



Sunday, November 21, 2010

**TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST;
SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY ARCHANGEL MICHAEL & ALL THE BODILESS POWERS**

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE ONE:

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure Body; You did rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life: Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your Kingdom! Glory to Your dispensation, O You who loves mankind.

TROPARION TO THE HOLY ARCHANGEL MICHAEL & ALL THE BODILESS POWERS - TONE FOUR:

O Commanders of the heavenly hosts, we who are unworthy beseech you, by your prayers encompass us beneath the wings of your immaterial glory; and faithfully preserve us who fall down and cry out to you: 'Deliver us from all harm, for you are the commanders of the powers on high!'

RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE ONE:

As God, You did arise from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Yourself. Human nature praises You as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to You: You are the giver of resurrection to all, O Christ!

KONTAKION TO THE HOLY ARCHANGEL MICHAEL & ALL THE BODILESS POWERS - TONE TWO:

O Commanders of God's armies and ministers of the divine glory, princes of the bodiless angels and guides of mankind, ask for what is good for us, and for great mercy, as supreme commanders of the bodiless hosts.

HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD - TONE SIX:

Steadfast Protectress of Christians and constant advocate before the Creator, do not despise the cry of us sinners; but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you!



13th Century Icon of the Holy Archangel Michael
(Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai, Egypt)

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 1ST TONE:

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on You.

EPHESIANS 5: 8-19

Brethren, you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

FOR THE HOLY ARCHANGEL MICHAEL & ALL THE BODILESS POWERS, HEBREWS 2: 2-10

For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how then shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with

various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying: ‘What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

God gives vengeance to me, and subdues people under me. He magnifies the salvation of the king, and deals mercifully with His Christ, with David and his seed forever.

COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS

We must judge what the world says is reasonable on the basis of what God says is true. Besides separating from darkness, Christians are also to expose it. But we must first come out of hiding in order to be exposed ourselves. That is, we must confess our sins and repent of them. Our goal is not to abandon the world, but to keep ourselves in Christ and salvage as much as possible from a corrupted world. Christians renounce the fallenness of the world and not creation itself.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS

“Made a little lower than the angels” refers to the Incarnation – the Son becoming man. Christ’s suffering and death has highly exalted Him. The Cross, which should have brought shame and reproach, has brought Christ glory and honor. This is not something God owes to man – it is His gift of grace.

GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

LUKE 12: 16-21

The Lord told this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul: ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

FOR THE HOLY ARCHANGEL MICHAEL & ALL THE BODILESS POWERS, LUKE 10: 16-21

Jesus said, “He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.” Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord,

even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and all over the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for it seemed good in Your sight.”

COMMENTARY ON LUKE

In the first passage, the rich man is a fool despite his material success because he vainly puts all his trust in these possessions rather than God. To be “rich toward God” is to have a life of close communion with Him through faith and works.

In the second passage, Jesus’ reference to seeing “Satan fall like lightning from heaven” could be related to Isaiah 14: 12-15 – note the five “I wills” in that reading. Because he pursued his own will, Satan is both fallen from heaven and dethroned from his demonic lordship over the world.



Synaxis of the Holy Archangels Michael & Gabriel and all the Bodiless Powers
(Courtesy www.eikonografos.com)

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From The Prologue for November 8/21 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Holy Archangel Michael & all the Bodiless Powers

The angels of God were celebrated by men from earliest times but this celebration was often turned into the divinization of angels (II Kings 23:5). The heretics wove all sorts of fables concerning the angels. Some of them looked upon angels as gods; others, although they did not consider them gods, called them the creators of the whole visible world. The local Council of Laodicea (four or five years before the First Ecumenical Council) rejected the worship of angels as gods and established the proper veneration of angels in its Thirty-fifth Canon. In the fourth century, during the time of Sylvester, Pope of Rome, and Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria, the present Feast of Archangel Michael and all the other heavenly powers was instituted for celebration in the month of November. Why precisely in November? Because November is the ninth month after March, and March is considered to be the month in which the world was created. Also, as the ninth month after March, November was chosen for the nine orders of angels who were created first. St. Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of the Apostle Paul (who was taken up into the third heaven), described these nine orders of angels in his book, *On the Celestial Hierarchies*, as follows: six-winged Seraphim, many-eyed Cherubim, God-bearing Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Virtues, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. The leader of all the angelic hosts is the Archangel Michael. When Satan, Lucifer, fell away from God and drew a part of the angels with him to destruction, then Michael stood up and cried out before the faithful angels: "Let us attend! Let us stand aright! Let us stand with fear!" and all of the faithful angelic heavenly hosts cried out: "Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!" Concerning the Archangel Michael, see Joshua 5:13-15 and Jude 1:9. Among the angels there reign perfect oneness of mind, oneness of soul, and love. The lower orders also show complete obedience to the higher orders, and all of them together to the holy will of God. Every nation has its guardian angel, as does every Christian. We must always remember that whatever we do, in open or in secret, we do in the presence of our guardian angel. On the day of the Dread Judgment, the multitude of the hosts of the holy angels of heaven will gather around the throne of Christ, and the deeds, words, and thoughts of every man will be revealed before all. May God have mercy on us and save us by the prayers of the Archangel Michael and all the bodiless heavenly powers. Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE: The Holy Archangel Michael & all the Bodiless Powers

Heavenly Commanders,
Who watch over us with great care,
Cover us with your wings,
And shield us with your power.

Armed with the power of God,
Crowned by His glory,
You wield flaming swords,
To cut the demons down.

Swift, swift as rays of light

You soar on the clouds—
The clouds of the air—
Where you do battle for God.

Without fatigue and without sleep
You hover ceaselessly
Over men and created things,
And over countless worlds.

Behold, yours are mighty armies,
Legions virtuous,
And gentle battalions of angels:
And, according to the Creator, our brothers.

Commanders of the might of heaven,
Lead us where we need to go—
To the throne of the Most High
Who created us from nothing.

REFLECTION

Holy Scripture clearly and irrefutably witnesses that angels ceaselessly communicate with this world. The Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church teaches us the names of the seven leaders of the angelic powers: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salathiel, Jegudiel, and Barachiel (an eighth, Jeremiel, is sometimes included).

“Michael” in the Hebrew language means “Who is like unto God?” or “Who is equal to God?” St. Michael has been depicted from earliest Christian times as a commander, who holds in his right hand a spear with which he attacks Lucifer, Satan, and in his left hand a green palm branch. At the top of the spear there is a linen ribbon with a red cross. The Archangel Michael is especially considered to be the Guardian of the Orthodox Faith and a fighter against heresies.

“Gabriel” means “Man of God” or “Might of God.” He is the herald of the mysteries of God, especially the Incarnation of God and all other mysteries related to it. He is depicted as follows: In his right hand, he holds a lantern with a lighted taper inside, and in his left hand, a mirror of green jasper. The mirror signifies the wisdom of God as a hidden mystery.

“Raphael” means “God’s healing” or “God the Healer.” (Tobit 3:17, 12:15). Raphael is depicted leading Tobit (who is carrying a fish caught in the Tigris) with his right hand, and holding a physician’s alabaster jar in his left hand.

“Uriel” means “Fire of God,” or “Light of God” (III Esdras 3:1, 5:20). He is depicted holding a sword against the Persians in his right hand, and a fiery flame in his left.

“Salathiel” means “Intercessor of God” (III Esdras 5:16). He is depicted with his face and eyes lowered, holding his hands on his bosom in prayer.

“Jegudiel” means “Glorifier of God.” He is depicted bearing a golden wreath in his right hand and a triple-thonged whip in his left hand.

“Barachiel” means “Blessing of God.” He is depicted holding a white rose in his hand against his breast.

“Jeremiel” means “God’s exaltation.” He is venerated as an inspirer and awakener of exalted thoughts that raise a man toward God (III Ezra 4:36).

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the Apostle Paul’s miraculous resurrecting of Eutychus (Acts 20):

1. How Paul preached in a house at Troas by night;
2. How the young man Eutychus drifted into a deep sleep, and fell from a third-story window to his death;
3. How Paul came down, embraced him and restored him to life.

HOMILY

on how Christ brings to life men who are dead in sin

Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ (Ephesians 2:5).

God first brought Christ to life: He first raised Him as a man from the grave. And Christ is our Head. Thus, in order to resurrect the whole generation of the faithful, it was necessary to resurrect the Head first. When the Head resurrected, then the resurrection of the whole body, with all its members, was assured. Therefore, the Apostle Paul speaks of our resurrection and glorification as a completed thing. So it is that God resurrected us also with Christ: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). God resurrected us—together with Christ as man—who once were dead in sins, slain by our sins. He not only makes us worthy of resurrection with the Lord Jesus Christ, but He also puts us on the same level with the resurrected Christ in the heights of heaven, above the whole realm of incorporeal spirits. Brethren, God did not come to earth for the sake of some petty, inconsequential thing, but for something completely unique, something greater than great. When an earthly king visits a place in his country, the benefit of his visit is felt long after. The Lord, the King, visited mankind on the earth and the benefit of that visit will be felt to the end of time. That visit means life instead of death for us, glory instead of shame, closeness to God instead of estrangement, and blessing instead of a curse. In other words, that visit means our resurrection from the dead, and our eternal reign in the heavens with Christ.

O Lord, thanks be to Thee; O Lord, glory be to Thee.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

APPEAL FOR EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS IN KRALJEVO

To the God-protected Western American Diocese, Serbian Orthodox Church,

My dear Brothers and Sisters, our Children in the Lord,

On November 3rd, a 5.4 magnitude earthquake struck at 1:56 a.m. in central Serbia, killing two and leaving more than 100 injured as well as thousands of residents in the city of Kraljevo without homes. Many buildings were completely destroyed while several thousands were critically damaged.

With the emerging picture of the extent of the tragedy, there is serious concern about the city's recovery. This earthquake, with its aftershocks, is so much more tragic than it first appeared. Kraljevo, one of the poorest regions in the country, is still struggling to recover from the post-war collapse of industry and the enormous aid for tens of thousands refugees from Kosovo and Metohija in recent years.

It is now estimated that the damage caused by the earthquake is over \$150 million.

So far, it has been confirmed that about 1100 buildings and homes are not in livable condition. There is a great danger that, with the weather turning worse (coming into winter season), the whole situation will become even more desperate, unless help comes in a timely fashion.

A great number of people affected by this tragedy are appealing to the nearby Zhicha Monastery for help!

At a time like this, our help can make a huge difference for the suffering people in Kraljevo. Our donations will fulfill the most immediate needs of the population, provide shelters, and rebuild homes, schools, hospitals, and churches.

We are urging all our faithful flock to unselfishly extend their help to the suffering people in our homeland in the heart of Serbia!

We are asking all parish priests and their respectful boards to respond to this appeal as soon as possible. All funds should be sent to our Western American Diocesan. Please make checks payable to Western American Diocese indicating "for Kraljevo" in the memo section. This will be transferred to Zhicha Monastery's account for immediate distribution.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

Pan-Orthodox Clergy Retreat in Dunlap, California

Registration form and Schedule is available at <http://www.westsrbdio.org>

December 7-9, 2010

2011 Dates to Remember

Thursday, February 17, 2011

Diocesan Clergy Seminar & KSS Annual Assembly

Luncheon 1:00 pm followed by Seminar & KSS meeting

Diocesan Council Meeting 7:00 pm

St. John the Baptist Church, San Francisco, CA

Friday, February 18, 2011 (One Day Event)

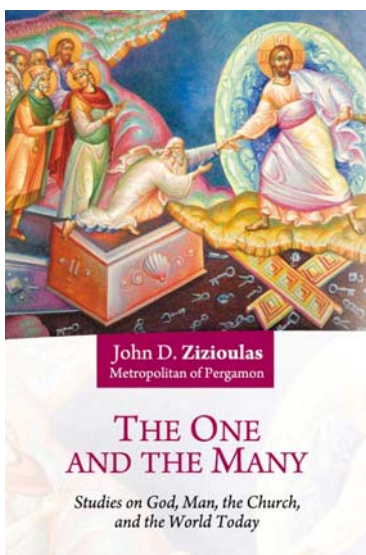
Diocesan Assembly - St. John the Baptist Church, San Francisco, CA

FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:

THE ONE AND THE MANY

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

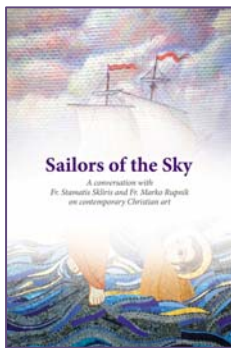
This volume offers a collection of Zizioulas articles which have appeared mostly in English, and which present his trinitarian doctrine of God, as well as his theological account of the Church as the place in which freedom and communion are actualized. The title, *The One and the Many*, suggests the 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-ecclesiological 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 TRIADODOLOGY* (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 part 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 (pp. 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 (pp. 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

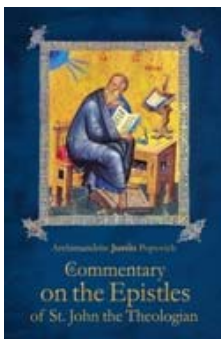


Sailors of the Sky

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

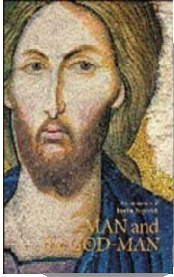
In these timely conversations led by Fr. Radovan Bigovic, many issues are introduced that enable the contemporary reader to deepen and expand his or her understanding of the role of art in the life of the Church. Here we find answers to questions on the crisis of contemporary ecclesiastical art in West 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.*

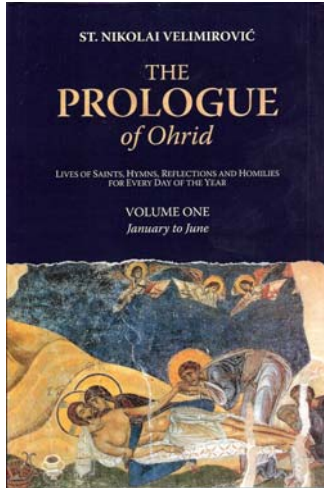


MAN AND THE GOD-MAN by Archimandrite Justin Popovic

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