only Crucified but also Risen.

Responses to participant's questions:

+ Moderate Muslims are standing against radicals more than in the past. E.g., the "Common Word" document from Muslims scholars to Christian scholars (<http://www.acommonword.com/>). Bishop Nicholas opined that, in the U.S, Muslims will lose radicalism and thus be a factor for change.

+ Our news media do not give a true picture of what is going on.

+ "Supporting democracy" in the region is non-productive as the concept is not understood there.

+ Religious leaders in the U.S. are speaking with the Government and President about the situation. Christians need to speak up more, be more organized as a body, write to Senators, re-focus energies to be pro-people, pro-humanity; support diplomatic approaches; care enough to vote. Individual postcards to Senators are more effective than signing petitions. It is important to stress in writing them that this is a human rights issue not a political one.

+ Continued prayer is important. It may have already helped more than we know, e.g., in surprises like the decision not to send US forces to Syria and the Russian intervention leading to negotiation. Prayer was especially urged for the two kidnapped archbishops.

Gunmen kill 3 in attack on Egypt's Coptic Christians

France 24 (Aug. 16) Gunmen riding a motorbike, recently shot and killed three people when they fired on a group leaving a wedding at a Coptic Christian church in Cairo late on Sunday, Egypt's interior ministry said.

The attack was the first appearing to target Christians in the Egyptian capital since the July 3 military coup that ousted Islamist president Mohammed Morsi.

A woman, a man and an 8-year-old girl were killed and nine others were wounded as they emerged from a wedding held at a church in north Cairo's al-Warak neighborhood, the ministry said.

"There were two men on a motorbike and one of them opened fire," said the interior ministry.

A health ministry official confirmed that three people had been killed but said 12 people had been wounded.

Ahmed al-Ansari from the health ministry told AFP that four of the 12 were in a critical condition, adding that the number of wounded could rise.

Armenian Church announces "Collective Canonization" of the Armenian Genocide

France24.com - At the conclusion of a recent synod, the Armenian Apostolic Church announced that it approved "in principle" the "collective canonization" of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, which took place in 1915 and claimed an estimated 1.5 million victims.

Father Georges Dankaye, rector of the Pontifical Armenian College, told the Fides news agency that the Armenian Apostolic Church has not conducted any canonizations since the sixth century.

The Armenian Apostolic Church, which ceased to be in communion with the Church of Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Churches following the Council of Chalcedon in 451, has six million members; the Armenian Catholic Church, an Eastern Catholic church in full communion with the Holy See, has 375,000 members.

Grand Mufti of Syria: The kidnapped Orthodox bishops are alive in Turkey

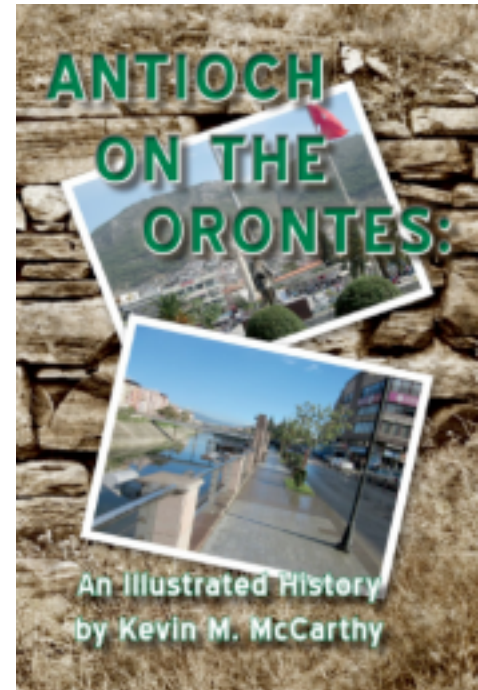


Moscow (AsiaNews) - The Grand Mufti of Syria, Ahmad Hassoun Badreddin, the spiritual leader of Sunni Islam, claims he has information that the two Orthodox bishops of Aleppo, kidnapped in April, are alive and outside the country. The news was reported by Interfax-Religion. Elena Agapova, vice president of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, the Russian Orthodox organization that plays an active role in the Middle East and takes care of delivering aid to the Syrian population reports: "According to information from the mufti they are in Turkey."

Agapova states that 28 October Hassoun met in Moscow with representatives of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society. The Grand Mufti believes that "there is the hand of the Chechen militants and Turkish services behind the kidnappings." According to the Syrian spiritual leader, the kidnapping may be linked to Ankara's request to transfer the seat of the patriarchate of Antioch from Syria to Turkey. During his visit to the Islamic University of Moscow, the same Hassoun complained that at least 2 thousand Russians, mostly from the North Caucasus, are fighting in the ranks of the armed opposition in Syria.

The Metropolitan Boulos Yazigi (the Orthodox Church of Antioch) and Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim (the Syrian Orthodox Church) were seized by a group of militants, who killed their driver. The two Orthodox leaders were engaged in humanitarian work in the village of Kafr Dael, near the Turkish - Syrian border. The Russian Orthodox Church has expressed "deep concern" about their fate. "In all this time we have had no news of where they are and how they are. There have been many rumors, but none of them has never been officially confirmed," Metropolitan Hilarion of Voloklamsk, chairman of the Department for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate told AsiaNews late August.

"A Great City": Illustrated History of Antioch Published



University of Florida Professor Emeritus Dr. Kevin McCarthy recently published Antioch on the Orontes: An Illustrated History, the story of the namesake city of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church. The 280-page book contains over 200 illustrations of the city that was so vitally important in the history of Christianity. Many of the photos were taken by the author when he lived in the city during the period when he was researching the book.

"Archpriest Thomas Zain of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral in Brooklyn and the Vicar General of the Antiochian Archdiocese, helped me with the book," notes Dr. McCarthy. "I wrote it to let more people know about the importance of a great city, ancient and modern Antioch, that many Americans are not aware of."

Over the course of his academic career, the professor of English lived in the Middle East in various locations. For one year he taught at the Lebanese National University in Beirut as a Fulbright Professor of English in the 70s, and for two years in the 1980s at King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as a Fulbright Professor of English.

A conversation with Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion on the work of the joint Catholic Orthodox Ecumenical Commission

In an article which appeared in *AsiaNews.it*, His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, Head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Relations, responds to questions in an interview with Marta Allevato



AsiaNews.it

His Holiness, Francis, Pope of Rome and Metropolitan Hilarion

What point is the work of the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Catholics at. When is the next meeting?

The next meeting of the Commission, most likely, will be in 2014. It's still early to talk about the results of the work of the Commission, very difficult issues are being considered, such as the primacy and the role of the bishop of Rome, which is being discussed for the first time in a thousand years. During the working sessions, some very delicate issues were also raised, not only regarding relations between Catholics and Orthodox, but also among the Orthodox Churches themselves.

Unfortunately, the document that the Commission is now preparing is under embargo and, therefore, it is not possible to comment or criticize, if not within the Commission itself.

It seems to me, however, that this document does not comply with the mandate that the Commission received from the Churches and does not explain clearly what the differences and similarities between Catholics and Orthodox consist of.

So it seems that dialogue on ethics with Catholics is more effective?

The Joint Theological Commission is only one aspect of the ongoing dialogue between Orthodox and Catholics today. Personally I am convinced that at the moment our joint work in the field of promoting moral and social values is much more effective. I believe that the elaboration of a common position on various social and moral issues has helped us to move ahead. In particular I want to mention the work of the Catholic-Orthodox Forum, which was established some years ago and has held several meetings in different countries, dealing with issues such as family ethics. We have obtained surprising results, which are reflected in the common desire to work together for the defense of traditional Christian values.

Your impressions of the new Pope?

I attended his inaugural Mass and the next day I had a meeting with him, during which we identified some important points of interaction between the Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church. I had the impression that the Pope fully understood the importance of our common action. In addition, it was clear that these issues are not new to him, but that he knows and understands them well. This knowledge in the field of Catholic-Orthodox dialogue, as well as his previous experience in Argentina (where he repeatedly visited our Russian Orthodox parishes in Buenos Aires and was present at liturgical services, meeting the parishioners), augur well for a positive development of our relations during his pontificate.

What needs to be done to achieve the meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch ?

It has to be very carefully prepared. Concretely, we must reach agreement on those issues on which we differ today. Do you know how bilateral meetings between heads of state are arranged? Before the heads of two states meet, several groups of their closest advisors must work hard on many issues of bilateral relations. In this way, the meeting between the two leaders is not just protocol, but the fruit of a long process of preparation. We too have to prepare well for this meeting, so that it is not just protocol, but allows us to elevate our relationship to a new level of interaction, trust and understanding.

What is the biggest obstacle in this regard?

To date, the biggest problem in this regard is the situation in western Ukraine, where in the 1980s and 1990s very sad events took place, which deprived the Orthodox communities in some towns and villages of their churches. It persists still today.

Do you think we are getting any closer to such a meeting?

I think every day we get exactly one day closer! I can not say exactly when this meeting will take place.

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<http://lightoftheeast.org/light-of-the-east-the-quarterly-newsletter-of-ssjc-wr/lending-library-catalog/>

Books

Atamian, Antranik,	Middle Eastern Christians at the Crossroads
Appleyard, Fr George	The Light of the East,
Bendasz, Fr Stephen	Five Years Behind Barbed Wire
Bloom, Anthony	Beginning to Pray
Bloom, Anthony & LeFebvre, Georges	Courage to Pray
Bridge, Antony	Theodora: Portrait in Byzantine Landscape
Bunge, OSB, Gabriel	Earthen Vessels-Practice of Personal Prayer... Patristic Tradition
Cabasilas, Nicholas	Commentary on Divine Liturgy
Cassian, John	Conferences
Chrysavgis, John	Light Through Darkness
Clement, Olivier	You Are Peter
Clendenin, Daniel	Eastern Orthodox Christianity-A Western Perspective
Climacus, John	Ladder of Divine Ascent, John Climacus
Coniaris, Anthony	Sacred Symbols That Speak Vol 1; Vol II
Dalrymple, William	From the Holy Mountain
Forest, Jim	The Ladder of the Beatitudes,
Gillet, Fr Lev	Orthodox Spirituality
Gillet, Fr Lev	Serve the Lord with Gladness
Gillet, Fr. Lev	Jesus, A Dialogue with the Savior
Hamant, Yves	Alexander Men, Witness for Contemporary Russia
Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, Metropolitan	Mind of the Orthodox Church
Hopko, Fr Thomas	The Lenten Spring
Hopko, Fr Thomas	Winter Pascha
Khoury, Theodore	Icons of the Most Holy Theotokos
Kronstadt, Fr. John of	Spiritual Counsels
Maloney, Fr George	Prayer of the Heart
Mathewes-Green, Frederica	The Illumined Heart, The Ancient Christian Path of Transformation
Plekon, Fr Michael	Living Icons: Persons of Faith in Eastern Church
Puskas, Laslo	Theodore Romzha: His Life, Times & Martyrdom
Raya, Archbishop Joseph	Byzantine Church & Culture
Roberson, Fr Ron	Eastern Christian Churches
Saato, Fr. Fred J.	American Eastern Catholics

CD

Hopko, Fr. Thomas	Made Perfect Through Suffering:
	On Christ's Humiliation and Human Suffering.
McPartlan, Dr. Paul	The Promise and Challenge of Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue
Ware, Kallistos	Christ in the Parish

EXHIBITS AT THE GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES

Canterbury & St. Albans: Treasures from Church and Cloister, until Feb. 24, 2014. This premier Getty Center exhibition celebrates two rare masterpieces of English medieval art: stained glass from Canterbury Cathedral and pages from the St. Albans Psalter, an illuminated book of Psalms. www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/canterbury

Miracles and Martyrs: Saints in the Middle Ages, through March 2, 2014, Illuminated manuscripts from the



permanent collection reveal the widespread appeal and influence of saints in art and society during the Middle Ages. Medieval artists pictured them in images of incredible horror and great beauty, designed to offer inspiration and comfort to the faithful. *The exhibition is presented in two parts. The pages of the manuscripts will be turned to reveal further treasures*

on December 3, 2013. <http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/saints/>

Heaven and Earth: Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections April 9 through August

25, 2014. Recognized masterpieces of Byzantine visual culture - sculptures, icons, mosaics, frescoes, manuscripts, metalwork, jewelry - from 4th to 15th century, from pagan late Roman Empire to the opulent and deeply spiritual world of the new Christian Byzantine Empire. Many never lent before to the United States, with newly discovered and previously unpublished objects from recent archaeological excavations in Greece. <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/press/exh/3514.html>



OTHER HAPPENINGS

Light of the East Conference: "Islam & Christianity: A Christian Perspective - May 16-17, 2014. at St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church, Irvine. Additional details forthcoming. Contact Fr. Steve Tschlis, father@stpaulsirvine.org

Vatican plans summit for Eastern Catholic Churches

The Tablet - Pope Francis has called heads of the Oriental Catholic Churches in the Middle East to join him for a summit in Rome next month to discuss the "real possibilities for peace" in Syria, Iraq and the Holy Land.

The one-day meeting is to take place in Rome on 21 November. The Vatican paper *L'Osservatore Romano* said Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, announced the special gathering last Saturday, with all the patriarchs and major archbishops of the Oriental Catholic Churches invited. They will already be in Rome for the congregation's 19-21 November plenary assembly.

L'Osservatore Romano said the summit would be an opportunity to "raise a collegial prayer for Christians from those martyred countries" in the Middle East. It noted that Pope Benedict held a similar meeting with Eastern Church leaders in 2009.

President's message

Continued from page 8

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (25: 30). Let us all use our gifts with one undivided voice. Some of us as teachers, all of us at least as defenders.

Evdokimov, P. (1998). Ages of the spiritual life. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

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Blessed Christmas

We wish a blessed and Holy Nativity Feast to all the members of The Society of St. John Chrysostom and ask that all of the blessings of the new born Christ be showered upon you.

The Society of St. John Chrysostom - Western Region WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Full membership: \$50 - Associate: \$40 - Parish Membership \$100

For full information call: Robert Greenwell at: 619 644 3600

or e-mail: Anne Petach at: secretary@lightoftheeast.org