

LIGHT OF THE EAST

"GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS."

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

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 6, NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 2012

VITO R. CARCHEDI, EDITOR, 35 SCHENLEY AVE. STRUTHERS, OH 44471

TELEPHONE: 330-755-5635 E-MAIL: vcarchedi@hotmail.com WEBSITE: www.bvzcath.org/stjohnchrysostom/



FROM THE EDITOR...

Dear Members and Friends, Our next regular meeting of the Youngstown-Warren Chapter of the Society of St. John Chrysostom will be at **St. Michael Carpatho-Rus Orthodox Church, 125 Steel Street, Youngstown, OH 44509.**

The pastor is Rev. Fr. Andrew Gromm who can be reached at 330-799-8133. The meeting is Wednesday, January 9 at 7 pm . Our speaker, Father David

Mastroberte will speak on "Recognizing Ourselves in the Other: Does Liturgy Impact Ecumenical Relations?" Father

David is pastor of Saint John's Orthodox Church in Sharon, PA, a parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox

Diocese of the Ecumenical Patriarchate . In 2011, St. John's sold its current complex in Sharon. On Sunday, February 12, 2012, ground was broken for the new church complex on the corner of Route 18 and Morefield Road in Hermitage. As of Fall 2012, the church was moving closer to completion.

Father David was ordained on August 13, 2011 and began his ministry at St. John's on September 1, 2011. Father is also an iconographer.



Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches holds its meeting. Metropolitan Hilarion takes part in it as representative of the Moscow Patriarchate.

On November 21, the feast day of the Presentation in the Temple of the Birth-Giver of God (according to the new style), members of the Coordinating Committee prayed at the Divine Liturgy celebrated in the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Stephen.

Metropolitan Hilarion is accompanied by hieromonk Antony (Sevryuk), secretary of the Administration of the Moscow Patriarchate's parishes in Italy.

HISTORIC ORDINATION TAKES

PLACE IN LAS VEGAS

from <http://www.eparchyofphoenix.org/media/May-July-2011-website-small.pdf> edited by LOE Las Vegas, NV On Thursday, June 16th at Our Lady of Wisdom Italo-Greek Catholic Church, an historic ordination took place. On that day, Bishop Gerald [Dino] ordained Deacon Diodoro Mendoza to the priesthood. It was historic because it was the first ordination to the priesthood specifically for the Italo-Greek Catholic Church in America in 110 years.

Coordinating Committee of the Joint Commission for Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue meets in Paris

<http://www.mospat.ru/en/2012/11/21/news76208/>

On 20 November 2012, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, arrived in Paris with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and All Russia and was met by Metropolitan Emmanuel of France (Patriarchate of Constantinople) at Charles de Gaulle airport.

They proceeded to the premises of the Patriarchate of Constantinople's Metropolia in France, where the Coordinating Committee of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the

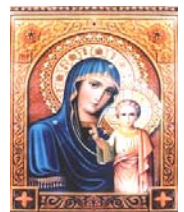
PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH

Unity of Hearts!

Unity of Christians!

Unity of the Feast of Easter!

****To further good ecumenical relations, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem has decided to modify its liturgical schedule so as to be congruent with the practice of the Orthodox churches. This means Easter in the Holy Land will be celebrated on May 5th in 2013 rather than March 31. To accomodate pilgrims Jerusalem and Bethlehem will not follow the new calendar.**



Seminary Includes Guest Cardinal Dolan

29 November 2012 • On-Campus • Deborah (Malacky) Belonick and Virginia H. Nieuwsma edited by LOE



His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon with His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan in Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary. (photo: Roman Ostash) When [His Beatitude The Most Blessed Tikhon](#), primate of the Orthodox Church in America

(OCA), made his inaugural visit to St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (SVOTS) as its new President and ruling bishop on November 29th, he sampled the rich diversity of campus life. First, His Beatitude attended Vespers, along with [His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan](#), archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York and a special guest of the seminary for the evening. Second, he sat down to a community fish dinner, prepared by the school's chef and his wife, Nat and Teresa Fasciani, served up by faculty and staff. And third, His Beatitude blessed the school's new exercise/gym facility. In four short hours, Metropolitan Tikhon experienced the mundane and the sublime, the ordinary and extraordinary, the earthy and the heavenly that characterizes daily life at SVOTS. His Beatitude assumed the offices of President of the Seminary and Chair of its Board of Trustees upon his election as Metropolitan of All America and Canada at the 17th All-American Council of the OCA, November 13, 2012. The Very Rev. John Behr, dean, welcomed Metropolitan Tikhon by saying, "This is the first chance we've had to welcome you to our school—I should say 'your school'!—as our President, since your election to the office of Metropolitan. Truly, it is a joy to have you with us."

In response, Metropolitan Tikhon said, "It is a blessing to make my first pastoral visit to join the community here for Vespers and a meal. It was truly a great honor to meet Cardinal Dolan and his delegation, and I am looking forward to returning to SVOTS soon to visit and

pray with you, as we work together in this sacred task of spiritual education and formation." His Beatitude will return to campus January 17–18, 2013, for the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees.

In acknowledging Cardinal Dolan, Fr. John continued, "Truly, you also honor us with your presence this evening. The last time we had a Cardinal of the Roman Church here was Cardinal Ratzinger!" [Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, made a brief visit to the seminary in 1998, attending Vespers with the community].

"You've inspired us with all the work you done in leading the advance with the gospel message, especially in your work in education: in uniting three seminaries from different dioceses; in your new program for pastoral education; and in your continuing education for clergy and laity alike," concluded Fr. John.

With his typical good humor, Cardinal Dolan responded, "The honor of being with you is all mine." Then he quipped, "I am especially happy to be here on the Feast of St. Andrew, as I've always identified with St. Andrew, having an impetuous and irascible brother of my own!"

Cardinal then enumerated the various cooperative projects over the recent years between the Seminary and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, including concerts of sacred music hosted in some of the most famous Roman Catholic churches in Manhattan; and smaller scale projects with the Crestwood neighborhood's Annunciation Church and nearby St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers.

Metropolitan Tikhon then presented His Eminence with a gift from the Seminary: an ornately carved pectoral cross, gilded with gold on the edge. His Beatitude noted, "As you know, the yoke of a bishop can be heavy to bear; here is a gift from us to make it lighter."

Cardinal Dolan, who came to campus for the occasion at the invitation of The Very Rev. Dr. Distinguished clergy join His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan and His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon John Behr, dean, and The Very Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield, chancellor/CEO, acknowledged the gift, with joy, saying, "It's beautiful; I will cherish this."

Father Chad noted, "It's highly symbolic that the Metropolitan of the OCA had his first meeting with Cardinal Dolan on the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, as this feast has come to symbolize the desire of unity between East and West."

"The Cardinal's visit represents the ever-strengthening ties between our seminary and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York," said Fr. Chad.+++

PRAY FOR THE UNITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES!!!

For Bartholomew, the ecumenical journey is "irreversible"

NAT da Polis » 11/30/2012 17:25 TURKEY

During the celebrations for the feast of Saint Andrew, patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Bartholomew said we must work for and practice dialogue, trying to focus more on what unites us than on what divides us. The preparatory work for the upcoming pan-Orthodox synod has ended.

Istanbul (AsiaNews) - The path toward ecumenism is "irreversible" in spite of difficulties in reaching the goal of full communion, said Bartholomew I, ecumenical patriarch, on the Feast Day of Saint Andrew, patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. A delegation representing the Holy See headed by Card Kurt Koch was present; it included Bishop Brian Farrell, Undersecretary Andrea Palmieri and papal nuncio to Ankara, Mgr Antonio Lucibello.

Bartholomew reiterated the importance of Vatican II, which changed the relations between the two Churches. He also mentioned the persistent difficulties on the path towards full unity, but stressed however the irreversibility of the ecumenical journey.

During his recent visit to Vienna, the ecumenical patriarch said the two Churches share the same desire to maintain their own identity and traditions, but also the same wish to celebrate the Eucharist together.

Vatican II was the turning point. During the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of that Council, Bartholomew noted that he was invited by Benedict XVI because of the shared apostolic roots that the Churches of Rome and Constantinople possess.

Unfortunately, the brotherly co-existence between the two Churches was broken when some of their theologians or even leaders wasted their time in digressions, more for their own self-aggrandizement than for the good of the Church. In so doing, they ignored the essence and importance of dialogue, which consists of peaceful co-existence and solidarity as an expression of Christian charity.

We must work for and practice dialogue, he said, trying to focus more on what unites us than on what divides us. For this reason, the ecumenical patriarch praised the contacts between the two Churches and proposed more frequent meetings to exchange ideas between the heads of the Churches, which help solve misunderstandings that go back a thousand years.

Those who want to participate in the dialogue are moved primarily by a desire to remove old obstacles, in order to achieve full communion, Bartholomew said. Sadly, progress is slow. Some are still reluctant. Nevertheless, we must praise the small positive steps taken so far. This way we can put to rest our dissensions.

"It is our joint duty, our brother the pope of Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople, of both our Churches, to remind those who hold material power in our troubled world of the importance of charity and mercy towards those in need. Scorn for those in need could lead to social break-up with unforeseeable consequences for all of us."



This year is ending with possible negative consequences that might spill over into next year. Still, 2013 will be marked by celebrations for the 1,700 years of the Edict of Milan in which Constantine proclaimed freedom of worship. Our Lord announced this freedom to free us and save us but we must preserve and strengthen it. Finally, the patriarch announced the end of preparatory work for the upcoming pan-Orthodox synod, which should be convened shortly.

CATHOLICS AND ORTHODOX MUST NOT LOSE THEIR RICH HARVEST THROUGH WEAKNESS AND DIVISION

Vatican City, 30 November 2012 (VIS) - Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, is leading a delegation sent by the Holy See to Istanbul to participate in celebrations marking the Feast of St. Andrew, patron of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Holy See and the Patriarchate exchange regular annual visits for the feast days of their respective patrons.

The Holy See delegation to this year's celebration is made up of Cardinal Koch; Bishop Brian Farrell, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; Fr. Andrea Palmieri, an official of the same dicastery, and Archbishop Antonio Lucibello, apostolic nuncio to Turkey. The group attended a divine liturgy celebrated by Bartholomew I in the patriarchal church of Fanar, then met with the Patriarch and the synodal commission which oversees relations with the Catholic Church.

Cardinal Koch gave Bartholomew I a gift and a message from the Holy Father which was read out at the end of the divine liturgy. He then met with representatives of the local Catholic community and the ecumenical council of the apostolic vicariate of the Catholic Church in Istanbul.

In his message, the Pope explains that this annual exchange of delegations "is testimony to the fraternal bonds which join us together. It is a profound and genuine communion, if still imperfect, which is based not on human motives of courtesy or convenience but rather on our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. ...

(Continue next page)

This solid foundation allows us to proceed together confidently on the path to the re-establishment of full communion".

"In our times, the most urgent challenge, about which we have always been in perfect agreement, ... is how we must connect the proclamation of God's merciful love for contemporary man, so often distracted and incapable of reflection on the meaning of his own existence, and as such often misled by plans and utopias that can lead only to disillusionment. The Church has only one message, 'God's Gospel', and no method other than its apostolic proclamation, supported and guaranteed by the testimony and sanctity of the life of priests and the people of God. The Lord Jesus told us that 'the harvest is rich', and we must not accept that it may be lost as a result of our weaknesses and divisions", concluded the Holy Father. +++

When a Letter of Congratulations Contains a Warning. . .

Published Wednesday, November 14, 2012 A.D. |
By [The Motley Monk](#)

<http://the-american-catholic.com/2012/11/14/when-a-letter-of-congratulations-contains-a-warning/>

The Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations for the Russian Orthodox Church, and a permanent member of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Moscow, Bishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk, has written a letter of congratulations to Right Reverend Justin Welby, Bishop of Durham and nominee as Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dear Brother and Lord Bishop,

I would like to extend to you wholehearted congratulations on your election as Head of one of the oldest episcopal chairs founded by St. Augustine of Canterbury in the 7th century.



You have been entrusted with the spiritual guidance of the entire Anglican Communion, a unique union of like-minded people, which, however diverse the forms of its existence in the world may be, needs one 'steward of God' (Tit. 1:7) the guardian of the faith and witness to the Truth (cf. Jn. 18:37).

The Russian Orthodox Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion are bonded by age-old friendly relations initiated in the 15th century. For centuries, our Churches would preserve good and truly brotherly relations encouraged both by frequent mutual visits and established theological dialogue and certainly by a spirit of respect and love which used to accompany the meetings of our hierarchs, clergy and ordinary believers.

Regrettably, the late 20th century and the beginning of the third millennium have brought tangible difficulties in relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion. The introduction female priesthood and now episcopate, the blessing of same-sex 'unions' and 'marriages', the ordination of homosexuals as pastors and bishops – all these innovations are seen by the Orthodox as deviations from the tradition of the Early Church, which increasingly estrange Anglicanism from the Orthodox Church and contribute to a further division of Christendom as a whole.

We hope that the voice of the Orthodox Church will be heard by the Church of England and Churches of the Anglican Communion, and good fraternal relationships between us will revive.

I wish you God's help in your important work.

"May the God of love and peace be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11).

+Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk

Eastern Catholics explain tradition, value of married priests

Tuesday, November 13, 2012

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

By Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service

ROME (CNS) -- In Eastern Christianity -- among both Catholics and Orthodox -- a dual vocation to marriage and priesthood are seen as a call "to love more" and to broaden the boundaries of what a priest considers to be his family, said Russian Catholic Father Lawrence Cross.

Father Cross, a professor at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, was one of the speakers at the Chrysostom Seminar in Rome Nov. 13, a seminar focused on the history and present practice of married priests in the Eastern churches.

The Code of Canons of the Eastern (Catholic) Churches insist that "in the way they lead their family life and educate their children, married clergy are to show an outstanding example to other Christian faithful." Speakers at the Rome conference -- sponsored by the Australian Catholic University and the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at St. Paul University in Ottawa -- insisted the vocation of married priests in the Eastern churches cannot be understood apart from an understanding of the sacramental vocation of married couples.

"Those who are called to the married priesthood are, in reality, called to a spiritual path that in the first place is characterized by a conjugal, family form of life," he said, and priestly ordination builds on the vocation they have as married men.

Father Cross and other speakers at the conference urged participants to understand the dignity of the vocation of marriage in the way Blessed John Paul II did: as a sacramental expression of God's love and as a path to holiness made up of daily acts of self-giving and sacrifices made for the good of the other.

"Married life and family life are not in contradiction with the priestly ministry," Father Cross said. A married man who is ordained is called "to love more, to widen his capacity to love, and the boundaries of his family are widened, his paternity is widened as he acquires more sons and daughters; the community becomes his family." Father Basilio Petra, an expert in Eastern Christianity and professor of theology in Florence, told the conference, "God does not give one person two competing calls."

If the church teaches -- as it does -- that marriage is more than a natural institution aimed at procreation because it

is "a sign and continuation of God's love in the world," then the vocations of marriage and priesthood "have an internal harmony," he said.

Father Petra, who is a celibate priest, told the conference that in the last 30 or 40 years some theologians and researchers have been making a big push to "elaborate the idea that celibacy is the only way to fully configure oneself to Christ," but such a position denies the tradition of married priests, configured to Christ, who have served the church since the time of the apostles.

Father Thomas J. Loya, a Byzantine Catholic priest and member of the Tabor Life Institute in Chicago, told the conference it would be a betrayal of Eastern tradition and spirituality to support the married priesthood simply as a practical solution to a priest shortage or to try to expand the married priesthood without, at the same time, trying to strengthen Eastern monasticism, which traditionally was the source of the celibate clergy. He called for a renewed look at what the creation of human beings as male and female and their vocations says about God to the world.

Father Peter Galadza of the Sheptytsky Institute told conference participants that the problem of "cafeteria Catholics" who pick and choose which church teachings they accept is found not just among Catholics who reject the authority of the church's leaders; "those who believe they are faithful to the magisterium" also seem to pick and choose when it comes to the church's official recognition of and respect for the Eastern tradition of married priests.

"We know we are only 1 percent of the world's Catholics, but Eastern Catholics have a right to be themselves," he said.

"As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, we hope the same Holy Spirit who guided the authors of its decrees would guide us in implementing them," he said, referring specifically to Vatican II's affirmation of the equality of the Latin and Eastern churches and its call that Eastern churches recover their traditions.

"There has been a long history of confusing 'Latin' and 'Catholic,'" he said, and that confusion has extended to an assumption that the Latin church's general discipline of having celibate priests is better or holier than the Eastern tradition of having both married and celibate priests.

The speakers unanimously called for the universal revocation of a 1929 Vatican directive that banned the ordination and ministry of married Eastern Catholic priests outside the traditional territories of their churches. The directive, still technically in force, generally is upheld only when requested by local Latin-rite bishops. +++



Egypt's new Coptic pope faces delicate balancing act

Tawadros II has to balance sensitivity to Muslim majority with promoting interests of Christian minority amid rising tension
[Abdel-Rahman Hussein](#) in Cairo
[guardian.co.uk](#), Sunday 4 November 2012



Some huddle in conclave before announcing their decision in a puff of smoke. Others ballot church dignitaries and pray for the wisdom to elect the right leader.

Not so the Coptic church, which on Sunday selected its new pope by getting a blindfolded boy to pick a name from a bowl. The winner, Bishop Tawadros, became Pope Tawadros II. By a quirk of fate, it also happened to be his birthday.

They call it the altar lottery, and it's how the Coptic Orthodox church has been selecting its heads since the 18th century. After the death of Pope Shenouda III in March, candidates from within the church put themselves forward for a lengthy selection process in which 2,500 prominent Christians from both inside and outside the church whittled them down to first five and finally three candidates.

The other two were the auxiliary bishop of central Cairo, Bishop Raphael, and Father Raphael Ava Mina, a monk at the St Mina monastery near Alexandria. Even after the boy had picked out Tawadros's name, the other two names had to be picked out of the bowl too, to ensure transparency of the process.

Sherif Azer, a Coptic Christian and human rights advocate who has been critical of the church's recent political stances, told the Guardian: "The idea behind it is to invoke divine intervention, which doesn't fit with the concept of a democratic election. Some active church members have already discussed reviewing the process, but I don't think this issue will be brought up anytime soon as the pope will serve for a lifetime."

Tawadros is to be officially enthroned on 18 November, but speaking from the monastery where

he lives in the Nile delta governorate of Beheira, he told the assembled throng: "The other two candidates were more deserving than me. I put

myself in the hands of Christ, who is the true leader of the church."

Pope Tawadros II will be officially enthroned on 18 November.

Photograph: Sami Wahib/AP

The new pope will have his hands full in the corporeal realm as he takes over a church that has not yet fully come to terms with the death of Pope Shenouda III, after four decades at the helm, and amid continued sectarian attacks against Christians in [Egypt](#).

Christian blogger Amira Mikhail told the Guardian: "The new pope is entering into a position that places him in a similar situation that each pope has had to deal with in the past, but this time with much higher tension. In general, all high profile Christian leaders are faced with the constant decision between being politically and religiously sensitive to the majority [religion](#) [Islam] and the government, and also what is best for the Christian minority group. In the past and quite unfortunately, this balance has not always been found." His predecessor had always toed a line close to the state, seeing it as the only bulwark against increased Islamist fanaticism and sectarian tensions. This came to a head during what came to be known as the [Maspero massacre in October 2011](#), when 27 Christian protesters were killed by soldiers who opened fire on them and ran over them with military vehicles.

The church's refusal to condemn the ruling military junta led to criticism from within the Coptic Christian community and from revolutionary forces outraged at the silence emanating from the pope. In a nod to the delicate balancing act he will have to perform as the new leader of the church, Tawadros said: "At this time, we would like to thank the state and the media who paid great attention to this lovely event and have shown us great affection." Azer said: "I think the new pope has two options: either be outspoken and make the church the official representative of the Copts, openly demanding their rights, or remove the church completely from the political realm." +++

That they may be one

John 17:22

Principles of eastXwest from:

<http://www.sanctiangel.org/eastxwest.html>

"There was a cross at the heart of the universe before Christ died on the cross" said Lev Gillet. It is the challenge of the cross to empty ourselves of inherited prejudices and see things as they really are. eastXwest is dedicated to honesty in relations between the



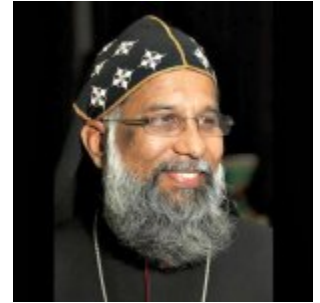
churches and exploring the common traditional basis of theology, Christian life and practise, and its manifestation in liturgical arts and music. We believe that no authentic relationship between the churches is possible without radical honesty, fidelity to the Gospels and to the teaching of the great Councils of the Contact us Church in the first centuries.

life in which tensions were resolved neither against the pope, nor against councils, but in a different way." The patriarch stressed the need for self criticism and continuous repentance, adding that to denounce the one who erred first is not the issue, or whether he erred more or less..."When a kenotic ethos finally prevails, then we will easily restore the unity of faith."

Card Baselios Thottunkal: Without Hindus, India would not have Christians

Giulia Mazza edited LOE

His Beatitude Mar Baselios Cleemis Thottunkal, Major Archbishop of Trivandrum of the Syro-Malankara Church,



will be made a cardinal on November 24 along with five other prelates. His appointment is "an honor and a recognition of" India and the Syro-Malankara Church. Religious radicalism "belongs to all faiths" and is "a form of selfishness," to be fought "within ourselves." A prayer for the imprisoned Chinese bishops and priests.

...

We Christians are in India for 2 thousand years, and are very happy to say that our apostolic Church founded by St. Thomas the Apostle, is a large Christian community made up of Catholics and non-Catholics, and it has grown. For this reason, I am very grateful to our Hindu brothers and sisters. They have supported us, protected us, more than the police and the army, because we Christians are only 2.5% of the population, and the majority of the population, 89% belongs to the Hindu community. If they had not been on our side, we would not have survived here in India. They were with us and are with us. Religious radicalism is a phenomenon that belongs to every religion and every person. We can not simply say "this community is a victim of radicalism, this other community is free from it." No. Religious radicalism is a sign of selfishness. When you alone are selfish, we can talk about selfishness. When a group of people are selfish, we are talking about *communalism* [term used in India to refer to violence by ultra-nationalist Hindu against other ethnic and religious communities, ed.] So, sometimes, when certain incidents occur in some parts of the world, people believe it is persecution based on religion. I believe we should always be very careful, because sometimes a small, local matter, which is based on other problems, can degenerate hidden behind religious reasons. This fundamentalism, this religious radicalism is much more selfish in all walks of life.

Pope Benedict XVI 'Concrete Gestures' Required



"In full awareness and at the beginning of his ministry in the Church of Rome that Peter bathed with his blood, the current Successor assumes as his primary commitment that of working tirelessly towards the reconstitution of the full and visible unity of all Christ's followers. This is his

ambition, this is his compelling duty. He is aware that to do so, expressions of good feelings are not enough. Concrete gestures are required to penetrate souls and move consciences, encouraging everyone to that interior conversion which is the basis for all progress on the road of ecumenism."

Patriarch Bartholomew 'Self-Emptying' the Path

"Primacy does not consist of power, but of a kenosis (self-emptying) which seeks only to bring life to others...moving beyond polemics, we need today to reflect on a period of ecclesial



EPISCOPAL SYNOD: GREGORY III LAHAM, “THE STRATEGY OF THE SMALL FLOCK” IN THE EAST

Domenica 14 Ottobre 2012
Scritto da [Oriente Cristiano](#)



“Drawing up a concise, accurate and clear text about our faith”. This “is imperative for the new evangelisation”. This was stated by Gregory III Laham, patriarch of Antioch of the Melkite Greek Church and head of the Synod of the Catholic Melkite Greek Church (Syria), as he spoke yesterday afternoon at the sixth general convention of the Episcopal Synod about the new evangelisation. “We, Christians of the East - Patriarch Laham explained -, live surrounded by a non-Christian world: we are the small flock, ad extra compared to Islam, ad intra because of the decreased practice of religion”. We have, therefore, “to work with such double reality, ad extra and ad intra, in mind. This means focussing our pastoral work about the new evangelisation on this small flock, without neglecting our somehow less practising devotees. This small flock must be excellent to be able to form, through it, groups of agents of the new evangelisation. Even if the Church grew to colossal proportions, it should retain the strategy of the small flock”. According to the Patriarch, “this is the meaning, the essence, the motivation, the reason d’etre of the small flock in the East and anywhere else. It is the apostolic strategy: forming the small flock, together and to the benefit of the large flock”. +++

Mail check for 2013 dues (\$20, family \$25, student \$15) to name & address in Masthead of this newsletter.
Thanks. +++

Interview with Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

Excerpt edited by LOE

By Jan Bentz

VATICAN CITY, OCTOBER 29, 2012 ([Zenit.org](#)).

ZENIT: During the Synod we also heard representatives of the Orthodox Churches. What is emerging for the dialogue with the Orthodox in the near future?

Cardinal Koch: At present the Orthodox Church is very busy with preparations for the Pan-Orthodox Synod. Personally, I am convinced that when it takes place it will be a great step forward for ecumenical dialogue. Hence, we must support these Orthodox efforts and also have patience. In the ecumenical commissions we continue the theological dialogue on the relation between 'Synodalism' and Primacy.

Vatican cardinal opens door to Lutheran ordinariates

CWN - October 30, 2012

The president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity said in an interview that the Vatican would entertain a hypothetical proposal by Lutherans to establish ecclesial structures modeled on the ordinariates developed for Anglican communities that wish to enter into full communion with the Holy See.

“*Anglicanorum coetibus* was not an initiative of Rome, but came from the Anglican church,” said Cardinal Kurt Koch, referring to the 2009 papal document that established the ordinariates. “The Holy Father then sought a solution and, in my opinion, found a very broad solution, in which the Anglicans’ ecclesial and liturgical traditions were taken into ample consideration. If similar desires are expressed by the Lutherans, then we will have to reflect on them. However, the initiative is up to the Lutherans.”

Cardinal Koch also said that both “progressives and traditionalists suffer from the same ailment”: a refusal to interpret the Second Vatican Council with a hermeneutic of “renewal in continuity.”

“Both see the Council equally as a break, even if in a very different way,” he said. “The Holy Father has questioned this understanding of the conciliar hermeneutics of the break and proposed the hermeneutics of reform, which unites continuity and renewal.” +++

CONCERN FOR IMMIGRANTS, MIDDLE EAST CHRISTIANS FOCUS OF CATHOLIC DIALOGUE WITH ORIENTAL ORTHODOX

[USCCB](#) > [Media](#) > [News Releases](#) > **October 23, 2012**

WASHINGTON—Catholics and Oriental Orthodox church leaders agreed that they would benefit from a better exchange of information regarding the programs available for new immigrant arrivals in the United States. The group of 20 participants representing Roman Catholics and five Oriental Orthodox churches were gathered for the Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation, October 15-16, at the Divine Compassion Spirituality Center in White Plains, New York.

As part of its mission to foster Christian unity, the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) meets annually with members of the Oriental Orthodox churches. Along with ministering to immigrant communities, the dialogue also discussed the plight of Christians in the Middle East.

Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, New York, and Metropolitan Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim of the Eastern Archdiocese of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch (Oriental Orthodox) co-chaired the dialogue. This was the Metropolitan's first meeting since his appointment as new co-chairman of the dialogue. He succeeds Very Reverend Chorbishop John Meno, also of the Syriac Orthodox Church, who had served as Oriental Orthodox co-chairman since 1985 and recently retired from the active ministry. The members expressed their gratitude to Father Meno for his many years of faithful service to this dialogue.

Presenters at the dialogue were Maronite Catholic Bishop Gregory Mansour of Brooklyn, Allison Posner, director of advocacy for the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), Julianne Barsoum Jabaly of the Syriac Orthodox Church, and Michael Guglielmo, executive director of the Armenian Eastern Diocese.

On Monday evening the members traveled to St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New Rochelle, New York.

Together they celebrated Armenian Vespers in the seminary chapel and attended a dinner hosted by Father Daniel Findikyan, the rector. Later in the evening the members had a wide-ranging discussion of major events in the lives of their churches both in the United States and overseas.

On Tuesday morning the dialogue examined the situation of Christians in the Middle East. Bishop Mansour presented the recent Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*. He discussed the structure and functioning of the Synod of

Bishops, and what the document had to say about the Christian presence in that part of the world. The members are deeply worried about the future of Christian communities in the region.

At last year's October meeting, the members examined the history of this dialogue and the 2010 statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, entitled "Steps Towards a Reunited Church: A Sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic Vision For the Future" (www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/dialogue-with-others/ecumenical/orthodox/steps-towards-reunited-church.cfm). It is scheduled to meet again in October 2013.

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

More information on the U.S. bishops' ongoing dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox is available online:

www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/dialogue-with-others/ecumenical/oriental-orthodox/

Seeing the Face of God

Icons and the Unity of Christians

by Fr. Elias L. Rafaj

The past ten years have seen a flurry of conciliatory gestures between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. These events are often occasions for theological homilies, documents, photos, and even the restitution of relics of different saints.



Efforts such as these have been very important in helping breach the divide that has separated Eastern and Western Christendom since A.D. 1054. But there is another element—much more visible at the grass-roots level—(Continue next page)

that can be a very powerful force for unity. In fact, you have probably experienced it yourself: It is the desire to see the face of God. Lord, Show Us Your Face!

My own journey to see the face of God began some twenty years ago, when I was a teenager living in the “Ukrainian Village” neighborhood of Chicago’s North Side. As I visited Roman Catholic churches, I noticed that the pictures and statues of Jesus made him look rather like the people in the pews. He seemed very life-like, and in some cases he was even smiling and laughing.

Then I would go back to my Byzantine Catholic parish with its many icons. There, Jesus would be very somber. He always looked somewhat Semitic and olive-skinned—not German, Italian, or Slovak. He always wore the same clothing and colors; he held his right hand the same way and had a big book in his left.

Although this Byzantine Jesus seemed distant and unvarying, there was something about him that beckoned me. His gaze transfixed, his eyes following my movements, his lips pursed shut, his form slender and long. His mysterious way of being drew me—I wanted to discover who he was.

The journey begun so many years ago is by no means ended. Like all believers, I seek the face of God every day. But now, icons of Jesus help me to come into his presence. As I contemplate his face, learn more about icons, and even “write” (paint) them myself, God helps me to understand, in my own limited way, his plan for humankind and for me in particular.

A Long Line of Seekers.

Our common desire to see God’s face may well go back to the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve walked and talked with God, felt his presence and heard his voice. Yet despite their unique intimacy with the One who had breathed life into them, Scripture does not say that they ever truly saw his face.

Later, God continued to reveal himself in different ways. He spoke to Moses through a burning bush. He led his people as a column of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night. He spoke to the prophet Elijah in the gentle breeze. He gave his word through the law and the prophets. Still, he never revealed his face.

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ changed everything. The God who has no body took on a body through the Virgin Mary. The God who has no beginning

was born in space and time. The God who is timeless became an infant and grew into adulthood. The God with no recognizable face now has the face of a Jewish man, Jesus of Nazareth.

The Incarnation is the great mystery that we cannot fully fathom or comprehend, but it is also an invitation to see and meet God in Jesus Christ. Jesus himself told his disciples: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

But what about us, who come so long after the disciples and apostles? Can we also see the face of God?

Church of Greece, Vatican join forces over tourism

http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite1_1_22/11/2012_471251

The Church of Greece and the Vatican are putting the final touches to an agreement for the joint promotion of religious tourism, the cleric leading the Greek side of the initiative said on Thursday.

An initial agreement reached last week by Greek and Italian clerics foresees the mutual promotion of religious sites including churches and monasteries, Bishop Chrysostomos of Dodoni told a conference in Thessaloniki on Thursday.

Several firms have expressed interest in working with the Synod’s office to produce CDs and DVDs introducing visitors to Greece’s religious sites, the bishop said. The agreement follows a similar pact last month between the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUNDAY

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation
Saint Paul’s College, Washington, DC
October 27, 2012

Recovering the theological significance of Sunday is fundamental to rebalancing our lives. As Orthodox and Catholics, we share a theological view of Sunday and so our purpose in this statement is four-fold: to offer a caring response to what is not just a human, but also a theological question; to add a little more volume to the growing chorus of Christian voices trying to be heard in the din of our non-stop worklife; to offer brief reflections in hopes of drawing attention to the fuller expositions elsewhere; and to reinforce the ecumenical consensus by speaking as Orthodox and Catholics with one voice.

For Christians, Sunday, the Lord’s Day, is a special day consecrated to the service and worship of God. It is a unique Christian festival. It is “the day the Lord has made” (Ps. 117 (118):24). Its nature is holy and joyful. Sunday is the day on (Continue next page)

which we believe God acted decisively to liberate the world from the tyranny of sin, death, and corruption through the Holy Resurrection of Jesus.

The primacy of Sunday is affirmed by the liturgical practice of the early church. St. Justin the Martyr writing around 150 AD notes that “it is on Sunday that we assemble because Sunday is the first day, the day on which God transformed darkness and matter and created the world and the day that Jesus Christ rose from the dead (First Apology, 67).” Sunday has always had a privileged position in the life of the church as a day of worship and celebration. On Sunday the Church assembles to realize her eschatological fullness in the Eucharist by which the Kingdom and the endless Day of the Lord are revealed in time. It is the perpetual first day of the new creation, a day of rejoicing. It is a day for community, feasting and family gatherings.

As we look at our fellow Christians and our society, we

*Like branches on a tree, we may grow in different directions,
yet our roots remain the same.*
- author unknown



observe that everyone is short of time and stressed. One reason is that many of us have forgotten the meaning of Sunday, and with it the practices that regularly renewed our relationships and lives. More and more Christian leaders see the effects of a 24/7 worklife and ask “Where is the time of rest?” As members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, gathered October 25-27, 2012, we add our combined voice to their call.

Our purpose here is not to replace or replicate their

message; it is to underscore and point to it. Anyone who looks at the 1998 Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (The Lord’s Day) of Pope John Paul II and its cascade of patristic quotations will see there is already a feast of food for thought on the meaning of Sunday. Anyone who reads the recent book *Sunday, Sabbath, and the Weekend* (2010, Edward O’Flaherty, ed.) will see there is also strong ecumenical consensus on the need to recover the meaning of Sunday-- not just for our souls, but for our bodies, our hearts, and our minds as well.

Sadly Sunday has become less of a day of worship and family and more like an ordinary work day. Shopping, sports, and work squeeze out the chance for a day of worship or rest in the Christian sense. By abandoning Sunday worship we lose out on the regenerative powers that flow out of the liturgical assembly. And when Sunday becomes detached from its theological significance, it becomes just part of a weekend and people can lose the chance to see transcendent meaning for themselves and their lives (*The Lord’s Day*, 4).

Sunday is more than just the first day of the week. In our faith we see how it is the ultimate day of new beginnings: “It is Easter which returns week by week, celebrating Christ’s victory over sin and death, the fulfillment in him of the first creation and the dawn of “the new creation” (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). It is the day which recalls in grateful adoration the world’s first day and looks forward in active hope to “the last day”, when Christ will come in glory (cf. Acts 1:11; 1 Th 4:13-17) and all things will be made new (cf. Rev 21:5. *The Lord’s Day*, 1).”

Sunday even unlocks the mystery of time itself, for “...in commemorating the day of Christ’s Resurrection not just once a year but every Sunday, the Church seeks to indicate to every generation the true fulcrum of history, to which the mystery of the world’s origin and its final destiny leads (*The Lord’s Day*, 2).” *The Lord’s Day* is the day after the last day of the week and so it symbolizes eternity as well: what St. Augustine calls “a peace with no evening (Confessions 13:50).” St. Basil the Great in his *Treatise on the Holy Spirit* writes, “Sunday seems to be an image of the age to come... This day foreshadows the state which is to follow the present age: a day without sunset, nightfall or successor, an age which does not grow old or come to an end (*On the Holy Spirit* 26:77).”

The apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II calls it a day of joy, rest, and solidarity. Joy there is, because the disciples are always glad to see the Master. God scripturally established a day of rest as a gift to us, and rest there must be for every human person. Rest is built into our nature and also withdraws us “...from the sometimes excessively demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to renew [our]”(Continue next page)

awareness that everything is the work of God. There is a risk that the prodigious power over creation which God gives to man can lead him to forget that God is the Creator upon whom everything depends. It is all the more urgent to recognize this dependence in our own time, when science and technology have so incredibly increased the power which man exercises through his work. Finally, it should not be forgotten that even in our own day work is very oppressive for many people, either because of miserable working conditions and long hours — especially in the poorer regions of the world — or because of the persistence in economically more developed societies of too many cases of injustice and exploitation of man by man (The Lord's Day, 65,66).” As members of the Consultation, we strongly urge both clergy and laity to work cooperatively within their communities to stress the importance of Sunday for worship and family. Foremost we call for all to render thanks to God and render love towards one another – and be willing to reserve time to do both -- and avail ourselves of the riches of the Lord's Day. Appropriate authorities can be approached to schedule sports activities after 12 noon in order to give young athletes and their families the opportunity to worship on Sunday morning. We call for our children to live in a timescape that respects the God-given rhythm of the week.

“Yes, let us open our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon it and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity, and he gives us "his day" as an ever new gift of his love. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore, not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human (The Lord's Day, 7).”

Pope: World's spiritual poverty heightens need for Christian unity

By Matthew A. Rarey Vatican City, Nov 15, 2012 ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).edited by LOE.

Christians must not allow their divisions to keep them from working together to evangelize a world enduring a “crisis of faith,” Pope Benedict XVI told the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. The failure to do so, he said, “goes against the will of Christ, and is a scandal in the world.”

The council, which is meeting Nov. 15 –19, will address the theme of “The Importance of Ecumenism for New Evangelization.” The theme dovetails with the topic of overcoming Christian divisions, which was widely-discussed topic at last month's synod of bishops on the New Evangelization.

Speaking in the Clementine Room of the Apostolic

Palace on Nov. 15, the Pope stressed the necessity of having theological dialogue with Christians who do not hold the Catholic faith, in order to give a credible witness to Christ in a world suffering a crisis of faith and spiritual poverty.

“Even if we do not see the possibility of the restoration of full communion in the near future, (other faiths) enable us to understand the wealth of experience, spiritual life and theological reflections that become a stimulus for a deeper testimony,” the Pope said. The aim of ecumenism is a “visible unity between divided Christians,” he told the assembly, and the Lord must be invoked to make even an imperfect unity possible.

And even if Christians' unity is imperfect, it is still needed to evangelize a culture gone awry, especially in the Western world.

“We cannot follow a truly ecumenical path while ignoring the crisis of faith affecting vast areas of the world, including those where the proclamation of the Gospel was first accepted and where Christian life has flourished for centuries,” he told council members.

The situation has grown so bad that many people no longer regard the absence of God in their lives as a vacuum to be filled. This presents a situation all Christians must address, discovering common ground that overcomes their denominational divisions.

The essential unity of Christians needs to be emphasized in order to bear witness to God before the world. This, he said, consists in faith in the Trinity – a faith received at baptism which all Christians can profess together “in hope and charity.”

A truly ecumenical spirit, the Pope noted toward the end of his remarks, demands abandonment to the will of God in order to bring others to belief in him.

“In the final analysis,” Pope Benedict concluded, “ecumenism and new evangelization both require the dynamism of conversion, understood as the sincere desire to follow Christ and to fully adhere to the will of the Father.”

Starting on the afternoon of Nov. 17, council participants will deliberate on the work of last month's synod and explore the progress of ecumenical work in different parts of the world.

Council president Cardinal Kurt Koch will give the opening address.

In a Nov. 13 interview with Vatican Radio, Cardinal Koch said he hopes the council meeting will foster Christian unity and aid evangelization efforts.

“The credibility of the message of the Gospel depends on unity,” he said. “The division of the Church in the world is the biggest obstacle to the missionary activity in the world.” +++

Russia: The Orthodox spring



Russia - The Orthodox Church is reliving its youth 10/16/12

From: <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/world-news/detail/articolo/russia-rusia-ortodossi-orthodox-christians-ortodoxos-18966/>

88% of the population professes to believe in God, while the number of agnostics and atheists is constantly dropping: a study examines religion's comeback in former kingdom of State atheism

ALESSIO SCHIESARI
TURIN

The long slog is over. The exile of the Orthodox Church from Russian society began in '17 with the October Revolution and the birth of "gosateizm", or State atheism. Ninety five years on, the Patriarchate in Moscow is reliving its youth all over again. A recent survey carried out by the Levada Centre has captured the religious sentiment within the Federation: 79% of Russians profess themselves to be Orthodox, 6% Muslim and 3% are Jews, Catholics and Protestants. Believers as a whole make up 88% of the Russian population. This figure is higher than what it was before the Bolshevik revolution. The number of agnostics is constantly falling (7%), while barely 5% call themselves atheists. Following the fall of the USSR, just 34% of the Russian population called themselves believers. If this figure is compared to today's, we see that in the past twenty years more than one in two Russians has discovered the faith. The spiritual counter-revolution affects members of the Orthodox faith above all, those who suffered the forced policies of "atheisation". From its very birth, the regime tried to uproot the roots of the Orthodox faith from

Russia's social fabric. The figures help us to understand the extent of the phenomenon: in 1919 there 54 thousand popes active in the USSR. Twenty years later, there were just 500 left. Before the accession of the Bolsheviks to power there were a thousand churches in the capital. After the fall of the wall, only 40 remained. Since the fall of the USSR this number has steadily risen and today there are about 500 churches.

Secularisation continued at the same pace, forced along by the five-year plans. The number of Orthodox faithful dropped by 75% in the years before the revolution, plummeting to a meagre 8 – 10% in the 70's. Everything pointed to religion disappearing definitively. But then a decade later things slowly started to change and the Church took its first timid steps towards recovery. In the 80's on the occasion of the thousand-year anniversary of the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate, Gorbacev defined the Church as "a milestone in Russian culture" and called upon believers and atheists "to refound socialism".

But this joint refoundation never took place because Marxism crumbled just three years later. In the period which succeeded the fall, being part of the Orthodox Church substituted national identity which people had lost touch with. Even among those who claimed to be believers, the acceptance of religious dogma remained a dead letter: paradoxically, many of those who went back to seeing themselves as Christians, continued not to accept the idea of life after death.

Since Vladimir Putin came to power, State and Church ties have been restored, with religion sacralising the nation and the nation protecting religion. The Russian President's relations with the Patriarchs of the Orthodox Church, first Aleksey II and then Cyril I as of 2009, are excellent, both on a personal and an institutional level. According to the Levada Centre study, 10% of Russians believes that the Orthodox Church is deeply involved in political affairs and 41% believes it is quite involved. Patriarch Cyril I takes enormous care of his relations with State leaders. Last year, in a burst of enthusiasm, the Patriarch defined Putin's twelve years in power as a "miracle of God." After the "gosateizm" years, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin have finally made peace again. +++

*****PLEASE NOTE THAT IN THE INTEREST OF INQUIRY, OUR NEWSLETTER SOMETIMES PRESENTS ARTICLES WITH POINTS OF VIEW WITH WHICH WE DON'T NECESSARILY AGREE.*****

High court: archbishop collaborated with secret police during Romania's communist era

AP Published: October 23

BUCHAREST, Romania — Romania's highest court has upheld the conviction of a top Orthodox cleric that he secretly served as an informant for the country's communist-era Securitate police.

The 83-year-old Archbishop Pimen was found guilty by a government council of serving as an informant sent by the church and the Securitate to spy on fellow clergy and members of Romania's expatriate community in the United States in the 1970s.

Before the allegations emerged in 2007, he was considered one of the luminaries of the church and had hosted Romania's former King Michael and Britain's Prince Charles at famous painted monasteries in Romania.

The conviction carries no penalty.

The influential Romanian Orthodox Church has opposed opening the files of its senior clergy from Romania's 1945-1989 communist era. Many priests are believed to have collaborated.

Nuncio celebrates Mass at ancient Iraqi monastery, meets Shi'ite leader

CWN - October 23, 2012

Archbishop Giorgio Lingua, the apostolic nuncio in Iraq, celebrated Mass at an ancient monastery near the city of Najaf, and met with the influential Shi'ite leader, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

At his meeting with Sistani, the Vatican envoy said that Pope Benedict "is very concerned with the situation of Christians in Iraq, and has urged them to stay in the country and live their lives naturally."

During his trip to Najaf, the archbishop celebrated Mass at a monastery in al-Hira, which was a stronghold of Christianity before the rise of Islam. The Mass was believed to be the first Eucharistic liturgy in that monastery in 1,500 years. The region is dotted with ancient monasteries, most of them now abandoned.

The Office of Christian Burial with Divine Liturgy

PREFACE

The Funeral Services of the Byzantine Catholic Rite are deeply impressive, yet truly meaningful and

uplifting.

From: www.byzantines.net

As they poetically accent the mystical aspects of death and the resurrection, they also bring our hearts and minds in touch with the reassuring hope that God is merciful. In part, this is revealed when the solemn mood of the music is frequently interrupted by triumphal chords to symbolize that the death of every Christian "is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15: 54). As a result, sorrow is lessened when seen through the light of the expectation of heavenly bliss; and the sadness of inevitable departure is alleviated by prayer, which is both encouraging and supportive.

In the following Funeral Services two main themes are beautifully interwoven into a most expressive ritual: the awesome judgment of God; and the resurrection to life eternal. The reality of judgment after death urges us to sincere, confident prayer for the departed soul, while the vision of immortality soothes our sorrow at this time of death. Thus we fulfill the counsel of St. Paul: "Brethren, we want you to be quite certain about those who are asleep (dead), to make sure that you do not grieve about them as those people who have no hope." (I Thess. 4: 13).

In the early days of Christianity, funeral services were an all night vigil of prayer. They ended about dawn with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the subsequent burial of the deceased. Today we use but a small segment of those ancient rites. Our modern Wake Service is called the PARASTAS or GREAT PANACHIDA. Panachida is literally translated from the Greek as All-night Services. Parastas is translated as a Standing Service, denoting the ancient custom of standing to pray.

There is a three-way dialogue within the structure of the Wake Service or Parastas in the Funeral Service of the Church which is now combined with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. In some prayers we, the faithful, pray and intercede for a merciful judgment for the deceased; in other prayers it is the deceased admitting to the weakness of sin during life and now beseeching forgiveness and acceptance into everlasting life; in still other prayers we hear the voice of Christ as the Merciful Judge.

Spiritual writers throughout the ages have attested to the tremendous value of prayers for the dead. In our times, Pope John XXIII wrote in his JOURNAL OF A SOUL: "To remember the dead in prayer gives me courage and joy in confident hope of joining them all again in the everlasting glory of heaven."

Bring a friend to our next meeting. Spread the Word of Light of the East. Pray for unity!!!

Armenia's Christian Heritage Under Threat

<http://www.rferl.org/content/armenia-christian-churches/24740361.html>



Christianity has been an official state religion in Armenia for the best part of two millennia. (file photo) October 15, 2012

As the first country to adopt Christianity as its official religion, it's not surprising that many Armenians are proud of their religious heritage. With a national church that dates back to A.D. 301, as well as thousands of ancient churches and monastic sites across the country, it's fair to say that religion looms large over Armenia's physical and psychological landscape. That's one of the reasons why Yerevan has in the past been quick to criticize Georgia and other neighboring countries for apparently neglecting their Armenian Christian heritage. Now, however, the conservation of Armenia's own religious monuments has come under scrutiny. According to a recent report by EurasiaNet.org, nearly 50 percent of the country's 24,000 Christian sites are in dire need of repair and almost one-third are

on the verge of collapse.

The main reason for this situation is a lack of funds for preserving churches, but the Armenian public has also been blamed for not respecting these precious monuments.

"It's not the Turks or Georgians or Azerbaijanis who are [to blame for this]," historian Samvel Karapetian told reporter Gayane Abrahamyan. "We are the ones littering, polluting, destroying."

The Culture Ministry has also been criticized for misspending some of its budget on dodgy reconstruction work.

It insists that the process for allocating conservation contracts has since been tightened up.

Nonetheless, given its limited resources, the ministry maintains that ordinary Armenians will also have to do their bit to ensure that Armenia's proud Christian heritage is not destroyed.

"Attitudes have to change.... Society has to become aware of the value of [historical] monuments," says Deputy Culture Minister Arev Samuelian. "The ministry is not almighty."

the Biblical Canon is an example of the interaction of the Scriptures, Holy Tradition and the Magisterium (An Essay)



Posted on September 2, 2012 by J. Andrew

<http://prayerofsaintephrem.wordpress.com/2012/09/02/describe-how-the-development-of-the-biblical-canon-is-an-example-of-the-interaction-of-the-scriptures-holy-tradition-and-the-magisterium-an-essay/> (Continue next page)

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20, KJV

So often the words of Holy Scripture are used to justify Scripture as a rule unto itself. And yet, Scripture not only does not teach that it is the only rule of faith, it also does not teach which books comprise it in a definitive manner. We also know that the Bible is a collection of books—it is not a singular entity discovered as is alleged of the Quran or the Book of Mormon and associated writings “found” by Joseph Smith. Rather, understanding which of the ancient writings of the Jewish people comprise the Old Testament, and which of the early Church writings comprise the New Testament, was an active interaction between the available texts and the life of the Church. Specific books found their approbation and eventual canonization through the liturgical life of the Church. The liturgical hermeneutic is set forth by Dr. Scott Hahn in his writings (Hahn, 101-136). The goal of the present essay is to offer some reflections on how the Canon varies between Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, with an emphasis on the unique position that Eastern Catholics face with this issue. Through this tension, I argue that the same principles that led to the first 73 books of the Catholic Bible to be canonized could offer a path for reconciliation about books not yet canonized by Catholics.

First, there is the matter of what separates a Catholic Bible from most Eastern Orthodox understandings. As the schism between Catholics and Orthodox has made Orthodox unable to hold a council that they would genuinely call ecumenical, the Orthodox canon is not as strictly codified as that of the Catholic Church. Church Fathers in the East and West comprised a list of books that was used liturgically, with an emphasis on the New Testament. In response to the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Church held the Council of Trent. After listing the 73 books that comprise the Catholic canon of Scripture, a Council Canon states:

“If anyone does not receive as sacred and canonical the books of Holy Scripture, entire and with all their parts, as the sacred Synod of Trent has enumerated them, or denies that they have been divinely inspired, anathema sit.” (CF, 218) This response was driven by the fact that Protestants lowered the size of their canon of Scripture to 66 books instead of 73, and that among the 66 books certain sections that have originals only in Greek (e.g., Esther and Daniel) were rejected. It is clear that the Magisterial teachings have harsh words for that difference of the canon.

In contrast, the Orthodox have a different canon which

includes the books in the Catholic Bible, but also includes some other writings. Does Trent therefore condemn the Orthodox for having a different canon of Scripture? I would argue that this is not the case based on two main lines of thinking. First, it is important to note that the canon from Trent issues judgment for those who would remove books from the Catholic Bible. That other Christians in the East have other books in their canon is not the focus of Trent. Next, it is important to note that with regard to Biblical Scholarship, the Latin Vulgate was never meant to be normative for all Catholics. Its venerable place in the Latin Rite does not make the Greek Scriptures irrelevant. Instead, calls to understand the Greek texts are clearly made by the Magisterium, as can be seen in the Papal Encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, which states that the use of the Vulgate “concerns only the Latin Church” (CF 233). Thus, authentic traditions of using the Greek Bible might point the way to reconciling books in the Orthodox Bible not found in the Catholic Bible.

Along these lines, there is the liturgical hermeneutic that emphasizes that the Orthodox canon of Scripture has something to offer to the whole Church. As Eastern Christians in communion with Rome, Eastern Catholics utilize the Prayer of Manasseh, which is listed as apocryphal in the Latin Vulgate, but is part of the Orthodox canon. This prayer is referred to in the beginning rites of confession, and is recited during Great Compline. Reflecting upon other disputed books of Scripture such as the Apocalypse and 2 Peter, their liturgical use eventually led to their acceptance into the canon. The *sensus fidelium* bore forth the validity of these books. In our own day, as ecumenism is leading to more and more rapprochement between Catholics and Orthodox, the liturgical use of the Prayer of Manasseh that exists in the Byzantine Catholic Churches may offer fertile ground whereby the differences in the Catholic and Orthodox Canons of Scripture could be reconciled. Through the prayers of our holy fathers, may these discrepancies end in the same manner as they once did with other books of Scripture, through liturgical reflections, and the unified voice of our Bishops. +++

FASTING

The Orthodox way to fast is to eat less (e.g. skip breakfast, have smaller meals later) and to abstain from any food that comes from an animal (meat & dairy). Depending how strict you want to be, seafood may or may not be eaten. +++

ARABIC

CNS. After his recent visit to the Church in Lebanon, Pope Benedict added Arabic to the list of official languages used at his weekly general audiences, launching the effort by offering the promise of his prayers in Arabic. +++