

Happenings!

Come & Hear! Lenten Retreat with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah

Saturday, March 20, 9 a.m.—Akathist; 10 a.m.—Divine Liturgy; 11:30 a.m. Brunch; 12:30 p.m.—“The Spiritual Path of Eastern Christianity;” 3 p.m.—“The Way of Silence & the Jesus Prayer;” 5 p.m.—Great Vespers.

Sunday, March 21, 8:30 a.m.—Greetings; 9 a.m.—Divine Liturgy; 11:30 a.m.—Brunch; 3 p.m.—“Spirituality of Family Life;” 5 p.m.—Great Vespers.

His Beatitude, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America & Canada and Primate of the Orthodox Church in America was raised in San Diego. He was introduced to the monastic life at Valaam Monastery in Russia. Before becoming a bishop he was the abbot of the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai & San Francisco, located in Northern California, which he helped establish in 1996. Event sponsored by the Eastern Orthodox Clergy Conference of San Diego.

“What can we do to achieve unity between Eastern Catholics and Eastern Orthodox? - Education, Mission & Witness.”

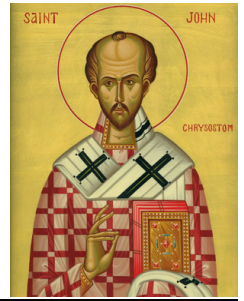
Saturday, May 1, 10 a.m./12:30 p.m. A Society of St. John Chrysostom Western Region workshop. San Rafael Roman Catholic Church, 17252 Bernardo Center Drive, San Diego, 92128. Presenters: Msgr. Dennis Mikulanis, Pastor, San Rafael Parish & Vicar for Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs, Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego, and the Very Reverend George Morelli, Asst. Pastor St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, San Diego and Licensed Clinical Psychologist & Marriage & Family therapist. Coordinator, Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Ministry of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese. A free will offering will be taken. A SSJC-WR meeting will follow.

Light of the East

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

Volume 4, Number 3

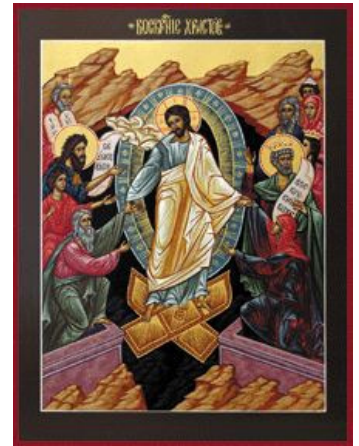
Spring, 2010



One date for Pascha, one proclamation for Christianity

By Archimandrite James Babcock

This year, 2010, and next year, 2011, Christians throughout the world will proclaim with one voice at the same time, “Christ is Risen!” Since the time of the institution of the Gregorian calendar Christians have celebrated the Resurrection of the Christ, frequently on different dates. The current 13 day (Julian Calendar vs. Gregorian Calendar) difference, along with a different way of calculating the date of Easter/Pascha, can result in as much as a five week difference.



With Easter/Pascha occurring on the same date two years in a row, Christianity throughout the world has a unique window of opportunity to once and for all come to an agreement in keeping this celebration confined to one way of ascertaining the dating of Easter/Pascha

An age old problem

The controversy of setting a date for Easter/Pascha is not confined to modern times. The early church also struggled with this issue. But the current divergence is a result of the use of the two calendars and the neglect to not celebrate before the Jewish Passover by those following the Gregorian calendar.

Members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation in 1998 endorsed a 1997 Aleppo Statement urging all Christian churches to start celebrating Easter/Pascha on a common date beginning in 2001, stating that the Aleppo Statement provides a sound theological, scientific, historical and practical basis to

end centuries of division over the dating of Easter/Pascha, letting all the churches give common witness once again to one of the central mysteries of the faith, the Resurrection of Christ. “The Aleppo Statement does well to call attention to the continuing relevance of the Council of Nicea—a fundamental point of reference for the traditions of both (Orthodox & Catholic) churches—and in so doing, to reject proposals to establish a fixed date for Easter/Pascha.” Until now, this proposal has not been implemented.

Speaking with one voice

Why is it important for us to celebrate the central and most important tenet of Christianity together? The message of the Resurrection of Christ is the core message of God to the world. As St. Paul says, “if Christ has not Risen then our preaching and our faith is in vain” (I Cor. 13-14). The world needs to hear this message proclaimed with one unified voice at the

Continued on page 8

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.

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A message from the President of SSJC-Western Region

The Byzantine liturgy as missionary

by the Very Reverend Father George Morelli, Ph.D.

One of the major developments in the modern age is the marginalization and indifference toward Christianity in society. The disunion among Christian communities has not been a beneficent witness to the unity prayed for by Christ Himself "that they may be one" (Jn 17:11). Secular and politically correct values have shaped doctrinal and moral teaching and practice among some groups calling themselves Christian: abortion, euthanasia, female ordination, same sex marriage, are but a few examples that are obvious departures from the teaching of Christ. Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev has suggested an alliance between Catholics and Orthodox be advanced because these apostolic churches have held fast to the essentials of Christ's teachings. This suggestion certainly conforms to the goals of the Society of St. John Chrysostom.

It should be noted that the Byzantine Liturgy is an outstanding missionary outreach to fulfill Christ's command to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Mt 28: 19) and stands as a witness to the fullness of the truth of Christ's teaching. The Liturgy could stand as a model for the suggested Catholic-Orthodox alliance. Archbishop Hilarion points out that the Byzantine Liturgy contains "psalms, litanies, hymns, prayers and the celebrating priest's invocations follow one another in a continuous stream. The entire service is conducted as if in one breath, in one rhythm, like an ever unfolding mystery in which nothing distracts one from prayer. Byzantine liturgical texts [are] filled with profound theological and mystical content..." The Liturgy has doctrinal authority: "as solemn entries and exits, prostrations and censing, are not intended to distract the faithful from prayer but, on the contrary, to put them in a prayerful disposition and draw them into the *theourgia* in which, according to the teaching of the Fathers, not only the Church on earth, but also the heavenly Church, including the angels and the saints, participates."

Our Church Tradition has linked Goodness, Beauty, Truth and Love, which from a human perspective is descriptive of God, and is all presented before us in the prayers and hymns of the Byzantine Liturgy. The Beauty of the Liturgy may well be the link that unites all these characteristics of God and proclaims them to all who can hear and see. Thus, not only can the Byzantine Divine Liturgy be a unique instrument in an alliance of all the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, but also can reach out to all Apostolic Churches and even the communities of the reform movement in the West. The Liturgy is an icon of salvation history, God's everlasting love of mankind, and the response we should have to God's invitation to us to "become partakers of the Divine Nature." (2Pt 1:4) The icons found in the Eastern Churches, meant to lead us to spiritual perception of Divine reality, are themselves the Logos, the Word of God, the Gospels and witness of the saints in visual form. Now we have to respond as did the early Christians who left the Liturgy and went into the world and lived Christ. St Luke tells us: "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4: 31).

http://en.hilarion.orthodoxia.org/7_2

http://en.hilarion.orthodoxia.org/6_22

Catholic-Oriental Orthodox continue search for unity

Roman Catholic officials and leaders of the Oriental Orthodox Churches (Armenian, Coptic, Eritrian, Ethiopian, Malankara and Syrian) recently reviewed a major document outlining agreements on key areas of faith. Members finalized their work on a new document, "Nature, Constitution and Mission of the Church, affirming wide spread agreement about the basics of the faith and church structure. *CNS*.

SSJC-WR workshop report

Real Saints—Real People

By Anne Petach

"It's we who make saints *unreal*," said Fr. Cavanaugh, by putting them into devotional niches. We can know them, he said, as *real* by understanding the social, political and ecclesiastical realities in which they lived, and which they often influenced. In St. Patrick's early fifth century Britain, social and cultural turmoil followed the withdrawal of the Roman Legions for the defense of Rome itself. Christians had been citizens of Romanized towns and settlements for generations, but there had been no ecclesiastical policy at that time of sending missionaries to convert the pagan barbarians. Patrick, a third generation Christian – son of a deacon, grandson of a priest, "though the family was not distinguished for piety," said Fr. Cavanaugh – grew up in his wealthy landowning family's villa on the coast of Britain at a time of increasingly frequent pirate raids. Captured by pirates in a raid on the villa, the then fifteen year old Patrick was sold as a slave in Northern Ireland where he was set to keep isolated herds on bitter cold and rainy Slemish Mountain - vividly described by Fr. Cavanaugh who passed it routinely on his way to school in Northern Ireland. Plunged into deprivation and harsh isolation, Patrick had only nature to converse with, and, said Fr. Cavanaugh, "... he awakened to the beauty of his Christian faith, dormant until then," was able to avoid despair and disillusionment and "to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit."

After six years of slavery he felt the Holy Spirit calling him to escape. Home again, he found his parents dead, though the townsfolk welcomed him. But "in those years of purifying isolation he had become at one with himself and with God," and when he heard in his dreams the voices of the pagan Irish calling out for Christ, he responded by seeking an education. Having developed a deep love of Scripture and a readiness to forgive his enemies, he was ordained and returned to the Irish as a missionary bishop, the first such, Fr. Cavanaugh related. Returning, not to get even, but simply to share Christ with his former captors in their own language. He faced jealous opposition and temptations against his mission and his faith, but the pagans respected, admired and feared him as one they perceived as honest, fearless, and responsible to something bigger than himself. "In one generation," Fr. Cavanaugh related, "everyone [in Ireland] had accepted the Christian faith, not by forced conversion, but because he spoke the language of the people. And under his influence Ireland had become the first nation to outlaw slavery."

What made his holiness "real?" His followers could say they

were "not followers of Patrick, but of the one he followed . . . those who saw him could see Christ." He simply shared his life, but he "could not offer his life without sharing Christ" whose life "was reflected in Patrick's life: exile, slavery, the burden of suffering, the forgiveness of enemies, the returning after captivity," his giving his life, his shepherding. He never saw himself as a saint, only as a sinner, for the closer one comes to the Divine Light the more it exposes to us our unworthiness. Fr. Cavanaugh recommended reading St. Patrick's *Confessions*, written in his old age, on the successes and failures of his life "... seen as a whole spiritual event . . . retrospectively, from a distance, with deep prayer and authentic humility."

Fr. George, evoking the halos which depict the shining divine energy of saints in the icons revered in the Eastern Churches, reminded that we are all called to witness to Christ by our lives. Neither we nor the acclaimed saints generate divine life, but as a cold person absorbs heat from a warm radiator, so the closer we come to God, the more God-energy will glow in us. No matter our weakness, our evasion, or denial (like the apostles) we are still all called to be partakers of the Divine nature. Christ builds on weakness. In the Orthodox

Church, after a person has been for some time acclaimed locally as a saint, a petition for their wider recognition is sent to the Metropolitan bishop who then decides if that person can be commemorated throughout the Metropolitanate.

Two recent examples, he noted, are Matushka (i.e., Mother, the title of an Orthodox priest's wife) Olga Michael (1916 - 1979) and Fr. Arseny (1893-1973). Matushka Olga is to be declared a saint later this year by the Orthodox Church in America. Fr. Arseny, a Russian Elder who spent most of his life in Soviet gulags, is venerated for his holiness not only locally, but also by those who read about him, and he may in time be commemorated as a saint.

Mother Olga, he related, lived all her life in the often harsh conditions of a small Alaskan Yup'ik Eskimo village. Married to the village postmaster who later became an Orthodox priest, she raised the surviving eight of her thirteen children and was the village midwife. She is thought to have been sexually abused, possibly physically. Her life was hard - she had to haul water daily for her family's needs - but she was generous beyond the high cultural norms of sharing common to the Yupik, helping her neighbors, especially the poor or shamed, in quiet, kindly, gentle, humble, unobtrusive and self-effacing ways, seeing Christ in all. To the spiritual sense of the closeness of God in nature which is common to native cultures such as the Yu'pik she added a Christ-centeredness which was evident in the peaceful calmness all sensed in her presence. She never said much, but had great empathy for women who had been abused,



Photo by Frank Scialdone
Fr. Cavanaugh Wallace and Archpriest George Morelli

Continued on page 8

ORIENTALE LUMEN XIV CONFERENCES

Theme: “Councils of the Church”

Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ
June 7-10, 2010

Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, Washington, DC
June 21-24, 2010

Plenary Speakers include:

Metropolitan Jonah*

Primate of the Orthodox Church in America

Archbishop Donald Wuerl

Archbishop of Washington

Archbishop Cyril Vasil’

Congregation for Eastern Churches, The Vatican

Archimandrite Cyril Hovorun**

Director of Religious Education, Patriarchate of Moscow

Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ

Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome

Fr. John Behr**

St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Orthodox Church in America

Father Thomas FitzGerald*

Holy Cross Orthodox Theological School, Boston, MA

Father George Gallaro

SS Cyril & Methodius Seminary, Byzantine Catholic Church, Pittsburgh, PA

Mr. Elias Damianakis

Iconographer and Lecturer, Tampa Bay, FL

* *Washington only* ***New Jersey only*

Overview: The agenda for each conference will begin with registration on Monday afternoon and conclude with lunch on Thursday. There will be six plenary sessions by prominent speakers with a wide range of backgrounds and Church traditions, a variety of liturgical worship services with full congregational participation, and many opportunities for fellowship with other participants and the speakers. Photos and excerpts from sessions of past conferences, a registration form, and online registration can be found at www.olconference.com. Videos can be viewed at www.oltv.tv.



Conference Fees: Conference fees are payable in advance and include lunch and dinner, materials, space usage, travel expenses for the speakers, receptions, and other related conference expenses (excluding transportation for participants). Limited accommodations (single room with shared bath) are available through the conference office for an additional cost. All rooms are air conditioned and include basic linens.

Conference Fees:

Early Registration (before 5/1/2010) \$ 195.00
Regular Registration (5/1/2010 or after) \$ 225.00
Accommodations: \$ 75.00/night per person

Co-sponsored by the Society of St. Chrysostom, the Orientale Lumen Foundation and the Center for Catholic Studies, Seton Hall University.



Orientale Lumen Conference Office
PO Box 192
Fairfax, VA 22038-0192
Phone: 1-703-691-8862
Fax: 1-703-691-0513
www.olconference.com



ORIENTALE LUMEN EUROEAST III

“The Church Councils
of the East”

July 3-12, 2010

Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey

(Conference dates: July 5-8, 2010)

Plenary Speakers: Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, Greek Orthodox Church, Oxford
Archbishop Cyril Vasil', Congregation for Eastern Churches, Rome
Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ, Pontifical Orientale Institute, Rome
Archimandrite Job Gretcha, Catholic Institute of Paris, Paris
Sister Vassa Larin, University of Vienna, Vienna
Professor Richard Schneider, St. Vladimir's Seminary, New York

Other Events: Orthodox and Catholic Divine Liturgies
Private Audience with His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew
Memorial Service at the tomb of Patriarch Athenagoras
Chartered boat visit to Halki School of Theology

Tour Features: Arrival Weekend shopping around Istanbul
Day Tour of the Churches of Constantinople
Weekend Pilgrimage to Ephesus
Visit and Tour of Patmos with Metropolitan Kallistos

Prices:

Airfare: Each person is responsible for airfare to/from Turkey (est. \$1500)
Flights should be booked to arrive on July 3, 2010

Tour Package: \$ 2295.00 per person/double occupancy (July 3 through July 12)
Includes accommodations (7/3 to 7/12) in 5 star hotels,
most meals, ground transportation, tours, conference fee

Conference Only: \$ 1695.00 per person/double occupancy
Conference fee, meals & room for July 5 through 9 only
(Single room supplement – add \$700.00 to each price above)

Further information and registration is available on the website at: www.olconference.com

Or contact the conference office at 703-691-8862 or by email info@olconference.com.

THE SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

-Western Region-

“What can we do to achieve unity between Eastern Catholics and Eastern Orthodox?

Education, Mission and Witness.”

San Rafael Roman Catholic Parish Center

17252 Bernardo Center Drive, San Diego 92128

Saturday, May 1, 2010, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

9:30 a.m: Roman Catholic Morning Prayer in the Chapel.

Monsignor Dennis Mikulanis,

Pastor, San Rafael Roman Catholic Parish; Vicar for Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs, Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego.

Very Reverend George Morelli,

Asst. Pastor, St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, San Diego. Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Marriage and Family therapist. Coordinator, Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Ministry of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

Moderator: Rt. Rev. James Babcock,

Pastor Holy Cross Melkite Catholic Church, Placentia, CA.

A freewill offering will be taken.

Business meeting of The Society of St. John Chrysostom-Western Region, during lunch, (approx.1 p.m.)

All welcome. Please bring a lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

Contact: A. Petach: (818).347.0758 or Patty Ann Born: Cell: (858) 922-2787

Directions: 15 FWY, N. or S.: Exit at Rancho Bernardo Drive. Continue (East) on it to left on Bernardo Center Drive. Up the hill ½ block, past first traffic light, then left into parish driveway.

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.

Catholic/Orthodox study group explores common roots

By Father Steven Tschlis

*"Behold, how good and pleasant it is
for brothers to dwell together in unity!"
Psalm 133:1*

Beginning at the turn of the third Christian millennium in September, 2000, twenty-five parishioners from St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church and St. John Neumann Roman Catholic Church in Irvine, CA have gathered together once each month for a Christian book club that provides an opportunity to pray and study together, to explore our common roots in the first thousand years of Christian history, and engage in ecumenical dialogue at a grassroots level.

Led by Mr. Eugene O' Toole, the recently retired director of adult ministry from St. John Neumann's, and Father Steven Tschlis, the pastor of St. Paul's, these meetings have been a structured attempt to explore a common path for Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians in living more prayerful, Christ-centered and Spirit-filled lives. Each meeting begins with a half hour of prayer, as Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians pray the Psalms and read the Scriptures together while remembering the saints of the first millennium that are shared by both communities. Over the years, the group has included people from many different backgrounds: lay leaders from both traditions; former Roman Catholic religious; converts to Orthodoxy from evangelicalism and pentecostalism; Catholic parochial school teachers; college professors; both Latin and Eastern Rite Catholics; and seekers exploring the wisdom of the ancient Christian faith.

"Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians have spoken to each other more in the past 50 years, since Vatican II, than in the previous 500," Mr. O' Toole commented. "With the symbolic gesture of lifting the mutual excommunications of 1054 by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras on December 7, 1965, a new era of dialogue began that has been carried forward by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Demetrios, as well as by Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Benedict XVI."

Over the past decade more than 60 books have been read by participants in this program. Among them have been modern Roman Catholic writers on the spiritual life like Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, Thomas Keating, Basil Pennington, Paula Huston and James Martin, SJ; and contemporary Orthodox writers like Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Thomas Hopko, Olivier Clement, Jim Forest and Kyriakos Markides.

"We have read books by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI as well as by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. We have read about St. Maria Skobtsova of Paris and St. Silouan of Mount Athos; St. Edith Stein and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. We have read *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a' Kempis and *The Life of St. Francis* by St. Bonaventure; the anonymously written *Way of a Pilgrim* and *The Life of St. Anthony the Great* by St. Athanasios of Alexandria. We've read St. Augustine of

Hippo and St. John Chrysostom," said Father Tschlis.

Duncan Simcoe, a member of St. Paul's and a professor at California Baptist University in Riverside, CA, added: "It's very humbling to be able to benefit from such a strong and vibrant river of collective wisdom and insight. Having read these books I now feel that I have so many friends who have reached across history and eternity to offer me the most profound kinds of aid in my journey as an Orthodox Christian. This kind of dialogue with our Catholic brothers and sisters is very important for moving beyond an us vs. them way of thinking."

This has borne fruit in a number of ways: *first*, the two parishes began doing ministry and outreach together. The people of St. Paul's have gotten involved in the work of Isaiah House, a Catholic Worker house providing shelter for the homeless in Santa Ana, and hosted a luncheon to provide scholarships to Catholic elementary schools for impoverished children; the people of St. John Neumann have helped raise funds for the building of an Orthodox Church in the Tanzanian village of Kobunshwi by St. Paul's and also for St. Innocent's Orphanage, an Orthodox ministry for homeless boys outside Tijuana, Mexico.

Second, participants have come to recognize the common roots that both traditions have in the first millennium. Jim Cordes, who is a longtime participant in the program and a member of St. John Neumann, said, "I didn't realize how similar we are in our practice of Christianity. I've come to realize that in so many ways we are more similar to one another than we are different." And Dorothea Love, a member of St. Paul's, added "I've had a deep respect for the Roman Catholic faith all my life and as a result of this class my respect and love have only increased. Many of us have been together now for ten years, since the beginning of our study, and we share the love of Christ as brothers and sisters, truly respecting and caring for one another."

"A quote from one of our recent books comes to mind," Mr. Simcoe recalled: "An elder said: I have fought for twenty years to see all human beings as only one."

Third, in looking more deeply at one another's histories, Roman Catholics have learned of the many challenges that Orthodox Christians have faced practicing their faith in Muslim countries and the terrible persecution of the Church during most of the 20th century under Communism; and Orthodox Christians have learned more about the history of Roman Catholicism and the effects of the 16th century Protestant Reformation on Roman Catholic life, history and thought, as well as the history of western Europe and America.

In addition, the books that have been read have "given me a heightened awareness of how shallow my prayer life was and that I needed to make my relationship with Christ a deeper one," said Ms. Love. "It's changed the way I pray and I now spend greater time in study and reading of the Scriptures."

Real Saints—Real People

Continued from page 3

and particularly helped heal the spiritual pain of women who had been sexually abused, a shame which they would only share, in that culture, with a gentle midwife. Since her repose, miraculous healings of the same type have been attributed to her. Her simple life, lived in God's love and in uneventful circumstances, was a witness of what it means to be a partaker of Divine life and even after her death draws others to God.

Fr. Areseny, amid, and despite, his own sufferings and privations in the gulags, was able to bring love and hope to fellow prisoners in simple, kindly ways - incarcerated priests were forbidden to evangelize. He forgave the abuse he endured from brutal guards and the harshness of other prisoners, seeing in each the weakness of human nature and the glory of the redeeming love of Christ for them and for all sinners, understanding and living the truth that, as humans, we fall, but Christ lifts us up. He was healed from bouts of deep depression by praying to the Theotokos

Fr. Cavanaugh noted that, in general, saints have the qualities of *humility* – they truly know their strengths and weaknesses, that they are not able to be authentic without God's grace; *clarity* – they know what they are about, know their mission; *perseverance* – they respond to their mission with faithfulness “even when it doesn't make sense.” Saints make us want to see what they are seeing, to partake of what they partake, to touch the Divine as they do.

Fr. George added that the Divine shines in them, sometimes even as light (as, for example, St. Seraphim of Sarov); they are self-giving, full of kindness even to those who are cruel to them; there is something Christ-like about them. The reality of sainthood, he said, “is not in a different dimension; it is in responding to the call of Christ despite the barriers in our lives. We may not have the temperament of the saints we admire, nor their particular gifts. The reality of the saints is that they held on to Christ in their own individuality, with the temperaments, gifts, and life circumstances they were given. They stayed focused on Christ no matter what.”

Common dating of Easter/Pascha

Continued from page 1

same time. The world simply won't listen to what Christians have say on any subject if we are divided among ourselves.

What we can do

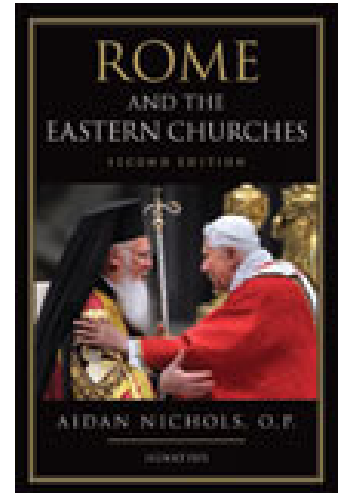
Our spiritual leaders are painfully aware of the need for Christians to celebrate Easter/Pascha together at the same time on the same date. Let us show our support through prayer and reinforcement by letting them know that we support their efforts by writing to them and urging them not to let this opportunity pass without taking action to create a single way only of ascertaining the correct dating of the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ with the hope that the world will clearly know of God's love for His people.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

From Light of the East—Youngstown-Warren Chapter

Rome and the Eastern Churches A Study in Schism

Availability: On Back Order
Author: Aidan Nichols, O.P.
Ignatius Press Available February, 2010
ISBN: 9781586172824
Length: 400 pages
Edition: Paperback
Code: REC-P
Retail Price: \$18.95



In the second edition of this major work, Dominican theologian Aidan Nichols provides a systematic account of the origins, development and recent history—now updated—of the relations between Rome and all separated Eastern Christians.

By the end of the twentieth century, events in Eastern Europe, notably the conflict between the Orthodox and Uniate Churches in the Ukraine and Rumania, the tension between Rome and the Moscow patriarchate over the re-establishment of a Catholic hierarchy in the Russian Federation, and the civil war in the then federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, brought attention to the fragile relations between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, which once had been two parts of a single Communion. At the start of the twenty-first century, in the pontificate of Benedict XVI, a papal visit to Russia—at the symbolic level, a major step forward in the 'healing of memories'—appears at last a realistic hope.

In addition, the schisms separating Rome from the two lesser, but no less interesting, Christian families, the Assyrian (Nestorian) and Oriental Orthodox (Monophysite) Churches, are examined. The book also contains an account of the origins and present condition of the Eastern Catholic Churches—a deeper knowledge of which, by their Western brethren, was called for at the Second Vatican Council as well as by subsequent synods and popes.

Providing both historical and theological explanations of these divisions, this illuminating and thought-provoking book chronicles the recent steps taken to mend them in the Ecumenical Movement and offers a realistic assessment of the difficulties (theological and political) which any reunion would experience.

Aidan Nichols OP is the John Paul II Memorial Lecturer in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oxford, and a member of the Dominican community at Blackfriars, Cambridge. He is the author of many books on theology and spirituality including Lovely Like Jerusalem, Looking at the Liturgy, and Hopkins: A Theologian's Poet.