

Happenings!

4th Annual Orthodox Day of Praise

Saturday, May 14, 9 a.m./2 p.m. St. Peter & St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church, 1245 4th St., Santa Monica 90401. A unique opportunity for all Christians to unite with other members of the Orthodox Faith, exploring similarities, embracing differences, celebrating and praising God through singing. For details go to: www.stpeterandstpaul.org

Beauty in Evangelization: East & West

Saturday, May 21, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. A Society of St. John Chrysostom-Western Region workshop. San Rafael Roman Catholic Parish, 17252 Bernardo Center Drive, San Diego, 92128. Presenters: East: Father Saba Shofany, West: Bennett Lord, A.I.A., of Lord Architecture. A free will offering will be taken. A SSJC-WR meeting will follow. Lunch may be ordered upon arrival or bring your own. A question and answer program will follow the presentations. Contact, Msgr. Dennis Mikulanis 858 674 1146.

Ecumenical Services celebrating Pentecost

Thursday, June 20, 7 p.m. Roman Catholic Mission Basilica San Juan Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano 92675. Fifth Annual Roman & Eastern Catholic & Orthodox Christian Ecumenical Service of Prayer celebrating Pentecost. Contact: Irma Contreras: icontreras@st-nicholaschurch.org

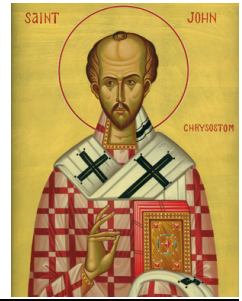
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Light of the East

Newsletter of the Society of Saint John Chrysostom
Western Region Edition

Volume 5, Number 3

Spring, 2011



Celebrating Easter/Pascha together

From the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation

From a statement issued on October 1, 2010

The center of our faith, the center on which all Christians agree, is the *kerygma* that Jesus is Risen, Jesus is Lord:

Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We venerate Your Cross, O Christ and we praise and glorify Your Holy Resurrection. You are our God. We know no other than You, and we call upon Your Name. Come, all faithful, let us venerate the holy Resurrection of Christ for behold, through the Cross, joy has come to all the world. --
Mattins of the Resurrection

Despite this agreement Catholics and Orthodox in fact celebrate Easter on different days, fracturing the proclamation of this Good News of the Resurrection.

The consequences of our division on this issue are significant. Interchurch families find themselves in conflict observing two Lenten cycles and two Paschal dates. The world looks on as Christians speak through their celebration with a divided voice. Many are impeded from hearing the Good News of the Resurrection by the scandal of this division.

In 2010, Eastern and Western Church Calendars coincided so that all Christians celebrated the Feast of the Resurrection on the same day. The dates for the Holy Day will coincide again in 2011, but will vary again after that. As we remember the joys of a common date this year, we look forward to the entire Christian world proclaiming the joy of the Resurrection together again next year. We are convinced that the time is at



Icon from goarch.org
Icon of the Anastasis (Descent into Hades).

hand for a permanent resolution of this issue.

We, the members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, urgently join our voices to those of many others calling for leadership to agree on a continued, unified determination for the celebration of the Resurrection. As Melkite Patriarch Gregorios III of Antioch has said of the Paschal date in the context of the Christian witness in the Middle East, "Is it permissible to turn a deaf ear to the voice of our sons and daughters? Today more than ever, we need to recognize the signs of the times, the outstanding initiatives to which our people aspire, a thirst for Christian unity and for making progress in realizing it, whatever the measures, great or small, needful to bring it about."

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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.

Vice President, The Rt. Rev. James Babcock

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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

Zeal: Among the first of virtues of our missionary apostolate



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

It may not have occurred to some SSJC members and supporters that our association is actually a missionary society. Our apostolate is to convert the Christians who make up the Apostolic Churches - the Latin and Eastern Catholic, the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox - to the complete fulfillment of the priestly prayer that Christ gave to His Apostles 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). Those we have to missionize are all those who make up these Churches: the Royal Priesthood of the baptized, the monastics, the deacons, the priests, the bishops and even the Patriarchs. The epitome of this oneness will be evident when all can share in Christ's Body and Blood together.

To be effective missionaries we have to cultivate, in cooperation with the grace of the Holy Spirit, the virtue of zeal, that is to say, intensely passionate spiritual fervor for our apostolate.

Let us examine how St. Paul's instructions to the Romans (12: 9-12) can be a model for our own zealous commitment to Church re-union: **"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."** Indeed, we must have "a zeal for God." (Rm 10: 2). Indeed, as part of this we must have a zeal for full re-union of the Apostolic Churches that is so strong that we are motivated to do all we can to make known the sin of disunion and our fervent desire for reunion of our Churches, even to the highest levels of our various hierarchies.

St. Isaac of Syria¹ tells us the outcome when zeal lags. St. Isaac considers zeal a weapon that guides action. "[When someone] casts away the weapon of zeal and becomes as a house without a guardian ... the serene flame of holy knowledge in the soul becomes dark." In the spirit of Christ's words to His Apostles (Mt 28: 19) let us zealously go forth ". . .and make disciples" - for church unity - "of all nations. . . ." St. Luke (Acts 18: 24-26) tells us about Apollos' fervent and zealous love for Christ. "He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. . . ." Can we do otherwise?

¹Wensinck, A. J. (ed., trans.) (1923). *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*. Amsterdam, Holland: Koninklijke Akademie Van Wetenschappen.



The Symposium program icon, by the hand of contemporary Russian Ivan Kusov Alexandrovich, shows Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Rodianov (1977-1996), a Russian soldier imprisoned and later executed in Chechen captivity for refusing to reject his Orthodox Faith. Shown in modern battles fatigues but in Byzantine iconographic style, the image reminds "... that the Christian encounter with violence is at once ancient and Modern."

Loyola Marymount 2011 Huffington Ecumenical Institute Symposium sheds new light on traditional understandings of war and peace

By Anne Petach

A vigorous and informative keynote address by Bishop Gabino Zavala of Los Angeles, current president of Pax Christi USA, set the tone for five tightly paced sessions of the March 25-26, 2011 Huffington Ecumenical Institute (HEI) Symposium in which a dozen forthright, open, and engaging Catholic and Orthodox American theological scholars discussed their respective traditions on war and peace. According to HEI acting director Fr. Dorian Llewelyn S.J., it was "the first ever such ecumenical conference on the topic."

By allotting a shorter than traditional time for the formal academic papers by the two speakers for each session, Catholic and Orthodox, enough time remained in each session for a relaxed conversation between them, and the audience question period was less hurried. The different moderators for each session efficiently but unobtrusively kept the pace both disciplined and unstressed with the result that a conversational atmosphere surrounded the academic presentations. Challenges were graciously offered and happily accepted, clarifications and nuances emerged, and gratitude for increased understanding was expressed, especially in the many instances, at each session, when others of the dozen speakers joined the questioners at the microphone. Photos from the Symposium reveal the conversational spirit that prevailed among speakers (see: <http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/ecumenical/war-and-peace.htm>). Speaker topics and backgrounds are also posted there.

Predictably, historical and philosophical aspects of the Catholic "just war" theory were both a starting point and a touchstone throughout. One Orthodox speaker saw St. Augustine's treatment of the topic as an effort to limit war rather than to support "just war;" another defended St. Ambrose's position. One Catholic speaker described nuances to the theory that have emerged in the last few decades due to modern warfare. In answer to a question, a Catholic speaker pointed out that emphasis on the theory is a result of pastoral care for the need of the faithful for decision-making guidelines.

The Catholic tendency to seek definite guidelines, or rules, was unwittingly emphasized by a later audience question asking for clarifications of "what if" war scenarios.

Also discussed were the rapidly deteriorating standards of conduct once a "just" war is entered into; the dehumanizing effects of war, not only on innocent victims but also on soldiers themselves, even those who only prepare for war; and the need to protect the oppressed. The components of "just peacemaking" were listed and all too briefly elucidated. In the conversational exchanges, the Orthodox position that all war is morally unjustifiable, ably put forth by several speakers, was shown to have some inconsistencies in modern practice, particularly in defending oppressed Orthodox, and to possibly need some refining. The inevitable conflict between the Orthodox goal of theosis, or deification, and the goals of war, and even preparation for war, was thoroughly delineated. A final paper examined the historical context of the life of Jesus to ascertain whether He could accurately be portrayed as a pacifist.

One of the questions that surfaced in a spontaneous exchange, whether Christians, by virtue of their faith commitment, must necessarily be pacifists, was among the many left unresolved in the richness of this extended conversation. However, the goal of the Symposium was not to resolve debate questions, nor to arrive at consensus, but to open an ongoing conversation that will reach beyond those who found this Symposium such an engaging experience. Those unable to attend can look forward to participating in the conversation when the full video coverage of the Symposium is posted on the HEI website address above.

The Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University follows the pioneering work of Patriarchs and Popes during the last forty years in rapprochement between the Churches of Constantinople and Rome. The goals of the Institute are: to promote the unity of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches:

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The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation

Steps toward a reunited church:

A sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic vision for the future: Part 2

Editor's Note: On October 10, 2010 at Georgetown University, Washington D.C. The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation issued a statement of the progress of their work. Due to the length of the statement *Light of the East* will print this document in parts over several consecutive issues. The entire document can be found at: www.usccb.org/seia/steps-towards-reunited-church.shtml

4. *What We Share.* Despite disagreement on the place of the bishop of Rome in the worldwide cohesion of Christianity, however, it seems to us obvious that what we share, as Orthodox and Catholic Christians, significantly overshadows our differences. Both our Churches emphasize the continuity of apostolic teaching as the heart of our faith, received within the interpretive context of the historical Christian community. Both believe our life as Churches to be centered on the Divine Liturgy, and to be formed and nourished in each individual by the Word of God and the Church's sacraments: baptism, the anointing with chrism, and the reception of the Eucharist mark, in each of our Churches, the entry of believers into the Body of Christ, while ordination by a bishop sets some of them apart for permanent sacramental ministry and leadership, and the marriage of a Christian man and woman within the liturgical community forms them into living signs of the union of Christ and the Church. Both our Churches recognize that "the Church of God exists where there is a community gathered together in the Eucharist, presided over, directly or through his presbyters, by a bishop legitimately ordained into the apostolic succession, teaching the faith received from the apostles, in communion with the other bishops and their Churches" (Joint International Dialogue, *Ravenna Statement* [2007] 18). Both our Churches, too, recognize the importance of various kinds of primacy, as the *Ravenna* statement further affirms: "Primacy at all levels is a practice firmly grounded in the canonical tradition of the Church," even though "there are differences of understanding with regard to the manner in which it is to be exercised, and also with regard to its scriptural and theological foundations" (*ibid.* 43). Both our Churches venerate Mary, the Mother of God, as the foremost among those transformed by the grace of Christ's redemption, and both also honor a whole range of holy men and women from every age, many of them common to our two traditions. Both our Churches cherish ancient practices that help the faithful grow in holiness, value personal asceticism and fasting, reverence sacred images, promote the monastic life, and set a high value on contemplative prayer. In all of these ways, our lives as Churches are enriched by the same spiritual resources. A significant degree of communion already exists between us.

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5. *A Matter of Urgency.* In light of the divine gifts that we share, then, it seems all the more urgent to us that our Churches grow closer together, in ways that the men and women of our time can see. The fact that our two Christian families have been separated in some central points of theology and Church discipline for almost a thousand years, and as a result no longer share in the sacramental communion that bound us together during the first millennium, is not only a violation of the will of God, as expressed in the prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper that his disciples "may be one" (John 17.21), but is also a serious impediment to effective Christian engagement in the world, and to the effective realization of our common mission to preach the Gospel. Marriages involving members of both our traditions are increasingly common, especially in ethnically pluralistic countries, creating serious problems in Christian education and practice for the families involved. All of these factors urgently call our Churches to overcome their division. As our largely secular world reaches constantly for new technical means of communication, and for mutual understanding within all its cultural and political diversity, it is urgent that Orthodox and Catholic Christians find an effective way to realize our common tradition of faith together, and to present the world with a unified testimony to the Lordship of Jesus. To be what we are called to be, we need each other. In the words of the Second Vatican Council, "The divisions among Christians prevent the Church from realizing in practice the fullness of catholicity proper to her" (*Unitatis Redintegratio* 4). To become what we are, effectively and permanently, we cannot stop short of re-establishing full Eucharistic communion among ourselves. Clearly, this cannot be achieved without new, better harmonized structures of leadership on both sides: new conceptions of both synodality and primacy in the universal Church, new approaches to the way primacy and authority are exercised in both our communions.

6. *The Shape of Communion.* It is difficult to predict what a structure of worldwide ecclesial communion, sacramental and spiritual, between our Churches, might look like. Some of its main features, however, would include the following:

a) *Mutual Recognition:* the larger units of Orthodox and Catholic Christianity, including patriarchates and other autocephalous Churches, would explicitly recognize each other as authentic embodiments of the one Church of Christ, founded on the apostles. This would include the recognition of our fundamental agreement on central Christian dogmas, as revealed in Scripture and articulated in mutually recognized ecumenical Councils, despite variations in our theological and liturgical traditions.

b) *A Common Confession of Faith:* both our Churches would confess the same basic Christian faith, as expressed in the

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Orthodox-Catholic statement

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Christian canon of Scripture and in the Churches' traditional creeds. The "faith of Nicaea," professed by the ancient councils as the foundation of Christian faith and practice, is received most fully in the original form canonized at the Council of Constantinople in 381, as understood through the canons and prescriptions of the other ecumenical councils received by Orthodox and Catholic Christians. As we have suggested in our 2003 statement "The *Filioque*: a Church-Dividing Issue?" the original Greek form of the Creed of 381, because of its authority and antiquity, should be used as the common form of our confession in both our Churches.

c) *Accepted Diversity*: different parts of this single Body of Christ, drawing on their different histories and different cultural and spiritual traditions, would live in full ecclesial communion with each other without requiring any of the parts to forego its own traditions and practices (see *Unitatis Redintegratio* 16).

d) *Liturgical Sharing*: members of all the Churches in communion would be able to receive the sacraments in the other Churches; priests and bishops would express their unity in concelebration, and the heads of the other Churches would be commemorated liturgically in the diptychs. In addition, other forms of common liturgical prayer would be encouraged as a regular practice involving both our Churches.

e) *Synodality/Conciliarity*: the bishops of the reunited Churches would meet regularly in regional synods, which would regulate the common life and relationships of the Churches in a particular region and provide an occasion for mutual correction and support. Bishops of all the Churches would be invited to participate fully in any ecumenical councils that might be summoned. Synodality would operate at various levels of ecclesial institutions: local, regional and worldwide. Aside from episcopal structures of synodality, the laity would be active participants in this dimension of Church life.

f) *Mission*: all the Churches would share a common concern for what directly affects their unity, as well as for their mission to non-Christians. As sister Churches, they would also engage in common efforts to promote the realization of a Christian moral vision in the world.

g) *Subsidiarity*: following the ancient principle recognized as normative for well-organized human structures, "higher" instances of episcopal authority would only be expected to act when "lower" instances were unable to make and implement the decisions necessary for continuing union in faith. This would mean, among other things, that in the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches, at least, bishops would be elected by local synods or by other traditional methods of selection. Those elected to major episcopal or primatial offices would present themselves to other Church leaders at their

their level, to their own patriarch, and to the bishop of Rome as first among the patriarchs, by the exchange and reception of letters of communion, according to ancient Christian custom. The bishop of Rome would also inform the Eastern patriarchs of his election.

h) *Renewal and Reform*. Ordered growth is essential to the health and well-being of the Church, and this means both continuity and change. For the Church, an essential aspect of this growth is *renewal*: the continual rediscovery of its fundamental identity as the Body of Christ, based on its experience of the Paschal Mystery, in the constant readiness to take on new forms of common life and witness and to adapt itself to new historical situations. In the words of a late medieval aphorism, "The Church is always in need of reform (*ecclesia semper reformanda*)."⁷ By making their catholicity concrete through full communion, the Catholic and Orthodox Churches would be realizing this life of reform in a new, undreamed-of way, and would be committing themselves to continuing renewal and growth – but now together. Life in communion with each other would be a life lived in readiness for a new Pentecost, in which people of many nations and cultures are formed anew by the living Word of God.

7. *The Role of the Papacy*. In such a communion of Churches, the role of the bishop of Rome would have to be carefully defined, both in continuity with the ancient structural principles of Christianity and in response to the need for a unified Christian message in the world of today. Although the details of that role would have to be worked out in a synodal way, and would require a genuine willingness on both sides to accommodate one another's concerns, a few likely characteristics of this renewed Roman primacy would be these:

a) The bishop of Rome would be, by ancient custom, the "first" of the world's bishops and of the regional patriarchs. His "primacy of honor" would mean, as it meant in the early Church, not simply honorific precedence but the authority to make real decisions, appropriate to the contexts in which he is acting. His relationship to the Eastern Churches and their bishops, however, would have to be substantially different from the relationship now accepted in the Latin Church. The present Eastern Catholic Churches would relate to the bishop of Rome in the same way as the present Orthodox Churches would. The leadership of the pope would always be realized by way of a serious and practical commitment to synodality and collegiality.

b) In accord with the teaching of both Vatican councils, the bishop of Rome would be understood by all as having authority only within a synodal/collegial context: as member as well as head of the college of bishops, as senior patriarch among the primates of the Churches, and as servant of universal communion. The "ordinary and immediate" jurisdiction of every bishop within his particular Church, would be "affirmed, strengthened and vindicated" by the exercise of the bishop of Rome's ministry (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* 27; cf. Vatican I, *Pastor Aeternus* 3). In a reunited Church, this understanding of papal and

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episcopal authority, as complementary and mutually enhancing, would have to be expanded to include the much more complex patterns of local, primatial, and patriarchal leadership that have developed in the Eastern Churches since patristic times.

c) The fundamental worldwide ministry of the bishop of Rome would be to promote the communion of all the local Churches: to call on them to remain anchored in the unity of the Apostolic faith, and to observe the Church's traditional canons. He would do this as a witness to the faith of Peter and Paul, a role inherited from his early predecessors who presided over the Church in that city where Peter and Paul gave their final witness.

d) His universal role would also be expressed in convoking and presiding over regular synods of patriarchs of all the Churches, and over ecumenical councils, when they should occur. In the Western Church, this same presiding function would include convoking and leading regular episcopal synods. In harmony with the Pope's universal ecumenical ministry, the Roman curia's relationship to local bishops and episcopal conferences in the Latin Church would become less centralized: bishops, for instance, would have more control over the agenda and the final documents of synods, and the selection of bishops would again normally become a local process.

e) In cases of conflict between bishops and their primates that cannot be resolved locally or regionally, the bishop of Rome would be expected to arrange for a juridical appeal process, perhaps to be implemented by local bishops, as provided for in canon 3 of the Synod of Sardica (343). In cases of dispute among primates, the bishop of Rome would be expected to mediate and to bring the crisis to brotherly resolution. And in crises of doctrine that might occasionally concern the whole Christian family, bishops throughout the world would have the right to appeal to him also for doctrinal guidance, much as Theodoret of Cyrus did to Pope Leo I in 449, during the controversy over the person of Christ that preceded the Council of Chalcedon (Ep. 113).

Part 3 of this document, "Specific preparatory steps toward reunion," will appear in the next issue of The Light of the East

War and Peace

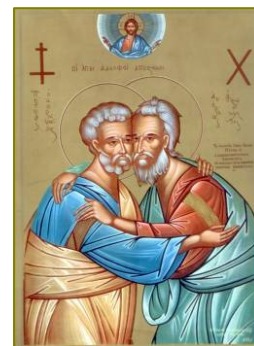
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- to provide opportunities for fraternal encounters between these two faith communities
- to provide resources and forums for reflective and frank ecumenical discussion and dialogue at local, regional, national and international levels
- to foster ecclesial and academic interest and leadership in constructive ecumenism
- - to build a leading collection of library resources in the areas of ecumenism and Orthodox theology

Oriente Lumen Conference 15th Anniversary!

June 20-23, 2011 at the Washington Retreat House (a change from the Pope John Paul II cultural Center which will not be available) in Washington, DC on the theme of

"Rome and the
Communion of
Churches:
Bishop, Patriarch
or Pope?"



Presented by:

Metropolitan Jonah (Orthodox) Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, Washington, DC

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia (Orthodox) Professor Emeritus of Oxford University, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Archimandrite Robert Taft, SJ (Greek Catholic) Professor Emeritus of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, The Vatican
Msgr. Michael Magee (Roman Catholic) Professor of Systematic Theology, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia, PA

Father Ron Roberson, CSP (Roman Catholic) Associate Director for Ecumenical Affairs, USCCB, Washington, DC

Sr. Dr. Vassa Larin (Orthodox) Lecturer, University of Vienna, Austria, Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia

Dr. Adam DeVille (Greek Catholic) Assistant Professor, University of Saint Francis, Ft. Wayne, IN and Editor, LOGOS

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia will also serve as moderator. Father Ron Roberson will give a summary of the North American Dialogue document "Vision for Unity" as the Closing Session, and the panel of speakers will discuss it, along with Q&A from the audience. Also: Several video recorded blessings and greetings from Church leaders at the Opening Session.

More details about the conference and online registration can be found at the Future Conferences page of

www.olconference.com.

CONFERENCE FEES

Payable in advance and includes all meals and materials.

\$245 including lunch, dinner & reception

\$95 Daily Registration includes meals.

\$25 Single Evening Fee includes reception

Limited accommodations (single room with shared bath) are available through the conference office:

\$75 per night, per person and includes breakfast.

Easter/Pascha common date

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We echo the recent calls of our own Consultation in 1998 and many others to close this wound once and for all: the Inter-Orthodox Theological Consultation (1971), the Pan-Orthodox Conference in Chambesy (1977), the Orthodox Theological Society of America (1992), The Aleppo Consultation (1997), the Lambeth Conference, the Lutheran World Federation, and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (shortly after 1997), the United States Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue (2000), The Orthodox Church of Finland (2001), the International Seminar at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv (2009), the National Council of Churches in the USA (2010), the Melkite Patriarch Gregorios III (2010), and others.

The First Council of Nicaea

The First Council of Nicaea (325), touchstone of Christian theology through the ages, was gathered largely to resolve two major questions: the Arian controversy and the date of Easter—so consequential were those two issues for the unity and life of the Church.

Our Consultation reaffirms the decision of the Council of Nicaea to celebrate the Paschal Feast on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the Spring Equinox.

As we said in response to the Aleppo Statement of 1997:

The Council of Nicaea was willing to make use of contemporary science to calculate the date of Easter/Pascha. We believe that this principle still holds valid today. Scientific observations about the cosmos reveal the goodness and wonder of God's creation, which he embraced in the incarnation of his Son. Moreover, to deny an observable truth about the world is to reject God's gift to us. As they witness to God's love for the world, our churches need to use the findings of contemporary science as did the Fathers of Nicaea.

The key today to resolving the issue in accordance with the mandate of Nicaea is to determine the Equinox from the meridian of Jerusalem (Longitude 35° 13'47.1) using the most accurate scientific instruments and astronomical data available. This will resolve the conflict in our liturgical observance by aligning existing Church calendars to the Nicene formula—not just the calendar from one set of Churches, but from both Eastern and Western traditions. As disciples of the Risen Lord who all profess adherence to the mandate of the Council of Nicaea, we find a profound need to adhere to Nicaea's formulae, and to calculate the yearly date accurately. As Churches whose faith is rooted in Scripture and Tradition, let us ensure we stay rooted in The One Who is Truth.

This method to resolve the problem according to Nicaea has

already been supported at the Aleppo Consultation of 1997 by representatives of the World Council of Churches and of the Middle East Council of Churches (both of which Councils were the sponsors of the Aleppo Consultation). It was also supported by representatives of the Catholic Church, of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and of many Christian communities.

In 1998, our own consultation made several points in support of Aleppo's recourse to Nicaea, including:

The Aleppo Statement accurately presents historical circumstances relating to such matters as the Council of Nicaea's treatment of the relationship between the Christian Pascha and the Jewish Passover. The practice of continuing to celebrate Pascha according to the ancient Julian calendar has often been defended, by some Eastern Christians, as resting on a decision associated with that council prohibiting the churches from celebrating the Paschal feast "with the Jews." As scholars of both our traditions have very clearly demonstrated, this prohibition was directed against making the calculation of the date of Easter depend upon contemporary Jewish reckoning, not against a coincidence of date between the two festivals. In fact, a coincidence of Passover and Easter dates continued to occur from time to time as late as the 8th century. Only later, when the increasing "lag" of the Julian Calendar made any coincidence impossible, did the prohibition come to be misinterpreted as meaning that the Jewish Passover must necessarily precede the Christian Passover each year.

The need for such unity is great, for our world has changed drastically since the Aleppo Statement was published in 1997. We have witnessed the growth of secularism and the global effects of tyranny and war. More than ever, there is a need for a unified Christian proclamation and a witness of the core of our common faith: the Resurrection of Our Lord.

Time is of the essence. In the short term, the Easter dates will coincide again in 2011, 2014, and 2017. Then seventeen years will pass before a unified Pascha is celebrated in 2034.

There is great need for careful education and pastoral sensitivity as we move forward together. We appeal as well to the media of both our churches to take care to report on this issue with accuracy and fairness. We emphasize the hope and joy that a united Easter/Pascha witness will bring the world. There are significant pastoral needs at stake: Can the members of our interchurch families celebrate Easter together? Can we prevent the undesirable possibility of a fixed date recurring every year, which would contravene Nicaea, our biblical theology, and our sacred tradition? For the mission of the Church, a common celebration would support the unity we already share and help to build it further in the future.

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New Eastern Catholic Patriarchs elected for Ukrainians and Maronites

Both the Ukrainian and Maronite Catholic Churches will be led by new Patriarchs.

Maronites

His Excellency Bechara Rai will be the 77th patriarch of the Maronite Catholic Church. The New Patriarch chose as his motto "Communion and Charity," expressing the hope that, "the Maronite Church will continue her journey in history under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." He was installed at the Maronite Patriarchate in Bkerke, Lebanon. His Beatitude is said to believe firmly in the importance of dialogue, coordination and collaboration between the Churches. He succeeds His Beatitude Nasrallah Pierre Sfier who submitted his resignation at the age of 91.



Ukrainians

The fourth youngest bishop in the entire Catholic Church will ascend the throne of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. His Excellency Sviatoslave, 40 will succeed His Beatitude Lubomyr, 78 who tendered his resignation for reasons of health. He will head one of the largest Eastern Catholic Churches with five million faithful. The Ukrainian Catholic Church entered into Communion with the Church of Rome at the Synod of Brest in 1596. It was particularly persecuted during the Soviet period, when Stalin ordered its dissolution in 1948. The legal persecution and marginalization ended in 1989 after the fall of Communism. Its emergence from underground created great tension with the Orthodox Church when Ukrainian Catholics attempted to reclaim their churches which during the Soviet reign were served by the Orthodox clergy and hierarchy.



In an interview to *Left Bank*, in response to the question whether he would like to meet with Russian Orthodox, Patriarch Kirill, and what he would say to him, he said the best way to communicate is to be open in a brotherly dialogue, be open to the purification of our memory, to ask for forgiveness and to forgive. "I am convinced that in a peaceful and open communication with each other, we can relieve any tension," commented the new head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

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Orthodox/Catholic common date

Continued from page 6

Like the Fathers of Nicaea, our hierarchs are called to be agents of healing to resolve once and for all this ancient dispute in the life of the Church. We, the members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation appeal to the Episcopal Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in the U.S.A., to the Episcopal Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in Canada, to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to add their voices to press for this change that we feel would benefit all Christians. Enable all of us to proclaim together, with one voice, heart and mind, "Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!"

More happenings...

Involuntary Sin

An Eastern Christian Contribution to Christian Ethics

Friday, June 3 - Sunday, June 5 at Holy Resurrection Monastery at St. Andrew Abbey in Valyermo. Presented by Hieromonk Maximos. Discussion of how moral vision leads Eastern Christians to look at such things as social justice and labor issues, violence and warfare, marriage and divorce, contraception and abortion. Room, board and tuition \$260 single, \$170 shared. For details go to hrmonline.org or call the abbey at 661 944 1076

The Society of St. John Chrysostom Western Region

WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Full membership: \$50; Associate: \$40;

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

Our Website

**www.ssjc-wr.org now jumps to
www.lightoftheeast.org**

**Still our site, just an easier to remember title.
The handsome layout is thanks to our webmaster
Fr. Hans Jacobse of**

Logos Web Services (Naples, FL)

<http://www.logoswebservices.com/>.

It's easy to leave a message right from the website. We welcome suggestions for improvement and hope to hear from many of you.