

Happenings!

Sin, Confession & Reconciliation

Saturday, Mar. 14, 10 a.m. at San Rafael Roman Catholic Church, 17252 Bernardo Center Drive, Rancho Bernardo, 92128. Sponsored by The Society of St. John Chrysostom—Western Region. Speakers will be The Reverend Msgr. Dennis Mikulanic, Vicar for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs, Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego and The Very Reverend Father George Morelli, Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Ministry of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese. Please bring your own lunch. A meeting of the Society of St. John Chrysostom will follow. A freewill offering will be taken.

Huffington Ecumenical Institute Symposium on Chalcedonian Christology

Thursday, Mar. 19, 7-9 p.m. at Loyola-Marymount University, 1 LMU Drive, Los Angeles, 90045. “Who do people say I am?” True God and True Man: Chalcedon’s Christology in a Post-Modern World. Sponsored by the Huffington Ecumenical Institute and Loyola Marymount University. Speakers will be His Eminence, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, primate of the Armenian Church of North America Western Diocese; and His Grace Bishop Maxim of the Diocese of Western America of the Serbian Orthodox church.

Fellowship Book Study Group
See page 7 for details.

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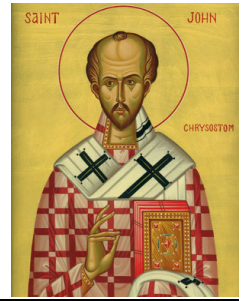
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Light of the East

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

Volume 3, Number 2

Winter, 2009



Metropolitan Jonah

Orthodox Church in America elects new Metropolitan Archbishop

The Holy Synod of Bishops at the 15th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America, meeting recently in Pittsburgh, has elected Bishop Jonah of the Diocese of the South, as Archbishop of Washington

and New York and Metropolitan of All America and Canada.

His Beatitude is a convert to Orthodoxy from the Episcopal Church. He was received into the Orthodox Church in 1978 at Our Lady of Kazan Moscow Patriarchal Church, San Diego, while a student at the University of California, San Diego. Later, he transferred to UC Santa Cruz, where he was instrumental in establishing an Orthodox Christian Fellowship.

After completing studies at UCSC, James attended St. Vladimir's Seminary, graduating with a Master of Divinity degree in 1985 and a Master of Theology in Dogmatics in 1988.

He went on to pursue studies towards a Ph.D. at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, but interrupted those studies to spend a year in Russia. He was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1994 and in 1995 was tonsured to monastic rank at St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA, having received the name Jonah.

Returning to California, Fr. Jonah served a number of missions and was later given the obedience to establish a monastery under the patronage of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco. The monastery, initially located in Point Reyes Station, CA, recently moved to Manton in Northern California, near Redding. During his time building up the monastic community, Fr. Jonah also worked to establish missions in Merced, Sonora, Chico, Eureka, Redding, Susanville, and other communities in California, as well as in Kona, HI.

In the spring of 2008, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America elevated Fr. Jonah to the rank of Archimandrite and he was given the obedience to leave the monastery and take on the responsibilities of auxiliary bishop and chancellor for the Diocese of the South. As spiritual leader of the Orthodox Church in America His Eminence faces a challenging role. May God grant him many years!

New Syriac Catholic Patriarch elected

The Synod of Bishops of the Syriac Catholic Church has elected His Excellency Yousif Younan as the new Patriarch for the Syriac Catholics of Antioch and all the East. His Beatitude served as founding pastor of Jesus Sacred Heart Syriac Catholic Church in North Hollywood before his elevation to the Episcopacy in 1996. He has served the Syriac Catholics of the United States and Canada since the creation of the Eparchy for Syriac Catholics in 1995. His Holiness Benedict XVI commented upon his election, “My hope is that in the East, where the Gospel was first announced, Christian communities may continue to live and bear witness to the faith as they have over the centuries.”

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
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Light of the East

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A message from the President of SSJC-Western Region

The wounds in the Body of Christ

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

If you turn on any news-program or look at the front page of almost any newspaper no one living in today's world can miss the egregious personal, social, political and religious brokenness surrounding us. It is also so easy to perceive this brokenness as being the problem and responsibility of others. However, in the Eastern Church there is no such thing as a solitary sin. Even an infraction done in total privacy is a wound to the totality of mankind created by God. Just as an injury to any part of our body actually affects the entire body, so too, all of us are affected by the sins of even the 'least' one who makes up God's human creation.

Because the Church is mystically "Christ's Body," how much greater are sins that injure the Church? The sinfulness of separation, the brokenness of those who make up the Body of Christ is a glaring violation of Our Lord's priestly prayer 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." Separation is a wound, scandal, illness, infirmity, and thus a dreadful sin. All of us are affected by this wound and all of us are called upon to heal this wound. A theme of one of the great feasts of the beginning of the civil calendar year is the Gospel passage from St. Matthew (4:17) read on the Sunday after the Theophany: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The first step in healing any sin is repentance. Repentance means a change of mind and heart. But there is prior step we have to do that enables us to repent. It is told to us by Jesus in the parable of the Prodigal Son. St. Luke (15:17) writes that the Prodigal Son, at a certain point when he was mired in swill feeding the swine, had come to a point when "he came to himself." In separating from his Father he was 'outside of himself.' He had to come to the realization that to be his true self he would have to be united with his father and family again. Then he was ready to go back to his father, repent and be united as one family again. Our active involvement in our grassroots Society of St. John Chrysostom is our opportunity to affirm that our 'true self' is to be united together as one family in the Body of Christ. Our continued devotion and commitment to the work of the Society can strengthen our own resolution, be a witness to and model our desire to attain the unity Christ wills for His Body the Church, when He commanded that all "may be one." O Christ, our heavenly physician, Come, heal our wound and sin of separation.

1,600 year old monastery in dispute

(From The Wanderer) Ownership of a 1,600 year old Assyrian monastery in Turkey that predates Islam and the Ottoman Empire is at the center of a dispute in Turkey. The case, one of many regarding church use and ownership in Turkey, is being monitored by European Union officials.

The head of the Deyrulmur Monastery, Father Kuryakos, said he disputed local officials who claim the monastery is being occupied by the monks. "Neither the Ottoman Empire, nor the Turkish Republic existed at the time of the establishment of this monastery where we have lived and prayed for centuries," stated Father Kuryakos.

He said that, "the monastery holds a central position in the life of Assyrian Christians." The EU and especially Germany, to where an estimated 100,000 Assyrian Christians migrated from Turkey, are pressing the country to improve its religious freedoms. In 2004 the EU Commission pointed out the problems encountered by the Assyrian Christians in Turkey. The Christians in Turkey and throughout the Holy Land & Middle East need our prayers that they may persevere.

On the unity of the Body of Christ

By Fr. Hrant Yeretzian, Pastor of 40 Martyrs Armenian Apostolic Church, Santa Ana, CA

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We live in prophetic times, the most important and outstanding prophecies are being accomplished in our times.

We are witnesses of a fundamental transformation. Jesus said: **“In my Father’s house are many rooms: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and take you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also”** (John 14:2, 3).

Jesus in over 2000 years has worked powerfully with the Holy Spirit, His archangels, Angels and Elders, to bring His message to every corner of the earth. Surely the means of communication have done a great job, and today, more than ever, because there is so little time before Jesus’ second coming, the Holy Spirit is present in the true Christians and it is operating powerfully in many corners of the earth. It inspires new openings and progress towards unity and evangelization. A strong manifestation of power and action of the Holy Spirit, besides all the communities and groups, and through the ecumenical movement worldwide where there are hundreds of Christian religions and groups.

Unity is a powerful and outstanding message that Jesus is inspiring to His spiritual church. It is clear that He wants a strong unity in His spiritual church before His Second Coming. The God of the Christians is a God of Love, but we know that there can’t be love if there isn’t any unity.

To be open in mind, heart and spirit you need love and humility. If we preach continuously that we must help the needy, and the Word of God teaches that we must love even our enemies.

How can we be Christians if we do not love our own Christian brother? **“If a man says, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”** (I John 4:20).

It is in these times, when there is such a spiritual hunger, **“Man shall not live by bread alone...”** (Matthew 4:4) that many philosophical groups will be formed, and that will create more confusion than ever.

It’s in these last days when the love of many will grow cold **“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”** (Matthew 24:12). The whole society will become colder. It’s important that just like the sun rises every morning, we Christians open our hearts to the Holy Spirit (through prayer and God’s Word) so that it may give us power every day from the powerful love of God.

Jesus is in us, and the Holy Spirit will guide us if we will

continue to feed our spirit, and the love of God will stay in us, if we transmit it with strength, determination, unselfishness and love to others: day after day and with all the means at our disposal.

We cannot profess to be Christians if we do not love, if we do not give ourselves in love, the love of Christ cannot live in us.

We cannot be true Christians and behave like many other people, maybe even kind and well mannered. Christ is asking us, in these important prophetic times to explode like a spiritual dynamite to give His powerful message of love, hope and salvation. He wants us to go to our brother and sister to bring His word, and by doing this we will give the message that God so loved them that He died on the cross for them. Through our love, our neighbor will understand the love of God; he will accept it and begin to transform his life. It is important to love. The love of God makes miracles in the soul that receives it. Let us not be limited by anything, let us love every person that is near us, be he rich or poor, of whatever religion he may belong to, big or small, it doesn’t matter, we have to love each one of them and give them the Word, and the Holy Spirit will do the rest.

Many souls that we have loved and to whom we have given the Word of God, we will surely find them in the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is important to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to know the most important prophetic processes, so that these future events will not take us by surprise, but through these signs we will be able to read the signs of the times, and know and interpret these prophetic events.

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7) (Matthew 16: 2, 3).

If we are united and in prayer, the power of God in us will be huge. God in the times of the end will give us more power, courage, determination and protection.

We have nothing to fear, everything is on our side, because with Christ we walk in security and we win. The fight for the Christians is in the Spirit. **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”** (Ephesians 6:12).

Millions of souls are waiting, if we don’t do it, who will? Lets get to work like never before, let’s accelerate our actions; Christ is and acts in us. **“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”** (Romans 8:31). **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** (Philippians 4:13).

We are the temple of the Holy Spirit, “Do you not know that you are God’s Temple?, and that God’s Spirit dwelleth in you.” (I Corinthians 3:16) so let’s make it possible for each one of us to be a reference, let’s make the Holy Spirit explode through us, let’s make the power of Christ shine through our testimony.

We will shine like never before **“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that**

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SSJC-WR Workshop report

What divides us: Impediments to Unity

Program at St. Margaret of Scotland Roman Catholic Church, Oceanside, well attended.

Program report by Anne C. Petach

Following the praying of the Sixth Hour led by Fr. James Babcock, Chaplain of SSJC-WR, and the Trisagion (Memorial) Service (Fr. James and Fr. George Morelli) for the newly reposed Marguerite Scialdone, wife of SSJC-WR Parliamentarian Frank Scialdone, Fr. Cavanaugh Wallace, pastor of St. Margaret's, Oceanside, warmly welcomed 50 attendees to the Jan. 3, 2009, Program. Fr. Cavanaugh noted that St. Margaret of Scotland, named for St. Margaret of Antioch, was baptized in the unified Church (1045) but died after it was divided. He prayed that Mary will always be our Mother so that we may always all be able "to call each other brothers and sisters."

His enthusiastic bulletin insert announcing the meeting, and an article in the local Jan. 2, 2009, North County Times featuring an interview with SSJC-WR President, Fr. George Morelli, inspired many local people to attend. Coming from a notable distance for the program were Fr. John O'Brien and Br. Mark Van Doren, from Santa Rosa, CA and Sergei Howard of Salt Lake City. Years of patient ecumenical networking by Fr. John and Br. Mark paved the way for Orientale Lumen West and thus, indirectly, for SSJC-WR. Sergei traveled to Southern California exclusively for this event. He hopes to get a chapter started in the Salt Lake City area. (See sidebar).

The program topic, "What Divides us? Impediments to Unity," was addressed by Fr. John Monestero, St. Justin Roman Catholic Church, Anaheim, Member of the Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Commission, Diocese of Orange, CA., and Fr. Ramon Merlos, pastor, Our Lady of Kazan Patriarchal Church, San Diego.

Fr. John Monestero quoted the late Archbishop Elias Zoghby that reaching agreement on doctrinal issues may be much easier than on questions of divisions of power. After noting that papal primacy, the filioque, the understanding of original sin and differences regarding the dissolution of marriage are still obstacles, he focused on the question of primacy and particularly new developments since Vatican II which include, for the Roman Church, the Roman Synods of recent years, "a step in reclaiming the role of the episcopate," and Episcopal Conferences, described as "not merely administrative subdivisions: they express the spirit of communion in the

Church, while at the same time respecting the diversity of human cultures" in "Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority," the Ravenna Statement agreed to by the Joint

Catholic-Orthodox Commission on Oct. 13, 2007.

Particular areas of challenge that he noted included: reform of the Roman Curia, because "the way issues are dealt with by the Holy See" which Archbishop John Quinn suggested by some as underlying the hesitancy of the Orthodox to be in communion with the Holy See; clarification of the privileges to be exercised by the Pope as the agreed "first among equals; the need for an agreement on ranking of "ecumenical" councils as several "ecumenical" councils of the West in actuality deal only with Western issues; the need for the Orthodox to accept the Catholic Church as authentic, rather than heretical, and for the Catholic Church to accept the Orthodox Churches as legitimate as they already exist.

On the question of infallibility, he noted that though the Roman Church might not easily relinquish it, understanding of it is likely to become more nuanced as Catholic theologians continue studying the Ravenna Statement.

He reminded that the Vatican I statement approved by Pius IX is that infallibility belongs to the Church, (i.e., not to the Pope), and that infallibility has only been invoked once, in defining the dogma of the Assumption. Perhaps, he speculated, infal-

lible statements will, in time, be considered binding only on the Latin Church.

He concluded that the most important question that divides us is the role of the Pope and "how the teaching of Vatican II on primacy is to be lived in the light of the first millennium."

Fr. Ramon Merlos, in turn, praised the progress represented by the Ravenna statement despite there still being many impediments to be overcome, noting that some will be easier to overcome than others: 1) primacy – the claim of, universal jurisdiction implies bishops are not equal, an idea foreign to the ancient church. 2) infallibility of the Pope; 3) procession of the Holy Spirit (the filioque); 4) purgatory and indulgences; 5) the Immaculate Conception dogma; 6) the Assumption dogma; 7) baptism (immersion replaced by sprinkling); 8) epiclesis (invocation of H. Spirit in Eucharist); 9) use of unleavened bread; 10) reserving the chalice to the clergy; 11) Extreme Unction; 12) divorce; 13) martial status of clergy.

Noting communication is vital, he called attention to other signs of movement toward unity: friendly bridge-building meetings between Patriarchs, and between Patriarchs and Popes, such as the meeting of Athenagoras and Paul VI in 1964 after 900 years of Schism; the mutual lifting of excommunications in 1965; and John Paul II's permission for Catholics to receive communion from Orthodox in emergency situations;

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Sergei (Robert) Howard of the Salt Lake City is interested in forming a Chapter of the Society of St. John Chrysostom. Please give his contact information to anyone in Northern Utah who might be interested. (801) 350.1227 (cell) sergeihoward@yahoo.com



North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation examines Ravenna Document

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation examined the International Dialogue's Ravenna Document and continued its study of Primacies and Synodality in the Church at its 17th meeting, October 23-25, 2008 at the Manoir d'Youville in Chateauguay, Quebec. The meeting was chaired jointly by Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati and Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh.

At the meeting the Consultation continued to examine the most recent document of the international Catholic-Orthodox dialogue, "Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority," also known as the Ravenna Document. An analysis of the text from an Orthodox perspective was provided by Father John Erickson of St. Vladimir's Seminary and from a Catholic perspective by Sister Susan K. Wood, a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth, from Marquette University. The Consultation plans to issue its own reaction to the Ravenna Document.

The Consultation also heard presentations related to its ongoing study of primacies and synodality/conciliarity in the Church. Father Peter Galadza, the Kule Family Professor of Liturgy at the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies in the Faculty of Theology, Saint Paul University, Ottawa, offered a brief paper entitled "Elements of a Vision for the Effective Synthesis of Universal Primacy and Conciliarity." Father Joseph Komonchak of The Catholic University of America offered a paper titled, "On the Priority of the Universal Church: Analysis and Questions," and also drew elements from an earlier article he wrote, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic: The Contemporary Theological Problematic," that appeared in *The Jurist* 52 (1992) 416-447. Father Thomas FitzGerald reflected on the ecclesiological significance of the recent gathering of the primates of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul (October 10-12, 2008), based on the Address of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Primates' October 12 message.

The Consultation also discussed key events in their churches, including the relations between the two Romanian Orthodox jurisdictions in North America, the withdrawal of the Jerusalem Patriarchate from North America, the recent Synod of Bishops in Rome in which Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew participated, the situation in the Orthodox Church in America, the Clergy-Laity Conference of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the upcoming plenary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the recent plenary of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB). In addition, Father Paul McPartlan reported on the meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church on Crete September 27-October 4. *From Eastern Church News edited by Ronald G. Roberson CSP*

New Auxiliary Bishop named

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI has announced the appointment of The Reverend Cirilo Flores as new Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Orange to assist Bishop Tod D. Brown & Auxiliary Bishop Dominic Luong. Bishop-Elect Flores served as pastor of St. Norbert Roman Catholic Church in Orange until his recent appointment. He is a graduate of Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and Stanford University School of Law. Bishop-Elect Flores will be ordained on March 19, 2009, at St. Columban Church in Garden Grove. May God grant him many years!

Selected comments from the welcoming address to SSJC-WR members

Following are some selected comments from Fr. Cavana Wallace, Pastor of St. Margaret Roman Catholic Church given at the recent SSJC-WR workshop on "What Divides Us..."

Although the Church may be perceived from an earthly perspective to be divided, the Church in heaven is united in the communion of saints into whose fellowship we are all and equally called to participate in. One such saint I would like to invoke the memory of – that of our parish patron, Saint Margaret. Named after the third century virgin and martyr St. Margaret of Antioch, our St. Margaret of Scotland was born in Hungary in 1045, just before what we sometimes call the Great Schism between Rome and Constantinople. In other words, our patron Saint Margaret of Scotland was born into a Church which spanned East and West but by the time of her death, the Church of her baptism had become almost exclusively identified with the West. But during her lifetime, the unity of the Church was a concern to her. When she arrived in Scotland in 1066, she discovered the isolationism of Celtic Christianity and gradually through various local synods, along with her saintly persuasion; she brought the Church in Scotland to a full, credible and visibly unity with the rest of the Church. Thus, the eleventh century [as illustrated in a painting in St. Margaret's Church of events of Church History] shows, in symbolic form, a wall being built between east and west. It was hardly built overnight. I would suggest that over a long period of time, as east and west drifted apart, bricks were being thrown at each other, to the point that over time, from them a tall wall was built! Even though we can and we often do scale the wall in order to now talk to each other, the awesome task and responsibility is upon us also, to do what we can, to gently and carefully remove the wall which separates us as fellow Christians. But we must do this patiently, brick by brick and maybe using our experience of working and talking together, we can instead build with these stones a bridge which can span across the centuries to help unite our people, East and West.... Today we make our contribution to bridge building.

SSJC-WR Workshop report

Spiritual Direction: East and West

Program report by Anne C. Petach.

Guidance, encouragement and obedience were recurrent themes in presentations of the program on *Spiritual Direction, East and West* at Holy Cross Melkite Church in Placentia, CA, on Nov. 1, 2008, which was attended by forty or so members and guests. Fr. Sebastian Walshe, O. Praem., of St. Michael's Norbertine Abbey, Silverado, CA, explained the traditional Roman approach, and Fr. Robert Pipta, pastor of Holy Angels Ruthenian Byzantine Greek-Catholic Church, San Diego, sketched that of Eastern Churches. Speakers prepare independently for this program format, trusting listeners to discern similarities and differences.

Fr. Sebastian spoke first and defined spiritual direction as "the art of leading Christians to the perfection of charity and loving union with God" that will bring them to love God "habitually and freely and as undistractedly as possible on earth," but not as if already in heaven, e.g., doing without eating or sleeping. In the Roman tradition, priests are the normal spiritual directors since they need to know everything about a directee, including matters of conscience. Sts. Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila were notable exceptions.

A spiritual director, he said, must be learned in theology and the principles of morality; prudent in discerning practical, concrete choices suitable for a specific directee; familiar with the path to holiness and its stages and obstacles, both objectively and through his own struggles and hearing of confessions; respectful of the actions of God in the directee's life; careful to avoid doing harm; and humbly aware of his limitations. He must know when to send a directee to someone more experienced, or to a mental health practitioner when appropriate. The objective path which must be followed without deviation, he said, is "the sacred humanity of Christ and its extension in the sacraments." He warned that Catholics have at times been deceived by those promoting prayer forms that have nothing to do with Christ or which serve to deny his sacred humanity. Thus, the directee must be encouraged to constant and habitual prayer at every moment that the mind is free, to almsgiving and good deeds done in love, and to becoming a "friend of the Cross" through a life of penance.

He sketched the features of the three stages of the spiritual life, noting that encouragement is particularly needed when a directee is between stages. Feelings of being abandoned by God and a lack of consolation are frequent between the beginner and proficient levels, and at that time encouragement from, and obedience to, the spiritual director are essential, as, for instance when a directee's fervor fades and they are tempted to think that if they aren't *always* doing their best they aren't doing good at all. Likewise, obedience will be essential for those between the second and third, or contemplative stage, in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit will predominate. At that point, feelings of a loss of faith and fear of damnation may arise. The devil, he reminded, can mimic spiritual states, but obedience is

impossible for him. Directing those in the third stage requires great care as wrong direction can cause serious harm.

Fr. Robert, describing the approach of the Eastern Churches, noted that *relationships* are central to the process of spiritual guidance. Specifically, the perfect love relationship within the Holy Trinity and God's loving covenant relationship with mankind wherein He gives gifts to mankind through the Incarnation, and mankind, in accepting God's gifts given through human mediation, accepts His authority. Voluntary acceptance of that authority by people of good will inspires in them, not blind obedience, but willingness to follow freely and to be guided by human mediators, by pastors, spiritual directors, by the Church, with the understanding that the purpose of this obedience is to break down the self-will that prevents union with God. He noted that "the devil is not able to fake" this obedience.

This guidance, which he often called "spiritual parenting," will be based on, and directed to, a life of literally ceaseless prayer, constant communication with God and longing for heaven, and to this end will include establishing a personal "prayer rule" that uses the language of the particular tradition of the directee and which will consistently and deliberately connect the directee's prayer life to that of the Church. In the matter of fasting it will keep the directee from falling into the extremes of either minimalism or discouragement. Rooted in Christian hope, and exercised in patience, it will guide the spiritual child to patience in suffering and will counteract discouragement.

He stressed the importance of authority in spiritual guidance as it allows freedom for, and support of, the painful task of facing honestly the force of our sinful habits, our misuses of freedom.

Guidance can be indirect, as when letting a directee discern on their own an understanding of a needed next step, or direct, as in: "Stop doing that!" A usual method he described is that of guided reading, hearing and discussion of the words of Scripture and of the Fathers and Mothers of the Church for the sake of growth for salvation. These writings, though written by monastics for monastics, have universal relevance in the East, because monasticism is the pattern of a fully lived Christian life, and is, as he quoted from *Oriente Lumen*, "a reference point for all the baptized."

Some non-ordained monks and nuns, having their own spiritual guides, may be living in such an obvious union with God that they attract directees and may agree to become spiritual parents. Fr. Robert stressed that in the Eastern tradition, these guides "have to be found," as they do not "hang out a shingle" like secular counselors. Relationships with them will be by mutual agreement and will not necessarily be lifelong. As holy monastics they will fully understand the relationship of Christ and the Church, and thus that of marriage as they guide their married spiritual children.

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What divides us: Impediments to Unity

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SSJC, Orientale Lumen and other similar efforts; dialogues between individual Orthodox and Roman Catholic Bishops.

As to what we should do today, he urged: studying the Ravenna document as all its sections represent progress in dialogue and are a basis for future discussion; becoming aware of the many difficulties; building on already reached agreements; and studying the dissenting statements of Vatican I. Some ways to further these ends, in a sense ways of experiencing the pain of separation, could include: working together on social issues and sharing worship services, educational events and discus-

sions. He noted that some have also expressed desire to see an agreement on a common date for Easter.

In conclusion, he reminded that “humility and prayer are essential if both sides are to arrive at the truth, which, he reminded, is one.” As an example of humility in action he recounted how an Orthodox Bishop was surprised at the conclusion of a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI when the Pope knelt and asked for his blessing.

The Ravenna Statement can be found at: <http://www.zenit.org/article-21012?l=english> (among other sites); Fr. John also cited: “The Claim of Primacy and the Costly call to Unity:” <http://www.ewtn.com/library/BISHOPS/OXFORD.HTM>

Holy Resurrection Monastery find itself in a state of flux

The monks of Holy Resurrection Romanian Catholic Monastery in Newberry Springs have found themselves in a state of flux recently. The monks were attempting recently to purchase a former Roman Catholic retreat house in New Jersey in which they hoped to establish a ministry of spiritual direction. The recent financial crisis, however, resulted in the withdrawal of an offer of assistance from a major donor, without which the monks were unable to complete the transaction.

Sale of the current monastic property to St. Anthony Coptic Orthodox Monastery has been completed and the monks are now faced with the need to relocate. The good news is the monks have decided to remain in Southern California. **In an effort to address the critical situation the monks are holding an informational gathering at Holy Cross Melkite-Greek Catholic Church, 451 West Madison Avenue in Placentia on Saturday, February 21st from Noon to 3 p.m.** This is an excellent opportunity to meet the monks and hear a number of speakers, including His Excellency, Bishop Salvatore Cordileone, a co-patron of the monastery’s Anastasis Project. Anyone who might be in a position to assist the community can contact Fr. Nicholas at 760 257 4008 or by e-mail at: holyresurrection@mscomm.com.

Roman Catholic/Orthodox Fellowship Book Study Group

Meets at St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church, 4949 Alton Parkway, Irvine in conjunction with St. John Nuemann Roman Catholic Church, 5101 Alton Parkway, Irvine, 92604. Participants discuss a book at each (Tuesday) 7:00-9:00 p.m. meeting.

- **February 24th** – *Confession: the Doorway to Forgiveness* by Jim Forest
- **March 24th** – *By Way of Grace: Moving from Faithfulness to Holiness* by Paula Huston
- **April 28th** – *Being Still: Reflections on an Ancient Mystical Tradition* by Jean-Yves Leloup
- **May 26th** – potluck at St. John Nuemann Roman Catholic Church, 5101 Alton Parkway, Irvine 92604 at 6:30 p.m., *The Book of my Life* by St. Teresa of Avila (translated by Mirabai Starr)

Spiritual direction: East/West

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In relation to sacramental Confession, Fr. Robert reminded listeners that since the work of repentance includes hearing ourselves disclosing our sins, ideally in regular sessions, spiritual work, sometimes quite difficult, is a necessary prelude. Expecting sins to be lifted without this work of disclosure is, he noted, a kind of “magical thinking.” Though quite rare, confession to the unordained has been part of the tradition of the East, e.g., St. Symeon the New Theologian (A.D. 949–1022).

Fr. Robert also noted that, for the East, the original state of mankind is considered to have been intended to be sinless, but the choice to sin contradicts that purpose, so acceptance of the promise of newness of life must involve making “rectifying” choices. Thus, “I’m only human” cannot be used as an excuse. The reality is: “I am not being human enough.” The Theotokos, being most fully human, shows us what we need to be.

On the unity of the Body of Christ

Continued from page 3

turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” (Daniel 12:3), we will understand like never before, we will conquer like never before, we will be instruments of God like never before.

Let us give of ourselves to Jesus like never before, He did it for us, He is asking it of us, He is asking you!

Let us be filled with the power and vision that Jesus gives us and let us strengthen our action.

Let us walk in Christ’s unity and we will shine like the stars in heaven, like countless diamonds, that shine like fire in every corner of the earth. We are the eyes, the hands, the feet and the mouth of Jesus, if we cannot do it, who will? (Mark 1: 15).

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publish peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation” (Isaiah 52:7).

I am sure that in the feast of the marriage of the Lamb you will be sitting at My big central table, just where you will be able to look into my eyes and where you will be able to read through them:

“Well done my good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.”

Memory Eternal**Russian Orthodox
Patriarch Aleksy II**

His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy II, spiritual leader of the Russian Orthodox Church fell asleep in the Lord December 5, 2008. Patriarch Aleksy presided over a flock that by most estimates numbers two-thirds of Russia's population of 142 million.

His Holiness presided over some of the most tumultuous times in modern Russian history. He entered Leningrad theological seminary in 1947 and graduated in 1949. He served as a priest in Estonia—then part of the Soviet empire—and rose rapidly through the clerical ranks, becoming Metropolitan at age 39 and winning election as patriarch in 1990, as the Soviet Union was collapsing.

As Patriarch, he vigorously advocated the return of the Orthodox Church to the center of Russian life and spirituality and oversaw a major religious revival in Russia, with hundreds of churches built or restored across the country. His funeral took place at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. May he rest in a place of light, a place of peace and happiness where there is no pain, no grief, no sighing, but everlasting life.

Memory Eternal**Coptic Catholic Patriarch Emeritus
Stephanos II**

His Beatitude Stephanos II, Coptic Catholic Patriarch of Alexandria fell asleep in the Lord recently in Cairo at the age of 89. As a priest he first served as a missionary of the Congregation of the Mission, then as bishop of Luxor prior to this election as patriarch. May he rest in a place of light, a place of peace and happiness where there is no pain, no grief, no sigh-

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Full Member \$50 (Voting privileges) for members of canonical apostolic jurisdictions**Associate member \$40 (No voting privileges)****Student or Monastic \$ _____ (Donation)****News from the SSJC-WR Library****Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent:
Faith and Power in the New Russia***John Garrard & Carol Garrard**Princeton University Press*

Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent is the first book to fully explore the expansive and ill-understood role that Russia's ancient Christian faith has played in the fall of Soviet Communism and in the rise of Russian nationalism today. John and Carol Garrard tell the story of how the Orthodox Church's moral weight helped defeat the 1991 coup against Gorbachev launched by Communist Party hardliners. The Soviet Union disintegrated, leaving

Russians searching for a usable past. The Garrards reveal how Patriarch Aleksy II—a former KGB officer and the man behind the church's successful defeat of the coup—is reconstituting a new national idea in the church's own image.

In the new Russia, the former KGB who run the country—Vladimir Putin among them—proclaim the cross, not the hammer and sickle.

Meanwhile, a major-

ity of Russians now embrace the Orthodox faith with unprecedented fervor. The Garrards trace how Aleksy orchestrated this transformation, positioning his church to inherit power once held by the Communist Party and to become the dominant ethos of the military and government. They show how the revived church under Aleksy prevented mass violence during the post-Soviet turmoil, and how Aleksy astutely linked the church with the army and melded Russian patriotism and faith.

Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent argues that the West must come to grips with this complex and contradictory resurgence of the Orthodox faith, because it is the hidden force behind Russia's domestic and foreign policies today.

To borrow this book or request a current list of books available from our SSJC-WR Library, please contact betkearns@roadrunner.com or phone 951-780-7328. Thank you!

