

LIGHT OF THE EAST

"GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS."

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, YOUNGSTOWN-WARREN OHIO CHAPTER

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FROM THE EDITOR...

The next regular chapter meeting will be Tuesday the 14th of July 7 P.M. at St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church in Liberty. Our speaker will be H. Paul Linley, Executive Director [Antiochian Village Conference and Retreat Center](#). Nestled in the foothills of Laurel Ridge, Antiochian Village is the ideal location for church retreats and conferences, business meetings and seminars, family reunions, banquets, and other appropriate events. Located only six miles from downtown Ligonier, Antiochian Village is close to a rich selection of historic sites, recreational areas, museums, and family site-seeing destinations. Owned by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, Antiochian Village Conference & Retreat Center has been in operation since 1985. An expansion in 1990 doubled the size of the facility and today we serve more than 10,000 visitors each year.

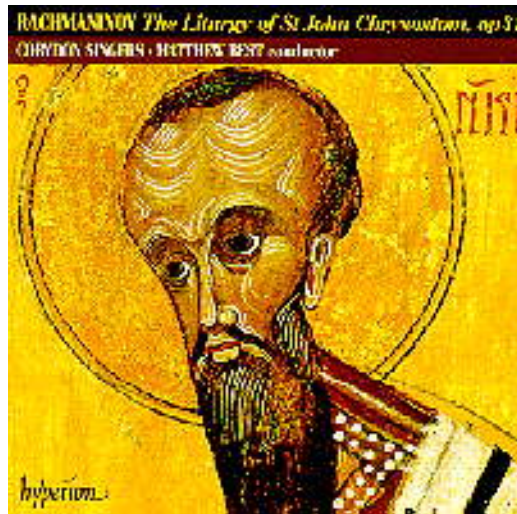
Antiochian Village hosts a wide variety of groups, families, religious retreats, business conferences, family reunions, weddings, and even sports camps. Though the Center is owned and operated by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, other denominations are welcome.

The Center includes 100 hotel-style guest rooms, 18 fully equipped meeting rooms, full service banquet hall with seating for 350, book and gift store, theological research library, exercise room, walking trails, a new Antiochian Heritage Museum, and a sloped lecture auditorium with seating for 150.

Mr. Finley will speak of his faith journey from Baptist to the Orthodox Church.

Fast, Pray, March for Unity

Our chapter decided to have a public manifestation of our desire for the unity of the Apostolic churches. On Saturday June 27th at 11:30 A.M. our members



and friends gathered in St. Columba Cathedral to pray for unity. Then the group marched to nearby St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church to pray again. Members were asked to fast for unity on Friday the 26th in preparation for the prayer and for the Apostles Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on the 29th. In recent years the Ecumenical Patriarch comes to Rome or sends his delegate for this feast just as the Pope of Rome is represented in Istanbul for the Feast of St. Andrew.

IS YOUR NAME LISTED HERE?

Members who have paid 2009 dues are Mattiussi, Carchedi, Nakley, B. Berardi, G. Berardi, Gage, Schmidt, Rohan,, Perantinides, the Sisters of Queen of Heaven Monastery, Zavatsky, Sleever, A. Kolitsos, Muntean, Limbert, Demiduk, Witmer, R. Nolfi, N. Nolfi, Gall, C. Sarantopoulos, P. Sarantopoulos, Scalise, Calabro, Kilpatrick, McCarthy, S. Kolitsos, Kent, Fata, Mistovich, D. Demiduk, Siffrin, Bonnot Mansour, Elsey, G. Jensen, M. Jensen, Spinosa, Skurich and Tavolario Dues are \$20 (\$25 family) per year; please mail check to address in masthead. Thank you for your membership.

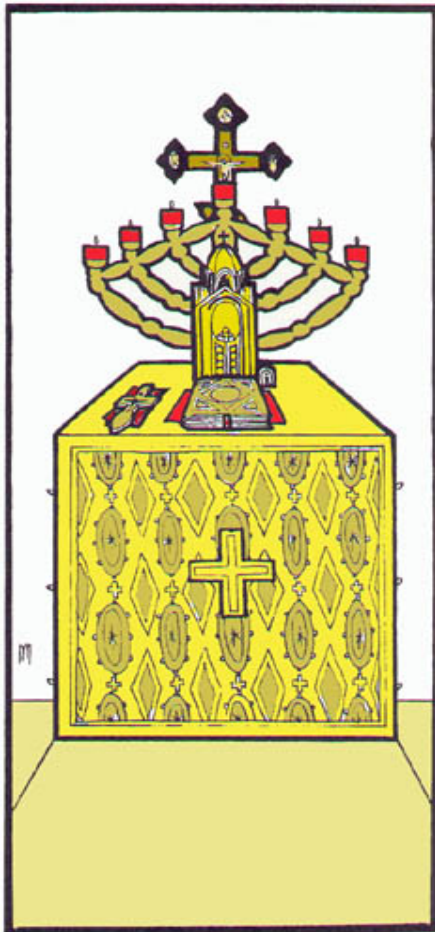
Excerpt from Fr. Georges Florovsky's address to the World Council of Churches in 1960:

"The very problem of Christian reconciliation is not that of a correlation of parallel traditions, but precisely that of the reintegration of a distorted tradition. The two traditions may seem quite irreconcilable, when they are compared and confronted, as they are at the present. Yet their differences themselves are, to a great extent, simply the results of disintegration: they are, as it were, distinctions stiffened into contradictions."

Worshipping Around the Throne/Altar

from OCA: The Orthodox Faith

“We have mentioned how the entire church building is centered around the altar table. The altar table does not merely symbolize the table of the last supper. It is the symbolic and mystical presence of the heavenly throne and table of the Kingdom of God; the table of Christ the Word, the Lamb and the King of the ever-lasting life of God’s glorified dominion over all of creation.



The Book of the Gospels is perpetually enthroned on the altar table. It is on the altar table that we offer the “bloodless sacrifice” of Christ to the Father. And from the altar table we receive the Bread of Life, the Body and Blood of the Lord’s Passover Supper. This table is the “table of God’s Kingdom” (Lk 13:29).

In Orthodox Tradition the altar table is often carved wood or stone. It is usually vested with colorful material to show its divine and heavenly character. It should always be a simple table of proportional dimensions, often a perfect cube, and is always free-standing so that it may be encircled.

On the altar table one always finds the antimension.

This is the cloth depicting Christ in the tomb which contains the signature of the bishop and is the permission for the local community to gather as the Church. “Antimension” means literally “instead of the table.” Since the bishop is the proper pastor of the Church, the antimension is used instead of the bishop’s own table which is, obviously, in his own church building, the cathedral — the place where the bishop has his chair (cathedra).

The antimension usually contains a relic (normally a part of the body) of a saint which shows that the Church is built on the blood of the martyrs and the lives of God’s holy people. This custom comes from the early Church practice of gathering and celebrating the eucharist on the graves of those who have lived and died for the Christian faith. Usually, a relic of a saint is embedded in the altar table itself as well.

Also on the altar table there is a tabernacle, often in the shape of a church building, which is a repository for the gifts of holy communion that are reserved for the sick and the dying. Behind the altar table there is usually a seven-branched candle stand which comes from the Old Testamental tradition of the Jewish temple. Generally speaking, the Jerusalem temple is highly valued in the Orthodox Christian tradition of worship and church construction as a “prototype” of the true worship “in spirit and truth” of the Kingdom of God (Jn 4:23).”
Fr. Thomas Hopko

Orthodox and Catholic Churches should abandon competition

Moscow, June 8, Interfax - The Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church should leave the spirit of competition behind them in facing modern challenges, said head of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

Meeting on Friday with head of the Catholic Archdiocese of Mother of God in Moscow Archbishop Paolo Pezzi, Archbishop Hilarion said he was determined to continue the course of his predecessor on the position of Department for External Church Relations head, currently Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, to look for ways toward improving mutual understanding and relations with the Roman Catholic Church in Russia

A Church Without Schism

31/05/2009

In early summer months of 1054 A.D., papal legates who represented a dead Pope (Leo IX, who expired not long after dispatching them) and a pharisaical Patriarch of Constantinople (Michael Cerularius) issued mutual anathemas and excommunications after weeks of petty bickering and blustering, much of it of a personal nature. The issues behind the catfight might have been weighty, but the triumph of egotism and invective over Christian charity and reasoned dissent was a moment of great triumph for the forces of darkness.

Patriarch
Athenagoras and
Pope Paul VI



Because it was a moment in history that crystallized the tensions between the apostolic Churches, our "Discovery Channel/Reader's Digest" (pick your generation) approach to history asserts that the separation of the undivided Church of the First Thousand Years can be marked at that point.

Not really. Few churchmen of that era saw it as such. Serious efforts at reunification did not end with that event. In fact, the Great Schism of 1054 itself was laid to rest in December 1965. Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I met and rescinded the specific excommunications issued by their dubious representatives in the 11th century.

Surprised? Does much of anything look different on the ground between the apostolic churches since the removal of the anathemas? Why do so many of the consequences of the schism remain unresolved over forty years later?

The New Testament call for unity could not be clearer; it was the focus of the last lessons of Christ as written in John's Gospel.

Our own hardness of heart maintains our continued division. How would we act if we really believed that the barriers that divide the apostolic churches don't reach all the way to Heaven?

Part II of a weekly series that began 31 May.

What would the life of a hierarch who embraced the New Testament call to maintain the One Body of the Church look like? One could do no better than to emulate the example of Athenagoras I. He represented the communion of the Eastern Orthodox Churches as Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople from 1948 until his death in 1972 (memory eternal!). It was he who joined with Pope Paul VI in 1965 to lift the mutual anathemas that had been wrongfully issued in 1054 A.D. 1964 marked the end of the formal break between the particular institutions of the Vatican and the Phanar. Though the anathemas were lifted, the consequences that rend the entire body of Christ of course live on. But they live on in spite of the efforts of Athenagoras I:

"He was meek, ascetic, tolerant of others, patient, physically as strong as iron, persevering, never yielding to outside influences, prophetic in his visions, a man of prayer, intelligent, and able as a pastor to confront extremely delicate storms and violent oppositions..."

"The dangerous tendency to overemphasize differences and to compare traditions and approaches, concluding that the differences are insuperable, is ever present. But Athenagoras was against making such comparisons. He was convinced that, on the whole, Orthodox and non-Orthodox hold the same views on basic issues of Christian faith and live the same Christian experience. East and West are not as divergent as some would believe. Traces of eastern thought can be found in the western mind, and western influence discovered in the East. There is an interpenetration which causes all believers in Christ to face the same spiritual realities. Athenagoras was not just patriarch of a limited See: he belonged to the whole oikoumene. In fact, it was his vision that the whole of Christendom should see the oneness of the saving message of the Gospel through the same eyes. The legacy left to us is to follow his example of seeing with the eyes of Christ in order to ensure that the obstacles to unity do not prove stronger than the will to unite."

- From a review of the book, A MAN SENT BY GOD: THE LIFE OF PATRIARCH ATHENAGORAS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, by DEMETRIOS TSAKONAS. Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1977

Nicaea & Easter from Touchstone Magazine blog Mere Comments

May 29 in the Eastern churches is the fixed date in the "synaxarion" for commemorating the first Ecumenical Council, held at Nicaea in 325. It is also the commemoration of one of the bishops in attendance, Alexander of Alexandria, who suffered the thorn of Arius in his side in the years leading up to the council. Arius was good at putting Arian doctrine to rhyme and music, which helped the doctrinal virus spread. While beating down Arius was the main business of Nicaea, the council also set the method for calculating the date of Easter and charged the Bishop of Alexandria (the city was known for its astronomical observatory) with sending out a letter each year announcing the date, based on the astronomical criteria set down by Nicaea.

Well as everyone knows, the date of Easter is still a matter of debate, even though Arianism is not. This year a meeting was held, not in Alexandria, but in L'viv, Ukraine, to address the topic. Here is a report from the conference:

On the 15th of May 2009, the Institute of Ecumenical Studies of the Ukrainian Catholic University in L'viv organized a seminar entitled, "A Common Date for Easter is Possible: The 1997 Aleppo Consensus". The meeting was organized in the framework of the Master Program of Ecumenical Studies of the Ukrainian Catholic University and the Ivan Franko National University of L'viv.

The participants of the seminar included:

- From the World Council of Churches – Rev. Dr. Dagmar Heller, a professor from the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, who was also one of the co-organizers of the Aleppo conference in 1997.
- From the Roman Catholic Church – Rev. Dr. Milan

Zust S.J., who came on behalf of the Pontifical Congregation for the Promoting of Christian Unity, Vatican City.

- From the Ukrainian Orthodox Church -- Dr. Constantine Sigov, Director of the St. Clement's Center, and chief editor of the journal, "Spirit and Letter".

The representatives of the many L'viv Churches took part in the lively discussion.

The main speakers of the seminar presented and analyzed the Aleppo document and discussed recommendations concerning what the document proposed for the establishment of a common method for calculating the date of Easter. (The agreed basis of calculating the date of Easter was settled on preserving the dictates of the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, calculating the astronomical date with the most precise, scientific method, and using the Jerusalem meridian as the basis for such calculations). Also, the importance for seeking a common date for the celebration of Easter as the greatest of Christian feasts and the special role that the Aleppo consensus of 1997 plays toward this aim was greatly stressed.

The participants of the seminar believed that the recommendations from Aleppo are the most acceptable for all Christian Churches of both East and West. They are convinced that using these recommendations for a common celebration of the solemn feast of the Resurrection of Christ could be a great common witness of the Holy Spirit action in the world and a common Christian witness of the Gospel to the world.

The participants are also aware that the main problem is not merely in calculating the date of Easter, but the complex relations and lack of trust among different Christian denominations due to long division. This is one of the main reasons why it is so difficult to accept the proposal that differs (**Continue next page**)

in method from those used both Eastern and Western traditions currently. Therefore, great strides toward mutual understanding and reconciliation are still necessary.

The seminar sought to spread the good news concerning the consensus, which positively justified the efforts toward the common celebration of the feast of Easter previously in Aleppo.

The way in which Christians came to the consideration of having one, common date of Easter was indeed long and difficult. From the beginning of the 20th century, voices for healing the divisions among the Churches were heard. There was the desire to join together. One of the important steps in such direction could be the common celebration of the most important of Christian feasts, Easter. In the Christian West among Roman Catholics and Protestants, there was even a willingness to accept a fixed date of Easter on the second Sunday of April, only if that would be acceptable to all. Such a solution was proposed to the Churches of the Christian East. The commission of the Orthodox Churches, which was established for this very aim and held a 1977 meeting in Chambesy concerning this topic, decidedly refused this particular proposal of a 'fixed date of Easter' due to the fact that it would clearly contradict the ancient tradition for calculating the date. All the participants of the commission confirmed the celebration of the date for the feast of the resurrection according to the rules of the Nicene council (the first Sunday after the full moon after equinox) and at the same time of using the assistance of modern technology in order to make this calculation.

Twenty years later, in 1997, the World Council of Churches by the welcome invitation of the Syrian Orthodox Church and with the cooperation of the Middle East Council of Churches, organized a consultation in Aleppo, Syria, where theologians of all present Churches

came from the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox traditions, accepted the decisions of the Orthodox conference and stated that the most acceptable and genuinely traditional method for obtaining and calculating the date of Easter would be in keeping the norms of the Nicene Council and celebrating Easter on the first Sunday after the full-moon of the vernal equinox in addition to using modern scientific data in order to precisely calculate this proposed date. The consultation recommended the use of the Jerusalem meridian as the basis for such calculations as it was the place of the paschal death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The participants of the seminar in L'viv desire that all Christians be aware of the painful question of division in celebrating the solemn feast of Easter and to enthusiastically inform the Christian world concerning the consensus and the progress of which Christians have already made.

They are deeply convinced that the recommendation of the decisions of the meeting in Aleppo which has been expected for almost a century, could become a real and concrete step on the way to the common celebration of Easter and at the same time, it could demonstrate to the world the Christian desire to give common witness to the living words of the Gospel, "that all may be one".

In the coming years of 2010 and 2011, the dates for the celebration of Easter will once more coincide in both the Eastern and Western traditions. The participants of the seminar encourage all Christians to join in the discussion of this issue and to put all their efforts to make this happy coincidence to be not merely an exception, but rather a rule. The joint celebration of the solemn feast of Easter would therefore become another real step for renewal towards full communion.

PRAY FOR THE UNITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES!

Tuesday, 26 May 2009

An Anglican Theological Question about a Catholic Church

As it is commonly understood amongst Anglo-Catholics the Church is Catholic with branches which make up a society. For Anglo-Catholics it is argued that the 'branch theory' supports the Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology as a Communion within the society of the Catholic Church. So, as Anglo-Catholics (AC) our tradition will argue that we are a branch of the Catholic society along with the Roman church and the Eastern church. But, there are a number of issues facing this ecclesiology.

One is that AC views have not won general recognition within the Anglican Communion as the legitimate expression of Catholic ecclesiology. Can we say that there is in existence an Anglican authority that can be pointed to that determines what the communion teaches? The obvious answer is no. So, how are we to understand a right ecclesiology with regards to there not being a unity of mind and authority about what it means to be a Catholic society let alone in communion with the two other branches of the Church? Strangely enough, the other two branches have not recognised the Anglican Communion as a part of the 'society' of Catholic churches. Without an official statement of contemporary Anglican authority there is no where to really look for essential beliefs of the communion. Perhaps this is why we can look hard at ourselves and see that the cafeteria approach to being Catholic is not working towards full unity.

One of the important matters for me as I seek to understand a sacramental ecclesiology is the issue that within the society of the Catholic Church there is no intercommunion of members. This obviously runs counter to Jesus' prayer that we be one. In order for this to take place it seems there must be a ministry recognised by all that is universal. We might begin by asking, what is the proper constitution of the Anglican Communion that is lacking in the other branches of the Catholic Church? How can the Mystical Body be the res of the Eucharist if there is not a single communion? Are we called to look for a 'potential' society or something more than that? Is the Church a single

visible entity? If it is a true society whose potential is to be a single entity how has the Anglican Communion worked towards an actualisation of that single society? Are we working against it?

I believe that these are very important theological questions to discuss and think about and open discussion on matters facing Anglo-Catholics. We should not be afraid of these tough questions and we should be willing to acknowledge what is lacking in the Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology that needs further work and more active movement towards a single communion. In my mind this is the essential question facing Anglo-Catholics, not what can be provided provisionally that further delays unity of communion. Bishop John Hind has it absolutely right, 'We seek communion not provision.' That is what I am hoping and praying towards.

posted by Fr Jeffrey Steel SSC

Book says young women attracted to orders whose members wear habits

DENVER (CNS) -- While the last 40 years have seen an overall drop in the numbers of women entering religious life, a new book released by the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious says orders that are more visibly counter cultural seem to be flourishing. The council represents the superiors of more than 100 religious communities of sisters whose members wear an identifiable religious habit. A canonically approved organization founded in 1992 to promote religious life in the United States, the council notes that the average age of its member communities' sisters is under 35. The book, titled "**The Foundations of Religious Life: Revisiting the Vision**" and published by Ave Maria Press, is a project of the council. It explores why the orders represented by the council are gaining numbers and how they are living out the vision of consecrated life described by the Second Vatican Council. The book, released May 16, consists of essays written by six religious sisters representing five orders. The topics they address are: religious consecration, the spousal bond, the threefold response to vows, communion in community, and mission.

PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH: UNITY OF HEARTS, UNITY OF CHRISTIANS, UNITY OF THE FEAST OF EASTER.

Metropolitan Alexios Prays for Unity at Roman Catholic Service

(AOI) John Couretas | May 15, 2009



Archbishop-emeritus John F. Donoghue, left, and Metropolitan Alexios, right, join Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory for a final blessing of the congregation. (Photo by Michael Alexander)

Alexios, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Atlanta, joined Roman Catholic Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory on May 6 for an “Evening of Prayer and Unity” service at Atlanta’s Cathedral of Christ the King in honor of the Jubilee Year of St. Paul. Archbishop Gregory graciously welcomed Orthodox Christians to the service. “Our Orthodox brothers and sisters represent a fraternity in the Lord that we cherish and long to strengthen in the Holy Spirit,” he said.

According to The Georgia Bulletin, a diocesan newspaper, the “prayer service blended together Eastern and Western traditions with song, prayer and words of wisdom from shepherds of each of the churches.” The paper said that members of the Choir of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation in Atlanta and the Chanters of the Cathedral of the Annunciation then sang “Phos Hilaron.” The Cathedral Choir of Christ the King also sang the hymn, this time in English, “again linking the two traditions together in Christ.”

Metropolitan Alexios, in his remarks to those at the prayer service, issued a plea for unity:

“Thank you for taking the initiative (to call for this service),” Metropolitan Alexios told the archbishop. “The spirit of St. Paul is with us this evening.”

He thanked the clergy and laity present and said the event was an important step in bringing the communities together. “The thing that has separated us is not the faith,” he said, indicating that the reason was a political issue and a weak moment in the history of the two churches.

But all of these things that are happening now, he said, are signs that the two churches have to do something together. “I pray for a unity ... to let the spirit of understanding, the spirit of the Lord prevail,” he concluded.

Pope meets Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with profound gratitude and joy that I make this visit to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem; a moment to which I have much looked forward. I thank His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus III for his kind words of fraternal greeting, which I warmly reciprocate. I also express to all of you my heartfelt gratitude for providing me with this opportunity to meet once again the many leaders of Churches and ecclesial communities present.

This morning I am mindful of the historic meetings that have taken place here in Jerusalem between my predecessor Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I, and also between Pope John Paul II and His Beatitude Patriarch Diodoros. These encounters,



including my visit today, are of great symbolic significance. They recall that the light of the East (cf. *Is* 60:1; *Rev* 21:10) has illumined the entire world from the very moment when a **(Continue next page)**

"rising sun" came to visit us (*Lk 1:78*) and they remind us too that from here the Gospel was preached to all nations.

Standing in this hallowed place, alongside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which marks the site where our crucified Lord rose from the dead for all humanity, and near the cenacle, where on the day of Pentecost "they were all together in one place" (*Acts 2:1*), who could not feel impelled to bring the fullness of goodwill, sound scholarship and spiritual desire to our ecumenical endeavors? I pray that our gathering today will give new impetus to the work of theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches, adding to the recent fruits of study documents and other joint initiatives.

Of particular joy for our Churches has been the participation of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His Holiness Bartholomew I, at the recent Synod of Bishops in Rome dedicated to the theme: *The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*. The warm welcome he received and his moving intervention were sincere expressions of the deep spiritual joy that arises from the extent to which communion is already present between our Churches. Such ecumenical experience bears clear witness to the link between the unity of the Church and her mission. Extending his arms on the Cross, Jesus revealed the fullness of his desire to draw all people to himself, uniting them together as one (cf. *Jn 12:32*). Breathing his Spirit upon us he revealed his power to enable us to participate in his mission of reconciliation (cf. *Jn 19:30; 20:22-23*). In that breath, through the redemption that unites, stands our mission! Little wonder, then, that it is precisely in our burning desire to bring Christ to others, to make known his message of reconciliation (cf. *2 Cor 5:19*), that we experience the shame of our division. Yet, sent out into the world (cf. *Jn 20:21*), empowered by the unifying force of the Holy Spirit (*ibid.* v. 22), proclaiming the reconciliation that draws all to believe that Jesus is the Son of God (*ibid.* v. 31), we shall find the strength to redouble our efforts to perfect our communion, to make it complete, to bear united witness to the love of the Father who sends the Son so that the world may know his love for us (cf. *Jn 17:23*).

Some two thousand years ago, along these same streets, a group of Greeks put this request to Philip: "Sir, we should like to see Jesus" (*Jn 12:21*). It is a request made again of us today, here in Jerusalem, in the Holy Land, in the region and throughout the world. How do we respond? Is our response heard? Saint Paul alerts us to the gravity of our response: our mission to teach and

preach. He says: "faith comes from hearing, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (*Rm 10:17*). It is imperative therefore that Christian leaders and their communities bear vibrant testimony to what our faith proclaims: the eternal Word, who entered space and time in this land, Jesus of Nazareth, who walked these streets, through his words and actions calls people of every age to his life of truth and love.

Dear friends, while encouraging you to proclaim joyfully the Risen Lord, I wish also to recognize the work to this end of the Heads of Christian communities, who meet together regularly in this city. It seems to me that the greatest service the Christians of Jerusalem can offer their fellow citizens is the upbringing and education of a further generation of well-formed and committed Christians, earnest in their desire to contribute generously to the religious and civic life of this unique and holy city. The fundamental priority of every Christian leader is the nurturing of the faith of the individuals and families entrusted to his pastoral care. This common pastoral concern will ensure that your regular meetings are marked by the wisdom and fraternal charity necessary to support one another and to engage with both the joys and the particular difficulties which mark the lives of your people. I pray that the aspirations of the Christians of Jerusalem will be understood as being concordant with the aspirations of all its inhabitants, whatever their religion: a life of religious freedom and peaceful coexistence and - for young people in particular - unimpeded access to education and employment, the prospect of suitable housing and family residency, and the chance to benefit from and contribute to economic stability.

Your Beatitude, I thank you again for your kindness in inviting me here, together with the other guests. Upon each of you and the communities you represent, I invoke an abundance of God's blessings of fortitude and wisdom! May you all be strengthened by the hope of Christ which does not disappoint!

Benedict XVI visits Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate, expresses hope for Christian unity

Vatican City, May 15, 2009 / 12:03 pm (CNA).- This morning the Holy Father visited the Armenian Patriarchal Apostolic Church of Jerusalem, where he was greeted by Patriarch Torkom Manoukian. The Pope assured the Armenian Community of his prayers and spoke of the need for Christian unity. **(Continue next page)**

There are 10,000 people of the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate who are present in the Palestinian Territories of Jordan and Israel.

"I count it a great blessing," said the Pope in his address, "to have met in this past year with the Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians Karekin II and with the Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I. Their visits to the Holy See, and the moments of prayer which we shared, have strengthened us in fellowship and confirmed our commitment to the sacred cause of promoting Christian unity."

The Holy Father also mentioned his appreciation for the commitment of the Armenian Apostolic Church "to the continuing theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. This dialogue, sustained by prayer, has made progress in overcoming the burden of past misunderstandings, and offers much promise for the future."

He continued, "A particular sign of hope is the recent document on the nature and mission of the Church produced by the Mixed Commission and presented to the Churches for study and evaluation." In this context he expressed the hope that the work of the commission may "bear abundant fruit for the growth of Christian unity, and advance the spread of the Gospel among the men and women of our time."

Pope Benedict gave assurances of his prayers that the Armenian Community in Jerusalem "will constantly draw new life from its rich traditions, and be confirmed in its witness to Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection in this Holy City."

"I ask you in turn to pray with me that all the Christians of the Holy Land will work together with generosity and zeal in proclaiming the Gospel of our reconciliation in Christ, and the advent of His Kingdom of holiness, justice and peace," he concluded.

God's Word: A Byzantine Christian View

Face to Face with God — Anthony Dragani, Ph.D.
(Dr. Anthony Dragani is a member of SS. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Portage, Pa. and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Mt. Aloysius College in Cresson, Pa. has assisted the Office of Religious Education in program planning.)

"From childhood you have known the Sacred Writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim 3:14)

But how does the written Word of Scripture have the power to "instruct for salvation"? The answer is through the Person of the Holy Spirit. Quoting Duke University Divinity School's Adjunct Professor, Edward Rommen, Dr. Dragani said, "The Holy Spirit participated in Creation and has spoken through the prophets. The Holy Spirit continues working through Pentecost and through the Sacraments. The power of the Holy Spirit gives life to the Church. It is the guiding force of our community, and through the ministry of the Church, brings salvation."

It is not uncommon to have someone walk up to you to ask: "Are you saved?" The Eastern Christian answer is not a simple yes. It is not a done deal. We are currently being saved; our salvation is taking place inside by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Eastern Christian term for this is Deification or Theosis. Just as we begin our journey at Baptism and Chrismation as spiritual children, we need to come to share and grow in God's own life through the air we breathe (prayer) and the food we eat (sacraments). We work through these mysteries under the guidance of the Church.

"It is the Holy Spirit who brings about Salvation/Theosis," Dr. Dragani said. "One of the vehicles by which he does this is Sacred Scripture." We believe that all Scripture is "inspired – brought into being by God's very breath. And what is this Breath, but the Holy and Life-Creating Spirit?"

Some may argue that since the Bible was written by human (imperfect) beings, how can it be the inspired Word of God? Dr. Dragani countered, saying, "The Bible expresses God's Truth through human authors – we see the Holy Spirit working through their humanity – human elements, including cultural biases."

Dr. Dragani gave for example, 1 Cor 11, where it says "it is disgraceful for a man to have long hair." Some Christian sects take that quite literally. But in Corinth, a seaport and crossroad of its time, for a man to wear his hair long was to advertise his services as a prostitute. Long hair on men just does not have that context today. The Scripture was speaking to a specific community in a specific cultural context, and was not intended to be taken as a universal truth. **(Continue next page)**

Today, there are fundamentalist Christians who take the Bible as Science, following the tenets of strict Creationism, etc. Eastern Christians, however, have come to believe in the Bible as a book of Faith that was written to “instruct for Salvation” – it was never written as a scientific or literal historical text. While fundamentalist Christians hold that Scripture alone (Sola Scriptura) is truth for Salvation and this may be received and interpreted individually, the Eastern Christian holds that Scripture should never be broken open in isolation, but rather within the light of the Church and Tradition as shaped by the Holy Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit is the same Spirit found in the writings of the Church Fathers and in the Councils, but in the Sacraments and the Divine Liturgy we come to experience the Holy Spirit in a most tangible way,” Dr. Dragani said.

The readings from Scripture that are taken in the Divine Liturgy, and the Liturgy itself, being grounded and interwoven with the same Scripture, have been designed by the Church under the guidance of that same Spirit. Through the Divine Liturgy, the whole Church proclaims the Word of God – in Scripture and in Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

“In our Byzantine Tradition, we understand Scripture within the larger context of the Divine Liturgy and the yearly cycle of readings,” Dr. Dragani added. He suggested studying Sunday’s readings before going to Liturgy to deepen our understanding and open our hearts to what the Church desires to reveal to us about a particular feast.

He concluded “In our Tradition, it is in the Holy Scripture and the Divine Liturgy that we experience the Face of God.”

Ukraine: New Catechism for Ukrainian Rite

ACN News, Friday, 12th June 2009 – Ukraine

By John Newton

The first worldwide catechism for the Ukrainian Byzantine Rite Catholic Church is set to transform catechesis throughout the rite.

Six years in the making, the historic book is almost finished – and will be published in 2010.

Sister Luiza Ciupa, whose work at the Catechetical Institute in Lviv, western Ukraine, has been vital in the Church’s recovery from 70 years of communist atheism, told Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) that the catechism was intended for Ukrainian Byzantine Rite Catholics around the world.

“Because this will be the book of our faith for our Church – and will unify our faith – it will be translated into at least six languages,” she said.

“A NEW STEP TOWARDS THE UNION OF THE ORTHODOX EPISCOPATES OF USA AND CANADA”, unofficial translation of an article so entitled from the Romanian- Canadian newspaper, ZIG- ZAG, April 2009 edition.

The series of meetings between the Hierarchs of the two Romanian Orthodox Episcopates in the USA and Canada continued recently with a common meeting of the Diocesan Council of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (Vatra) and the Archdiocesan Council of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of both Americas (under the canonical authority of the Romanian Patriarchate). The majority of Orthodox clerics from USA and Canada considered this meeting to be an historic one, given the fact that it follows along last year’s decisions made by both Congresses to continue efforts towards their union in a single grouping. The basis of the discussions- held at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Cleveland- was the Joint Dialogue Commission’s document regarding the creation of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of North America. Among the main problems discussed were those referring to the nature of the autonomy of the future Metropolitanate and its relationship with the Romanian Orthodox Church (BOR), the administrative union of all Orthodox Christians in North and South America, and of no lesser importance, the issues regarding the means of spiritual healing of wounds produced over 60 years of religious division of Romanian Orthodox in USA and Canada. The meeting, jointly presided by His Eminence Nathaniel and His Eminence Nicolae, the Archbishops of both Orthodox church groupings in USA and Canada, was finalized through a document- proposal of the principles that will be presented to the next Congresses of both Romanian Episcopates for debate and ratification; thereafter these proposals would be presented to the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which would then approve the inception of the future North- American Metropolitanate. In this context, one of the supporters of the union of both Romanian Episcopates, Fr. Cezar Vasiliu, Parish Priest of St. Nicholas church of Montreal, presented the above-mentioned news items as part of a Conference he held in front of his parishioners, and in the presence of Ioan Casian, Vicar Bishop of the other Episcopate, all this as a sign of the hope for unity. Fr. Vasiliu did not hide the existence of some form of opposition to this project, admitting that there exists a “nucleus” [of people] who vehemently oppose the union with the “Mother Church” - a nucleus made up of a few (13!) Orthodox churches, the majority being from the “Vatra” Episcopate.

Anglican Convent of All Saints to be Received in Full Communion

BY SHAWN TRIBE, 6-14-09

From one of our priestly readers comes this exciting bit of news:

On Thursday, 3 September in the Year of Our Lord 2009

Mass will be Celebrated in the Chapel of All Saints Convent Catonsville, Maryland with the Archbishop of Baltimore -Edwin O'Brien - as the Chief Celebrant

During this Mass Mother Christina, Sister Emily Ann, Sister Mary Joan, Sister Hannah, Sister Elizabeth, Sister Elaine, Sister Catherine Grace, Sister Julia Mary, Sister Mary Charles, and Sister Margaret will be received into full communion with the Holy See.

Mother Virginia and Sister Barbara Ann have chosen to remain Anglican.



predominantly Western since we are a Western country. Both sides, he stated, would need to change to make it happen. But then he said that it is clear from the

problems currently in Orthodoxy that “we need a pope.” He was very quick to follow that with statement emphasizing that he doesn’t mean a pope as defined by Vatican I, but that nonetheless, the Church needs a single head.

I thought this was a startling statement by the Metropolitan. Not that I believe he is a crypto-Catholic, since many Orthodox will agree that the papacy, as they perceive it was practiced in the 1st

millennium, is a valid part of Christian ecclesiology. But Jonah says it in a more blunt, less defensive fashion. He comes across as a lover of Orthodoxy who is not afraid to say things that traditionally have not been said for fear of being seen as traitorous to Orthodoxy. I think it is a good thing for both Orthodox and Catholics that he has been picked as the Primate, and I pray that his ministry will bring us closer to unity.

Oriente Lumen Conference in DC.

Excerpt from a blog The Divine Life: Why We Were Created by Eric Simmons

But it was my personal conversation with him [Metropolitan Jonah] afterward which was most enlightening. Earlier in the day, he asked us all to “picture what a united Catholic-Orthodox Church would look like in America. For it won’t happen until we picture it.” I approached him, told him I was a Roman Catholic, and then asked him to tell me how he pictured a united Church in America. He told me that he thought it was almost unimaginable, but that it would involve a united synod of bishops, which would most likely be



Pope Benedict XVI

“ Cyril and Methodius are a classic example of what is today referred to with the term ‘inculturation’: Each people should make the revealed message penetrate into their own culture, and express the salvific truth with their own language. This implies a very exacting work of ‘translation,’ as it requires finding adequate terms to propose anew the richness of the revealed Word, without betraying it. The two brother saints have left in this sense a particularly significant testimony

that the Church continues looking at today to be inspired and guided. ”

LIGHT OF THE EAST

Newsletter of the Society

Of St. John Chrysostom

(Youngstown-Warren Chapter)

C/o Vito R. Carchedi

35 Schenley Ave. Struthers, OH 44471

The Society of Saint John Chrysostom is an ecumenical group of clergy and laypeople which promotes Eastern Christianity and Ecumenical Dialogue between the Eastern and Western Churches. It sponsors the Eastern Churches Journal and the annual Orientale Lumen Conferences. Chapters of the Society are located in several cities around the United States and meet regularly on a regional basis. The national organization is based in Washington, D.C.

+REGULAR MEETING OF THE YOUNGSTOWN-WARREN CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

+TUESDAY JULY 14, 2009

+ 7:00 P.M. (PRAYER)

+ST. MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH, 3506 LOGAN WAY LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

+ SPEAKER: H. PAUL FINLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE

+TOPIC: JOURNEY OF FAITH: BAPTIST TO EASTERN ORTHODOXY

+PRAY FOR THE UNITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES!

+PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO A FRIEND.