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ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Metropolitan Theodosius, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Father Gregory [Wolfenden], Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Charles Mezzomo, Ollie Pendylshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Sandy Gamble, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 7year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 3-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Jim Logue throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, George & Mika Rocknage, Elizabeth Mitchell, Robert McKivitz, Cliff Dow, Marjorie Pershing, Amy Kemerer, Tom Marriott, Joe Farkas, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Helen Pytlak, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Mary Ann, Charlotte, Peter Natishan, Michael Spak, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Brandi Thomas, Eleanor Kelly, and

Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Saint Philip's Fast/Nativity Fast/Advent begins on Friday, November 28. Please plan to fast as your health, schedule, and conscience permit.

Please remember especially in your prayers: Walter Burlack & Liz Obradovich.

Please remember David Weaver in Mosul, James John Logue, & George Senita assigned to Iraq, Matthew Machak, and ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR "BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION" AND CAMPBELL'S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex's Sixth Grade and Matt's Fourth Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! Love, ALEX AND MATT

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

<u>Communion Fasting:</u> nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob. *AT ANY TIME*—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, November 23 Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM 23RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, APOSTLES ERASTUS, OLYMPAS, HERODION, SOSIPATER, QUARTUS, & TERTIUS OF THE 70, MARTYR ORESTES THE PHYSICIAN OF CAPPADOCIA, HIEROMARTYR MILOS-BISHOP OF PERSIA & TWO DISCIPLES, VENERABLE THEOCTERISTUS-ABBOT OF SYMBOLA ON MOUNT OLYMPUS, MARTYR CONSTANTINE-PRINCE OF GEORGIA, SAINT NONNUS-BISHOP OF HELIOPOLIS

Tone 6

Ephesians 2:4-10

Luke 10:25-37

Litany in Blessed Memory of Paul Popichak—Fr. Bob

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Agnes Rossi—Mr. & Mrs. Chester Debick

Monday, November 24

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

7:00

Saint Sylvester RC Church—Pastor Carl Jones speaking

Friday, November 28 Nativity Fast-Advent Begins

Sunday, November 30 Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM 24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, SAINT GREGORY THE WONDERWORKER—BISHOP OF NEO-CAESAREA, VENERABLE LAZARUS-ICONOGRAPHER OF CONSTANTINOPLE, MARTYR GORBRON & 133 SOLDIERS OF GEORGIA, SAINT NIKON-ABBOT OF RADONEZH-DISCIPLE OF VENERABLE SERGIUS, SAINT LONGINUS OF EGYPT, SAINT GENNADIUS OF VATOPEDI—MOUNT ATHOS, SAINT MAXIMUS-PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, SAINT GREGORY-BISHOP OF TOURS & WITH HIM SAINT AREDIUS-ABBOT OF LIMOGES & SAINT VULFOLIAC-STYLITE OF TRIER Tone 7

Ephesians 2:14-22

Luke 12:16-21

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Charlie & Tillie Pawlyshyn—Fran Letter & Family

Sunday, December 07 Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM 25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, GREAT-MARTYR CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA, GREAT-MARTYR MERCURIUS OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA, MARTYRS AUGUST-EMPRESS, PORPHYRIUS, & 200 SOLDIERS AT ALEXANDRIA WITH CATHERINE, VIRGIN MASTRIDIA OF ALEXANDRIA, SAINT GREGORY OF PONTUS, MARTYR ALEXANDER AT CORINTH, VENERABLE LUKE-STEWARD OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA, SAINT HERMOGENES-BISHOP OF AGRIGENTUM, SAINT PORTIANUS OF AUVERGNE, MARTYR MERCURIUS OF SMOLENSK, VENERABLE MERCURIUS THE FASTER OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA

Tone 8

Ephesians 4:1-6

Luke 13:10-17

Litany in Blessed Memory of Thomas Bryan, John Hanczar, Mary Blitzkan, Marjorie Yarmeak, Mary Sharon, Frank Barankovich, Mary Krevanich, Katherine Holowaty, & Rose Pyrch—Fr. Bob

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Joseph Yakim, Eva P. Thompson, & John Pendlyshok--Ollie

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 23 NOVEMBER 2008

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST APOSTLES ERASTUS, OLYMPAS, HERODION, SOSIPATER, QUARTUS, & TERTIUS OF THE 70, MARTYR ORESTES THE PHYSICIAN OF CAPPADOCIA,

HIEROMARTYR MILOS-BISHOP OF PERSIA & TWO DISCIPLES, VENERABLE THEOCTERISTUS-ABBOT OF SYMBOLA ON MOUNT OLYMPUS, MARTYR CONSTANTINE-PRINCE OF GEORGIA, SAINT NONNUS-BISHOP OF HELIOPOLIS

TROPARION—TONE 6

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men.

Mary stood by Thy grave, Seeking Thy most pure body.

Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it.

Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.

O Lord who didst rise from the dead: glory to Thee!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 6

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,

Raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His might hand,

He bestowed resurrection on the human race.

He is the Savior of all,

The Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 6

READER: O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. PEOPLE: O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

READER: To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me.

PEOPLE: O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

READER: O Lord, save Thy people. PEOPLE: And bless Thine inheritance.

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 6

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God.

He will say to the Lord: My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in whom I trust.

Teach gently about Jesus Christ—milk first, then solid food. Saint Aidan

However, it is important to come to an understanding about the hearing of the word of God. Years ago many people were not able to read. Today the opposite is true. Almost everyone can read. So in the past, the basic source of knowledge leading to the truths of God was the sense of hearing, the ear. People could not read. However, even today the hearing of the word is very basic for all people because the word is offered through a living tongue. And much like the word of God, it is alive; so when the word of God is heard through a living tongue, this makes it especially graceful. The word of God in this case can be presented along with the personal experiences of the speaker. And this can be a source of courage to listeners as far as the application of the word of God goes. It is not the same if you hear it on the radio, or if you read it in a book. It is something very different. This is why we go to hear the word of God and we do not rely on reading alone. Reading does not replace the spoken word. And the hearing of the spoken word does not replace reading. These two parallel things are equally important.

I must also tell you that the hearing of the word of God presupposes the presence of other people. The word of God is connected with the presence and vision of other people. In other words, it is connected with the Church. And this is very important, to have the word of God be heard in the Church, very beneficial and of great value. On the other hand, if I sit by myself listening to a cassette, it is like eating canned food according to the holy one of Florina, Metropolitan Augoustinos Kantiotes. The canned word of God does not have the same freshness as the live participation. Of course I will listen to my cassettes; I will read my books; but I will also make it a point to go and hear the living word of God, to get together with the other faithful, my other brothers and sisters in Christ. This is so I can become a presence and show forth the Church, not only in its liturgical worship but also in the hearing of the word of God.

From the 100 homilies on the book of the Revelation by +Archimandrite Athanasios Mitilinaios translated by Constantine Zalalas

(Please note that these quotes are snipped from one hour length homilies given to his spiritual children over the course of several years in Greece during the mid-1980's. We are trying to give you complete thoughts but may not aways be successful. Bear with us. The first book of 24 chapters is complete and being formatted as of Oct. 30, 2008)

St. Nektarios of Aegina/ Nov. 9/13th

The divine Nektarios of Aegina, is one of the most widely known of Greek Orthodox Saints. He was born on October 1st, 1846 in Silyvria, in Asia Minor (now occupied by Turkey). At Holy Baptism he was given the name Anastasios. His parents were simple pious Christians. They brought him up in a manner pleasing to God, and did what their very limited means allowed for his formal education. Having completed elementary school in his hometown, he left for the great city of Constantinople at the age of 14. There, he found employment as a shop assistant and was able to earn a meager living. As well as regularly attending the Divine Liturgy, he also read the Holy Scriptures and Writings of the Orthodox Elders of the Church on a daily basis. In 1866, at the age of 20, Anastasios went to the island of Chios, where he was appointed a teacher. After 7 years, he entered into the local monastery, under the care of the venerable elder Pachomios. After 3 years as a novice Athanasios was tonsured a Monk and given the name Lazarus.

A year later, he was ordained a Deacon and received the name Nektarios. Elder Pachomios, and a wealthy local benefactor convinced the young monk to complete his high school studies in Athens. From there Deacon Nektarios went to Alexandria, where he was cared for by the Patriarch of Alexandria, Sophronios. The Patriarch insisted that Nektarios complete his Theological studies, and so in 1885 he graduated from the School of Theology in Athens. The Patriarch of Alexandria ordained Deacon Nektarios to the Priesthood in 1886. His great service to the Church, prolific writings and teachings, energy and zeal led Fr Nektarios to be ordained as the Metropolitan of Pentapolis in Egypt.

As a Metropolitan he was greatly admired and loved by his flock for his virtue and purity of life. But this great admiration by the people aroused the envy of certain high officials, who plotted and succeeded in having the Blessed Metropolitan removed from office in 1890 - without a trial or any explanation whatsoever. He returned to Greece to become a monk and Preacher, to the great edification of the people. There the Blessed Metropolitan continued to write his now famous books.

In 1904, our Saint founded a monastery for women in Aegina, the Holy Trinity Convent. Under his guidance the Convent flourished. In 1908, the Blessed Nektarios, at the age of 62, retired from the Rizarios Ecclesiastical School and withdrew to Holy Trinity Convent in Aegina. There, for the rest of his life as a true monk and ascetic. He served as a confessor and spiritual guide to the nuns and even priests from as far as Athens and Piraeus. His Holy and pious life shone forth like a guiding light to all near him. Many would come to him for healing. Saint Nektarios was a great wonder-worker even while alive.

On September 20, 1920 one of the nuns took him to the local hospital, in spite of his protest. He was convulsing in pain from a long-standing ailment. He was admitted, and placed into a ward reserved for the poor and unwanted. There he stayed for two months among the sick and dying. At 10:30 in the evening of November 8th, although in the midst of terrible pains, in peace and at prayer he gave up his spirit unto God at the age of 74.

As soon as the Saint gave up his Spirit, a nurse came to prepare him for transfer to Aegina for burial. As the nurse removed the Saints sweater, she inadvertently placed it on the next bed, on which a paralytic lay. And O, strange wonder!, the paralytic immediately began to regain his strength and arose from his bed healthy, and glorifying God.

Some time after his repose, strangely a beautiful fragrance was emitted by his Holy body, filling the room. Many came to venerate his Holy relics prior to his burial. With amazement, people noted a fragrant fluid that drenched his hair and beard. Even after 5 months, when the nuns of the convent opened the Saints grave to build a marble tomb, they found the Saint intact in every respect and emitted a wonderful and heavenly fragrance. Similarly three years later, the Holy Relics were still whole and radiating the same heavenly fragrance.

The Orthodox Church proclaimed him as a Saint on April 20, 1961. His Blessed memory is celebrated by the Church on November 9/13th.

Here's a great idea, I'd like you to consider:

When doing your Christmas cards this year, take one card and send it to this address. If we pass this on and everyone sends one card, think of how many cards these wonderful special people who have sacrificed so much would get. When you are making out your Christmas card list this year, please include the following:

A Recovering American Soldier c/o Walter Reed Army Medical Center 6900 Georgia Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20307-5001

e-mail via Rebecca Danchenko

+ Jonah Nominated, Elected as Metropolitan www.ocanews.org 11.12.08

+Jonah Nominated, Elected as Metropolitan

After it happened one could hear clergy and laity repeating again and again: "I knew it would happen. I knew it last night when he spoke." Well, the truth is no one *knew* it would happen. There was only a widespread hope among a growing number of those present, and the realization among the Bishops that it should.

Following a Divine Liturgy the delegates gathered again the ballroom of the Pittsburgh Hilton to nominate a Metropolitan. The results of the first ballot saw 233 votes for Bishop Jonah (Paffhausen), consecrated only some 11 days earlier, 212 for Archbishop Job, 75 for Bishop Benjamin, with another 100 or so votes divided among another 15 candidates. Since no one received 2/3 of the votes, a second ballot was required. The second ballot saw Bishop Jonah's number double to 473, with Archbishop Job increasing to 364, with the rest being cast for even more "favorite son" candidates.

The Synod then retired into the altar for consideration of the two names, while the clergy and laity sang. Some 15 minutes later, Archbishop Dmitri, as locum tenens, emerged with all the other Bishops following behind - save one. +Jonah was missing. Could the Synod really have chosen such a dramatic change, such a break with the past? The eldest Archbishop in the OCA then announced to the Council that "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us" to elect its youngest Bishop as the Primate. There were a few gasps, but the Council's feelings were expressed more clearly in the loud shouts of "Axios" ("He is worthy") that accompanied the announcement.

(And now a personal note: Superlatives abound: +Jonah is the youngest Bishop, the newest Bishop, the first convert Primate, etc.... All that is interesting, but not important. What is important is that the clergy and laity in their votes expressed an unmistakable choice for change, real change, at the top. They voted overwhelmingly for the Archbishop most identified with accountability and transparency, and even more for the one Bishop totally untouched by the scandal. The Synod agreed to dramatic change as well. Everybody was suddenly on the same page - and after twenty years of life in the Potemkin Village and three years of scandal, that was the hand of God moving among us.)

In his opening remarks Metropolitan Jonah stated that "I spoke at length last night. Now, I am speechless." He then reached out to the Bishops, clergy and laity around stating that it was only through their prayers would he be able to bear his new ministry. He called for everyone to work together, to rebuild the

OCA in love and honesty, and then he took his place, newly clad in his primatial mantia and white klobukh, to receive greetings from the assembled clergy and faithful.

And that the OCA has been slowly embracing change was immediately apparent. In the second session of the day, Fr. Michael Tassos delivered a financial report that could only be called masterful. Open, transparent, accountable, honest, accessible (it will all be posted with the Council papers) Fr. Michael, ably assisted by Metropolitan Council Finance Chair Fr. Matthew Tate, offered a Treasurer's Report that stood in marked contrast to that which had been presented in the past 15 years. The latter's goal was to hide, deceive and cover-up expenses; this Report sought to enlighten and explain. It was brutally honest. But the single most important line in the Report was the line Fr. Tassos delivered explaining why he is referring some items to the IRS for potential investigation, even though it might cost the OCA down the road. "I have prayed long over this, because there may indeed be consequences for us. But it must be done, because it is the right thing to do."

Many people have come up to me today to ask my opinion of the election and whether I was excited as they about the new Primate. My tears began not with the election, but with the financial report and the obvious integrity it showed, and with which it was presented. That is one of the most important changes we have needed these past years, and the one that will greatly assist our new, young and energetic Metropolitan to lead us in the same manner - with integrity.

The OCA is clearly on its way back, friends. And the Hand of God has moved among us. Thanks be to God- and to all of you, who in your concern, prayers, righteous indignation, effort, withholding, debating, writing, posting and reposting, praying even more, downloading and sharing, caring, crying, and when the time came, standing up and voting, that made this choice for change possible. –Mark Stokoe

+Bishop Jonah of Fort Worth Elected Metropolitan of All America and Canada--Posted 11/12

PITTSBURGH, PA [OCA Communications] -- On Wednesday, November 12, 2008, His Grace, Bishop Jonah of Fort Worth was elected Archbishop of Washington and New York and Metropolitan of All America and Canada at the 15th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America.

--His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah was born James Paffhausen in Chicago, IL, and was baptized into the Episcopal Church. While still a child, his family

later settled in La Jolla, CA, near San Diego. He was received into the Orthodox Church in 1978 at Our Lady of Kazan Moscow Patriarchal Church, San Diego, while a student at the University of California, San Diego. Later, he transferred to UC Santa Cruz, where he was instrumental in establishing an Orthodox Christian Fellowship.

After completing studies at UCSC, James attended St. Vladimir's Seminary, graduating with a Master of Divinity degree in 1985 and a Master of Theology in Dogmatics in 1988.

He went on to pursue studies towards a Ph.D. at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, but interrupted those studies to spend a year in Russia.

In Moscow, working for *Russkiy Palomnik* at the Publishing Department of the Moscow Patriarchate, he was introduced to life in the Russian church, in particular monastic life. Later that year, he joined Valaam Monastery, having found a spiritual father in the monastery's Abbot, Archimandrite Pankratiy. It was Archimandrite Pankratiy's spiritual father, the Elder Kyrill at Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra, who blessed James to become a priestmonk. He was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1994 and in 1995 was tonsured to monastic rank at St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA, having received the name Jonah.

Returning to California, Fr. Jonah served a number of missions and was later given the obedience to establish a monastery under the patronage of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco. The monastery, initially located in Point Reyes Station, CA, recently moved to Manton in Northern California, near Redding. During his time building up the monastic community, Fr. Jonah also worked to establish missions in Merced, Sonora, Chico, Eureka, Redding, Susanville, and other communities in California, as well as in Kona, HI.

In the spring of 2008, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America elevated Fr. Jonah to the rank of Archimandrite and he was given the obedience to leave the monastery and take on the responsibilities of auxiliary bishop and chancellor for the Diocese of the South.

Bishop Jonah's episcopal election took place on September 4, 2008, at an extraordinary meeting of the Holy Synod of Bishops. Earlier in the summer, his candidacy was endorsed by the Diocese of the South's Diocesan Council, shortly after Bishop Jonah had participated in the diocese's annual assembly.

Bishop Jonah was consecrated Bishop of Forth Worth and Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of the South, at St. Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX, on Saturday, November 1, 2008. Consecrating hierarchs included His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South, Locum tenens of the Metropolitan See; His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania; His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West; and His Grace, Bishop Alejo of Mexico City and the Exarchate of Mexico.

Metropolitan Jonah will be installed by the OCA's Holy Synod of Bishops at St. Nicholas Cathedral, Washington, DC, on December 28, 2008.

May the Lord bless His Beatitude, Jonah, newly-elected Metropolitan of All America and Canada with many years of fruitful service in His Holy Vineyard. *Eis polla eti, Despota!*

a word from the desert.

One of the high officials bore a grudge against another. Great John (the Almsgiver) heard of this and admonished him several times, but could not persuade him to be reconciled with his enemy. One day therefore the saint sent and had him fetched on the pretext of some public business, and as soon as he had come the patriarch held a service in his oratory, no one else being present save his syncellus. After the patriarch had said the prayer of consecration and had pronounced the opening words of the Lord's Prayer, the three of them began to repeat the Prayer. When they got to the sentence, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" the patriarch made a sign to the syncellus to stop, and he himself stopped too, and the magistrate commenced saying all by himself, "Forgive us as we forgive." At once the saint turned towards him and said in a gentle voice, "Consider in what an awful moment you are saying to God 'As I forgive, do Thou forgive me'!" Immediately, as though tormented by fire, the magistrate fell on his face at the saint's feet crying, "Whatever you command, my lord, your servant will do." And from that time he was reconciled to his enemy in all sincerity.

Leontius, Life of John the Almsgiver, 39 St. John the Almsgiver, Patriarch of Alexandria (610-619), commemorated 12/25 November

icon and troparion at: http://www.comeandseeicons.com/j/spe07.htm

Abba John the Short said, "A house is not built by beginning at the top and working down. You must begin with the foundations in order to reach the top." They said to him, "What does this saying mean?" He said, "The foundation is our neighbor, whom we must win, and that is the place to begin. For all the commandments of Christ depend on this alone."

Abba John the Short, commemorated 9/22 November

Orthodox Christian leaders meet at the Ecumenical Patriarchate - Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle - Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America

November 13, 2008 Istanbul, Turkey Originally published on 10/15/2008

Patriarchs, primates and representatives of all the Patriarchal and Autochephalous Orthodox Churches recommitted themselves to overcome intra-Orthodox conflicts as well as to continue theological dialogues with Christians from other confessions at a 10-12 October meeting in Istanbul, Turkey.

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and heads of Orthodox churches from around the world celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George in Istanbul, Turkey.

"Overcoming the internal conflicts of the Orthodox Church through the surrendering of nationalistic, ethnic and ideological extremes of the past" is a requisite for the "word of Orthodoxy [to] have a necessary impact on the contemporary world," reads a message issued at the end of the meeting.

The message also affirms the participants' "desire to continue, despite any difficulties, the theological dialogues with other Christians, as well as the interreligious dialogues, especially with Judaism and Islam".

Fourteen patriarchs, primates and representatives of the Orthodox Christian Church gathered in the Phanar, the see of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The meeting took place at the invitation and under the presidency of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew - the "first among us," according to the message.

"This has been an extremely important event in the life of the Orthodox church," said the World Council of Churches (WCC) deputy general secretary Georges Lemopoulos. "The message, calling mainly for inter-orthodox unity and collaboration, and spelling out an 'Orthodox agenda' as a witness to the world, has a significant ecumenical dimension and will certainly impact the work of the ecumenical movement," added Lemopoulos, an Orthodox layman from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

An historic moment as all heads of churches and symposium attendees gather together.

Addressing some of the issues making headlines these days, the message linked the current financial crisis to "manic profiteering" and "corrupt financial activity," while calling for a "viable economy" able to combine "efficacy with justice and social solidarity".

Regarding the conflict between Georgia and Russia over the breakaway South Ossetia region, the Orthodox leaders commended both Orthodox churches for "their fraternal cooperation" and hoped that their "efforts will contribute to overcoming the tragic consequences of military operations and [to] the swift reconcilement of the peoples." The meeting's message condemns the "unjust inequality" in the sharing of "the goods of Creation" by "individuals, or even peoples" as a consequence of "nationalistic, ethnic, ideological and religious" divisions. The results are wanton: billions of people deprived of basic goods; mass migration; nationalistic, religious, and social discrimination and conflicts; and destruction of the natural environment and the entire ecosystem.

As Orthodox Christians "share responsibility for the contemporary crisis of this planet," they also have "a major obligation to contribute to overcoming the divisions of the world," the message states.

Participants at the gathering welcomed "the proposal by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to convene Pan-Orthodox Consultations within the coming year" in order to address jurisdictional and other issues that have "arisen from historical circumstances and pastoral requirements, such as in the so-called Orthodox Diaspora."

The Orthodox Primates also welcomed "the continuation of preparations for the Holy and Great Council". Preparations towards a major conciliar event of the Orthodox churches took place at the end of the seventies and in the eighties but slowed down when changes in Eastern Europe created new pastoral needs and ecclesial challenges within the Orthodox world.

The message has been signed by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Moscow, the primates of the churches of Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania, and the Czech Lands and Slovakia, as well as representatives of the churches of Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Georgia.

[Source: World Council of Churches]

MESSAGE OF THE PRIMATES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

1. Through the Grace of God, the Primates and the Representatives of the local Orthodox Churches have gathered from 10-12 October, 2008, in the Phanar, at the invitation and under the presidency of the First among us, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, on the occasion of the proclamation of this year as the year of Saint Paul, Apostle to the Nations. We have deliberated in fraternal love on the issues that concern the Orthodox Church, and participating in the festivities of this occasion, we celebrated together the Holy Eucharist in the Most Sacred Patriarchal Church of the Ecumenical Throne, today, 12 October 2008, Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. During these days, we have been strengthened by the truth of the gifts of divine providence received by the Apostle to the Nations, which rendered him a superb "chosen vessel" (Acts 9:15) of God and a shining model of apostolic ministry for the body of the Church.

The entire Orthodox Church is honoring this Apostle during the current year of the Lord, promoting him as an example to its faithful for a contemporary witness of our faith to "those near and those afar" (Eph. 2:17).

2. The Orthodox Church, having the understanding of the authentic interpretation of the teaching of the Apostle to the Nations, in both peaceful and difficult times of its two-thousand year historical course, can and must promote to the contemporary world the teaching not only regarding the restoration in Christ of the unity of the entire human race, but also regarding the universality of His work of redemption, through which all the divisions of the world are overcome and the common nature of all human beings is affirmed.

Nevertheless, the faithful promotion of this message of redemption also presupposes overcoming the internal conflicts of the Orthodox Church through the surrendering of nationalistic, ethnic and ideological extremes of the past. For only in this way will the word of Orthodoxy have a necessary impact on the contemporary world.

3. Inspired by the teaching and the work of the Apostle Paul, we underscore first and foremost, the importance of the duty of Mission for the life of the Church, and in particular for the ministry of us all, in accordance with the final commandment of the Lord: "you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts

of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The evangelization of God's people, but also of those who do not believe in Christ, constitutes the supreme duty of the Church.

This duty must not be fulfilled in an aggressive manner, or by various forms of proselytism, but with love, humility and respect for the identity of each individual and the cultural particularity of each people. All Orthodox Churches must contribute to this missionary effort, respecting the canonical order.

- 4. The Church of Christ today fulfills it ministry in a rapidly developing world, which has now become interconnected through means of communication and the development of means of transportation and technology. At the same time however, the extent of alienation, divisions and conflicts is also increasing. Christians emphasize that the source of this condition is the alienation of man from God. No change in social structures or of rules of behavior suffices to heal this condition. The Church consistently points out that sin can only be conquered through the cooperation of God and humankind.
- 5. Under such circumstances, the contemporary witness of Orthodoxy for the ever-increasing problems of humanity and of the world becomes imperative, not only in order to point out their causes, but also in order to directly confront the tragic consequences that follow. The various nationalistic, ethnic, ideological and religious contrasts continuously nurture dangerous confusion, not only in regard to the unquestionable ontological unity of the human race, but also in regard to man's relationship to sacred creation. The sacredness of the human person is constrained to partial claims for the "individual", whereas his relationship toward the rest of sacred creation is subjected to his arbitrary use or abuse of it.

These divisions of the world introduce an unjust inequality in the participation of individuals, or even peoples in the goods of Creation; they deprive billions of people of basic goods and lead to the misery for the human person; they cause mass population migration, kindle nationalistic, religious and social discrimination and conflict, threatening traditional internal societal coherence. These consequences are still more abhorrent because they are inextricably linked with the destruction of the natural environment and the entire ecosystem.

6. Orthodox Christians share responsibility for the contemporary crisis of this planet with other people, whether they are people of faith or not, because they have tolerated and indiscriminately compromised on extreme human choices, without credibly challenging these choices with the word of faith. Therefore,

they also have a major obligation to contribute to overcoming the divisions of the world.

The Christian teaching about the ontological unity between the human race and sacred creation, as expressed by the entire mystery of the redemptive work in Christ, constitutes the foundation for interpretation of man's relationship with God and the world.

- 7. Efforts to distance religion from societal life constitute the common tendency of many modern states. The principle of a secular state can be preserved; however, it is unacceptable to interpret this principle as a radical marginalization of religion from all spheres of public life.
- 8. The gap between rich and poor is growing dramatically due to the financial crisis, usually the result of manic profiteering by economic factors and corrupt financial activity, which, by lacking an anthropological dimension and sensitivity, does not ultimately serve the real needs of mankind. A viable economy is that which combines efficacy with justice and social solidarity.
- 9. With regard to the issue of the relationship of Christian faith to the natural sciences, the Orthodox Church has avoided pursuing ownership of developing scientific research and assuming a position on every scientific question. From the Orthodox viewpoint, freedom of research constitutes a God-given gift to humanity. While affirming this however, at the same time Orthodoxy underscores the dangers concealed in certain scientific achievements, the limits of scientific knowledge, and the existence of another "knowledge" that does not immediately fall with the scope of science. This other "knowledge" proves in many ways to be necessary for establishing the proper boundaries of freedom, and utilizing the fruits of science by the restraint of egocentrism and respect for the value of the human person.
- 10. The Orthodox Church believes that technological and economic progress should not lead to the destruction of the environment and the exhaustion of natural resources. Greed to satisfy material desires leads to the impoverishment of the human soul and the environment. We must not forget that the natural riches of the earth are not only man's property, but primarily God's creation: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and all who dwell therein" (Ps.23:1). We ought to remember that not only today's generation, but also future generations are entitled to have a right to the resources of nature, which the Creator has granted us.
- 11. In firmly supporting every peaceful effort for just solutions to conflicts that arise, we salute the position of the Churches of Russia and Georgia and their

fraternal cooperation during the period of recent military conflict. In this way, the two Churches fulfilled the obligation to the ministry of reconciliation. We hope that their mutual ecclesiastical efforts will contribute to overcoming the tragic consequences of military operations and the swift reconcilement of the peoples.

12. In the ever-growing confusion of our times, the institution of family and marriage faces a crisis. In a spirit of understanding the new complex social condition, the Church is obliged to find ways to spiritually support and generally encourage the young and large families.

We turn our thoughts especially to the young people, in order to call them to actively participate both in the sacramental and sanctifying life, as well as in the missionary and social work of the Church, transferring their problems and their expectations to the Church, since they constitute not only its future, but also its present.

- 13. As Primates and the Representatives of the Most Holy Orthodox Churches, fully aware of the gravity of the aforementioned problems, and laboring to confront them directly as "servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries" (1 Cor. 4:1), we proclaim from this See of the First-throne among the Churches and we re-affirm:
- i) our unswerving position and obligation to safeguard the unity of the Orthodox Church in "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), the faith of our Fathers, in the common Divine Eucharist and in the faithful observance of the canonical system of Church governance by settling any problems that arise from time to time in relations among us with a spirit of love and peace.
- ii) our desire for the swift healing of every canonical anomaly that has arisen from historical circumstances and pastoral requirements, such as in the so-called Orthodox Diaspora, with a view to overcoming every possible influence that is foreign to Orthodox ecclesiology. In this respect we welcome the proposal by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to convene Panorthodox Consultations within the coming year 2009 on this subject, as well as for the continuation of preparations for the Holy and Great Council. In accordance with the standing order and practice of the Panorthodox Consultations in Rhodes, it will invite all Autocephalous Churches.
- iii) our desire to continue, despite any difficulties, the theological dialogues with other Christians, as well as the interreligious dialogues, especially with Judaism and Islam, given that dialogue constitutes the only way of solving

differences among people, especially in a time like today, when every kind of division, including those in the name of religion, threaten people's peace and unity.

iv) our support for the initiatives by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as by other Orthodox Churches, for the protection of the natural environment. Today's ecological crisis, which is due to both spiritual and ethical reasons, renders imperative the obligation of the Church to contribute through the spiritual means at her disposal, to the protection of God's creation from the consequences of human greed. In this regard, we reaffirm the designation of the 1st of September, the first day of the Ecclesiastical Year, as the day of special prayers for the protection of God' creation, and we support the introduction of the subject of the natural environment in the catechetical, homiletic, and general pastoral activity of our Churches, as this is already the case in some .

v) the decision to proceed with the necessary actions, in order to form an Inter-Orthodox Committee to study issues of bioethics, on which the world also awaits the position of Orthodoxy.

Addressing these things to the Orthodox people throughout the world and to the entire oikoumene, we pray "again and again" that peace, justice, and God's love may finally prevail in people's lives.

"Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine, glory be to him in the Church and in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:20-21). Amen.

In the Phanar, 12th October 2008.

- + Bartholomew of Constantinople
- + Theodore of Alexandria
- + Ignatius of Antioch
- + Theophilos of Jerusalem
- + Alexey of Moscow
- + Amphilochios of Montenegro (representing the Church of Serbia)
- + Laurentiu of Transylvania (representing the Church of Romania)
- + Dometiyan of Vidin (representing the Church of Bulgaria)
- + Gerasime of Zugdidi (representing the Church of Georgia)
- + Chrysostomos of Cyprus
- + Ieronymos of Athens
- + Jeremiasz of Wrock, aw (representing of the Church of Poland)
- + Anastasios of Tirana

+ Christopher of the Czech Lands and Slovakia

1,200-year-old church uncovered in Syria Nov 13, 8:31 AM (ET) By ALBERT AJI

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) - Archaeologists in central Syria have unearthed the remnants of a 1,200-year-old church believed to be the largest ever discovered in this Mideast country, an antiquities official said Thursday.

Walid al-Assaad, the head of the Palmyra Antiquities and Museums Department said the church, dating back to the 8th century, was discovered recently by a joint Syrian-Polish archaeological team.

The discovery took place at an excavation site in the ancient town of Palmyra, some 153 miles northeast of the capital Damascus, the official said but did not provide a more specific timing.

The church is the fourth to be discovered in Palmyra - once a regional trade center and now an archaeological treasure trove that even contains oldest layers from the prehistoric era in Syria.

However, al-Assaad said the church was the biggest of its kind to be found so far - it's base measuring an impressive 51 by 30 yards. The churchcolumns were estimated to be 20 feet tall, with the height of the woodenceiling more than 49 feet. A small amphitheater was found in the church's courtyard where the experts believe some Christian rituals were practiced.

"In the northern and southern parts of the church there are two rooms that are believed to have been used for baptisms, religious ceremonies, prayers and other rituals," added al-Assaad.

Palmyra, said to have been founded by King Solomon, was the center of an Arab servant state to the Roman empire and thrived on the caravan trades across the desert to Mesopotamia and Persia, especially after the decline of ancient Petra in Jordan.

The city emerged to become a powerful trade center after the Romans took control of it, serving as a link between the ancient Orient and Mediterranean countries. Under Queen Zenobia, the city rebelled against Roman rule and briefly carved out an independent desert Arab kingdom before being re-conquered and razed by the Romans.

The Polish team has been working in Palmyra since 1958. It has made many significant historical discoveries.

a word from the desert

Abba Poemen said of Abba John the Short that he had prayed to God to take his passions away from him so that he might become free from care. He went and told an old man this, "I find myself in peace, without an enemy," he said. The old man said to him, "Go quickly, beg God to stir up warfare so that you may regain the affliction and humility that you used to have, for it is by warfare that the soul makes progress." So he besought God and when warfare came, he no longer prayed that it might be taken away, but said, "Lord, give me strength for the fight."

a word from the desert

A soldier asked Abba Mius if God accepted repentance. After the old man had taught him many things he said, "Tell me, my dear, if your cloak is torn, do you throw it away?" He replied, "No, I mend it and use it again." The old man said to him, "If you are so careful about your cloak, will not God be equally careful about his creature?"

archived as a blog at: http://wordfromthedesert.squarespace.com/