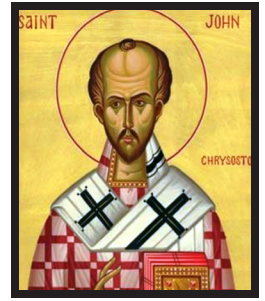


# Light of the East

Newsletter of the Society of Saint John Chrysostom  
Western Region Edition  
Website: [www.lightoftheeast.org](http://www.lightoftheeast.org)



Volume 14, Number 2

Spring 2019

## Monasticism topic of annual conference

By Jim Trageser

The topic of the 2019 Light of the East Conference is monasticism — and its different traditions and understandings in the Eastern and Western churches.

The featured presenters at this year's conference are:

- Mother Melania — abbess of the Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, Calif.
- Chris O'Donnell — a lay member of the Franciscan 3rd Order
- Father George Morelli — chairman of the Society of St. John Chrysostom, Western Region, a licensed psychologist, and on faculty at St. Katherine's University in San Marcos, Calif.

The event is being hosted by St. Katherine's University, and will be held in the university's chapel.

Mother Melania has served as abbess at Holy Assumption for a decade. She is also on faculty at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.

In addition, she is also the published author of a series of children's books (several of them



Photo courtesy University of St. Katherine

**The University of St. Katherine in San Marcos, Calif., is hosting the 2019 Light of the East Conference for the Society of St. John Chrysostom, Western Region.**

under her pre-abbess name of Sister Elayne) written to provide lessons in Christian belief and values from an Orthodox perspective.

Mother Melania has extensively studied the writings of St. John Chrysostom, and his thoughts on both monastic and lay Christian life.

O'Donnell is a married father of three, and the director of catechetical ministry for San Rafael Parish in Rancho Bernardo.

As a lay member of the Franciscan 3rd Order, O'Donnell has written that he feels called to "enter into the life of the world, in its darkness and bring to it the light of Christ through joyful love, sincere respect for the dignity of creation."

Morelli is chairman of the SSJC-WR, and assistant pastor at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in San Diego. He recently joined the psychology faculty of St. Katherine for the fall term.

### Happenings!

#### **Ecumenical Pilgrimage to the Holy Land:**

Patriarch Emeritus Gregorios of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church has invited members

of the Orientale Lumen Foundation, and the Society, to visit Jerusalem next summer.

Tentative dates are July 10-24. More details will be shared as they become available.

## **The Society of Saint John Chrysostom**

The Society of Saint John Chrysostom is an Ecumenical group of clergy and lay people that promotes Eastern Christianity and Ecumenical Dialogue between the Eastern and Western Churches. It has sponsored the Eastern Churches Journal and the annual Orientale Lumen Conference. It has been in existence since 1997 in the United States and for over 70 years in England.

### **The Goals of the Society are to:**

- Make known the history, worship, spirituality, discipline and theology of Eastern Christendom
- Work and pray that all Christians, particularly the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, will attain the fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires
- Develop educational programs that present information about the Eastern Churches
- Organize and conduct pilgrimages and conferences that encourage ecumenical dialogue
- Contribute to fundraising activities that 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 and Orthodox Seminaries.

### **Western Region**

*Chairman:* The Very Reverend Archpriest George Morelli, PhD.

*Vice Chairman:* The Reverend Father James Bankston

*Secretary:* Diane Alves

*Treasurer:* Robert Greenwell

*Sgt. at Arms / Parliamentarian:* Mark Hartman

*Historian:* Anne Petach

*Catholic Liaison:* Msgr. Dennis Mikulanis

*Chaplains:*

Archimandrite James Babcock (Eastern Catholic)

Very Reverend Ramon Merlos (Orthodox)

Fr Cavanaugh Wallace (Roman Catholic)

### **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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## **Message from the Chairman of SSJC-Western Region**



# Respect, humility offer only paths to real unity

*Archpriest George Morelli PhD*

"Chaos" is defined as "a state of extreme confusion and disorder." As we look at the world around us, we see just such a state. Around the globe we see political, social and, very unfortunately, religious conflict.

C.S. Lewis tells us in "The Screwtape Letters" how the evil one, the separator, the divider, accomplishes his work simply by using our own human foibles. For example, to take pride in our own "correct" view of the world around us, to take pride in our being a Christian or to take pride in our own Church Rite (e.g. Eastern, Western) or ethnic tradition (e.g. Latin, Greek, Russian) is actually inimical to the true Christian humility we should be cultivating in our mind and hearts. Such pride separates us from others and Christ, thus working toward accomplishing the work of the evil one.

The spiritual ethos of the Society of St. John Chrysostom is to lessen the barriers to fellowship between our Apostolic Churches by promoting understanding and appreciation of our various histories and traditions. We pray this would extend to the socio-cultural-political world around us as well. It is critical that we value and respect equally each and every individual in the world, as sons and daughters of God.

We know that Christ is the only sinless one. As St. Paul tells the Hebrews (4:14-15), "Jesus the Son of God: ... For we have not a high priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin." This is underscored so beautifully in the prayer of the Orthodox Trisagion for the Dead: "for there is no man who liveth and sinneth not and Thou [Christ] art only without sin ..."

Thus we can apply the scripturally inspired popular adage: "hate the sin, but love the sinner." A true lesson in the humility so needed in the world today.

What better time, then, than during this Paschal Season to help heal the world of political, social and religious division by praying Christ's own words that He uttered from the cross: "And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Lk 23:34)

*Continued on Page 4*



# Light of the East Conference

June 29, 2019

Feast of Saints Peter & Paul

8am – 4pm

***Monasticism for the Rest of Us***

***Lay Monasticism is also called  
Interiorized Monasticism***

Sponsored by the Society of St. John Chrysostom-Western Region and hosted by:

***University of Saint Katherine***

1637 Capalina Road, San Marcos, CA 92069

## Presenters:

**Chris O'Donnell** Roman Catholic layman, married, father of three; member of the Franciscan 3<sup>rd</sup> Order; Director of Catechetical Ministry for San Rafael Parish

**Mother Melania**, Abbess of Holy Assumption Monastery (Orthodox), Calistoga, CA; faculty member of Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA.

**Fr. George Morelli PhD**, Chair of Society of St. John Chrysostom – Western Region; Licensed Psychologist & MFT; Asst. Pastor St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, San Diego, CA; faculty (psychology) University of St. Katherine

## Conference Schedule:

**Saturday, June 29:** 8 am Registration/Coffee 9 am Chris O'Donnell 10 am Mother Melania  
11:30am Prayer Service 12:00 noon Lunch – Sandwiches available 1:30pm Fr. George Morelli  
3 pm Panel of speakers Q & A.

**Registration: \$25 - add extra \$10 if want lunch (Make checks payable to "SSJC-WR")**

Please return to: Robert Greenwell, Treasurer 2700 Katherine St., El Cajon, CA 92020

Advance Registration by mail or register at the door Questions? 760-920-6530

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email\_\_\_\_\_



## Briefly ...

### Holy Sepulchre agreement reached



**Custodian of the Holy Land Father Francesco Patton, left, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, and Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Nourhan Manougian**

Following up on critical repairs from May 2016 through March 2017, the three Christian communities that jointly maintain and operate the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem have finalized plans for the next round of work.

Where the first round of repairs improved seismic stability, the next round will focus on the foundations and floors.

The three bodies that jointly operate the holy site under auspices of the historic Status Quo agreements are the Armenian Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, and the Roman Catholic Franciscan order.

### Filaret claims to cancel Ukrainian merger

Honorary Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of the Ukraine, Filaret, sent out invitations to Orthodox bishops across Ukraine inviting them to a council on June 20, but other leaders of the newly formed Orthodox Church of Ukraine are warning that he lacked the authority to do so.

Formerly head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kiev Patriarchate, his office was dissolved

when Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew recognized the new autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine last year – combining Filaret’s church with the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. The first two churches were not previously recognized by other members of the Orthodox communion, and the Russian Orthodox Church has not relinquished its claim to primacy over the UOC-MP.

At the June 20 meeting, Filaret says the “Local Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate” voted to cancel the December dissolution of UOC-KP. He said parishes, schools and monasteries formerly owned by the UOC-KP were not being turned over to the OCU after all.

However, the OCU issued a statement afterward that read, ““Such meetings can in no case be recognized by the local Council, and their decisions are initially useless in the legal and canonical meaning of this term, they do not generate legal consequences and are not enforceable.”

Bartholomew’s decision of reorganization in Ukraine has not been recognized by the Russian Orthodox Church, nor any other members of the Orthodox communion, and has become a very sensitive issue within the Eastern Orthodox churches.

Filaret’s call to council is seen as a challenge to the authority of the new Ukrainian metropolitan, Epiphany I, who was elected in December.

### Syriac Orthodox patriarch meets prelates, king

Serbian Orthodox Patriarch Irinej traveled to Damascus, Syria on June 2 and met with Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II of the Syriac Orthodox Church. The two leaders were joined by Patriarch John X of the Antiochian Orthodox Church and Patriarch

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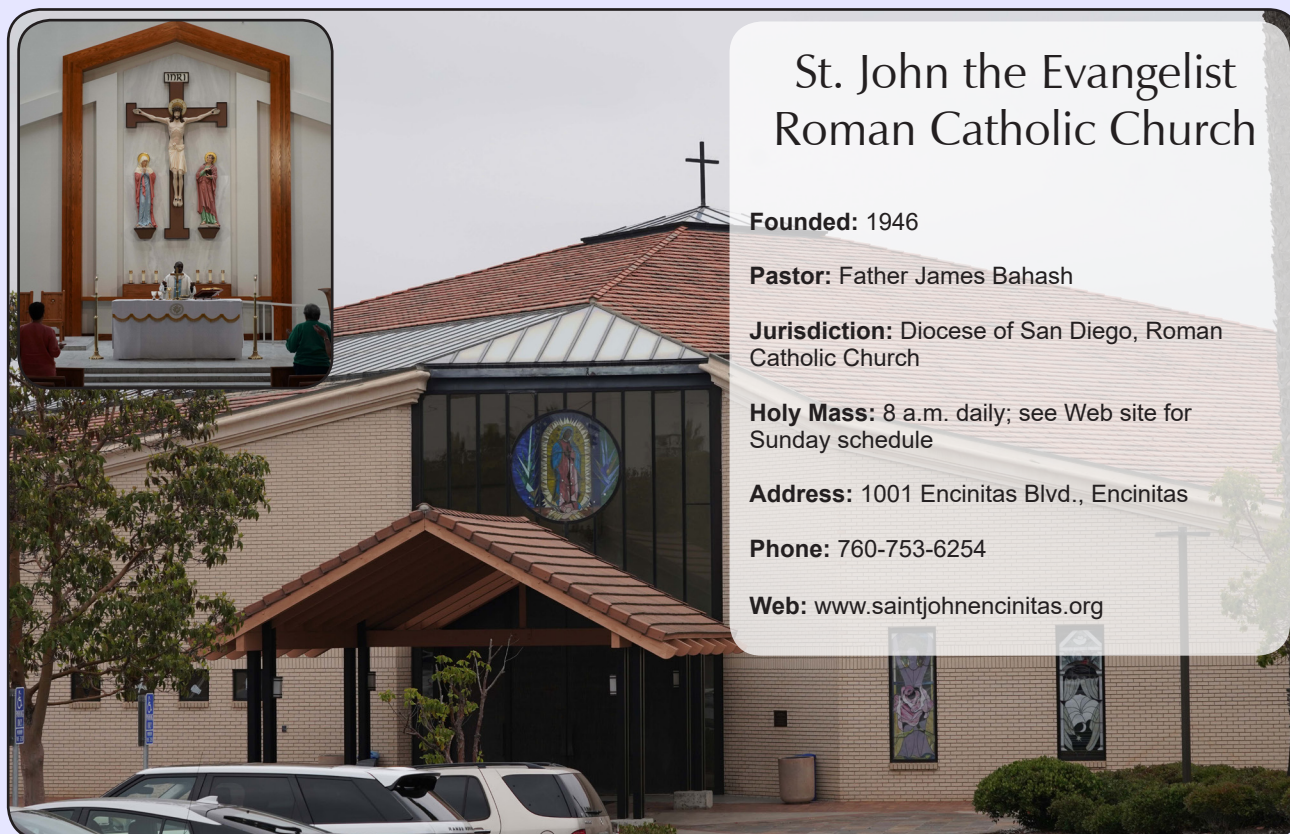
## Morelli

*Continued from Page 2*

As Christ conquered sin and death by His death and Resurrection, we can help in conquering the

sins of chaos and division by our unity with and in the forgiving Christ. As the Psalmist (132:1) notes, “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity.”

# Parish profiles: Encinitas, California



## St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church

**Founded:** 1946

**Pastor:** Father James Bahash

**Jurisdiction:** Diocese of San Diego, Roman Catholic Church

**Holy Mass:** 8 a.m. daily; see Web site for Sunday schedule

**Address:** 1001 Encinitas Blvd., Encinitas

**Phone:** 760-753-6254

**Web:** [www.saintjohnencinitas.org](http://www.saintjohnencinitas.org)

*Photos by Anthony Porrello*

## Sts. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church

**Founded:** 1978

**Pastor:** Father Michael Sitaras

**Jurisdiction:** Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco

**Divine Liturgy:** 10 a.m.

**Address:** 3459 Manchester Avenue, Encinitas

**Phone:** 760-942-0920

**Web:** [www.stsconstantinehelen.com](http://www.stsconstantinehelen.com)





## Briefly ...

Continued from Page 4



**King Abdullah of Jordan, right, greets the delegation of the Syriac Orthodox Church in Amman, Jordan.**

Youssef Absi of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church at St. Georges Patriarchal Cathedral, where they shared a sutoro (compline) prayer service.

Following the service, Aphrem II thanked Irinej for visiting, and said that the faithful “long for the day on which we partake of the same one Eucharistic chalice, after the theologians of both churches agreed that we confess the same belief in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word.”

Irinej then spoke, adding that, “What unites us is love and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; we are one Church, although, sorrowfully, the historical circumstances had divided us.”

In May, Aphrem II led a church delegation to Amman, Jordan, where they met with King Abdullah to discuss the safety of Christians in the Middle East. At that meeting, the King reaffirmed that Christians are an important part of Arab society, and pledged to continue protecting Christian sites in both Jordan and in Jerusalem.

### **Indian Catholicos offers resignation**

Mor Baselios Thomas I, Catholicos of India, offered his resignation to Aphrem II in a letter dated April 27 following a dispute over the administration of the Jacobite Syrian Christian Church in India.

However, this offer was made ahead of Aphrem’s state visit to India on May 24, and as of mid-June, Baselios Thomas I remained Catholicos – an office he has held since 2002.

In his letter to Aphrem II, Baselios Thomas I said that new church administrators in India had been

spreading allegations against him via social media – specifically questioning his handling of church funds. Baselios Thomas I told Aphrem II that he has turned over all assets to the church, and then asked to be relieved as Catholicos but to remain as bishop to his local diocese.

During his visit to India, Aphrem II addressed ongoing friction with the separate Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. The Malankara patriarch, Yuhanon Mar Dioscoros, issued a public statement afterward saying that Aphrem II’s comments regarding India’s legal system had made ecumenical efforts between the two churches more difficult.

### **Pope Francis visits Balkan countries**

Pope Francis made two recent pilgrimages – with one to North Macedonia and Bulgaria, and a second to Romania. Both are seen as attempting to reinforce ongoing ecumenical efforts between Rome and the Eastern Orthodox communion.

Francis visited Bulgaria from May 5-6, and North Macedonia May 7. During his Bulgarian visit, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church issued a statement saying it was canonically prohibited from participating in a joint prayer service with the Catholic pontiff. However, an Orthodox children’s choir did perform.

In North Macedonia, Francis was greeted by Metropolitan Timothy of the Macedonian Orthodox Church – whose status is under review by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Church declared independence from the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1967 – although the Orthodox Communion still considers the Macedonian Church an autonomous part of the Serbian Church.

Francis’ three-day visit to Romania began May 30, and included a visit with Patriarch Daniel of the Romanian Orthodox Church. In his remarks to the Romanian Synod, Francis said, “Thank God, our roots are sound and sure, even if their growth has undergone the twists and turns of time. The remembrance of steps taken and completed together encourages us to advance to the future in the awareness — certainly — of our differences but above all in thanksgiving for a family atmosphere to be rediscovered and a memory of communion to be revived, that, like a lamp, can light up the steps of our journey.”