Sunday, January 23, 2011

THIRTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST:
SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY; ST. GREGORY, BISHOP OF NYSSA; VENERABLE DOMETIAN, BISHOP OF MITYLENE

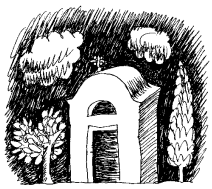
RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE TWO:
When You did descend to death, O Life Immortal, You did slay hell with the splendor of Your Godhead! And when from the depths You did raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to You!

THEOPHANY TROPARION - TONE ONE:
When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bare witness to You, and called You His beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, who has revealed Yourself and has enlightened the world, glory to You!

RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE TWO:
Hell became afraid, O Almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with You! And the world, O my Savior, praises You forever.

THEOPHANY KONTAKION - TONE FOUR:
Today You have appeared to the universe and Your light, O Lord, has shone on us, who with understanding praise You: You have come and revealed Yourself, O Light Unapproachable!

INSTEAD OF "IT IS TRULY MEET...": Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Mother of God, more honorable than the heavenly hosts! No tongue is capable of praising you worthily; the angelic mind is overawed in exalting you, O Mother of God! But accept our faith, since you are gracious and know our divine love. You are the protectress of Christians, and we praise you!



From Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church in Butte, Montana

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 2ND TONE:
The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

EPHESIANS 4: 7-13
Brethren, to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." Now this, "He ascended" - what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

FOR ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA, 1 CORINTHIANS 12: 7-11
Brethren, the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:
The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you! Save the the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call.

COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 4: 7-13

The Church is truly one in essence but it is diverse in both function and gifts. Unity does not mean uniformity. Each member is unique before God, with gifts and roles granted by Him. Why a diversity of persons and gifts in the Church? For the unity of service, for the preservation of truth and for the operation of sacrificial love, "agape," the primary quality of Christian growth. The Church, where Christian life develops, is not an organization, but rather an organism whose parts (members) receive their edifying power from Christ to grow up in Christ.

COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 12: 7-11

The purpose of spiritual gifts is the growth of the whole Church: "*A charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit given for the benefit of others. But no person possesses all the gifts*" *(Saint Basil the Great)*. This list of gifts is not exhaustive (see Romans 12: 6-8; 1 Corinthians 14: 1-5; Ephesians 4: 7-12).

GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 4: 12-17

At that time when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

FOR ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA, MATTHEW 10: 1, 5-8

At that time, when Jesus had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW 4: 12-17

Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee because the common people on the edge of Jewish territory are more receptive to His teaching than the leadership in Jerusalem. 'Darkness' means ungodliness. To sit in darkness means to be overcome by spiritual ignorance and death. The 'great light' shines on these people in anticipation of the Gospel being preached. Christ's first word, like that of John the Baptist, is "Repent" because repentance is necessary to enter and continue in His new way of life.

COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW 10: 1, 5-8

"Disciples" and "apostles" are often used interchangeably for the Twelve; disciple means "learner" and apostle means "one sent out" as in to instruct. Christ gives them the same

mission as His – preach, heal sickness, cast out demons and even raise the dead – with the understanding that since all they receive is from God, they should be willing to bestow as freely.

(14th century fresco of St. Gregory of Nyssa, Chora Church, Istanbul)

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From The Prologue for January 10/23 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa

Gregory was the brother of Basil the Great. At first he was only a presbyter, since he was married; but when his wife, Blessed Theosevia, reposed, Gregory was chosen and consecrated Bishop of Nyssa. He was distinguished by his great secular learning and spiritual experience. He participated in the Second Ecumenical Council [Constantinople, 381]. It is thought that he composed the second half of the Symbol of Faith [the Creed]. He was a great orator, an interpreter of Holy Scripture and a theologian. Because of their defeat, the Arians especially attacked him as their worst enemy, so that during the reign of Emperor Valens—their ally of the same mind—they succeeded in ousting Gregory from the episcopal throne and sent him into exile. This Holy Father spent eight years in exile, patiently enduring all miseries and all humiliations. He finally reposed in old age toward the end of the fourth century, and entered into the Kingdom of God, remaining throughout the ages as a great beacon of the Church on earth.

The Venerable Ammon, Egyptian Ascetic

For fourteen years, Ammon prayed to God and struggled to conquer anger within himself. He attained such perfection of goodness that he was not even conscious that evil existed in the world. He was particularly knowledgeable in Holy Scripture. He reposed at the beginning of the fifth century.

Saint Marcian
Marcian was born in Rome. After being ordained a presbyter, he lived the remainder of his life in Constantinople, during the greater part of the reign of Emperor Marcian and Empress Pulcheria. Inheriting enormous wealth from his parents, Marcian generally spent it on two goals—building or restoring churches, and charity for the poor. He built two new churches in Constantinople, both famous for their beauty and sacredness, dedicated to St. Anastasia and St. Irene. When he was asked: "Why do you spend so much on churches?" he replied: "If I had a daughter and wanted to marry her to a nobleman, would I not spend much gold in order to adorn her as a worthy bride? And here I am adorning the Church, the Bride of Christ." As generous as this wonderful man was toward the churches and the indigent, so was he austere, very austere, toward himself, following the apostolic exhortation: *Having food and raiment let us be therewith content* (I Timothy 6:8). It is written about him: "He was totally in God and God in him." And he departed to God, in fullness of years and good works, in the year 471.

HYMN OF PRAISE: Saint Gregory and Saint Marcian
The Spirit possesses the gifts, the Spirit imparts the gifts:
To some, blessed mercy; to some, bold understanding;
To some, a special virgin's purity;
To some, a living love or a sound mind.
According to the strength of one's faith, the Spirit adds new gifts.
If faith grows, which moves mountains,
Then the treasury of the Spirit is opened,
And gift upon gift descends like rain upon the faithful one.
St. Gregory, because of his great faith,
Soared like an eagle to spiritual heights.
St. Marcian, because of his great faith,
Was illuminated with heavenly mercy.
The light of theology was imparted to Gregory.
To Marcian was given grace, the oil of praise.
O Heavenly Spirit, Lord and King,
Do not withhold Thy wondrous gifts from us,
But, through the prayers of Thy chosen vessels,
Save us from condemnation on the day of the Dread Judgment.

REFLECTION
Vanity over clothing is taking on a particular momentum in our time. He who has nothing else of which to be proud, becomes proud of his attire. Yet he who has something more costly than clothes of which to be proud, does not become proud. Just as gold is not found on the surface of the earth, so it is that the spiritual worth of a man does not show outwardly. It is said that a certain distinguished philosopher saw a young man who took pride in his clothing. He approached the young man and whispered in his ear: "The same fleece was previously worn by a ram; nevertheless, he was still a ram!" To be a Christian and to display pride in clothing is more insane than to be an emperor and to be proud of the dust under one's feet. While St. Arsenius wore clothes of gold in the

royal court, no one called him Great. He was called Great only when he unselfishly gave himself over completely to God—and dressed in rags.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the lowliness of the Lord Jesus:
1. The lowliness of the King, Who was born in a cave;
2. The lowliness of the Most-wealthy One, Who hungered and thirsted;
3. The lowliness of the Almighty in relating to the lowly on earth.

HOMILY

on contentment with that which is most necessary to us

Having food and raiment let us be therewith content (I Timothy 6:8).

The apostles of God taught others that which they themselves fulfilled in their own lives. When they had food and clothing, they were content. Even when it happened that they had neither food nor clothing, they were content, for their contentment did not emanate from the outside but from within. Their contentment was not so cheap as the contentment of an animal, but costly—more costly and more rare. Inward contentment, the contentment of peace and love of God in the heart—that is the contentment of greater men, and that was the apostolic contentment. In great battles, generals are dressed and fed as ordinary soldiers: they do not seek contentment in food or in clothes but in victory. Victory is the primary contentment of those who battle. Brethren, Christians are constantly in battle—in battle for the victory of the spirit over the material, in battle for the victory of the higher over the lower, and in battle for the victory of man over his beastly nature. Is it not, therefore, absurd to engage in battle and concern oneself not with victory but with external decorations and ornaments? Is it not foolish to give to one's enemies the marks of identification? Our invisible enemy, Satan, rejoices at our vanity and supports us in every vain thought. The invisible enemy occupies us with every possible unreasonable pettiness and idleness, only to impose upon our minds the heavy forgetfulness of that for which we are here on earth. The invisible enemy presents to us the worthless as important, the irrelevant as essential, and the detrimental as beneficial, only in order to achieve victory over us and to destroy us forever.

O Lord, Holy, Mighty and Immortal, Who created us from the mud and breathed the living soul into mud; do not, O Lord, allow the mud to overcome us! Help our spirit, that it always be stronger than the earth.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

DIOCESAN EVENTS

2011 Dates to Remember

Monday, January 31, 2011
Parish Reports due from Parishes and Monasteries for the Annual Assembly

Thursday, February 17, 2011
Luncheon 1:00 pm followed by Clergy Seminar & KSS Annual Meeting
Diocesan Council Meeting 7:00 pm
St. John the Baptist Church, San Francisco, CA

Friday, February 18, 2011 (One Day Event)
Diocesan Assembly - St. John the Baptist Church, San Francisco, CA

March 13, 2011
Sunday of Orthodoxy

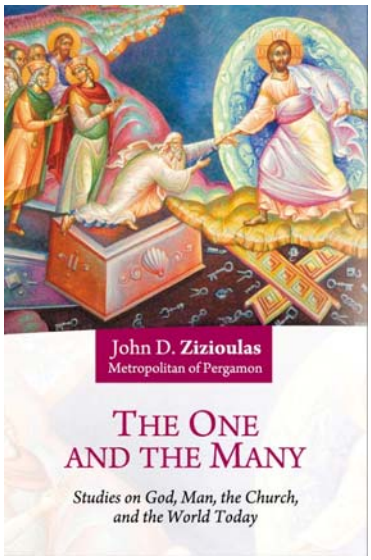
March 22-23, 2011
Annual Lenten Clergy Retreat
Christ the Saviour Serbian Orthodox Church
1424 S. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia, CA 91007
Tuesday, March 22nd beginning at 3:00 p.m.
Departure on Wednesday, March 23rd
following 10:30 am Breakfast and Wrap-up

April 8-9, 2011
Annual Lenten Women's Retreat

July 17 – August 6, 2011
Diocesan Summer Camp
Saint Sava Mission, Jackson, California

September 2-4, 2011
Diocesan Days
Saint Sava Mission, Jackson, California

December 4, 2011
Diocesan KSS Slava
Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos



FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:
A NEW PUBLICATION

Treasures New and Old

Writing by and about St. Nikolai Velimirovich

Before us is a book about a theologian, a minister, a missionary, a writer, a poet, an apostle, a saint, a man of dialogue: this book is about St. Nikolai Velimirovic, Bishop of Ohrid and Zhicha (1880 - 1956), who along with his many other attributes is regarded, with good reason, as an Enlightener of the Americas, The renewed interest in this man and his works has resulted in the materialization of this book for English-speaking readers who wish to become acquainted with this extraordinary person. The collected texts provide an extensive over view of his life, present important testimonies about his personality, and offer essential insights into his theology. The authors penetrate the depths of his thought with remarkable precision and also elucidate his actions. The authros agree that the appearance of Nikolai Velimirovich marks an era of change in the ecclesiastical and theological paradigm as a result of his spirituality, ecclsiastical work, and theological position.
Retail price: $18.00 Paperback

THE ONE AND THE MANY

Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today

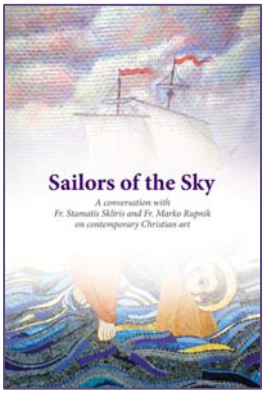
This volume offers a collection of Zizioulas articles which have appeared mostly in English, and which present his trinianatarian doctrine of God, as well as his theological account of the Church as the place in which freedom and communion are actualized. The title, The One and the Many, suggests the idea of a profound relationship that exists between the Persons in the Holy Trinity, between Christ and the Church, between one Catholic Church and many catholic Churches. On each of these levels of communion, each one is called to receive from one another and indeed to receive one another. And while this is understandable at the Triadological and Christological levels, it raises all sorts of fundamental ecclesiological questions, since the highest point of unity in this context is both the mutual ecclesial-eucharistic recognition and agreement on doctrine and canonical-eccelesiological organization.The book has the Preface written by Bishop Athanasius Yevtich, and an extensive and valuable Introduction (pp. xi-xxi) written by Paul Mc Partlan. Part one contains Zizioulas STUDIES IN TRIADOLOGY (Trinitarian theology): The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today (pp. 3-16: The need for a fresh study; The question

of God s being in relation to the world; The problem of God s being in Himself; The place of Trinitarian theology in Ecclesiology; Conclusion). The Being of God and the Being of Man (pp. 17-40: The need for a serious theological dialogue; A controversial issue: Trinitarian theology and the human person; Personalism-Existentialism and the theological concept of the person; Neoplatonism and patristic theology; Apophaticism and ontology; The personal existence of God and the human person; The importance of Christology and history; The eschatological character of salvation; Conclusion). This parts ends with an article One Single Source: An Orthodox Response to the Clarification on the Filioque (pp. 41-45). Part Two: STUDIES IN ECCLESIOLOGY: The Church as Communion (pp. 49-60: Introduction; Koinonia as a theological concept; The Church as koinonia ; Conclusion). Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist (pp. 61-74: Historical background; The Eucharist makes the Church and the Church constitutes the Eucharist; Conclusions; Our ecumenical situation today). The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church(p.75-90: The place of Pneumatology in ecclesiology; Pneumatology and the actual structure and life of the Church). Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist (p.91-). Symbolism and Realism in Orthodox Worship (pp. 101-117: Introduction; The notion of symbol; Symbolism in the Christian Faith; Symbolism in Orthodox worship; Iconic symbolism in worship; A look at the situation today). The Theological Problem of Reception (pp. 118-125: Introduction; The classical idea of reception and its theological significance; The actual ecumenical situation); Eschatology and History (pp. 126-135); The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition (pp. 136-146: Some basic theological presuppositions; The importance of these principles for ecclesiology); The Early Christian Community (pp. 147-169: Primitive Christianity; Aspects of the Faith of the early Christian community; The early Patristic period; The challenge of Gnosticism; The emergence of a Christian Gnosticism; Martyrdom as a form of spirituality; Toward medieval spirituality); Preliminary Considerations on the Concept of Authority (pp. 170-176); The Meaning of Ordination (pp. 177-180); Ordination and Communion (pp. 181-189: Some preliminary considerations; Ordination in the light of communion; Some concluding remarks); The Development of Conciliar Structures to the Time of the First Ecumenical Council (pp. 190-213: Primitive conciliarity on the local level; The transition to provincial conciliar structure; Toward an Ecumenical Council; Some concluding remarks); Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity (pp. 214-220).

Retail Price: $80 Hardcover $35.00 Paperback – Available Now

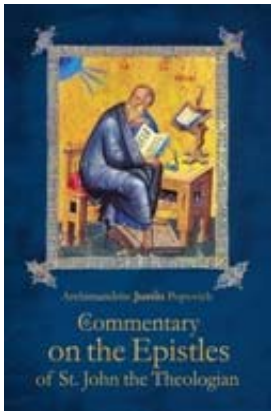
Sailors of the Sky

A conversation with Fr. Stamatis Skliris and Fr. Marko Rupnik on contemporary Christian art



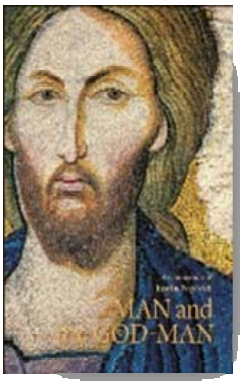
In these timely conversations led by Fr. Radovan Bigovic, many issues are introduced that enable the contemporary reader to deepen and expand his or her understanding of the role of art in the life of the Church. Here we find answers to questions on the crisis of contemporary ecclesiastical art in West and East; the impact of Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, and Abstract painting on contemporary ecclesiastical painting; and a consideration of the main distinction between iconography and secular painting.

This book is adorned with striking full-color icons by Fr. Stamatis Skliris and Fr. Marko Rupnik, renowned as iconographers and as writers and lecturers on Byzantine iconography. Highly recommended! 94 pages – Retail Price - $15.00



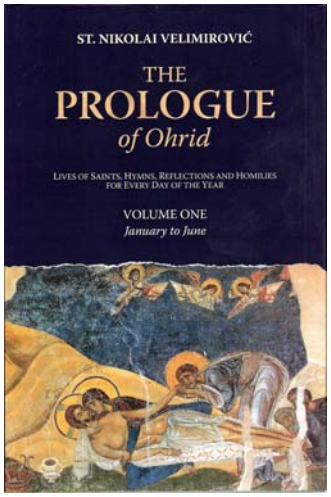
Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian

By Archimandrite Justin Popovic - This Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian - published now, three years after the blessed repose of Venerable Fr. Justin (on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1979) - was written by the tireless Messenger of Christ forty years ago, in circumstances similar to those in which Christ's Holy Evangelist John wrote his sacred Epistles. The text of this 93-page soft-bound book has been translated from the Serbian by Radomir M. Plavsic. Published by Sebastian Press, Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Contemporary Christian Thought - *Retail price: $10.*



MAN AND THE GOD-MAN by Archimandrite Justin Popovic

This newest publication of our Sebastian Press Publishing House is now available for purchase online at:
http://www.westsrbdio.org/ads/man_and_the_godman.html
Retail Price: $15.00



THE PROLOGUE OF OHRID

St Nikolai of Zica (Velimirovic) (1880-1956) has been called the "Serbian Chrysostom" for his theological depth and golden-tongued eloquence. Now for the first time, a complete and unabridged English translation of St. Nikolai's Prologue of Ohrid has been made available. St. Nikolai's Prologue has become a much-loved spiritual classic for Orthodox Christians worldwide. An inspirational source-book of the Orthodox Faith, it contains within its pages a summation of the Church's wisdom and Her experience of sanctity through the Grace of Jesus Christ. Lives of Saints, Hymns, Reflections and Homilies are presented for every day of the year. St. Nikolai's beautiful Hymns have never before appeared in English.
– Retail $120 per set