

Happenings!

The History & Spirituality of the Eastern Churches

Aug. 28/30, Presenter: Fr. Maximos (Holy Resurrection Monastery) at St. Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo. Room, board & tuition: Single \$260, Shared \$170, Reservations now being accepted, Valyermo Retreat office: 661 944 2178. For additional details contact Holy Resurrection Monastery 661 944 2178 ext. 161

Married Saints: East & West

Saturday, Sep. 12, 1-2:30 p.m. at Prince of Peace Abbey, 650 Benet Hill Rd., Oceanside, CA 92058.

Presenters: Presbyter Joy Corona of St. Gregory of Nyssa Greek Orthodox Mission in El Cajon & a Benedictine Oblate TBA. Monastery Conventual Liturgy 11 a.m. Brown bag lunch precedes presentation.

East & West Together: A Monastery Pilgrimage

Friday/Sunday, Sep. 25/27 at St. Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo. Presented by The Monks of St. Andrew Abbey & Holy Resurrection Monastery Room, board & tuition in the retreat house for the entire weekend only Single \$260, Shared \$170. Dorm style with meals \$50 per night. Day guests \$15 per day, meals extra. Reservations now being accepted at Valyermo Retreat office 661 944 2178. Those attending on Saturday only should bring a picnic lunch. You may contact HRM at 661 944 2178 ext. 161 (See also page 7).

Orientale Lumen XIII complete report

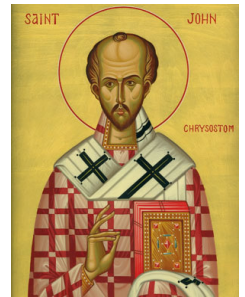
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Light of the East

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

Volume 3, Number 4

Summer, 2009



Hope that all Christians may celebrate Pascha on the same date reaffirmed by Institute of Ecumenical Studies

(May 15) The hope that all Christians will be able to celebrate Pascha (Easter) on the same day in the future was reaffirmed by an international ecumenical seminar organized by the Institute of Ecumenical Studies at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv recently. The problem of conflicting dates is just about as old as the church itself: As Christianity started to spread around the world, Christians came to differing results on when to commemorate Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, due to the different reports in the four gospels on these events.

Attempts to establish a common date for Pascha/Easter began with the Council of Nicaea in the year 325. It established that the date of Pascha/Easter would be the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox. However, it did not fix the methods to be used to calculate the timing of the full moon or the vernal equinox.

Nowadays the Orthodox churches use the 21st of March of the Julian calendar as the date of the equinox, while the churches of the Western tradition – that is the Protestant and Catholic churches – base their calculations on the Gregorian calendar. The resulting gap between the two Pascha/Easter dates can be as much as five weeks.

All participants at the seminar in Lviv, which included Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians from a variety of European countries, endorsed a compromise proposed at a World Council of Churches (WCC) consultation in Aleppo, Syria, in 1997. The proposal was to keep the Nicaea rule but calculate the equinox and full moon using the accurate astronomical data available today, rather than those used many years ago.

Concretely, participants at the seminar expressed the hope that the years 2010 and 2011, when the coincidence of the calendars will produce a common Pascha/Easter date, would serve as a period during which all Christians would join their efforts "to make such coincidence not to be an exception but rather a rule" and prepare for a Pascha/Easter date based on exact astronomical reckoning and celebrated by all Christians on 8 April, 2012.

However, the seminar entitled "A common date for Easter is possible" did not turn a blind eye to what participants considered to be "the main problem": "not the calculations, but the complex relations and missing of trust among different Christian denominations because of long standing divisions."

French Orthodox theologian Prof. Antoine Arjakovsky, director of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies, pointed out: "Whilst the astronomic reckoning of the Nicean rule comes closer to the Gregorian calendar than to the ancient Julian one, the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches did take a step towards the Orthodox churches in Aleppo, accepting that the date of Easter should be established on the base of a cosmic calendar rather than by a fixed date as had been proposed prior to the inter-Orthodox meeting in Chambésy in 1977."

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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

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The Very Rev. Fr. George Morelli, PhD.
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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 Society of St. John Chrysostom as witness

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

In a recent interview Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev, new head of the Department of External Church relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, noted an ongoing problem that the church lacks a bridge to the outside world. He notes: "A person will have to surmount his own numerous barriers separating him from the church world – barriers psychological, cultural and linguistic." To accomplish this task he perspicaciously notes that the church has to break down the "... mechanism of alienating people ... expecting indifferently that they will come and surmount all the barriers on their own." Archbishop Hilarion notes that accomplishing this task will involve both clergy and active lay people.

Promoting dialogue between Eastern and Western Christian, making known the history, worship, spirituality, discipline and theology of the apostolic churches, is the stated goal of the Society of St. John Chrysostom (SSJC). The Society is one part of the body of Christ, as in the words of St. Paul: "As it is, there are many parts, yet one body." (1Cor 12:20), which acts to work and pray that the Apostolic Churches will seek the unity Christ desired. We know this from His prayer for His Body, the Church at the Last Supper: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one." (Jn 17:11). Archbishop Hilarion points out that the Church does not use "aggressive and importune methods of mission," as do some Protestants, but we are to announce Christ to the world by the witness of our example. We can become missionaries in the sphere of our own personal life.

Every member to the SSJC-Western Region (WR) can do a self-assessment of the gifts of teaching-witness which God has given them, to accomplish the mission of the Church and the goals of the SSJC-WR. A few examples: to distribute the *Light of the East*, (printed edition or by e-mail) to our own parishes, neighboring parishes, family, friends and acquaintances; to announce and post flyers of upcoming SSJC-WR events; to acquire the knowledge of one's own tradition and the tradition of others to further dialogue and understanding. (This may involve a self-directed study program, possibly under the guidance of a learned priest or monastic); to volunteer to be more active in the Society programs; to apply specific talents we may have, such as computer ability, public relations, or writing; to be able to have the skill to dialogue in charity and wisdom with others on the necessary unity of the Apostolic Churches of Christ. In other words, we must become, in the words of Archbishop Hilarion, the Church's "bridge to the outside world."

"...that they may be one, even as We are one"... John 17:22b

Christianity must speak to the world with one voice if it is to be taken seriously. Help make this happen. Join the Society of St. John Chrysostom

90 participate in Orientale Lumen XIII Conference in Washington D.C.

By Hieromonk Maximos

Just one Orientale Lumen Conference was held this year, numbered XIII, and held from June 15 through 18 at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, D.C. It was clear from the very first session that the decision to hold one national conference was a sound one in the current economic climate. There were around ninety attendees (as opposed to fewer than fifty at each of the three conferences held last year), of whom about half were attending for the first time.

The presence of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) was partly responsible for the boost in numbers, especially among Orthodox participants. I estimate the ratio of attendees at around 40% Eastern Catholic, 40% Eastern Orthodox and 10% Latin Catholic. There was also a healthy mixture of clergy, monastics and lay folk. All in all, the demographics of the conference indicate that the Orientale Lumen "movement" remains healthy.

Monastic Spirituality in Everyday Life

The topic for this year's Conference was "Monastic Spirituality in Everyday Life." In addition to Metropolitan Jonah, the speakers were:

Bishop Hlib Lonchyna, who, in addition to being a hierarch of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (currently appointed Exarch for Great Britain) is a monk of the Studite order;

Mother Lois (Farag), a nun of the Coptic Orthodox Church and patristic scholar currently teaching at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN;

Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchik, OSBM a member of the Byzantine Catholic Basilian Order and director of the sisters' retreat house at Uniontown, PA;

Professor Richard Schneider of the University of Toronto, Canada and St. Vladimir's Seminary, NY;

Mr. Elias Damianakis, a Greek Orthodox iconographer and lecturer based in Florida.

Video presentations by His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) and Father Robert Taft, SJ, were also presented as part of the program. The moderator was Father John Crossin, OSFS, Executive Director of the Washington Theological Consortium and President of the North American Academy of Ecumenists.

The conference began with the usual Moleben (prayer service) to the Holy Spirit led by Bishop Hlib. There followed the first session which began with a welcome from conference organizer, and national head of the Society of St. John Chrysostom, Reader Jack Figel. Fr. Cossins then gave a brief talk on one form of monastic spirituality in the Latin tradition, namely that of St. Francis de Sales as set forth in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*. Stressing that the term "spirituality" is today so vague as to be almost meaningless, Fr. Cossins suggested above all we need to look to the guiding example of the saints if we

are to grow spiritually. The writings of St. Francis de Sales, with their emphasis on the need for gentleness and charity to all—including those who disagree with us concerning matters of faith—certainly seemed an appropriate way to introduce conference participants to the topic of how monastic thought might be of help to contemporary lay Christians across confessional lines.

The first full day of the conference began early, as participants boarded busses to take them to St. Nicholas Cathedral (OCA) in downtown Washington, DC where Metropolitan Jonah served a primatial Divine Liturgy. This solemn celebration of the hierarchical Liturgy is distinguished by the intoning of the diptychs naming the heads of all autocephalous Orthodox Churches.

At the end of the Liturgy, His Beatitude gave a brief homily, in which he challenged all present, Catholic and Orthodox, to try to imagine what a truly local *American Church* would look like. This is a truly remarkable thought experiment! Imagine what communion between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches would mean at the local level, in each parish and diocese. How differently a single united synod of all bishops would operate compared with the various administrative structures now in place within each communion.

Studite monasticism

Conference participants gathered on Tuesday afternoon to hear Bishop Hlib speak on the origins and distinctive features of Ukrainian Studite monasticism. Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky (1865-1944) saw the need for a form of monasticism that was grounded in prayer, work and community life, in contrast to the more active and clerical religious orders of the time. Giving over care of his new foundation to his brother Archimandrite (Blessed) Clement Sheptytsky (1869-1951), the foundation grew until the monks were forced underground by the Soviets after 1946. The last twenty years has seen a remarkable revival of the order, which remains faithful to the monastic Typikon written by Blessed Clement. This Typikon stresses the importance of a balanced life of prayer, work and rest, with every moment consecrated to God through charity in community.

Monastic Spirituality for the laity

The next two talks on Tuesday's schedule, first by Professor Richard Schneider and then later that evening by Metropolitan Jonah, contributed in very different ways to shaping an answer to the question of how monastic spirituality might make a difference to the lives of lay people.

The Metropolitan's talk centered on the importance of prayer of the heart as the central vocation not only of the monk but of every Christian. He said that there is no real difference between monastic spirituality and that of the laity, merely a aa

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Oriente Lumen XIII

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difference in terms of public witness. Just as every monk and nun needs to be committed to growth in holiness under the guidance of an experienced spiritual father or mother, so it is with every Christian. His Beatitude made frequent reference through his talk to his own spiritual fathers, including a Roman Catholic Benedictine hermit in California, Fr. Dunstan to whom the talk was dedicated.

The Metropolitan stressed that the most important goal of prayer is to become united with the Lord in the heart. To attain this we must first become aware of the way our attachments to things, habits, persons, ideas—including religion itself when it is merely external ritual—prevent us from coming to know the Lord in the heart through illumination of the consciousness (*nous*) in prayer. In this way we move from seeing God as the object of thought, and instead become united with Him through Grace.

Most questions raised by members of the large audience (about 150 local Orthodox came for the Metropolitan's evening talk) centered on the practical difficulty of finding a suitable spiritual father. His Beatitude acknowledged the problem, but pointed out that most people can benefit greatly simply from giving over 20 minutes of their time each morning and evening to silent prayer and by going to Confession at least once a month.

The earlier talk by Professor Schneider approached the question of monastic spirituality in a very different spirit, one that might be described as a kind of healthy skepticism. Professor Schneider's area of expertise is what he calls, "iconology" by which is meant the study of the visual language of icons. In his work, Schneider approaches icons as visual texts, decrying the tendency of modern writers to ascribe to icons a kind of quasi-magical aura. Icons are not, as they are often described, "windows into heaven," if by that is meant they take us out of one "natural" world into another "supernatural" one. Rather icons are intended to make us see our own world with new eyes; they do not transport, they transfigure, they are not windows but mirrors.

Monastics in the iconological and liturgical tradition of the Church are never viewed as magical beings that exist in some world "out there." They are always part of the Church, a rank within the ecclesial hierarchy, differing only from other Christians by their function (namely to live ascetic lives publicly). Monastic teaching is therefore a resource for all Christians, living texts to be explored, interpreted, understood and applied in real life situations. And like icons, monastics do not offer a way out of the world by way of mystification. Rather they call Christians back to the world as it really is, requiring them to work tirelessly for the poor and broken wherever they are to be found.

This perspective enabled Professor Schneider to offer what seems to me an important counterpoint to Metropolitan Jonah's talk. Where His Beatitude offered a vision of monastic spirituality that seemed, at times rarefied and abstract, Professor Schneider brought us back to earth with an understanding of the

original impulse that lies behind all monastic striving: the transfiguration of life through acceptance of the whole Gospel.

One of the unavoidable disappointments of this Conference was the fact that Professor Schneider was unable to stay until the final day on which Mr. Elias Damianakis, a practicing iconographer, gave his presentation. It was very clear that Mr. Damianakis took a very different approach to the question of icons as intrinsically mystical objects, a notion Professor Schneider derided. A face to face dialogue on this question would have done much to illumine an area that remained, alas, under-explored.

Mother Lois & Sister Barbara

The other talks by live (as opposed to pre-recorded) presenters were those of two female monastics, Mother Lois of the Coptic Orthodox Church, and Sister Barbara Jean Mihalchik, OSBM from the Uniontown Basilians. Mother Lois spoke eloquently on the *Life of St. Antony* written by St. Athanasius the Great. Among the many nuggets of wisdom she drew from this text was St. Antony's comforting words to all those who find themselves in temptation, that "without temptations no one can be saved." Sister Barbara Jean gave an interesting talk on the role of hospitality in monastic life and its applicability in the wider Church, notably the parish and the family.

As usual the program included a wide variety of liturgical services. In addition to the Orthodox Divine Liturgy mentioned earlier, Bishop Hlib served a hierarchical Divine Liturgy in the Ukrainian tradition at the Ukrainian Catholic national shrine and attendees went one evening to St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Virginia for Vespers and a fellowship meal.

This was a most exciting and interesting conference. The ideas exchanged were refreshing, at times challenging, and over all a spirit of great friendliness and charity prevailed. Next year Mr. Figel has definitely announced an Oriente Lumen Conference in Istanbul, July 5-8, 2010. Whether there will also be conference stateside remains to be seen, as economic realities must be taken into consideration. Wherever these conferences are held, the Holy Spirit is most definitely at work building up the Body of Christ.

I want to be a member of SSJC-WR

Name _____

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Jurisdiction _____

Full Member \$50 (Voting privileges) for members of canonical apostolic jurisdictions

Associate member \$40 (No voting privileges)

Student or Monastic \$ _____ (Donation)

Mail to: SSJC c/o Bob Greenwell, 2700 Katherine St., El Cajon, CA, 92020. Or - E-mail rjgreenwell@sbcglobal.com

Documentation

Pan-Orthodox Conference addresses issue of the diaspora

The Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference was convened by His all Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, with the consensus of their Beatitudes, the Primates of the Most Holy Orthodox Churches meeting at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, from 6 to 13 June 2009 under the chairmanship of His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

This Conference, to which all of the most holy Orthodox Autocephalous Churches were invited and at which all were represented, studied the issue of the canonical organization of the Orthodox Diaspora. Pursuant to article 16 of the Rules of Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conferences, this Conference discussed the relevant documents submitted in 1990 and 1993 by the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, amending and approving them as follows:

1. a) It is affirmed that it is the common will of all of the most holy Orthodox Churches that the problem of the Orthodox Diaspora be resolved as quickly as possible, and that it be organized in accordance with Orthodox ecclesiology, and the canonical tradition and practice of the Orthodox Church.

b) Likewise, it is affirmed that during the present phase it is not possible, for historical and pastoral reasons, for an immediate transition to the strictly canonical order of the Church on this issue, that is, the existence of only one bishop in the same place. For this reason, the Conference came to the decision to propose the creation of a temporary situation that will prepare the ground for a strictly canonical solution of the problem, based on the principles and guidelines set out below. Of necessity, this preparation will not extend beyond the convening of the future Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church, so that it (the Council) can proceed with a canonical solution of the problem.

2. a) This Conference proposes that, for the transitional period where the canonical solution of the issue will be prepared, "Episcopal Assemblies" of all canonically recognized bishops in each region should be created (or founded) in each of the regions defined below. The bishops will continue to be subject to the same canonical jurisdictions to which they are subject today.

b) These Assemblies will consist of all the bishops in each region who are in canonical communion with all of the most holy Orthodox Churches, and will be chaired by the first among the prelates of the Church of Constantinople and, in the absence thereof, in accordance with the order of the Diptychs. These Assemblies will have an Executive Committee composed of the first hierarchs of the different jurisdictions that exist in the region.

c) The work and the responsibility of these Episcopal Assemblies will be the concern for manifesting the unity of

Orthodoxy, the development of common action of all the Orthodox of each region to address the pastoral needs of Orthodox living in the region, a common representation of all Orthodox vis-à-vis other faiths and the wider society in the region, the cultivation of theological scholarship and ecclesiastical education, etc. Decisions on these subjects will be taken by consensus of the Churches who are represented in the particular Assembly.

3. The regions in which Episcopal Assemblies will be created in a first stage are defined as follows:

- i. North America and Central America.
- ii. South America.
- iii. Australia, New Zealand and Oceania.
- iv. Great Britain and Ireland.
- v. France.
- vi. Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg.
- vii. Austria.
- viii. Italy and Malta.
- ix. Switzerland and Lichtenstein.
- x. Germany.
- xi. Scandinavian countries (except Finland).
- xii. Spain and Portugal.

The Bishops of the Diaspora, living in the Diaspora and possessing parishes in multiple regions, will be members of the Episcopal Assemblies of those regions.

4. These Assemblies, which are formed by the decision of this present Conference, have the responsibility to complete the regulation of their operation in the specifications approved by this Conference, and to apply this regulation as soon as possible, and certainly before the convening of the Great and Holy Council.

5. The Episcopal Assemblies do not deprive the Member Bishops of their administrative competencies and canonical character, nor do they restrict their rights in the Diaspora. The Episcopal Assemblies aim to form a common position of the Orthodox Church on various issues. In no way does this prevent Member Bishops from remaining responsible to their own Churches, and to express the views of their own Churches to the outside world.

6. The chairmen of the Episcopal Assemblies convene and preside at all joint meetings of the Bishops of their region (liturgical, pastoral, administrative, etc.). As for matters of a more general concern that require, by the decision of the Assembly of Bishops, a Pan-Orthodox approach, the Assembly's chairman refers it to the Ecumenical Patriarch for further Pan-Orthodox actions.

7. The Orthodox churches are bound not to advance actions that could hinder the above process for a canonical resolution of the issue of the Diaspora, and to do their utmost to facilitate the work of the Episcopal Assemblies and the restoration of normal Canonical order in the Diaspora.

Rules of Operation - See Page 6

Rules of operation for the Orthodox Diaspora

The following “Rule of Operation of Episcopal Assemblies in the Orthodox Diaspora” were approved by the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference:

Article 1:

1. All Orthodox Bishops of each region, from those regions defined by the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, who are in canonical communion with all the local Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, form each Episcopal Assembly.
2. Those Orthodox Bishops who do not reside in the region, but who have pastoral ministry in parishes in the Region, are also members of the Episcopal Assembly.
3. Retired Bishops and Bishops visiting the Region, inasmuch as they meet the requirements of paragraph (1), may be invited to participate in the Assembly, but without voting rights.

Article 2:

The purpose of the Episcopal Assembly is to manifest the unity of the Orthodox Church, to promote collaboration between the churches in all areas of pastoral ministry, and to maintain, preserve and develop the interests of the communities that belong to the canonical Orthodox Bishops of the Region.

Article 3:

The Episcopal Assembly will have an Executive Committee composed of the Primatial Bishops of each of the canonical Churches in the Region.

Article 4:

1. The Episcopal Assembly and its Executive Committee will have a Chairman, one or two Vice-Chairmen, a Secretary and a Treasurer, and any other positions of responsibility that the Assembly may designate.
2. The Chairman is ex officio the first among the Bishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and, in the absence thereof, in the order of Diptychs. The Chairman of the Episcopal Assembly convenes the meetings thereof, directs its work and presides over its colleagues. Regarding issues that were discussed during the meeting of the Episcopal Assembly, and on which a unanimous decision was reached, the President (or another member of the Episcopal Assembly charged by him), presents the common position of the Orthodox Church in the Region to government, society and to other religious organizations.
3. The Vice-Chairmen are appointed ex officio from the Member Bishops of the Assemblies, from the next ranking Churches, in accordance with the order of the Diptychs of the Orthodox Churches. The Secretary, Treasurer and other positions of responsibility are chosen by the Assembly, and have the possibility not to originate from the ranks of the bishops.

Article 5:

1. The competencies of the Episcopal Assembly are:
 - a. To safeguard and contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church of the Region in its theological, ecclesiological, canonical, spiritual, philanthropic, educational and missionary obligations.
 - b. The coordination and leadership of activities of common

interest in areas of pastoral care, catechesis, liturgical life, religious publishing, mass media, religious education, etc.

- c. Relations with other Christian Churches and other religions.

- d. Anything that entails obligations of the Orthodox Church in Her relations with society and government.

- e. The preparation of a plan to organize the Orthodox of the Region on a canonical basis.

2. The definition of the scope of these competencies should in no way interfere with the responsibility of each Bishop for his eparchial jurisdiction, or restrict the rights of his Church, including its relations with international agencies, governments, civil society, mass media, other legal undertakings, national and treaty organizations, as well as other religions. For specific linguistic, educational and pastoral issues of a particular Church, the Episcopal Assembly may also collaborate with the ecclesiastical authority of the Church in question, so that the diversity of national traditions may secure the unity of Orthodoxy in the communion of faith and in the bond of love.

Article 6:

1. The Episcopal Assembly receives and records the election of Bishops of the Region, and their reference to the most holy autocephalous Orthodox Churches.
2. It examines and determines the canonical status of local communities in the Region that have no reference to the most holy autocephalous Orthodox Churches.
3. It must record every decision relating to clerics promulgated by their bishops, in order that this decision is applied among all the Orthodox Churches in the Region.

Article 7:

- 1 The Episcopal Assembly meets once a year, at the invitation of the Chairman. It may meet as often as it is deemed necessary by the Executive Committee, or at the written request that shows cause of one third of the members of the Assembly.
2. The Executive Committee meets once every three months and whenever necessary at the invitation of the Chairman or at the written request that shows cause of one third of its members.
3. The invitations to the Assembly, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, are to be sent two months in advance; and for the Executive Committee, one week in advance. They are to be accompanied by the agenda items and related documents.
4. The agenda must be approved at the first session of the Assembly, and should only be amended by a decision of the members present, by means of an absolute majority of the votes.

Article 8:

The quorum for the Executive Committee is two thirds of its members and for the Assembly, an absolute majority of members, including the Chairman.

Article 9:

The work of the Episcopal Assembly is conducted in accordance with the principles of the Orthodox conciliar tradition and is directed by its Chairman, who has the responsibility for supervising the implementation of its decisions.

Article 10:

1. The decisions of the Episcopal Assembly are taken by

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The Monks of
Holy Resurrection
Monastery
& St. Andrew's
Abbey
welcome you to a



Pilgrimage to Valyermo Mother of God: Searcher for the Lost Saturday, September 26th

Each year, the monks of Holy Resurrection Monastery have welcomed pilgrims to their monastic home to enjoy a special day of prayer and liturgical beauty. This year, in cooperation with the monks of St. Andrew's Abbey, the Holy Resurrection Monks invite you to celebrate the joy of Christ with them at the Abbey, "breathing with both lungs" in a shared experience of the spiritual treasures of the Christian East and West.

Pilgrimage to Valyermo

Mother of God:
Searcher of the Lost
Saturday, September 26th
(Tentative Schedule)

9:00 a.m. - Matins (Byzantine Chapel)

11:00 a.m. – Procession (Procession with icon, "Mother of God Searcher for the Lost" from Byzantine Chapel to outdoor chapel.)

11:30 a.m. - Hierarchical Byzantine Divine Liturgy at outdoor chapel (Celebrant: His Grace Bishop John Michael, Bo-tean).

2:00 p.m. - Lunch *

3:00 p.m. - Spiritual Conference (icons/imagery in the Benedictine tradition)...& here begins 1/2 hour **tours of the Byzantine chapel** every half hour until 5:00 p.m.

5:00 p.m. - Byzantine Vespers (Outdoor Chapel).

- ***You are welcome to share in any part of the day with us. However, to assure that everyone is fed without the necessity of the miracle of the loaves and fish, please know that "pilgrims" are encouraged to bring "picnic lunches"**

Rules of Operation...

Continued from page 6
consensus.

2. In matters of more general concern which require, by the decision of the Assembly of Bishops, a Pan-Orthodox approach, the Assembly's chairman refers it to the Ecumenical Patriarch for further Pan-Orthodox actions.

Article 11:

1. Upon the decision of the Episcopal Assembly, it is possible to form from its members Committees for Liturgical, Pastoral, Financial, Educational, Ecumenical and other issues, chaired by one of the Bishop-Members of the Assembly.

2. The members of these Committees, clergy or laity, are appointed by the Executive Committee. In addition, advisers and experts may be invited to participate in the Assembly or in the Executive Committee, without voting rights.

Article 12:

1. The Episcopal Assembly may establish its own Internal Regulations in order to supplement and adjust the above provisions, in accordance with the needs of the Region and in

respect to the canon law of the Orthodox Church.

2. All legal and financial issues relating to the functioning of the Assembly are to be decided in the light of the civil laws of the countries of the Region, in which members of the Assembly exercise their jurisdiction.

Article 13:

The formation of a new Episcopal Assembly, the partition or abolition of an existing Episcopal Assembly, or the merger of two or more of these Assemblies, occurs following the decision of the Synaxis of the Primate of the Orthodox Churches, at the request of a particular Church, or the request of the Chairman of a particular Episcopal Assembly to the Ecumenical Patriarch.

Attention SSJC members: Dues are now due!

Our treasurer, Bob Greenwell, reminds us that our annual dues are now due. Membership is \$50. Associate membership (non-voting) is \$40. \$10 is sent to the National Society of St. John Chrysostom while the remainder is used to fund this newsletter and all of our local events. The newsletter costs approximately \$500 per issue, so your assistance is truly needed to help keep our organization alive and our newsletter publishing. Many thanks for your support!

Common date of Pascha/Easter

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Other speakers at the ecumenical seminar were Rev. Dr Dagmar Heller, professor at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey and executive secretary of the WCC Faith and Order Commission, Jesuit Father Milan Zust, an official of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Prof. Konstantin Sigov, director of Saint Clement Centre in Kiev, Ukraine.

Further to the students of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies – a consortium between the Ukrainian Catholic University, the National University of Lviv and several other European universities – the seminar had gathered representatives of the city's major denominations: the Ukrainian Orthodox Churches of the Patriarchates of Moscow and Kiev as well as the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in the Ukraine, the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Baptist and the Evangelical Church. – WCC Press Release, May 28.

Patristics Symposium:

“The Our Father in the Fathers of the Church”

By Anne Petach

Several SSJC-WR members attended the Saturday, July 11, portion of the 2009 Patristics Symposium on “The Our Father in the Fathers of the Church” at St. Maurice Coptic Orthodox Church in Pomona. Both speakers emphasized that only in the Coptic tradition is the phrase “Through Christ Jesus Our Lord” added between the end of the Our Father and its doxology. Bishop Serapion of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Los Angeles, Southern California and Hawaii stressed the need to understand the meaning of the Kingdom of God in order to understand the Our Father. He based his talk on the sermons of St. Cyril of Alexandria on the Our Father, and a booklet of eight of the sermons, with an introduction by Bishop Serapion, was made available to attendees. Copies of it can be ordered from the St. Athanasius and Cyril Theology Library, 4909 Cleland Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90042 or through www.copticllibrary.org.

Fr. George Dragas, Dean of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, discussed seven mysteries contained in the Our Father as described in the writing of St. Makarios of Corinth, co-compiler of the *Philokalia*: the theology of the Holy Trinity, our adoption as sons, equality with the angels, enjoyment of eternal life, the reconstitution of human nature, the law of forgiveness, the abolition of sin, and the destruction of the tyranny of the devil. He quoted from his recently published book titled *The Lord's Prayer according to St. Makarios of Corinth* (in Greek and English) which is available from the Orthodox Research Institute, 20 Silver Lane, Rollinsford, NH, 03869 or from:

http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/store/order_form.pdf.

BOOK REVIEW

The Courage to Be Ourselves

The Legacy of Archbishop Joseph Tawil

Compiled by Bishop Nicholas Samra

Reviewed by Father James Babcock

In 1970, two years into his pontificate as Eparch of Newton for the Melkites in the United States, His Excellency produced a document entitled, “The Courage to Be Ourselves” in which he laid out a vision for the growth and development of the Melkite-Greek Catholic Church in the United States. In later years he began to develop this document into a book, which he regrettably never finished before his passing into eternal life in 1999. Nine chapters were completed. These and other documents which he produced have been combined into this book.

The first nine chapters should be read consecutively, however, the documents in the second part may be read in any order. Those documents, including the original pastoral letter, deal with ecumenism, interventions at the Second Vatican Council, various pastoral letters and addresses.

Why is this book important to those outside the Melkite Catholic Church? The situation faced by the Melkite Catholics, Eastern Christians of Middle Eastern descent, is synonymous with that of other Eastern Christians (Catholic & Orthodox) from around the world who have immigrated to the United States. Albeit the Eastern Catholics faced an additional

hurdle of overcoming Latinization, yet all faced the challenges of integrating into the American culture while attempting to maintain their Eastern Christian Spirituality. His Excellency is clear in that if the emphasis is to maintain an ethnic church, then that church will soon fail as the ethnic customs and languages gradually disappear.

“One day all our ethnic traits—language, folklore, customs—will have disappeared.

Time itself is seeing to this. And so we cannot think of our communities as ethnic parishes, primarily for the service of the immigrant or the ethnically oriented, unless we wish to assure the death of our community. Our Churches are not only for our own people but are also for any of our fellow Americans who are attracted to our traditions which show forth the beauty of the universal Church and variety of its riches.”

The ideas gleaned from this publication can be applied to the situations faced by all Eastern Christians in the modern world. Of special note are His Excellency's warning to his clergy regarding the importance of maintaining a vibrant spiritual life.

Available from Sophia Press, 3 VFW Parkway, West Roxbury, MA. 02131 (\$17).

