

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...

Dear Members and Friends, I send along my best wishes for a Holy Nativity season and a Happy New Year. **Our first regular meeting of 2012 will be at St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, 7782 Glenwood Ave., Boardman, Oh 44512-582** <http://www.stmarysbyzantine.org> Phone/Fax: (330) 726-8573. St. Mary's is our chapter's home base.

The meeting will be Tuesday January 10 at 7 p.m. Father George Gages, pastor of St. Mary's will speak on "The Miracle of Damascus, Church Unity: Priority or Apathy?."

Please mark your calendar for two other regular meetings: Tuesday, March 13, 7 p.m., Bishop John of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Eparchy of Parma and Tuesday, May 8,, 7 p.m., Dr. Edith Humphrey of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. You will be notified of further details in the future.

Archimandrite Serge (Keleher) Memory Eternal!

Edited by LOE from

<http://www.orientalelumen.org.uk/Sunday>, 13 November 2011

Archimandrite Serge Kelleher fell asleep in the Lord in Dublin late in the morning of Friday 11th November. Bishop Hlib Lonchyna, Apostolic Exarch for the Ukrainian Greek Catholics of Great Britain, responsible also for the Ukrainian Catholic flock in Ireland, informs us that the priestly Parastas is planned for Friday evening, 18th November, and the Funeral itself will be on Saturday, 19th November.

Father Deacon Richard Downer writes:

It was while he was at Keston College that Fr Serge published his book about the persecuted Greek Catholics in the Ukraine. The book launch, which was held in the Church Hall of the joint Russian/Greek Orthodox Church in Canterbury Road in Oxford. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware of the Greek Orthodox Church was

present. The Orthodox presence in a Church Hall, a Hall that they owned, was quite remarkable considering the fact that Fr Serge's book was about the suffering/persecuted Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine. Once again Fr Serge stood out, as it were, by wearing his Kamelevikon and veil; neither of the Orthodox Bishops wore theirs.. At some stage during the gathering Metropolitan Kallistos also spoke. He started his talk in his own very English humorous way as follows: "God is a mystery; therefore because man is made in the image of God, he too is a mystery; but there is no greater mystery than Archimandrite Serge Kelleher!"

In addition, many years ago, when the Society of St John Chrysostom in England had almost ceased to exist, there was a meeting held downstairs in the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in London attended by Fr Serge, the late Fr Graham Woolfenden, the late Joe Farrelly, myself and others, in order to see how the Society could be re-started, as it were. Following on from that meeting various things began to happen, and Fr Serge played an important role in this regard.

This was some time before the formation of the Society of St John Chrysostom in the USA, a matter that we discussed at some of our Society committee meetings in London, prior to its formation. Another of Fr Serge's projects was the launching of the *Eastern*

Churches Journal, the first copy of which appeared for Winter 1993/1994, Fr Serge being the editor. Again this was a matter that we discussed on various occasions at Society committee meetings in London prior to the Journal being launched.

The Society is immensely grateful to God for Fr Serge, who not only helped to lay the foundations for the work of the Society today, but also the significant work of our sister Society in the United States and its conferences and publications in furtherance of Catholic-Orthodox unity



PLEASE PAY 2012 DUES. SEND \$20 (\$25 FAMILY) TO ADDRESS IN MASTHEAD. THOSE LISTED HAVE PAID: SPINOSA, D. LIMBERT, KAIL, MIHALIK, HUDAK, CALABRO, SKURICH, B & C BERARDI.

Catholics, Orthodox must pursue new evangelization together, Pope tells Patriarch

(CatholicCulture.org) In a message of greeting to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Pope Benedict XVI said that Catholics and Orthodox must work together to bear witness to the Gospel in increasingly secularized societies.

Pope Benedict sent a personal message to Patriarch Bartholomew I for the feast of St. Andrew, the patron of the Constantinople see, and for the 20th anniversary of Bartholomew's election as Patriarch. Cardinal Kurt Koch, the president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, led a Vatican delegation to Istanbul to join in celebrating the feast.

After meeting with Patriarch Bartholomew, the Vatican delegation joined in a liturgical celebration, at which the papal message was read aloud. In it the Pontiff said that he thanks God "for having allowed me to strengthen the bonds of sincere friendship and true brotherhood which unite us."

The Pope went on to say that Catholic and Orthodox leaders face the same challenges in a secularized society. "Announcing the mystery of salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ needs to undergo deep renewal in many regions which once accepted the light but are now suffering the effects of secularization which impoverishes man in his deepest dimension," he said.

The Vatican annually sends a delegation to join with the Ecumenical Patriarch in celebrating his patronal feast, just as the Orthodox leader sends delegates to Rome for the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

UKRAINIAN PATRIARCH ADDRESSES BISHOPS

On Monday 11-14-11 His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church addressed the Fall General Assembly in Baltimore of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The 41 year old Patriarch spoke in English and concluded in Spanish. One of the

points he made was that for every seminary spot in Ukraine there are three applicants.

PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH

Unity of Hearts!

Unity of Christians!

Unity of the Feast of Easter!



Pope prays for Eastern Catholic Church in November

Vatican City, Oct 31, 2011 / 10:46 am (CNA/EWTN News).- Pope Benedict is praying this November for the Eastern Catholic Church and for the Church in Africa as it looks to live out the Synod for Africa.

The Pope's general prayer intention for November is: "That the Eastern Catholic Churches and their venerable traditions may be known and esteemed as a spiritual treasure for the whole Church."

His mission intention is: "That the African continent may find strength in Christ to pursue justice and reconciliation as set forth by the second Synod of African Bishops."

1st Session of Committees of Kyivan Patriarchate and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church on Unification Held

31 October 2011, 13:24 | Inter-Orthodox relations | <http://risu.org> |

The first joint session of the committees set up by the Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyivan Patriarchate (UOC-KP) and the Hierarchical Council of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) to conduct a dialogue on unification was held on October 27, in a session hall within the Golden Dome Monastery of St. Michael.

PRAY FOR UNITY OF THE ORTHODOX & CATHOLICS

Sale of Monastery on Squires Lane in Warren



Bishop Botros and Sister Demiana at the first Divine Liturgy



In January, 2007, after discernment, study and consultation, the sisters decided to sell the monastery, buildings and property. After several offers, our community accepted the offer of the Orthodox Coptic Church. They plan to use the monastery as a convent for Egyptian Orthodox Christian sisters. It is now known as St. Mary and St. John the Beloved Convent. Anointing of the Relics of St. John the Beloved during the first Divine Liturgy of the Coptic Christians at our former Squires Lane monastery. Bishop Botros and other bishops and priests officiated.

ORIENTAL ORTHODOX ROMAN CATHOLIC CONSULTATION MEETING 2011

(from <http://www.syrianorthodoxchurch.org/>)

The United States Oriental Orthodox Roman Catholic Consultation held its 2011 meeting at the Divine Compassion Spirituality Center in White Plains, New

York, on October 6 and 7. The meeting, co-chaired by His Eminence Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and Catholic Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, New York, focused primarily on pastoral issues facing both churches.

The Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation was established in 1978, and is sponsored jointly by the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches America, which includes representatives from the Armenian (Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin), Coptic, Ethiopian, and Syrian Orthodox Churches.

POPE HONORED BY ORTHODOX UNIVERSITY

Receives Medal of the Apostle Jason of Thessalonica

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 5, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- At the end of today's general audience, Benedict XVI received the Gold Medal of the Apostle Jason of Thessalonica from a delegation of the Theology Department of the University of Thessalonica.

The medal was given to him personally by the president of the Association of Post Graduates and Doctoral Candidates of the university, Stefanos Athanasiou, and by the secretary-general, Zizis Siskos.

In his greeting to English-speaking pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square this morning, the Holy Father addressed the delegation of the University of Thessalonica, saying that he felt "profoundly honored" by this "kind gesture," which is an "eloquent sign of the growing understanding and dialogue between Catholic and Orthodox Christians."

"I pray that it will be a presage of even greater progress in our efforts to respond in fidelity, truth and charity to the Lord's calls to unity," stressed the Pontiff.

According to Tradition, the apostle Jason is one of the seventy disciples; he appears in *Acts* 17, during St.

Paul's preaching in Thessalonica. He is greatly venerated by the Orthodox and Eastern Churches.

Bishop Savas of Troas Elected Metropolitan of Pittsburgh

Nov 3, 2011 (GOARCH)

photo © Dimitrios Panagos
Metropolitan-elect Savas



NEW YORK – The Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople elected today His Grace Bishop Savas of Troas as the Metropolitan of Pittsburgh to succeed Metropolitan Maximos, who retired on September 1, 2011.

The Metropolitan-elect was chosen for the see of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh from a list of three candidates whose names were submitted to the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

The newly-elected Metropolitan Savas is a native of Gary, Indiana, the second of six children of Skevos and Stamatia (Georgiades) Zembillas of Kalymnian and Cypriot ancestry. He is a graduate of Andrean High School, Gary, Indiana (1975), Colby College, Waterville, Maine (1979, BA in Philosophy and English Literature) and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts (1984, M.Div. with highest honors). He served as the pastoral assistant at Holy Trinity/St. Nicholas in Cincinnati, Ohio from 1985-87 before resuming his academic studies at Oxford University, England, from 1987 until 1994, under the supervision of then Bishop Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, researching texts and persons of spiritual significance for the history of early Byzantine monasticism.

He was ordained to the Holy Diaconate on November 21, 1992, and on January 8, 1995, to the Holy Priesthood, on both occasions by the then Bishop Iakovos of Chicago, at his home parish of Sts. Constantine and Helen Cathedral in Merrillville, Indiana. During a two-year interim between ordinations, he served as Deacon to Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia. Upon his return to the United States, in September 1995, he was appointed as Proistamenos of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite on November 12, 1996, by the then Bishop Maximos of Pittsburgh. In September 1997, His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon of America assigned Archimandrite Savas to the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios in Merrick, Long Island.

In December 1999, the newly-enthroned Archbishop Demetrios of America, appointed his former student Savas Chancellor of the Archdiocese, a position he held for ten years.

On December 11, 2001, he was elected an Auxiliary Bishop to Archbishop Demetrios by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and given the title “Bishop of Troas.”

Bishop Savas served as the Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America until 2009, when he was named Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Church, Society and Culture.

PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

In a presentation to a gathering of experts on religious freedom and religious rights of minorities, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I said there must be respect for the “inherent rights of all human beings and their aspiration and rights of religious freedom should be important components to sustain tolerance among all God’s creation.” (from OCP, edited LOE).

Calabria

from:

<http://www.initaly.com/regions/byzant/byzant6.htm>

... this region is a real Byzantine treasure trove. In



Rossano, the 10th-century church of San Marco, defiantly perched on its own outcrop, is a mystical masterpiece, considered

one of the best preserved Byzantine churches in Italy. It was built by St. Nilus the Younger as a retreat for the monks who lived in the tufa grottos underneath. Inside, there are still traces of the original wall frescoes.

Vibo Valentia, an ancient Calabrian city that has begrudgingly hosted Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Normans and Bourbons, is home to the Byzantine temple of S. Ruba.

In the picturesque hill town of Bivongi stroll down the narrow streets, under archways, past high stone walls and out into the countryside to see the 11th-century church of San Giovanni

Theresti, considered a masterpiece of Norman-Byzantine art. It contained a renowned library and was one of the most important monasteries in southern Italy until the 15th century.



Nearby Stilo is a fairly well preserved village whose main attraction is the Byzantine Cattolica, thought to have been built either in the 7th or the 10th century. Its elegant red brick façade, topped by four cylindrical cupolas, is visible from afar as you

climb the slopes of Mt. Consolino. Inside, the church is small, austere and extremely mystical.

Gerace is one of the most interesting towns in southern Italy. Its castle was first erected in the 7th century, and though it has been devastated by numerous earthquakes, it is still an imposing bastion. The 11th-century cathedral is considered a national treasure, with its massive outer towers and spiritually inspiring interior. Add to that the picture-perfect streets of the town, which lead to three Byzantine churches (S. Giovanello, S. Maria del Maestro and S. Maria del Monserrato), and you have a destination well worth the detour.

Frascineto is a town which takes great pride in its Albanian heritage. Everything in town is written in two languages, and all the local residents will be happy to tell you about their ancestors, who came here in two waves, first in 1448 as mercenaries, and then in the 1500s to escape Turkish invasions.

Perched on the edge of the picturesque Pollino National Park, Frascineto offers spectacular views of snow-

capped mountains, as well as a remarkable museum housing over 250 Byzantine icons. The earliest of these, dating back to the 1500s, were brought here by the Albanians.



The

Museum of Byzantine Icons and Tradition is located on Piazza Albania, tel. (0981) 32688, open Monday-Friday 10:30 am-1:30pm and 4-7pm. La Locanda di Alia is only 3 km from Frascineto and makes a wonderful base for exploring all of Byzantine Calabria.

***POPE BENEDICT MADE A PASTORAL VISIT TO CALABRIA THIS PAST OCTOBER.**

US Melkite bishop urges study of ordaining married men as priests

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

By [Catholic News S...](#)

By Mark Pattison Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- To address a shortage of priests in his nationwide eparchy, the Melkite Catholic bishop of Newton, Mass., is exploring the possibility of ordaining married men as priests.

Bishop Nicholas J. Samra of Newton notes that of the 40 parishes in his diocese, eight have no resident priest. And, while the answer is more priests, the question is how to get them.

The strategy Bishop Samra prefers is to develop priests from within the diocese rather than ask Melkite

Catholic bishops from the Middle East, where the rite has its roots, to supply priests.

Bishop Samra made his views clear during an address he gave Aug. 23, the date of his installation as bishop.

"God calls men and women to religious vocations. And I believe he also calls married men to the priesthood," he said in his remarks. "We need to study this situation in our country and develop the proper formation for men who are truly deemed worthy of this call."

He added, "The (diocesan) deacon formation program is a good program; however, (it) is not the back door to the priesthood. Married men who are called to priesthood need the same formation as those celibates who are called. I have already discussed this issue with those involved in priestly formation and hopefully soon we can see the growth of properly formed married clergy. Of course there are also major financial issues to be looked at and we will embark on this also."



In a Nov. 9 telephone interview with Catholic News Service, Bishop Samra said his comments should not provoke any surprise at the Vatican.

"This is not new that I said this. I've said it before. They must have known this when they named me (bishop)," he said, adding he has even published his views in a book. "I know a copy went to Rome and I'm sure they saw that."

"I haven't hidden the fact that it's a necessity for our church," he said, noting that any such initiative would need to be "properly managed, and not just ordaining somebody who thinks they have a vocation."

The Vatican began placing limits on the ordination and assignment of Eastern Catholic married priests in the West in the 1880s. In 1929, the Vatican, at the request of the Latin-rite bishops of the United States, ruled that married priests could not serve the Eastern-rite churches in the United States. The ban was applied to Canada in the 1930s and to Australia in 1949.

But by the early 2000s, the Vatican had stopped suspending married men ordained to the priesthood for service in the Eastern Catholic churches of North America and Australia.

Archbishop Cyril Vasil, secretary of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, told CNS in Rome that the Vatican reconfirmed the general ban in 2008, "but in individual cases, in consultation with the national bishops' conference, a dispensation can be given" allowing the ordination.

Eastern Catholic bishops say the Second Vatican Council's call to respect the traditions and disciplines of the Eastern churches, and the 1990 Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches affirmation of that call, in effect nullifies the ban, or at the very least makes the ban a "disputed question" and therefore not binding.

But practical questions abound for the Melkites. "The Melkite Church never had a married clergy (tradition) in the USA," Bishop Samra told CNS.

"We have a bunch of people who want to be ordained, yeah, but we need to have men who have the credentials," he said, adding there are priests in the diocese who have complained, "If I had to go through all that training to get it (ordination), why shouldn't they?" To that end, Bishop Samra said he planned on meeting with representatives of **(Continue next page)**

the Byzantine Catholic seminary where Melkite seminarians are educated to work out those issues.

There are some married priests serving the diocese; four are assigned to small parishes that struggle to pay the expenses incurred by the priests' families. To address that, Bishop Samra said he would like to reinstate a dormant philanthropic arm of the diocese, and apply 30-40 percent of the funds raised as an escrow account to have the dioceses pay the costs of a priest's family, leaving the individual parish to pay the same costs whether the priest is celibate or married.

One solution Bishop Samra said he would no longer pursue is bringing in Melkite priests from the Middle East. "Everyone we brought over we had problems with, and they're all gone," he said, noting they did not adapt to U.S. culture.

He added that he has told his brother Melkite bishops, "I'm a little afraid now of requesting priests from the Middle East. I'm just afraid you're going to send us people who have problems and those problems are going to be multiplied."

Bishop Samra is the Melkite Catholic diocese's first U.S.-born bishop.

He said other approaches include having "working priests" who make a salary outside the diocese staff parishes during the weekend, and "asking a couple of our birituals to help out a little more." Biritual priests have permission to celebrate Mass in two rites, often the Latin rite and an Eastern rite.

Melkite parishes have been closed, not for a lack of priests but for a lack of parishioners, according to Bishop Samra. He said Melkite Catholics without a priest will typically worship at a Latin-rite church, but that the longer they attach themselves to a Latin-rite parish, the harder it is to bring them back to the Melkites once a priest becomes available.

"I haven't had people calling me up complaining they have no priest. They just don't understand modern-day assignment procedures," Bishop Samra said. "I'm a bishop, but that doesn't mean I can be a dictator. ... Although they sing 'despota' in the liturgy, I can't be a despot."

He added, "God provides, and that's my faith. We're working on it."
Contributing to this story was Cindy Wooden in Rome.

Orthodox archbishop: we're internally divided on question of 'primacy'

By Benjamin Mann

Castel Gandolfo, Italy, Sep 30, 2011 / 12:51 am (CNA).-

A leading Russian Orthodox official says the Eastern Orthodox churches have yet to resolve the question of authority among themselves, a condition for future progress on the issue of the papacy.

"I would say that there are certain divergences, and there are different positions, of the Orthodox churches on the question of the primacy," said Metropolitan Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, in a Vatican

Radio interview following his Sept. 29 meeting with Pope Benedict XVI at Castel Gandolfo.



"As we discuss the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, within the framework of the next commission, we do not only discuss the primacy of Rome; but we have to touch the issue of the primacy in general," noted the Orthodox metropolitan, apparently referring to future proceedings of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

"And here, of course, we have different traditions – not only between the Catholics and the Orthodox, because we never had such a centralized system as the Catholics have – but we also have some difference among the Orthodox, as to what should be the role of the 'first hierarch' in the Orthodox Church." The Patriarch of Constantinople occupies that role, but his prerogatives are not fully defined.

Metropolitan Hilarion was scheduled to participate in the last session of the Catholic-Orthodox commission, held in 2007 to discuss the question of papal primacy. But an internal dispute between Constantinople and Moscow, over an Orthodox group in Estonia, prompted the Russian representative to walk **(Continue next page)**

out. The two churches also dispute the status of the Orthodox Church in America.

On Thursday, the metropolitan made an apparent reference to these types of difficulties between the Patriarchs of Moscow and Constantinople, saying that “if a particular Orthodox church will want to impose its own vision of this primacy on other churches, then of course we will encounter difficulties. And this is what is happening at the moment.”

Meanwhile, the world's local self-governing Orthodox churches are also attempting to organize a historic Pan-Orthodox Council, comparable to the Church councils held in the Byzantine empire during the first millennium. The new gathering has been in preparation for 50 years, as the Orthodox world seeks to determine how the Patriarch of Constantinople should exercise his authority.

“We believe that his role should be the primacy of honor, and also he is afforded some coordinating role: for example, he can convene the Pan-Orthodox Council,” said Archbishop Hilarion. “Of course, previously – in the history of the ecumenical councils – it was not the Patriarch of Constantinople, neither was it the Pope of Rome, but it was the (Byzantine) Emperor, who convened the councils.”

“So we have this model (of primacy), which is emerging in the Orthodox tradition. But generally, for centuries we had a very decentralized administration. Each autocephalous church is fully independent from other churches in its self-governance. And therefore we do not have a very clear picture as to what should be the role of the primate in the Orthodox tradition.”

“Without having this clear and unified vision, we cannot easily discuss the issue of how we see the role of the 'Primus Inter Pares' ('first among equals,' an Orthodox concept of the papacy) in the universal Church,” Metropolitan Hilarion admitted.

The phrase “first among equals” signifies the typical Orthodox view of the Pope as having a primacy of honor but not jurisdiction. In his 2010 book “Light of the World,” Pope Benedict said the “first among equals” view of the Pope was “not exactly the formula that we believe as Catholics,” due to the Pope’s “specific functions and tasks.”

Until Orthodoxy clarifies its own systems of authority, Archbishop Hilarion said, hopes for progress on the

question of the papacy between Catholics and Orthodox are “probably not too high.”

“But still, there is hope, because if there is willingness to accommodate different positions and to produce a paper – or several papers, maybe – which would clearly state the differences, which would outline the way forward, then we can progress.”

The Moscow Patriarchate's ecumenical representative also expressed hesitation about a possible meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch of Moscow, which has never occurred in the centuries since Moscow's elevation to patriarchal status in 1589.

There are hopes that such a meeting could take place in 2013, on the 1,700th anniversary of Christianity's legalization by the Emperor Constantine. But Archbishop Hilarion said Catholics and Russian Orthodox believers should not jump to conclusions about when a meeting may occur between the Pope and the Patriarch of Moscow.

“We believe that such a meeting will take place at some time in the future. We are not yet ready to discuss the date, or the place, or the protocol of such a meeting – because what matters for us, primarily, is the content of this meeting.”

“As soon as we agree on the content, on the points on which we still disagree or have divergent opinions, then I believe we can have this meeting. But it requires a very careful preparation, and we should not be hurrying up, and we should not be pressed to have this meeting at a particular point of time.”

Despite his cautious attitude toward this meeting and other ecumenical matters, Metropolitan Hilarion spoke warmly of Pope Benedict XVI himself. During his recent trip to Germany, the Pope met with representatives of the Orthodox churches in the country, and spoke of a “common engagement” among Christians to ensure that “the human person is given the respect which is his due.”

“His Holiness is a man of faith and whenever I meet with him I’m encouraged by his spirit, his courage and his dedication to the life of the Church worldwide,” Metropolitan Hilarion said after his meeting with the Pope on Thursday.

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“Of course I’m very impressed by his knowledge of the Orthodox tradition and the attention he pays to the

dialogue between the Catholics and the Orthodox ... I believe that this attitude of the Primate of the Roman Catholic Church will greatly help us in our way towards better mutual understanding.”

Friday, September 30, 2011

Orthodox Diversity on the Problem of Primacy

<http://easternchristianbooks.blogspot.com/> Dr. Adam DeVille

Met. Hilarion Alfeyev, of whom I was recently [critical](#), has come out with a [restatement](#) of his views--already in circulation since the fall of 2007 at least--on the issue of Orthodox understandings of primacy, correctly observing that “there are certain divergences, and there are different positions, of the Orthodox churches on the question of the primacy.” He further noted that “we do not have a very clear picture as to what should be the role of the primate in the Orthodox tradition...Without having this clear and unified vision, we cannot easily discuss the issue of how we see the role of the 'primus inter pares' in the universal Church.” In other words, until Orthodoxy deals with its internal notions of primacy, external discussions about papal primacy with Catholics will probably not go very far.

I've heard this argument before, and rejected it. As I have argued in several places, most fully and with more detail than anyone else has ever done in my [Orthodoxy and the Roman Papacy: Ut Unum Sint and the Prospects of East-West Unity](#), the problem of primacy within Orthodoxy only becomes an issue after East and West part company.

I am convinced (and here follow the suggestion of Met. John Zizioulas in his essay in [The Petrine Ministry: Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue](#)) that Met. Hilarion's proposed method for resolving this disagreement needlessly extends the process to a superfluous second step. He says Orthodoxy must treat internal notions of primacy first and then papal primacy. On the contrary, I am convinced that Orthodoxy and Catholicism must have this discussion *together*: “solving” the problem of papal primacy will *ipso facto* solve the problem of internal Orthodox orderings of primacy. For that, and many other germane arguments, you really will want to read [Orthodoxy and the Roman Papacy: Ut Unum Sint and the Prospects of East-West Unity](#).

Excerpt from post Papal Infallibility by Dr. Adam DeVille

Monday, November 7, 2011

<http://easternchristianbooks.blogspot.com/>
...reflection on infallibility picking up the point that the late Tomas Spidlik [made](#) in referencing a conversation he had with Romania's greatest theologian of the twentieth century, Dumitru Staniloae:

I went to see a dear Romanian friend of mine, the great Orthodox theologian Staniloae, shortly before his death. He told me he could not understand the infallibility of the Pope.

I then replied: You and I are also infallible. He was amazed at my answer, so I explained: When I say during the Mass: "This is my body ..., this is my blood ..." or when I say: "I absolve you from your sins," these are infallible words and this is also the Pope's infallibility, nothing else.

Then Staniloae said: If infallibility is understood in this way, then it is easier to comprehend. Not only is the Pope infallible when he speaks in the name of the Church, but so is the Mother when she tries to speak of God to her child. The priest is infallible in the sacraments and the Pope is also infallible when he speaks in the name of the great sacrament, of the whole Church.

Coordinating Committee of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between Catholic and Orthodox Churches begins its work

The Coordinating Committee of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church began its work in Rome on 22 November 2011. Taking part in the meeting as consultants on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church are Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, and archimandrite Kirill (Govorun), first deputy chairman of the Education Committee of the Russian Orthodox Church.

(Continue next page)

At the beginning of the meeting, members of the committee decided unanimously to send congratulations to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia on his 65th birthday. The two co-chairmen, His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon, Patriarchate of Constantinople, and Cardinal Kurt Koch signed the message.

In his address, Metropolitan Hilarion reminded the participants that a discussion of the problem of *unia* was a precondition of the return of the Russian Orthodox Church to the process of the dialogue. This position was espoused by the Orthodox participants in the meeting. The problems of general methodology of elaborating the document on the primacy of the Roman Pontiff were discussed at the suggestion of Metropolitan Hilarion, who believes that the methodology should reflect the centuries-old experience of the Orthodox dispute against papal claims to universal authority in the Church.

The Commission will continue its work till November 25th.

Austrian cardinal's church transfer to Orthodox gains Vatican approval

Jonathan Luxmoore
15 November 2011



(ENInews). The head of Austria's Roman Catholic church has agreed to give one of his parish churches to Orthodox Christians, after an appeal against the decision by local Catholics was rejected by the Vatican on 11 November.

In October 2011, Cardinal Christoph Schonborn said he had decided to merge two neighboring parishes in Vienna so that the church of Our Lady of Sorrows could be taken over by the Serbian Orthodox church's diocese of Central Europe.

However, the move was protested by local Roman Catholics, including Poles who attend Polish-language services in the church and who staged demonstrations outside Vienna's St. Stefan Cathedral.

In an open letter, Schonborn said he had promised to donate the church after determining it could no longer be maintained by its declining Roman Catholic congregation, adding that he had arranged Polish services in other local churches.

The cardinal said he believed Roman Catholics should "help sister churches in a spirit of Christian solidarity," and would rather give churches to a denomination with which they had "so much in common" than sell them for use as restaurants or discos.

"I am aware this is a painful decision for people connected with this place. But the churches we own were built in other times in the expectation that there would be more Catholics," he said.

However, the handover was suspended pending the result of an appeal to the Vatican by the church's Polish priest, Tadeusz Cichon. In a statement, the Vienna archdiocese said Schonborn had received the Vatican decree rejecting the appeal and would now hold talks with parish representatives on the church's handover.

Meanwhile, a Serbian Orthodox spokesman, Mirko Kolundzic, welcomed the cardinal's ecumenical gesture, adding that the request for a church had been made directly by Patriarch Irinej after his 2010 installation.

"There are up to 160,000 Orthodox Serbs living in and around Vienna, and we've very few places for our liturgies, not to mention any community life," Kolundzic told Poland's Catholic information agency, KAI, on 15 Novemb

SSPX REJECTS VATICAN OFFER, GROUP DISSATISFIED AND WILL SUGGEST MODIFICATIONS TO THE OFFER.

ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC DIALOGUE MEETS, ISSUES STATEMENT ON PLIGHT OF CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

November 3, 2011

WASHINGTON—The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation held its 81st meeting at St Paul's College in Washington October 27-28. The meeting was chaired by Catholic Archbishop Gregory Aymond of New Orleans. The Orthodox co-chairman since 1987, Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh, has retired, and a successor has not yet been named.

During this meeting the members heard reports about major events in the lives of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and issued a brief statement, "On the Plight of Churches in the Middle East."

"We are concerned for our fellow Christians who, in the face of daunting challenges, struggle to maintain a necessary witness to Christ in their homelands," they wrote. "United with them in prayer and solidarity, we ask our fellow Christians living in the West to take time to develop a more realistic appreciation of their predicament. We ask our political leaders to exert more pressure where it can protect these Churches, many of which have survived centuries of hardship but now stand on the verge of disappearing completely."

The members of the Consultation also continued their study of the role of the laity in the two churches and the intermediate or regional levels of ecclesial authority. A paper on the Catholic theology of the parish by Sister of Charity of Leavenworth Susan K. Wood of Marquette University was presented in her absence. Father Patrick Viscuso of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America delivered a paper, "Canonical Reflections on the Orthodox Parish." Father Nicholas Apostola of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas presented a study, "The Role of the Laity in the Church," and Chorbishop John D. Faris, pastor of St. Louis Gonzaga Maronite Church in Utica, New York, presented a paper, "Synodal Governance in the Eastern Catholic Churches."

The Consultation also welcomed a new Orthodox member, Despina D. Prassas, Ph.D., associate professor of theology at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island.

The next meeting is slated to take place at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, June 5-7.

Additional Orthodox members include Rev. Dr. Thomas FitzGerald, dean of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts; Father John Erickson, former dean and professor of canon law and church history at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York; Father James Dutko, pastor of St. Michael's Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church in Binghamton, New York; Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Ph.D., of Brown University; Paul Meyendorff, Ph.D., Alexander Schmemmann professor of liturgical theology and editor of *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, Crestwood, New York; Bishop-Elect Alexander Golitzin, professor of theology at Marquette University, Milwaukee; Robert Haddad, Ph.D., Sophia Smith professor emeritus of history at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts; Father Robert Stephanopoulos, pastor emeritus of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New York; Father Theodore Pulcini, associate professor of religion at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; and Father Mark Arey, general secretary of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), New York, staff.

Additional Catholic members are Jesuit Father Brian Daley (secretary), Catherine F. Huiscking professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame; Thomas Bird, Ph.D., of Queens College, City University of New York, Flushing, New York; Sylvain Destrempe, Ph.D., faculty of the Grand Seminaire in Montreal; Father Peter Galadza, Kule Family professor of liturgy at the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, Ottawa; Father John Galvin, professor of Systematic Theology, The Catholic University of America (CUA); Father Sidney Griffith, professor in the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures, CUA; Father Joseph Komonchak, professor emeritus of religious studies at CUA; Monsignor Paul McPartlan, (Continue next page)

Carl J. Peter professor of systematic theology and ecumenism at CUA; Father David Petras, spiritual director and professor of liturgy at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Pittsburgh; Vito Nicastrò, Ph.D., associate director of the Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Archdiocese of Boston; and Paulist Father Ronald Roberson, Ph.D., associate director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, staff.

FULL TEXT of the joint statement follows:

Statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation

October 29, 2011
Washington, DC

The Plight of Churches in the Middle East

The “Arab Spring” is unleashing forces that are having a devastating effect on the Christian communities of the Middle East. Our Churches in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine report disturbing developments such as destruction of churches and massacres of innocent civilians that cause us grave concern. Many of our church leaders are calling Christians and all people of good will to stand in solidarity with the members of these ancient indigenous communities. In unity with them and each other, we the members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, gathered October 27-29, 2011, add our voice to their call.

We are concerned for our fellow Christians who, in the face of daunting challenges, struggle to maintain a necessary witness to Christ in their homelands. United with them in prayer and solidarity, we ask our fellow Christians living in the West to take time to develop a more realistic appreciation of their predicament. We ask our political leaders to exert more pressure where it can protect these Churches, many of which have survived centuries of hardship but now stand on the verge of disappearing completely.

When one part of the body suffers, all suffer (cf. 1 Cor. 12:26). As Christians in the West, we therefore have the vital responsibility to respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters who live in fear for their lives and communities at this moment. As Orthodox and Catholic Christians we share this responsibility and this concern together.

With the Rise of Militant Secularism, Rome and Moscow Make Common Cause

October 19, 2011 11:05 AM | Fr. Johannes Jacobse



Met. Kyrill (before becoming Patriarch) and Pope Benedict

The [Acton Institute](#) just published my essay.
Source: [Acton Institute](#) | Fr. Johannes L. Jacobse

The European religious press is abuzz over recent developments in Orthodox – Catholic relations that indicate both Churches are moving closer together. The diplomatic centerpiece of the activity would be a meeting of Pope Benedict and Patriarch Kyrill of the Russian Orthodox Church that was first proposed by Pope John Paul II but never realized. Some look to a meeting in 2013 which would mark the 1,700th anniversary of the signing of the [Edict of Milan](#) when Constantine lifted the persecution of Christians. It would be the first visit between the Pope of Rome and Patriarch of Moscow in history.

A few short years ago a visit between Pope and Patriarch seemed impossible because of lingering problems between the two Churches as they reasserted territorial claims and began the revival of the faith in post-Soviet Russia, Ukraine and elsewhere. The relationship grew tense at times and while far from resolved, a spirit of deepening cooperation(**Continue next page**)

has nevertheless emerged. Both Benedict and Kyrill share the conviction that European culture must rediscover its Christian roots to turn back the secularism that threatens moral collapse.

Both men draw from a common moral history: Benedict witnessed the barbarism of Nazi Germany and Kyrill the decades long communist campaign to destroy all religious faith. It informs the central precept in their public ministry that all social policy be predicated on the recognition that every person has inherent dignity and rights bestowed by God, and that the philosophical materialism that grounds modern secularism will subsume the individual into either ideology or the state just as Nazism and Communism did. If Europe continues its secular drift, it is in danger of repeating the barbarism of the last century or of yielding to Islam.

The deepening relationship does not portend a union between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Roman Catholics are more optimistic about unity because they are less aware of the historical animus that exists between Catholics and Orthodox. Nevertheless, while the increasing cooperation shows the gravity of the threat posed by secularism, it also indicates that the sensitive historical exigencies can be addressed in appropriate ways and times and will not derail the more pressing mission.

The cooperation has also caused the Churches to examine assumptions of their own that may prove beneficial in the long run. The meaning of papal supremacy tops the list.

On the Orthodox side the claims to a universal jurisdictional supremacy of the Patriarch of Rome have been rejected since (indeed, was a cause of) the Great Schism of 1054 (see [here](#) and [here](#)). That said, the Orthodox see the Pope of Rome as the rightful Patriarch of the Church of Rome and could afford him a primacy of honor in a joint council but not jurisdiction.

On the other side, the Orthodox do not have a Magisterium, a centralized Church structure that speaks for all the Orthodox in the world. This has led to some fractious internal wrangling throughout the centuries although doctrine and teaching has remained remarkably consistent.

It will come as no surprise for anyone to know that the Orthodox have difficulties with some of the claims made by the Catholic Church concerning the precise responsibilities and the nature of the authority associated with the Bishop of Rome. The Catholic Church has long

recognized this as a basic difference between the Orthodox and Catholic worlds. The rise of militant secularism, however, and the cultural challenges this creates for Orthodox and Catholic Christians alike, have focused everyone's minds on how they can cooperate to address these issues of ethics and culture.

Protestants have a stake in the outcome as well particularly as attitudes have softened towards Rome due in large part to Pope John Paul II's exemplary leadership during the collapse of communism in the last century. Protestant ecclesiology has no real place for priest or pope which makes the nature of discussions between them and the Catholics or Orthodox entirely different. Nevertheless, as the soul denying ramifications of secularism become more evident, an increasing number look to the Catholic and Orthodox Churches for leadership.

The most visible ambassador for the Orthodox Church is Oxford-educated [Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev](#) of Volokomansk who runs the [Department of External Church Relations](#) of the Russian Orthodox Church. Observers report that a deep respect and even genuine fondness exists between Hilarion and Benedict which has contributed to the recent thaw.

Both of them note with alarm the increasing attacks on the Christian faith in Europe and on Christians themselves in other parts of the world, a development they term "Christophobia." Hilarion brought these points forward several years back when he first challenged the European Union for omitting any mention of the Christian roots of European civilization in the EU Constitution. That earned him considerable worldwide notice and he has become increasingly outspoken towards any attempts to silence the Christian testimony or dim the historical memory of Christendom.

From the Orthodox side it is clear that the leadership that deals with the concrete issues that affect the decline of the Christian West is emerging from Moscow. One reason is the sheer size of the renewed Russian Orthodox Church. The deeper reason however, is that the Russians have direct experience with the suffering and death that ensues when the light of the Christian faith is vanquished from culture.

Decades before the fall of Communism was even a conceptual possibility for most people, Pope John Paul II prophesied that the regeneration of Europe would come from Russia. At the time many people thought it was the misguided ramblings of a misguided man. It is looking like he knew more than his critics. **(Continue next page)**

We are fortunate to have these two leaders, Benedict and Kyrrill, to help guide us through the coming difficulties.

Fr. Johannes L. Jacobse is an Orthodox priest in the Antiochian Archdiocese of North and South America. He is president of the American Orthodox Institute and serves on the board of the Institute for Religion and Democracy. He writes frequently on social and cultural issues [on his blog](#) and elsewhere.

Christian church leaders urge unity at Balamand meeting

By Antoine Amrieh

BALAMAND, Lebanon: Leaders of Lebanon's Maronite Church held talks Tuesday with Greek Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius IV Hazim, the head of the country's second-largest Christian community, in a bid to strengthen Christian unity as political instability sweeps the Middle East.

Maronite Patriarch Beshara Rai underscored the need for dialogue and unity among Christians, as well as between Christians and Muslims, particularly under the current circumstances in the region.

"We see wars and divisions today as events unfold in neighboring Arab countries. Thus we need to meet and unite our people and urge solidarity among all Christians and Muslims," Rai told reporters at the Greek Orthodox patriarchate at the monastery of Balamand in northern Lebanon.

"All religious sects should consider themselves one family ... our religion is based on love," Hazim said.

Rai added that his visit was aimed at strengthening bonds with the Greek Orthodox Church to encourage Christians to maintain their presence in the Arab world.

"We hope to intensify our meetings, particularly under the current circumstances, not only with other Christian sects but also with Muslims to serve the interest of people," Rai said.

A statement released following the meeting said participants agreed that Christians looked forward to seeing states where all citizens enjoy equal rights and duties and live in freedom without religious discrimination.

"Both patriarchs underscored the importance of urging the international community to support national and just Arab causes, particularly the Palestinian cause," the statement also said.

The statement highlighted the historic role that Christians played in the Middle East on both cultural and national levels.

"Both patriarchs stressed their rejection of the so-called 'protection' of any faction by another one, because only the state should be responsible for enforcing justice and protecting people," the statement added.

Pope approves US Anglican ordinariate launch for Jan. 1

By Michelle Bauman



Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl announces the U.S. Ordinariate will begin January 1, 2012

Baltimore, Md., Nov 15, 2011 / 06:15 pm

(CNA/EWTN News).- Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl announced today that an Anglican ordinariate in the United States will be canonically erected on Jan. 1, 2012, the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. "I remain convinced this ordinariate will be a true expression of the Catholic Church," said Cardinal Wuerl, who made the announcement Nov. 15 at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' fall general assembly in Baltimore. Cardinal Wuerl is serving as the Vatican's delegate for establishing a U.S. Anglican ordinariate. He explained that he recently received a letter from Cardinal William Joseph Levada, head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, saying that Pope Benedict has approved the erection of a U.S. ordinariate.

Ordinariates are similar to dioceses but typically national in scope. Pope Benedict authorized the creation of ordinariates for Anglican communities seeking to enter the Catholic Church in his 2009 apostolic constitution, "Anglicanorum coetibus." They will allow entire communities to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church while retaining elements of their Anglican heritage and liturgical practices.

Cardinal Wuerl said that he anticipates approximately 2,000 people joining the American ordinariate when it is established in January. **(Continue next page)**

He explained that two Anglican communities – one in the Diocese of Fort Worth and the other in the Archdiocese of Washington – have already come into full communion with the Catholic Church in anticipation of the new ordinariate being created.

In addition, he said, 67 dossiers from Anglican clergy seeking ordination have been sent to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome.

So far, 35 have received initial approval, meaning that they can now move on to the second stage of the process, which includes a criminal background check, psychological evaluation and vote of support from the local Catholic bishop, as well as from the local Anglican ecclesiastical authority, if possible.

Cardinal Wuerl also announced that the Holy See has approved a catechesis program for Anglican congregations that wish to join the ordinariate.

A formation program for those seeking ordination as Catholic priests has also been approved, he said. That program is currently based at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston and can be completed either on campus or through a distance learning program.

Cardinal Wuerl also addressed some of the practical questions that have arisen as the ordinariate has begun to take shape.

A married Anglican priest can be ordained a Catholic priest but not a bishop, he explained.

As the ordinariate works to get established, it will have the option of using either the Roman Missal or the Anglican Book of Divine Worship. Meanwhile, Cardinal Wuerl said that a committee in Rome is working on future liturgical texts for the ordinariates.

Cardinal Wuerl thanked his brother bishops for the strong support that they have shown for the implementation of the ordinariate in recent months.

“Your involvement is one of the guarantees of the wellbeing of the ordinariate as it is established,” he said.

Head of Ukrainian Catholic Church explains challenges of guiding dispersed flock

Head of church talks about evangelizing post-communist, secular society

By Michelle Martin - OSV Newsweekly, 10/23/2011
Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, 41, was elected in March to lead the Ukrainian Catholic Church, an Eastern-rite church with more

than 7 million members worldwide. The young archbishop and primate visited Chicago last month to celebrate the golden jubilee of the St. Nicholas Eparchy, which includes the United States from Indiana west, including Alaska and Hawaii. He has emphasized developing good ecumenical relationships with other churches and evangelization of post-communist Ukraine since taking his position.

He spoke with Our Sunday Visitor in the offices of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Chicago.

Our Sunday Visitor: How many of your members are in Ukraine and how many are in other countries?

Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk: In Ukraine, we have 5.5 million. In other countries we have around 2 million, more or less. It's not so easy to count.

OSV: What makes it difficult?

Archbishop Shevchuk: As a global church, we exist in different cultures and in different countries. Very often our people will be disseminated in very huge territories. For example, for two years I was bishop for the Ukrainians in Argentina. In Argentina we have almost 300,000 Ukrainians, but I was in touch only with 10,000. It's a huge territory, six times bigger than the territory of Ukraine. I can imagine there is the same situation in other countries.

After the fall of communism, 5 million Ukrainians emigrated, mostly from western Ukraine, which is the Catholic part. We are trying to reach those people in the countries where they are settled, especially Italy, Spain and Portugal. A lot of Ukrainians are in Africa, and in eastern countries, like Singapore, Oceania, in Australia we have an eparchy. This immigration process is making it difficult not only to count those people but to provide for them adequate pastoral care.

OSV: Do you see that challenge here as well?

Archbishop Shevchuk: The most interesting phenomenon in terms of the internal immigration of Ukrainians in the United States is that now people will move to where they can find a job. In the past, they would go mostly to those places where a Ukrainian community exists. That's why it's not so easy to follow those people.
OSV: What happens when you have a few dozen Ukrainians who go to, say, somewhere in west Texas because there are jobs there? Do they go to a Latin-rite church if there is no Ukrainian church? Do you lose contact with them? **(cont)**



Archbishop Shevchuk: There are two different kinds of reactions when perhaps two dozen Ukrainians find themselves in a place where there is no Ukrainian church. Some of them would go to the Roman Catholic Church, and we are very grateful for the Roman Catholic priests that provide pastoral care for our people. But very often, they would not go to any church. Again, in Argentina, a lot of people were moving from the more rural territory to the cities, and in the big cities, we do have our parishes, but they would not come. Some of them explained to me that they were very strongly attached to their church in the village, and when they came to the city, it was not so easy for them to integrate themselves in a new parish. That's why we are supposed to be more welcoming to newcomers, and not only those people who are originally from Ukraine or who are Ukrainian descendants.

OSV: Is your church trying to play catch-up after being underground under communism, when so many bishops and priests were exiled to Siberia?

Archbishop Shevchuk: The Ukrainian church in Ukraine is a little different than the Ukrainian Church in the diaspora. In Ukraine, church structures were destroyed during communism, but the church communities? No. They were small, but they were very active, vibrant. After the fall of communism, those small communities really exploded. They became big parishes, very active. Many people from those parishes emigrated, especially to the United States. In some cases, those people would join the old parishes (in their new homes), but in some cases, those people would perceive that those parishes were very old, not so vibrant structures, so they would go away.

That's why we are considering the pastoral care of our parishes, not only in Ukraine, but also outside, how to be open to newcomers, They can revitalize, make more living parishes.

OSV: What's your relationship with the Orthodox churches like? It seems to be more friendly than it might be in Russia or other countries.

Archbishop Shevchuk: It's a very different situation in Russia. Russia is a mostly Orthodox country. Ukraine is a more pluralistic country. There is no one Orthodox church in Ukraine; among the Orthodox, we have three churches. Also in Ukraine we have a big number of Protestant churches of the different denominations and Muslims and Jews.

OSV: What's the biggest challenge facing your church?

Archbishop Shevchuk: Well, Ukraine is a post-communist country and maybe half of the population does not believe in God. This is a country that needs new evangelization. But also Ukraine is receiving all those influences from the West, which we'd call with one word: secularism. In Ukraine, those ideas find very good

soil. That's why for us, it's so important to fulfill our most important mission: to preach the Gospel of Christ. Those people are looking for the church. They are asking for some spiritual care. Maybe after those decades, we have the right time in order to give the bread of life to those people who are hungry or thirsty for this spiritual dimension of human life. It's why I proclaimed evangelization is our most important task.

OSV: How do you go about doing that?

Archbishop Shevchuk: We are trying first of all to conserve our treasure: liturgy, spirituality, theology. Thanks be to God, we have a lot of vocations. Right now in Ukraine we have almost 600 seminarians, but it's not enough. In our church in Ukraine, for one priest we have 2,050 faithful. It's very difficult to give them efficient pastoral care. I think the most important thing right now for us is the formation of clergy and people of consecrated life. Then, also formation of laity. A lot of Ukrainian young people did not have a good catechetical preparation; it's why catechization is one way to evangelize.

OSV: What would you want a Roman Catholic here in the United States to know about the Ukrainian Catholic Church?

Archbishop Shevchuk: Three points. First, that the Catholic Church does not mean Latin-rite Church. The Catholic Church is a community of different churches. In the Catholic Church, there are 22 different Eastern churches of the different traditions. Second, it's very important to have mutual respect and the interchange of our treasures. Maybe we can ask Roman Catholics how to help our faithful be present in a territory where there are no Ukrainian Catholic parishes, to help them to preserve their identity. Third, I will promise that we will be more and more open to helping Roman Catholics learn more about us who are present in this country.

(Michelle Martin writes from Illinois.)

Patriarch Sviatoslav (Shevchuk) and Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev) want to meet UGCC Information Department, edited by LOE

I am very glad that meetings are held between the Apostolic See and the Moscow Patriarchate," said the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Patriarch Sviatoslav, during a press conference at UNIAN as he commented on the meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev). The head of the UGCC stressed that such meetings are very useful: "We will do everything we can not to hinder such meetings, but to promote them by all means," stated Patriarch Sviatoslav.