

LIGHT OF THE EAST

"GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS."

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, YOUNGSTOWN-WARREN OHIO CHAPTER
VOLUME 13, NUMBER 2, MARCH-APRIL, 2014

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Dear Members and Friends, the next regular meeting of our chapter will be **Tuesday, May 13, 7 pm at St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, 7782 Glenwood Avenue, Boardman, OH 44512..** Our speaker will be Rev. Joseph T. Hilinski, Delegate for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Pastor of St. Barbara Church, Director, Office of Continuing Education and Formation of Ministers for the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. **"The Dialogue of Charity"**

When Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and Francis, Pope of Rome embrace in Jerusalem in May 2014 will mark fifty years since their predecessors met together. That meeting fifty years ago was the first in centuries between the patriarchs of these two historic sees. The 'Dialogue of Charity' would be announced in 1967 in the first visit of an Ecumenical Patriarch to Rome—**What has that meant for the churches of the East and West? What has that meant for our Christian lives in northeast Ohio for Christianity?**

Fr. Hilinski comes with a narrative of his local engagement as Roman Catholic ecumenical director since 1979 and what that dialogue has meant for the local churches of greater Cleveland.

Chapter Paid dues 2014

These have paid:

Gilbert, Billcheck, Democko, Limbert, Sarantopoulos, Jim & Esther Dershaw, Fr. Witmer, Beri & Christopher Berardi, Carchedi, Fr. Gage, Fr. Manning, Fr. Rick, Msgr. Siffrin, Chiu, Mattiussi, Tavolario, Nakley & Katz, Fr. Schmidt, Chorbishop Kail, Msgr. Spinosa, Benedictine Sisters, Hudak, Rev. Mr. Ettinger, Fr. Bonnot, Joan & Jenna Binsley, Fr. Hilinski, Mike & Terri Aquilina, Peter & Norma Kopko, Vasilchek
If you aren't on list send check for \$20 (25 family 15 student) made out to the Society in care of the name and address at top of this page. Thank you!



WHO ARE WE?

The Society of St John Chrysostom promotes greater appreciation of the spiritual, theological and liturgical traditions of Eastern Christendom, works and prays for the unity of the Churches of East and West, and encourages support for the Eastern Churches :

- the Byzantine and Oriental Catholic Churches
- the Orthodox Church
- the Oriental Orthodox Churches and
- the Church of the East.

In the United Kingdom and Europe

the Society was founded in 1926

In 1998 the Society was also founded in the United States, where it runs the annual North American and international Orientale Lumen conferences

Following some exploratory and preparatory meetings in 1998 and early 1999, the first regular meeting of the Youngstown-Warren Chapter took place May 4, 1999.

MEMORIALS

A monetary contribution has been made to our chapter by Martha Katz and Ray Nakley in memory of Virginia Marapese, Vito's mother-in-law. May her Memory Be Eternal! Any future contributions to the chapter in memory of those you wish to commemorate will be noted in our newsletter.

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

BRING A FRIEND TO OUR MEETING!

Pope Francis to visit Amman, Bethlehem and Jerusalem in his journey to the Holy Land

The Holy Father will meet twice the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, hold an ecumenical meeting in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, and sign a joint declaration. The pilgrimage will also mark the 50th anniversary of the meeting in Jerusalem between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras. Despite labour troubles in Israel, preparations for the trip continue "as planned," says Father Lombardi.



Vatican City (AsiaNews) - The pope will hold two meetings with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, as well as an ecumenical meeting in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. He will also sign a joint declaration. The pilgrimage is particularly important because it marks the 50th anniversary of the embrace of peace in Jerusalem between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras, on 5 January 1964. Although questions were raised about certain issues concerning the three main stops in the papal visit, namely Amman, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. However, Holy See Press Office Director Fr Federico Lombardi, SJ, said in a statement that the release of the programme shows that preparations for the trip are "continuing as planned." When asked about [labour problems in Israel](#), Fr Lombardi said that he hoped the Vatican authorities would soon be able to resume "formal contacts" with the authorities responsible for the papal visit.

According to the official schedule, the pope will leave Rome in the morning on 24 May. After arriving in Jordan, he will be welcomed at a ceremony at the Al-Husseini Royal Palace in Amman, where he will pay a courtesy visit to King and Queen of Jordan, followed by a meeting with Jordanian authorities and Mass at Amman International Stadium.

The pope will then visit Jesus' baptismal site at Bethany beyond the Jordan, where he will meet Syrian refugees and young people with disabilities at the Latin Church. On Sunday 25 May, the Holy Father will travel from Jordan to Bethlehem, in the Palestinian Territories, where he will be welcomed at the Presidential Palace during a courtesy visit to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

After that, the pope will meet with local authorities, and then celebrate Mass in Manger Square.

Around midday, he will have lunch with a group of Palestinian families at the Franciscan Convent of the Casa Nova, followed by a private visit to the Grotto of the Nativity.

He will then proceed to the Phoenix Center in the Dheisheh refugee camp, where he will be greeted by children from the Dheisheh, Aida and Beit Jibrin refugee

camp.

From Bethlehem, Francis will travel to Jerusalem where he will meet privately with Patriarch Bartholomew I at the Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem. The two will sign a joint declaration.

This will be followed by an ecumenical meeting in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre to mark the 50th anniversary of the embrace between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras. Afterwards, Francis will dine with the patriarchs and the bishops at the Latin Patriarchate.

On Monday 26 May, after a visit to visit to the grand mufti of Jerusalem in the building of the Great Council on the Esplanade of the Mosques, the Holy Father will lay flowers on Mount Herzl and visit the Yad Vashem Memorial.

He will then make a courtesy visit to Israel's two chief rabbis of Israel at the Heichal Shlomo Center, followed by a meeting with Israeli President Shimon Peres at the presidential residence in Jerusalem, and a private meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Notre Dame Center in Jerusalem.

In the afternoon, Pope Francis will meet privately Patriarch Bartholomew at the building next to Orthodox Church of Viri Galileai on the Mount of Olives. This will be followed by a meeting with priests, men and women religious and seminarians, and then a Holy Mass with the ordinaries of the Holy Land.

From there, the pope will leave Jerusalem for Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv for his return flight to Rome Ciampino Airport late Monday evening.

Pope receives Greek Orthodox delegation

[CWN](#) - March 25, 2014

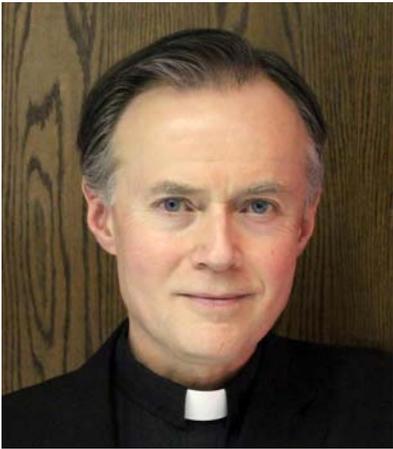
Pope Francis has received in audience a Greek Orthodox delegation led by Bishop Agathangelos of Fanarion, the director general of the Apostoliki Diakonia.

The Apostoliki Diakonia promotes Orthodox pastoral and cultural activities in Greece and collaborates with the Holy See in some cultural matters. *L'Osservatore Romano* characterized the meeting as "an opportunity to relaunch commitment to ecumenism."

During their six-day visit to Rome, Bishop Agathangelos and his delegation are also meeting with officials from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Vatican archives and library, and Libreria Editrice Vaticana, the Vatican's publishing house.

"Father, may they all be one" *John 17.23*

Orthodox Church Highlights Synodality, the Holy Spirit Creating Community



By Father Ronald Roberson

In an interview with the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* published March 5, Pope Francis was asked about the significance of the meeting he was planning to have with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in the Holy Land in late May. In his response, the pope said that “Orthodox theology is very rich. And I believe that they have great theologians at this moment. Their vision of the Church and of synodality is marvelous.” What did the pope mean by this?

It has long been recognized that the great Eastern and Western traditions of the Church are different, but that at the deepest level they are not contradictory but complementary. In its 1964 Decree on Ecumenism, the Catholic bishops acknowledged at the Second Vatican Council that the traditions of the East offer a different perspective on our faith that should be respected; that the East has its own ecclesiastical laws and customs, its own spiritual, theological and liturgical heritage. They went on to say in paragraph 16 that “this holy Council solemnly declares that the Churches of the East [...] have the power to govern themselves according to the disciplines proper to them, since these are better suited to the character of their faithful, and more for the good of their souls.”

Many theologians in recent times have written that to a large extent these differences between East and West can be traced back to their different perspectives on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Both of them have their roots in the New Testament and both are equally valid. One perspective, more typical of the West, sees the Holy Spirit as primarily at work in individuals, giving them

the strength to accomplish certain tasks or to carry out a mission. Here Christians are thought of as dispersed, as being sent forth by the Spirit to bring the good news to the nations. And so we think of the Holy Spirit at work in the pope, the bishops and other individuals in the Church.

But the other perspective, more typical of the East, sees the Spirit as primarily at work not in individuals but in communities. Here the Spirit is perceived chiefly as the Spirit of fellowship or communion, not as dispersing God’s people but gathering them together, especially at the Eucharist. This point of view explains why, in the East, there has always been the strong emphasis on the synodality or conciliarity in the Church that Pope Francis referred to.

In the East, for example, Orthodox patriarchs have very limited personal authority and for the most part can only act with the agreement of the other bishops. Assemblies composed of clergy and laypeople often play a primary role in the governing of these Churches, sometimes even in the election of a new primate. When a bishop ordains a priest, he does so as head of a Eucharistic community, and the new priest is ordained not to be set apart, but to be placed in a specific community within the web of relationships that the Spirit creates. In Eastern parishes, the priest serves as the spiritual father, but the property is owned by an elected parish council which also plays a role in setting the general direction of the parish.

This emphasis on the Spirit creating communion among Christians explains why in the East it is incomprehensible for a priest to celebrate a private Mass alone, and why priestly ministry ordinarily takes place within the stable bonds of communion either within a family or a monastic community. Russian theologians in particular have presented this ideal of the whole Church as a great “sobor” or council, where the Spirit gathers everyone together, giving each and every person specific gifts that are fruitful only in relation to others in the community.

This is not to say that Pope Francis is necessarily in favor of any of the specific examples of the Eastern understanding of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the Church that I have mentioned here. But he clearly has a general appreciation of the Eastern tradition. Both East and West have their own perspective on these matters, and they have much to learn from one other.

Father Ronald Roberson, CSP, is a Paulist priest and associate director of the U.S. Bishops’ Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

**The walls of separation do not rise as far as
heaven.
Metropolitan Platon Gorodetsky of Kiev**

‘We are called to be one’

April 2nd, 2014

By Valerie Schmalz

Ecumenical tradition continues in Belmont as archbishop, Orthodox prelate meet in prayer

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone is inviting Catholics to join him and Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Gerasimos at an April 8 Lenten prayer service commemorating the 50-year anniversary of the historic meeting of Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI.

Archbishop Cordileone and Metropolitan Gerasimos will venerate a relic of the true cross possessed by the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross in Belmont and pray for the upcoming meeting in Jerusalem of Greek Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Francis May 25-26. Pope Francis will meet Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, considered “first among equals” of the Orthodox bishops, May 25 in Jerusalem and again the following day. On May 25, the two are scheduled to sign a joint declaration. “We are called to be one, and the pope is coming to remind us of this and renew the spirit of unity and fraternal love,” Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal of Jerusalem said at a Jerusalem news conference May 27.

The historic 1964 meeting between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras healed the Great Schism of 1054, establishing a special relationship between the two churches whose split over the primacy of the pope created the first division in Christendom 900 years earlier.

The Catholic Church recognizes the validity of all Orthodox sacraments, the Catholic News Service stylebook notes.

“Rejoice, O Cross Guardian of the World,” is an “Ecumenical Service of Salutations to the Holy Cross” at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross at 900 Alameda, Belmont. A reception and discussion will follow immediately.

The Belmont prayer service is an outgrowth of a long-standing neighborhood friendship between the pastors and parishioners of Catholic Immaculate Heart of Mary and Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross, said IHM pastor Father Stephen H. Howell and Holy Cross pastor Father Peter Salmas.

Church of the Holy Cross was given a relic of the true cross by Mount Athos, a monastic community in Greece in 2006, said Father Salmas, and for eight years has invited Immaculate Heart of Mary to join it in Lenten prayer. “The service is the Salutation to the Holy Cross which is the service that helps us remember the place of the cross in the history of the church and the salvation of mankind,” Father Salmas said.

“Father Peter and I have been friends for years,” said

Father Howell, with IHM advertising the annual Labor Day Greek festival and parishioners attending the festival. The Orthodox church shared its facilities with Junipero Serra High School when Father Howell was president of Serra, he said, and Orthodox children attend IHM elementary school.

“It is an opportunity to pray together so our people would have the opportunity to experience the Eastern Christian tradition and also have an opportunity to venerate the true cross,” Father Howell said of the annual prayer service.

The Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches split in 1054, when the patriarch of Constantinople and the papal delegation from Rome excommunicated each other in a dispute over the primacy of the pope. The schism gradually hardened because of political divisions, atrocities on both sides and Orthodox objections to the “filioque” addition to the Nicene Creed which changed the original creed from saying the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father” to the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son,” Catholic News Service stylebook states.

After meeting in 1964, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in 1965 annulled the mutual excommunications. In 1979, Blessed John Paul II and Patriarch Dimitrios created the International Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches.

From April 4, 2014 issue of Catholic San Francisco.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, FIGURE OF RECONCILIATION

(Excerpt from Pope Benedict’s letter on the 1600th Centenary of the death of St. John Chrysostom)

In view of the ecumenical progress made between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches since the Second Vatican Council and especially in recent years, we wish to recall the outstanding efforts that St. John Chrysostom made in his day in promoting reconciliation and full communion between Eastern and Western Churches. Singular among these achievements was his contribution in ending the schism which separated the See of Antioch from the See of Rome and other western churches. At the time of his consecration as Archbishop of Constantinople, John sent a delegation to Pope Siricius at Rome. He also won in advance of this mission the crucial collaboration of the Archbishop of Alexandria in Egypt for his plan to end the schism. Pope Siricius responded favorable to John’s diplomatic initiative, and the schism was peacefully resolved so that full communion between the churches was restored.



Forgiveness and the Healing of Memories

Posted on **February 28, 2014** by **Adam DeVille**
<http://holysurrection.areavoices.com/#sthash.kFYv2yTI.dpuf>

Nearly a decade ago now, in a relatively obscure journal, I published an article in which I proposed that, among Byzantine Christians—both Catholic and Orthodox—we use the opportunity of Forgiveness Vespers (which is celebrated on this coming Sunday, alternatively called Forgiveness Sunday or Cheesefare Sunday) to come together to begin the process of healing the memories of our divided past. I proposed that in cities where this was possible, Catholic and Orthodox bishops come together to celebrate this service *together*. Forgiveness Vespers remains one of the most powerful liturgical celebrations of the entire year, in my mind, and I have long made it my practice to visit an Orthodox Church on this Sunday, small gesture though this may be. How much more powerful could it be if bishops and their faithful celebrated this together?

Some may object: what have I done to harm my Orthodox or Catholic neighbor? But just as in the ‘economy of grace’ we may help one another get to heaven by our prayers and charity, so also in the ‘economy of salvation’ we may harm one another by what we have done or what we have left undone, not only on a personal level but also on a corporate and ecclesial level. We all bear some measure of responsibility for our brothers and sisters both living and dead. Perhaps we might help heal the divisions of the dead, and heal, moreover, the memories of those divisions among the living, by seeking out each other this coming Sunday, prostrating each before the other, and asking the God of us both to forgive us both so that both of us might worthily celebrate the Pascha of His Christ?

Why We Orthodox Won’t Take up the Suggestion of Adam’s Joint Forgiveness Vespers Idea

Posted on **March 1, 2014** by **Rev. Oliver Herbel**
In the last post, Adam DeVille suggested that Orthodox and Roman Catholics serve Forgiveness Vespers together. Would that we would! It is a suggestion that makes sense on so many levels. So, why won’t it happen? Well, it’s simple, and again, brings me back to my point that it is largely the Orthodox who are at fault

in sinking ecumenical ships. I think in many places our Catholic neighbors WOULD be so inclined and interested were we willing simply to propose such an idea.

We won’t see bishops (on our side) with the guts to do this anytime soon because we fear the canon against “praying with heretics” as though that canon were intended to be applied in such a fearful, anti-ecumenical way in the twenty-first century. Here, one sees just how relevant Inga Leonova’s last post was as well. Likewise, I doubt we have many, if any, priests with the guts to do this because of the fear that the bishop would come down on them, based on this canon (all the while bishops will sometimes ignore other canons). Really, it’s that simple. Of course, said bishops have all sorts of Orthodox priests and laity who would support such an application of the canon. That’s part of the problem, too, but really, hierarchy (bishops and priests both) should be brave enough to stand up against such fundamentalism. We don’t. We lack courage. Frankly, I think we lack courage because we might lack love.

Chaldean Patriarch on the uncertain future of eastern Christians, a bridge between the West and Islam

by Mar Louis Raphael I Sako
The wars in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan have made things worse for their peoples, especially minorities. As Western policies have been a failure, fundamentalism has grown with the Arab Spring losing out to extremism. Muslim authorities have a role in protecting rights and religious freedom. The presence of Christians in the Middle East is crucial for Muslims.



Lyon (AsiaNews) - *In recent days, Mar Louis Sako Raphael I took part a seminar sponsored by the Université catholique de Lyon, France, on "The Vocation of Eastern Christians".*
For the Chaldean patriarch, Christians should not be considered a "minority, but as citizens in every respect." In an extended address, His Holiness explained the general situation of Christians in the Middle East, emphasising the importance of their presence. He also looked at the role of Muslim authorities and Eastern Churches, calling for pressures to be put on governments to recognise and guarantee equal rights. Lastly, he renewed his appeal for an end to the exodus of Christians from their native lands.
(Continue next page)

Here is a brief excerpt edited by (LOE) from Mar Sako's full address (translation by AsiaNews).

- The role of Eastern Christians in the West

Eastern Christians in the West can play an important role in helping their brethren in distress in the East, showing them solidarity. It is their job to help them stay in their lands of origin.

They can put pressure on Muslim communities living in the West to spread a culture of respect for all religions, especially respect for the religious freedom of Christians in the East. They can ask their governments to grant them the same rights that Muslim citizens exercise, in particular the right to participate actively and constructively in politics, in the service of the common good to create true democracy. The presence of Christians in the East is a guarantee for moderate Islam, one that is able to live with others in peace and harmony!

Would it not be possible to bring together these Eastern Christians in the West under a single name, such as 'Eastern Christians Union', to help their Eastern brothers and sisters in seeking solutions to their problems? Create a sort of lobby? Diaspora Christians should retain their right to vote, so precious at election time, in order to increase the number of elected officials from our community.

They should not encourage emigration and deprive the country of its youth. They should inform Western Christians about the challenges they face every day. Perhaps, they could invest and create activities in their countries of origin, providing people with employment opportunities.

LOOK EAST FOR ECUMENISM

Orthodox Synaxis and Ecumenical Witness

By Dale M. Coulter

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

About three miles northeast of the Hagia Sophia on the Golden Horn one will find the Phanar, home to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and site of the recent pan-Orthodox assembly, or “Synaxis” of the primates of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches (not including the Oriental Orthodox). Called by His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the importance of the assembly extends beyond Orthodoxy, giving hope for all

Protestants and Catholics who pray for the unity of the church.

At the conclusion of the Synaxis the patriarchs issued [a joint statement](#) stating their desire “to reinforce our unity through communion and cooperation.” In Orthodox terms, the global witness of the church occurs in and through its synodality, the convening of church councils. As the Ecumenical Patriarch pointed out in his [opening address](#), to deal with the problems of secularity “there is one necessary condition, namely the unity of our Church and the prospect of addressing the contemporary world with a unified voice.”

Both the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Synaxis have put the challenge of balancing the autocephaly of the Orthodox churches—the fact that they are in communion while maintaining hierarchical independence—with their unity front and center. Although no easy task, this is a welcome development. The seriousness of their intention is underscored by a further commitment to work toward a Holy Synod in 2016. If the Orthodox churches can speak with a united voice through the work of a Holy Synod, it can have a powerful effect for all Christians.

This push toward synodality is not a recent development, but the signs of its success are encouraging. The Ecumenical Patriarch underscored the fact that the Holy Synod is the means of expressing the fundamental unity of the Orthodox churches. Ideally, a synod holds together the global and local nature of the church because the patriarchs represent their own churches while forging a consensus that applies to all. Such a move toward synodality harmonizes with Pope Francis’ desire to shift the focus away from Rome and toward the local by utilizing the same means. All Protestants should rejoice at these moves to emphasize the local because they represent a democratization that can give expression to the people of God. As Nicholas Afanasiev has noted, the bishops should lead the flock without domination through the gifts of the Spirit that remain within the church. This can happen when they acknowledge that “within the people of God, who constitute the Church, each one of the faithful, and not just the pastors, is established priest and king by his God.” What results is a communion of mutual love and submission concretely expressed in and through the synod. (Continue next page)

The concern for unity identifies the second issue of Orthodox mission in the world. Such a mission begins with a recognition of the plurality of the modern world, which extends to a plurality among Christians. It is heartening to see the primates “reaffirm our obligation at all times to be open in our contact with ‘the other’: with other people and other cultures, as well as with other Christians and people of other faiths.” I say this as one of those “other Christians.”

A posture of openness to the other in recognition of the plurality of the modern world suggests the possibility of the Orthodox deepening their commitment to ecumenical conversations with the many diverse forms of Protestantism. At least, I hope that this is the signal being sent by the Synaxis.

Currently, any bilateral ecumenical dialogue with the Orthodox churches remains difficult precisely because of the need to have all the patriarchs endorse such a dialogue for it to be a genuinely pan-Orthodox affair. A pan-Orthodox synod is the natural place for such an endorsement to occur. Without this endorsement other Christian communions must remain content to dialogue with this or that Orthodox church rather than the entire Orthodox communion. The implication is that any statement issued by such a dialogue would only apply to one autocephalous church. For example, the Finnish Lutheran Church has had an ongoing dialogue with the Moscow Patriarchate for quite some time, but this dialogue does not carry any jurisdictional weight with other Orthodox churches.

Protestants and Catholics should welcome a united Orthodox witness in mission because it can open to the door to a common Christian witness. Of course, the road to a Holy Synod will not be easy for the primates even with a consultative group. The withdrawal of the [Antiochian delegation from the Synaxis](#) over the conflict with the Jerusalem Patriarchate reveals the ongoing challenge. The issue is the creation of an archdiocese by the Patriarch of Jerusalem within the jurisdiction of the Antiochian Orthodox Church. Thus far efforts to resolve the dispute have been unsuccessful. One can only hope that efforts to maintain communion between these two Orthodox churches will succeed.

I do not know what the future holds for a common

witness to the Christian faith. The current fracturing of Protestantism suggests that we may be in for an ecumenical winter. At the same time, the movement toward a Holy Synod, like the recent extension of friendship by Pope Francis to Pentecostals, may be signs of spring. Common witness must begin at the local level before it can move to the global, which is why I pray for a strong, united Orthodox presence in the world in the same way that I pray for the many tongues of Pentecost to return to the one Spirit and one baptism from which they spring. In the words of the late Avery Dulles, ecumenical theology must be “biblically rooted, ecclesially responsible, open to criticism, and sensitive to the present leading of the Spirit.” Ecclesial responsibility requires adherence to one’s local expression while biblical rootedness and openness to criticism acknowledge the global; and yet, enveloping them all is the leading of the Spirit who inspires the Scriptures, illuminates the mind, and transforms the heart. This is why we all participate in the Benedictine call of *ora et labora* at the local level in the service of a global witness.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH DOES NOT CONSIDER 2016 ORTHODOX COUNCIL ECUMENICAL

14 March 2014, 10:08 | Moscow Patriarchy |

In an interview with the news agency Interfax-Religion, Vladimir Legoyda, head of the Synodal Information Department of the Russian Orthodox Church, described the outcome of the meeting of the Primates and representatives of the Orthodox Churches, which took place last week at the residence of the Patriarch of Constantinople at the Phanar in Istanbul. (Continue next page)



The main purpose of the meeting was to prepare for the Pan-Orthodox council. According to the head of the Synodal Department, the Orthodox Churches achieved a consensus at the meeting to convene the council in spring 2016.

“The delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, headed by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, played a crucial role in this,” said Legoyda. “At the meeting it was decided to intensify preparations for the council. Already this fall a special inter-Orthodox committee, which will consist of one priest and one councilor from each autocephalous church, will be set up. It is expected that by the spring of next year the council will have prepared the foundations for the pan-Orthodox preconciliar meeting. It will have to address the latest issues, and it will be the final step in the preparation for the Pan-Orthodox council.”

“It is worth nothing that the Primates and representatives of the churches clearly supported the position that was initially held by the Russian Church that all decisions of the future Orthodox Council should be taken by consensus,” said the head of the Synodal Information Department of the Russian Orthodox Church. “This means that if any decision is not supported by at least one of the churches, it will not be accepted, meaning no church will remain in the minority. This is an ancient church tradition that characterizes its synodality and distinguishes the latter from parliamentary democracy, where a majority of votes is used in the decision-making procedure.”

When asked whether the forthcoming council is ecumenical, Legoyda said: “The council, the preparation of which is entering its final phase, is called the Holy and Great, sometimes Pan-Orthodox. Calling it ecumenical is not accepted and is incorrect. The last ecumenical council was convened in Nicaea in 787, and since then such councils have not convened. Following the schism in 1054, ecumenical councils were held in the West. However, in the East they are not recognized as such...”

“It is expected that in the Orthodox council in 2016 will be attended by representatives and Primates of all the universally recognized autocephalous Orthodox Churches,” Legoyda said in conclusion, Patriarkhiya.ru reported.

Russian Orthodox prayer services to be held in Paris’s Notre Dame

[CWN](#) - March 13, 2014 The Russian Orthodox Diocese of Chersonese (Korsun) in France has reached an agreement with the Cathedral of Notre Dame of Paris to

hold a weekly Lenten prayer service there, according to the Interfax news agency. During the service, which will take place on Fridays, the Akathist-- a Marian hymn beloved by Eastern Catholics and Orthodox alike-- will be sung before an icon of the Mother of God.

Ecumenical Patriarch visits Hungary, meets with Catholic bishops

[CWN](#) - March 04, 2014



The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, who holds a primacy of honor in Eastern Orthodoxy, traveled to Hungary on March 2 and 3. During his visit, he met with the nation’s Catholic bishops.

“The crisis which plagues Europe today and threatens its unity

is the result of a process of its continuous spiritual decomposition, separation from its Christian tradition and the Church, and dissolution of the fundamental institutions of nation and family,” said Patriarch Bartholomew I.

“We are especially moved and delighted for our forthcoming meeting with His Holiness Pope Francis, the Primate of the Roman Catholic Church, who already from the first year of his papal ministry has paved ways and created visions,” he added, referring to his upcoming meeting in Jerusalem with the Pontiff in May.

The Patriarch added:

We Christians are obliged to unite our resources in order to protect our flock from the increasingly troubling persecutions and tragic waves of violence against Christians in various parts of our planet, especially in the Middle East, Africa and other place of the world. We would also like to take this opportunity to inform you about the concern and intense anxiety of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the protection of Christians in the lands, where Christ’s feet first stepped, where the Apostles lived and early martyrs died – a concern that we shall also share with our fellow-Cyrenaeans in this humanitarian struggle, Pope Francis, during our highly anticipated forthcoming meeting.

PRAY FOR THE UNITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES!

First married man ordained priest for U.S. Maronite Catholic Church

Perla Akiki receives Communion from her father, Fr. Wissam Akiki, after he was ordained to the priesthood Feb. 27 at St. Raymond's Maronite Cathedral in St. Louis. Akiki, who is married with a daughter, is the first married man to be ordained a priest for the U.S. Maronite Catholic Church.

ST. LOUIS

Fr. Wissam Akiki is the first married man to be ordained a priest for the U.S. Maronite Catholic Church.

On Feb. 27, with permission granted by Pope Francis, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan of the U.S. Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon ordained the married deacon at St. Raymond's Maronite Cathedral in St. Louis.

"It is a blessing and an honor to officiate over any ordination, and especially so at this historic ordination of the first married man to enter the priesthood in the United States of America for the Maronite Church," Zaidan said in a statement issued before the ordination. "I join our Holy Father, our Maronite patriarch, my fellow bishops and priests throughout the world in our prayer for priestly vocations," he said.

Akiki studied for the priesthood at Holy Spirit University in Lebanon, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington and the Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis. He is married to Manal Kassab and they have a daughter, Perla.

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The Maronite Church is among 22 Eastern Catholic churches that are in union with Rome. The spiritual heritage of the Maronite Church is traced to a fourth-century hermit, St. Maron.

These Eastern churches have an ancient tradition of allowing married men to become priests, although since the 1920s the practice generally has not been permitted in the United States, according to a press release from St. Raymond's Cathedral.

St. Raymond's statement also noted that having a married priesthood should in no way "detract from the value that the church finds in the vocation to celibacy.

The celibate priesthood continues to be highly esteemed. We need to always keep in mind that it is a vocation to be married and a vocation to be a priest."

In the Latin-rite Catholic Church, including in the United States, celibate priesthood has been the normal practice, explained Msgr. Michael Witt, professor of church history at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. The Council of Trent, he said, realized that celibacy within the priesthood was a church discipline.

"In other words, the church says that she wants her priests to be celibate so that we priests then stand in for Christ at the altar and also beyond the altar," Witt told the *St. Louis Review*, newspaper of the St. Louis Archdiocese. "There is a marriage bond between the clergy and the church just as there is a marriage covenant between the church and Christ. And we as priests are supposed to image that."



Eastern Catholic churches traditionally have dealt with the issue of married priests in a different way.

In 692 during the Council of Constantinople, also known as the Council in Trullo, Witt said, the council fathers "acknowledged the legitimacy of a married clergy, but it is highly restricted."

"A (married) priest is not allowed to be a bishop -- in fact most bishops (in the Eastern Church) are monks and they must be celibate. And if you're ordained a priest and you're not married, then you're expected to remain celibate the rest of your life," he explained.

"The important thing to remember about celibacy in Roman Church is that it is a covenantal relationship between the individual priest and the church itself," Witt said. "The priest is standing in for Christ -- the 'alter Christus' -- and he stands in for Christ not only when he is performing the sacraments, but in a much broader sense than that. We are really married to the church in a unique kind of way."

[Jennifer Brinker is a staff writer for the *St. Louis Review*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.]

PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH

Unity of Hearts! Unity of Christians! Unity of the Feast of Easter!



Christian Unity

A quotation by Bryan Cross of the blog:
<http://www.calledto communion.com/>

We should already be reunited. It shouldn't take 500 years to resolve a disagreement. What concerns me more than the 500 years, however, is the general indifference and apathy among many leaders regarding the state of division. Over the course of a year, the average pastor or priest is doing almost nothing aimed at Protestant-Catholic reconciliation per se. (Just follow the average pastor or priest's blog, and see how often he writes posts aimed at effecting Protestant-Catholic reconciliation.) But that's the challenge that (from the Catholic point of view) Catholics have to face and overcome. We can't sit idling our thumbs waiting for more Protestants (and more Catholics) to beat down the doors pursuing unity at the dialogue table. We have to pray and work in an evangelistic way to raise awareness of the problem of our state of division. Love doesn't wait for the other to come to oneself; love goes out and reaches out to the other. So Catholics can't wait for Protestants to reach out over the wall; Catholics should outdo Protestants in love, and thus in reaching out in love to effect reconciliation and reunion.

Although the above refers to Protestant-Catholic reconciliation, it seems applicable as well to Orthodox-Catholic reconciliation. (LOE)

ORTHODOX AND GREEK CATHOLIC PRIESTS PRAY FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE



Assyrian Church of the East Hosts Major Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Event in Beirut

<http://news.assyrianchurch.org/>

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

Matthew 18:20

The Assyrian Church of the East in Lebanon has hosted an ecumenical celebration marking the end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The event, on 26 January 2014, was held at St George Cathedral of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Beirut suburb of Sed el-Bouchriyeh.

The ecumenical gathering, the largest of its kind ever held in Lebanon, saw representatives of 10 churches come together to celebrate the important event.

These churches were:



Antiochian Orthodox Church- Armenian Orthodox Church- Assyrian Church of the East- Chaldean Catholic Church- Coptic Orthodox Church- Maronite Catholic Church- Melkite Catholic Church- National Evangelical Church of Lebanon- Syriac Catholic Church- Syrian Orthodox Church

Senior prelates and clergy from the noted churches were represented at the event.

The ecumenical prayer event commenced with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer in Arabic, followed by an address from The Rev'd Fr Michel Jalakh, Secretary-General of the Middle East Council of Churches.

The Secretary-General welcomed all prelates and distinguished guests present stressing that the spirit of ecumenism should be the driver of relations between the churches that they may live together in unity. He stressed that each church has its own liturgical and theological tradition and cultural legacy. This, said The Rev'd Fr Michel Jalakh, is a symbol of the richness of the Church of Christ with ecumenical unity not meaning each church should abandon its own historical legacy.

The Vatican's Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Gabriele Giordano Caccia then addressed the gathering offering prayers in the French language. (Continue next page)

The keynote address of the function was delivered by His Grace Mar Narsai Benjamin, Bishop of Iran of the Assyrian Church of the East visiting from his Diocesan See in Tehran. In his remarks, His Grace expressed the openness of the Assyrian Church of the East to constructive dialogue with its sister churches. His Grace noted that the ecumenical gathering was a visible reflection of the desire of the Assyrian Church of the East to pursue fruitful and sincere relations with all churches, without exception.

The Very Rev'd Archdeacon Emmanuel Youkhana of the Assyrian Church of the East then interpreted the address of the Bishop of Iran to Arabic.

Following the formal addresses at the beginning of the programme, vespers were offered according to the rite of the Assyrian Church of the East. The Gospel was read in the Greek, Armenian, Arabic and Assyrian languages.

Following the evening prayers, hymns were sung in several languages by a 'unity choir' composed of faithful from 9 churches.

At the end of the programme His Beatitude Mor Ignatius Joseph III Younan, Patriarch of the Syriac Catholic Church offered the final blessing.

Following the conclusion of the gathering, the prelates proceeded to the Archbishopric of the Assyrian Church of the East where His Beatitude the Patriarch of the Syriac Catholic Church offered his felicitations and thanks to the Assyrian Church of the East and the organising committee for the success of the ecumenical event.

The Vatican's Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Gabriele Giordano Caccia then addressed those present and noted that he was pleased and honoured to be the only western prelate participating in the Eastern gathering. He further expressed his joy that all the sister churches of the East were gathered in an atmosphere of love, unity and respect which are at the roots of the Christian faith.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

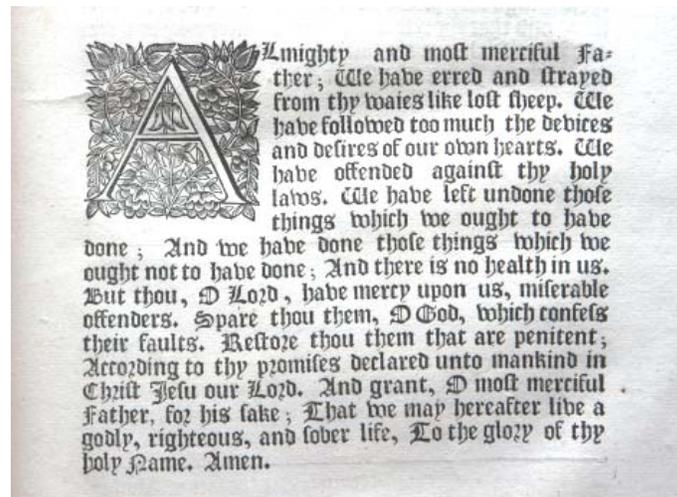
Saint John's Orthodox Church, Hermitage, PA is a parish of the [American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese](#) of the [Ecumenical Patriarchate](#). Photo of first Liturgy in **new** church.



THE LITURGY AND THE ANGLICAN ORDINARIATES: AN EVANGELICAL OPPORTUNITY

04/01/2014 · by [Lateran649](#)

· from: <http://priestofthechurch.wordpress.com/>



As previous posts here will have made clear, although my spiritual home is in the Byzantine East, I am not disinterested in the life of the Western Church. In fact, quite the opposite is true. This is because over the course of Christian history, faithfulness in all things was of interest to the whole Church, and not limited to those who happened to live in particular regions. Furthermore, in a cosmopolitan world such as ours, wherein Greeks brush up against Slavs, Copts against Germans, and Syrians against Celts on a daily basis, it is hardly becoming of any Churchman to take shelter in their own corner, and ignore the affairs of those in another just because their rite is different, and their traditions lie outside his own. And as a former Anglican who was much concerned with the theological and spiritual rationale of what we did as traditional 'Anglo-Catholics', my interest in the current question is significant.

I feel compelled to address the issue of the Ordinariate liturgies because I have heard from certain quarters – both former Anglican and cradle Roman – that there is some dissatisfaction in England and Wales with the idea that Ordinariate Catholics should use what they regard as the 'old' services. This means, in terms of Anglican patrimony, that there is consternation on the part of some that the services of the Ordinariate in Britain should be based on the traditional Book of Common Prayer.

To be fair, Anglo-Catholics in England never did benefit from the 20th century revisions that made the American and Canadian Books of Common Prayer (for example) much more conducive to Catholic interpretation than the 1662 Book. By this, I am NOT referring to the 1979 American book (Continue next page)

(also called the Book of Common Prayer) or the 1985 Canadian Book of Alternative Services; I am, rather, referring to the 1928 and 1962 books proper to each country. In any case, it is almost certain that the failure of the Proposed Book of Common Prayer in England to gain Parliamentary approval in 1928 set the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Anglican ‘mother country’ on a very different path to that of the United States and Canada.

The nature of this different path, I would argue, was most unfortunate. Whereas in Canada, Anglican Ritualists could draw on the 1962 book with pleasure, celebrating the Service of Holy Communion as if it was simply an Elizabethan English translation of the Sarum Rite, the like-minded brethren in England (at least after 1969) seemed to have little choice but to go down a path of surreptitious use of the Roman Missal. My own experience manifests this precisely. My penultimate service as a Canadian Anglican was taken at [St John the Evangelist in Montreal](#), celebrated using nothing but the Canadian Book of Common Prayer, but done in a fashion that I can imagine our Medieval forbears would have recognised. Within weeks of moving to England, by contrast, I was using the Roman Missal for all services, while only the laity ‘in the know’ were aware that we weren’t simply giving them a permissible variant of the 1980 Alternative Services Book. I observed that from parish to parish, Anglo-Catholics in England had largely lost sight of the historically-rooted Catholic aspirations of such figures as the Caroline Divines and the Oxford Fathers, and had rather come to emulate (albeit with better taste!) much of the English-speaking post-Vatican II Roman Catholic world (in either its Irish or its faux-Mediterranean form). For the most part, it seems, what became known in England (and Wales) as Anglo-Catholicism, was really a post-Anglican imitation of the most unfortunate post-Conciliar Roman Catholic liturgical experimentation, which, other than being done with dignity, was and is both ahistorical and counter-rubrical.

I have been of the opinion for some time that one of the great weaknesses of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain is that her contemporary incarnation can appear as less than sympathetic to the indigenous spirit. It might be argued that, since the Reformation and the systematic dismantling of monasteries on these shores, together with the suppression of native rites (such as those of Sarum) by Trent, the indigenous British Catholic tradition has been, however residually, stewarded by the Protestant Church of England. This is because, in spite of the breath-taking witness of Recusants, the Roman Catholic Church has looked, in some instances, like the Italian Mission on the one hand, and the restricted spiritual domain of Irish immigrants on the other. Yet, [as](#)

[I have said elsewhere](#), if a country and a people need one thing in order to hear the Gospel, it is to be spoken to in a language of their own.

Whatever Thomas Cranmer became, at the time that he first translated the Latin Mass into English, drawing from Eastern sources as he did, he was a liturgical and linguistic genius. His pioneering creation, the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, was a work of beauty, and even subject to close analysis, Catholic understanding. His principal source for this work was, of course, the Sarum Rite, combined with a Benedictine spiritual worldview that he drew from the landscape of England itself. In saying so, I am in no way apologising for the theological, political, and historical travesty that led to the Prayer Book in the first place; I am only saying that, in spite of things, the resulting work could hardly have been surpassed. And it is this Book, together with its deeply flawed and wholly inadequate successor books that – for better or worse – spoke to, and for, the British people until at least the early twentieth century: from England to Wales and, to a lesser extent, Scotland. When Pope Benedict graciously raised up the Ordinariates in countries with substantial numbers of Anglicans wishing to enter communion with the Catholic Church, he presented them with an opportunity to consider who they were and what they brought to the Catholic table as Anglicans. I would argue that Anglicans in the United States and Canada have been more successful in undertaking this opportunity than Anglicans in Britain, by reason of their stronger attachment to the liturgies of the Prayer Book tradition than their English counterparts, and because of the fact that theirs was always a highly reflective theological position as compared to an emotional, ritual one. It seems to me that, at this early juncture in the history of *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, it is incumbent on Anglicans who have entered communion with the Catholic Church to reflect on their identity as Catholic Anglicans, and to understand what distinguishes them from their more numerically significant Roman brethren. I, for one, would argue that the answer to this must be the liturgy above all: not only that it is celebrated with a certain Anglican dignity, but that it also draws on the legitimate heritage that Pope Benedict himself identified, and which resides in the services derived directly from the Book of Common Prayer. I believe that in deciding thus, the Ordinariates – but especially the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham – have an unsurpassed opportunity to meet the people where they are, and represent something that truly speaks to them. The legitimate heritage of Anglicanism has been doing so on some level for generations, and that heritage has now been recognised and taken up by the Church of Rome. I pray that we may all benefit from it

“Theological dialogue with Catholics risks failure”

The Metropolitan of Pergamon Ioannis Zizioulas has raised alarm bells about divisions between the Orthodox Churches. Some have reduced Christian unity to an alliance between religious hierarchies formed in order to tackle sexual ethics issues together

GIANNI VALENTE
VATICAN CITY

<http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/>

The theological dialogue between Catholic and Orthodox Churches which was launched with the aim of achieving full sacramental communion, risks stalling permanently. And one of the main reasons for this would appear to be the divisions that exist between the

Orthodox Churches and those influential circles within the Orthodox faith – the Patriarchate of Moscow above all – that are refusing to recognise one universal primate as the leader of the Church, founded on a shared and canonical and ecclesial tradition. The alarm was raised by none other than the Metropolitan of Pergamon, Ioannis Zizioulas, a former member of the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, co-President of the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Zizioulas, whom many consider to be the greatest living Christian theologian (his “Eucharistic ecclesiology” is appreciated both by Pope Francis and his predecessor Benedict XVI) restores faith in the upcoming meeting between the Bishop of Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Jerusalem next May. He sees unity among Christians as much more than just an alliance between Church hierarchies to form a “common front” to deal with ethical and sex-related issues.

Meanwhile, the direction the Ukrainian crisis has taken raises questions once again over the control the Patriarchate of Moscow exercises over the majority of Orthodox parishes in the Ukraine.

The date of the Pope and the Patriarch’s meeting in Jerusalem is nearing. What can we expect from this meeting?



“It’s going to be a very important event. The intention is to commemorate the meeting between Paul VI and Athenagoras 50 years ago, the first time a Pope and an ecumenical Patriarch had met since the days of the schism. Their embrace sparked hopes of forthcoming

unity between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. This has not yet happened. But it is important to show the world that we are continuing to move patiently and determinedly towards unity. We are on our way to achieving this. We haven’t stopped. This is why the upcoming meeting between Francis and Bartholomew in Jerusalem will not just be a commemorative act looking to the past but represents a door that is open to the future.”

A year on from his election, what is the prevailing impression Orthodox faithful and leaders of the Eastern Churches have

of Pope Francis?

“Pope Francis surprised all of us in a positive way, because of his style, his temperament, his humility and also because the actions he is taking as Pope could bring the Catholic and Orthodox Churches closer together. The Orthodox have always essentially seen the Pope as the Bishop of Rome. And Pope Francis often refers to this title as the title which allows him to exercise his ministry. The Orthodox used to see the Pope as a figure who put himself on a pedestal and the papacy as a form of ecclesiastical imperialism. They thought the Pope’s intention was to subjugate them and exercise power over them. Now there are many signs which are pointing in the opposite direction. For example, the Pope has stressed on more than one occasion that the Catholic Church can learn from the Orthodox Church when it comes to synodality and the synodal nature of the Church.

Does the creation of the Council of 8 Cardinals and the new impetus given to the Synod of Catholic bishops have anything to do with this? Come into this

“Yes, these are important decisions. Some misunderstand synodality, presenting it as the application of worldly political methods to Church life. But the theological dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches clearly set out the correct way in which synodality should be understood. In the Ravenna document of 2007 we recognised that the primacy is necessary and is deeply rooted(Continue next page)

in the Church's canonical tradition. This is not just for human "organisation" reasons. It must always be seen in the context of synodality. The Church is always a synod and in the synod there is always a protos, a number one, a primate. This does not mean a penetration of secular thought on democracy or the monarchy into the Church. Only theology. It derives from the faith in our Holy Trinity. Ever since the very beginning, Church tradition has had canons which state the following: in the Church there is never a Primus without the Synod and there is never a Synod without the Primus. Harmony between the Primus and the Synod is a gift of the Holy Spirit. This has been our ecclesiology right from the start."

The Patriarchate of Moscow rejected the conclusions of the Ravenna document you mentioned. Did you read the Russian Church's pronouncement?

"Yes I did read it. I speak for myself and on behalf of the ecumenical Patriarchate when I say that we do not agree with that document. It claims that the primacy exists and has theological grounding at the local and regional Church level but not on a universal level. We know what the real reason for this is: they want to deny that after the schism in the Orthodox Church too the ecumenical Patriarchate exercised universal primacy. In order to achieve this, they reject the possibility of recognising the Pope's role as universal primate in a way that is acceptable to the Orthodox Churches as well. In the Ravenna document they managed to reach a consensus on this very point: we recognised that in the Church the primacy is always exercised on three levels: a local level, a regional level and a universal level."

Are internal divisions within the Orthodox faith compromising ecumenical dialogue?

"I fear that there are going to be problems. Particularly because the position of the Patriarchate of Moscow holds as much weight as a pronouncement by the Synod. These are not positions expressed by single individuals, by Metropolitan Hilarion or by Patriarch Kirill. With a pronouncement like that, it becomes difficult for an exchange of views to take place and this is what dialogue is all about. Imagine if the Orthodox Church today wished to enter into dialogue with the Catholic Church having already made certain synodal pronouncements on the primacy issue, which is the issue currently at the centre of discussion: it would mean there was no room for discussion and that dialogue had ended. The step taken by the Patriarchate of Moscow could have very negative consequences. It could in fact lead to

the end of theological dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches which was launched in order to overcome the obstacles that are standing in the way of full communion. I hope this will not happen."

Will clarifications be made at the sinaxis (assembly) of the Primate of the Orthodox Churches in March?

"We also need to discuss issues relating to the Orthodox Churches in the context of the great pan-Orthodox synod. Preparation work for this began several years ago and the event could be announced next year. I hope ecumenical dialogue will also be discussed, if not officially, then at least in private. I want to ask the Patriarch of Moscow whether he is aware of the consequences of the step he has taken. He may not have realised just how catastrophic it could be for dialogue."

Pope Francis says that the greatest danger the Church faces is self-referentialism. A while back you talked about a "narcissistic self-satisfaction" that has contaminated many ecclesial circles. Why is ecclesial introversion so insidious?

Pope Francis says that the greatest danger the Church faces is self-referentialism. The Church is there for the world not for itself. The Church gets its light from Christ, as the moon gets its light from the sun. But the light which beams out from the Church is not just for itself: it is for the world, for the life of the world. But what I see now in many ecclesial circles is a growing temptation to set the Church against the sin-filled world and sinful humans. But Jesus ate with sinners. He embraced them. The Church is called to give the same love and forgiveness and not to serve people an ideology caked in Christian words."

Byzantine Splendor and Roman Sobriety

published 9 January 2014 by Dr. Peter Kwasniewski
<http://www.ccwatershed.org/blog/categories/loft/>

I have been thinking a great deal lately about the differences between the Byzantine Divine Liturgy and the Mass of the Roman Rite. For the purposes of this article, I am assuming a Roman liturgy celebrated beautifully and reverently, "with all the stops pulled." (The barren, perfunctory, verbose, and eclectic manner in which the Roman Mass is usually said nowadays does not allow for a fair comparison of the rites as they exist in their plenitude.)

Many have noted that the traditional Western Mass seems more intent on reminding the worshiper of the death of Christ on the (Continue next page)

Cross and the believer's own sinfulness and unworthiness, while the Eastern Divine Liturgy brings to the forefront the eschatological victory of Christ in whose triumph the Christian shares whenever he partakes of the Eucharist, the food of immortality. It is easy, however, to exaggerate the difference between the "downward" symbolism of the Mass (Christ as suffering redeemer, Christians as miserable sinners) and the "upward" symbolism of the Divine Liturgy (Christ as eternal victor, Christians as already glorified in Him). After all, both liturgies frequently recall the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Our Lord. Even if the traditional Latin Mass emphasizes the advent of Christ as Redeemer and the re-presentation of the Sacrifice of Calvary, and in this way places the accent on man's sinfulness and God's infinite mercy, leading to purification and the forgiveness of sins, it could hardly be imagined that the Mass lacks an eschatological dimension. Similarly, if the Eastern liturgy tends to place worship in the context of the Eschaton, the kingdom of the Holy Spirit, in which the life of Christ figures as the exemplar of what all Christians are called to become anew—the image of the Logos—it is no less evident that the Eastern liturgy continually refers to the ongoing drama of redemption. Perhaps the Western soul is more sharply conscious of the incompleteness of our present state, our need to work out salvation "in fear and trembling." The traditional Mass expresses the feeling of homesickness, the longing sinners have for heaven, and raises up before our eyes the Cross of Christ as our bridge, our path, to heaven. In the liturgy's solemnity, majesty, beauty, and silence, in its confessions of sin and hieratic distances, we taste the glory of heaven while being reminded of the sins and limitations that keep us away from the fullness of the kingdom. Thus there is both great joy and great sorrow. Are we not victors in Christ? Has He not risen from the dead and ascended to make intercession for us at the right hand of the Father? Is not the kingdom of God here and now, among those who are incorporated into Christ? Yes—and yet, this is not an unambiguous, final yes on earth, but a yes mixed with all the no's of humanity, of the sin and death which reign in the kingdom of the prince of this world, the no of unconversion, the no of relapsing, the no of impenitence. Our joy is complete in its Source, but we are not completely His. Our Lord is risen; we are



striving to rise. Our Lord is ascended into heaven, we are still torn between heaven and earth. Our Lord is in glory, but we are blinded by His glory, our eyes are not fully purged, our hearts not fully aflame with the love of God. It is for this reason that the Catholic rejoices—and weeps; that the priest glorifies the God who is truly present in our midst—and beats his breast in silence, head bowed; that the Church, sojourning in this vale of tears, waves the flag of victory even as she sounds the trumpets of battle.

In the traditional Roman liturgy, the word "glory," and the reality it signifies, is everywhere. One grows accustomed to hearing it, like a sweet song from afar: gloria . . . gloria . . . gloria. The whole purpose of the Christian life, and the goal towards which it moves, are expressed, evoked, fulfilled in this most serene of liturgies. The sparseness of the rite, too, in comparison

to the East, has its own loveliness: "to thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears." It is a liturgy at once of glory and of mourning, of exile, of longing.

One cannot help noting, nevertheless, that over the centuries certain liturgical riches have fallen out of use in the West that are reminiscent of the splendor of the Byzantine rite. A solemn

High Mass in the *usus antiquior*, adorned with sacred music, can bring joy, solace, and wonder even to an Eastern Catholic, but alas, how rare is such a Mass today? Even in a major city, there might be only one on a Sunday, or two at best.

Here, in a preface from the Sarum Rite, is a fantastic example of the kind of riches the Western liturgy has historically contained.

Preface for the Mass of Saint Cuthbert

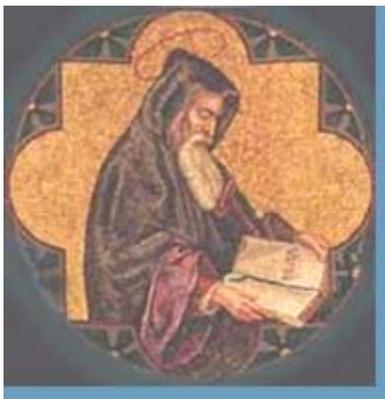
It is truly meet and just, right and availing to our salvation, that we should always and in all places give thanks to Thee, O Holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God, upon this day of the departure to Christ of the most holy priest Cuthbert, Who first of all became an example to saints in his daily life, a life of most temperate and most chaste conduct, and afterwards followed the contemplative life in the wilderness for many years, nourished only by the love of the God of deathless life, and then was chosen to the rank of the episcopate, being (Continue next page)

invited not by his own will but by God's providence, and the counsel of the churches.

For he had ever fought manfully and mightily against flesh and blood, and the rulers of this aerial realm, seizing victory with the helmet of hope for salvation, and the breastplate of righteousness, and with the shield of faith, and the sword of the Word of God, and being protected on the right hand and on the left, the soldier of God overcame the battle-formations of the enemies, and the Lord wrought many miracles by him; and he foretold his death many days before. For he commended the governance of the people to the King and the Bishop, and he set out for the holy desert, and he gave up his spirit to God the Father Almighty, accompanied by a heavenly, holy multitude from the Gospel.

Thee, therefore, O Lord, we entreat, that by the intercession of holy Bishop Cuthbert, we may be counted worthy to reach the harbour of joy, and the heavenly realms of Him before Whom there stand innumerable choirs of Angels and Archangels, and they say: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth ...
Traditional Byzantine Liturgies

Cries From the Heart: Prayers of St. Gregory of Narek



by Michael J.L. La Civita
From ONE Magazine

The golden age of the Armenian civilization is personified by Gregory of Narek — priest and poet, theologian and philosopher, monk and mystic.

Gregory was born in the year 951 to a family dedicated to the church; his father Khosrov Antsevatsi served as a bishop and theologian of the Armenian Apostolic Church. After his wife's death, the bishop entrusted the boy to the care of an uncle, Anania. A respected scholar, mystic and monk, Anania founded the Narek Monastery on the shores of Lake Van in eastern Anatolia and reared Gregory as one of the monastic community, to which his pupil remained attached for the rest of his short life.

Few details of Gregory's life are known, but hints of the man's years of pain and suffering suffuse his

writings, particularly his Book of Lamentations. Written in the waning years of the first Christian millennium, Lamentations is considered by scholars a metaphor for the preparation and celebration of the Divine Liturgy — an “edifice of faith,” to use the poet's words.

The 95 Lamentations are grouped together, mirroring the different stages of the liturgy, from the dismissal of the catechumens, the profession of faith and communion to the final prayers in preparation of death and judgment.

The work of St. Gregory of Narek encouraged the development of Classical Armenian as a literary language. His writings also adorn the liturgical rites of the ancient Armenian Church, including the Badarak, or eucharistic liturgy, which Gregory's father described as “the great medicine”: “We beseech you,” the priest says to himself as he ascends the sanctuary, “with outstretched arms, with tears and sobbing prayers.” St. Gregory's monastery thrived for nearly a millennium, but it did not survive the bloodshed known to the Armenian community as the Armenian Genocide (1915-1922), in which some 1.5 million Armenians — as well as Assyrians, Chaldeans, Greeks and Syriac Christians — died. Yet, the writings of this “angel in human form” survive, carrying to God the cries of millions of hearts.

Prayer 95

*By your noble and glorious blood,
offered unceasingly to please God who sent you,
may the dangers be lifted from me,
may my transgressions be forgiven,
may my vices be pardoned,
may my shamelessness be forgotten,
may my sentence be commuted,
may the worms shrivel,
may the wailing stop,
and the gnashing of teeth fall silent.
Let the laments lessen and tears dry.
Let mourning end and darkness be banished.
May the vengeful fire be stamped out
and torments of every kind exiled. ...*

*May you who grant life to all be compassionate now.
Let your light dawn,
your salvation be swift,
your help arrive in time,
and the hour of your arrival be at hand.*