



**January 10, 2010**

***CHRIST IS BORN! INDEED HE IS BORN!***  
**SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST:**  
**FEAST OF THE HOLY RIGHTEOUS ONES**

**RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE SIX:**

The angelic powers were at Your tomb; and the guards became as dead men; and Mary stood by Your grave, seeking Your most pure Body. You did capture hell, not being tempted by it. You did come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord who did rise from the dead: Glory to You!

**NATIVITY TROPARION - TONE FOUR:**

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the Light of Wisdom. For by it, those who worshiped the stars were taught by a star to adore You, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know You the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to You!

**TROPARION TO THE HOLY RIGHTEOUS FATHERS - TONE TWO:**

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph, to David, the ancestor of God: you saw a Virgin great with child; you gave glory with the shepherds; you worshiped with the Magi; you received the news from the angel. Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

**KONTAKION TO THE HOLY RIGHTEOUS FATHERS - TONE THREE:**

Today godly David is filled with joy; Joseph and James offer praise. The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ fills them with great joy. They sing praises to the One ineffably born on earth and they cry out: "O Compassionate One, save those who honor You!"

**NATIVITY KONTAKION - TONE THREE:**

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One! Angels, with shepherds, glorify Him! The wise men journey with the star! Since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little child.

**INSTEAD OF "IT IS TRULY MEET...":**

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts. I behold a strange, most glorious mystery! Heaven – the cave! The cherubic throne – the Virgin! The manger – the place where Christ lay, the uncontainable God whom we magnify in song!

## EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

### **THE PROKIMENON IN THE 6<sup>TH</sup> TONE:**

*O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.*

### **GALATIANS 1: 11-19**

Brethren, I make known to you, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

### **ALLELUIA VERSES**

*Remember, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured. How he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob.*

### **COMMENTARY**

Apostolic tradition is grounded in divine revelation from Jesus Christ. Just as the Twelve were called by Christ, so was Paul (verse 1). Just as the Twelve received the gospel directly from Christ, so did Paul (Acts 9: 3-6; 26: 13-18). Just as the Twelve stood together as one, so Paul entered their unity in consensus and mutual submission.

People are called by God's grace (verse 15); Paul, whom God called in mercy, received grace from Ananias' hands and the water of baptism (Acts 9: 10-19). "Separated me from my mother's womb" refers not to Paul's physical birth but to God's call to apostolic ministry before he was born. As with Paul, God's intention for a person may lay hidden for years.



## GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

### **MATTHEW 2: 13-23**

At that time when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." Now when Herod was dead, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

### **COMMENTARY**

Egypt is where Israel once took refuge and was made captive; the first steps of the infant Christ-child are taken in exile. "Out of Egypt I called My Son" refers to Israel in Hosea 11: 1 (see Exodus 4: 22; Numbers 23: 21, 22; 24: 5-8). In the Old Testament the son of God is Israel; here, Jesus is the true Israel. He reenacts in His own life the history of Israel without Himself falling into sin.

Jeremiah recorded the people of Jerusalem being led away to exile. On their sad pilgrimage to an alien land, they passed Ramah where Jacob's wife Rachel lay buried. In his prophecy Jeremiah pictures Rachel weeping even in her tomb for the fate that had befallen the people, her children.



## Христос се роди!

У овом божићном и ”богојављенском” поздраву открива се порука и чудо љубави ванвременог и непроменљивог Бога који пристаје да буде рођен у пролазном времену и да постане Човек, један од нас, Емануил – с нама Бог. Од тада Он остаје нераскидиво повезан са светом и историјом, и ненаметљиво пружа ”живот у изобиљу”, пројављујући оваплоћену љубав по свој васељени.

Догађај Божијег рађања од Духа Светог и Марије Дјеве, другачији од сваког биолошког рођења, ”засија као светлост познања” свету који пребива у тами незнања и сенци смрти, и постаде свеиспуњујућа светлост надумног знања, знања које осветљава сваку тајну постојања. Под том светлошћу и ми треба да посматрамо сваки трен нашег живота, сваки поступак, и наше међуљудске односе, и однос са васколиком творевином Божијом.

Рођење Богомладенца позива све нас да се ослободимо служења себичним жељама и да се усмеримо ка ”једино потребном”, а то је служење Сунцу правде и Извору с висине, Рођеноме Сину, Безузрочном Оцу и Духу Свесветоме. Отац нам дарује Сина свога, а Син нам дарује себе да бисмо били васпостављени у Заједници Духа Светога ради које смо и створени.

Од Божића па надаље, ”за Логосом и логиком живота не треба ићи у онај свет, јер је Логика и Логос живота ту, међу нама; ми имамо *Логос живота*, зато знамо логику живота, циљ живота, смисао живота”, по речима богомудрог аве Јустина Поповића.

Овај Син Човечији, који ”силази с Неба” (Јн 3, 13) у област земље, обесмрћује све оно што се у Њему ”возглави” (Еф 1,10), овековечује све што се роди ”водом и Духом” (Јн 3,5) и угради се у Цркву као Тело Његово.

Будимо сведоци усељења Његовог у срце творевине и спасоносних последица по које припадају свима и свакоме!

## Христос се роди!

**Благословена Нова 2010. година венца доброте Господње!**

## **Peace from God! Christ Is Born!**

Revealed in this Nativity and “God-manifesting” greeting is a message and a miracle of the love of the timeless and unchangeable God Who accepted to be born in this temporal world and become a Man, one of us, Emmanuel – “God with us.” From that moment on He remains inseparably connected with the world and history, and offers, without force, “abundant life,” proclaiming the incarnate love throughout the whole universe.

The event of God’s birth from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, different from every biological birth, “shown forth as the light of knowledge” to a world that exists in the darkness of ignorance and the shadow of death, and became the all-pervading light of the knowledge above reason, the knowledge that enlightens every mystery of existence. We, too, should view every moment of our life, every action—as well as every relationship with others, and our relationship with God’s creation—through this light.

The Nativity of the God-Child calls upon all of us to free ourselves from serving our selfish desires. It calls us to move toward “the one thing that is needed,” which is serving the Sun of righteousness and the Source from on high, the Born Son, the Eternal Father, and the All-holy Spirit. God the Father gives us his Son, and the Son gives Himself to us so that we may be firmly planted in the Communion of the Holy Spirit, for which we are called into existence.

From Christmas onward, “for the Logos and the logic of life there is no need to go into the world beyond this one, for the Logos and the Logic of life is here, He is among us; we have the Logos of life, that is why we know the logic of life, we know our life’s goal, we know the meaning of life,” according to the God-inspired words of Abba Justin Popovic.

This Son of Man, who “came down from Heaven” (John 3:13) to earthly regions, makes deathless all that which in Him “is set forth” (Ephesians 1:10), thus making eternal all that is born “of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5); He has built Himself into the Church as His own Body.

Let us be witnesses of His coming into the heart of creation, and of the salvific consequences that belong to everyone!

## **Peace From God – Christ Is Born!**

**May the Crown of God’s Goodness in the Year of our Lord 2010 Be Blessed!**

With paternal love before the God-Child Christ,

+Maxim

Bishop of Western America

## SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

**From *The Prologue* for Dec. 28/Jan. 10 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:**

### **The Twenty Thousand Holy Martyrs of Nicomedia**

During the reign of the wicked Emperor Maximian Hercules, the Christian Faith flourished in Nicomedia and increased day by day. At one time the emperor, staying in this city, learned of the large number of Christians and the progress of the Christian Church, and he became greatly embittered and conceived a plan of how to kill them all. The Feast of the Nativity of Christ approached, and the emperor, knowing that all the Christians gathered in the church for this feast, ordered that on that day the church be surrounded by soldiers and set afire. When all the Christians had gathered in the church after midnight and began the solemn celebration, the soldiers surrounded the church and would not permit anyone to leave. The emperor's envoy entered the church and announced to the Christians the emperor's command that they immediately offer sacrifices to the idols or be burned alive. Then the archdeacon, a heroic soldier of Christ, inflamed with divine zeal began to encourage the people, reminding the faithful of the Three Children in the furnace in Babylon. "Behold, brethren," he said, "the table of oblation in the sanctuary of the Lord, and understand that our true Lord and God was just now sacrificed for us on it; should we not then lay down our lives for Him in this holy place?" The people were filled with zeal to die for Christ, and all the catechumens were baptized and chrismated. The soldiers then set fire to the church on all sides, and the Christians, twenty thousand of them in number, were burned in the flames while singing praises to God. The church burned for five days; and smoke with an intoxicating and wonderful fragrance rose from it. A certain marvelous, golden-rayed light manifested itself over this place. Thus, numerous men, women and children gloriously died and received the wreath of eternal glory in the Kingdom of Christ. They suffered and were glorified in the year 302.

### **The Venerable Simon, the Myrrh-gusher**

Simon was the founder of the Simonospetra Monastery on the Holy Mountain. He was glorified because of his asceticism, visions and miracles. He entered peacefully into rest and went to Christ in the year 1257.

### **The Holy Martyr Domna**

Domna was a virgin and priestess of the foul idols at the court of Emperor Maximian. Reading the Acts of the Apostles, which she had obtained from somewhere, she came to believe in Christ and was baptized by Bishop Cyril in Nicomedia, together with the eunuch Indes. St. Cyril directed her to a convent, where Blessed Agatha was the abbess. When the emperor began to search for her, Agatha dressed her in men's clothing and sent her to a men's monastery. This was at the time when twenty thousand Christians were burned in the church by Emperor Maximian. Immediately after this, by the emperor's command, Saints Indes, Gorgonius and Peter were thrown into the sea with millstones around their necks; Commander Zeno, who had openly denounced the emperor for his idolatry, was beheaded; St. Theophilus, the deacon of Bishop Anthimus, was slain by stoning and

by arrows; Abbess Agatha, the nun Theophila and the nobles Dorotheus, Mardonius, Migdonius and Euthymius were also slain for the sake of Christ. One night, Domna was walking along the seashore and saw fishermen casting their nets into the sea. At that time she was especially grieving for St. Indes. Called by the fishermen to help them, she assisted them and by God's providence drew out three human bodies in the net. Domna recognized in them Saints Indes, Gorgonius and Peter, and she took their bodies and reverently buried them. When the emperor learned that a young man was caring for and tending the graves of the Christian martyrs, he ordered that the young man be beheaded. Thus, St. Domna was seized and beheaded, and she was crowned with the wreath of glory in the Heavenly Kingdom with the other martyrs.

### **REFLECTION**

A story of the Divine Christ-child: When the Most-holy Virgin, with her Divine Child and the righteous Joseph, drew near to the city of Hermopolis [Cairo], they saw a tree before the gate of the city. The travelers from afar were weary from their journey and approached this tree to rest a while, even though the tree was very tall and did not offer adequate shade. The Egyptians called this tree "Persea" and worshiped it as a god, for they believed that some divinity was hidden in the tree. In reality, an evil spirit dwelt in this tree. As the holy family approached the tree, the tree shook fiercely, and the evil spirit, terrified by the approaching Christ-child, fled. Then the tree bent its top down to the ground and worshiped its Creator like a rational creature. Thus the bent tree cast a great shadow, under which the weary travelers rested. From that day, the tree received miraculous healing powers from Christ the Lord to heal every infirmity of men. Afterward, the holy sojourners went to the village of Matarea. Near the village they saw a fig tree, and, while Joseph went into the village on business, the Most-holy Virgin took refuge under the fig tree with the Lord. And, oh, what a miracle: the tree lowered its crown down to the ground to create a shadow for the travelers, and its lower half split open in such a way that the Mother with the Child could enter and rest. And what is even more miraculous: a living spring of water suddenly opened up near the fig tree. Joseph found a hut in the vicinity, where they settled. There they lived and drank water from that miraculous spring. This was the only spring of living water to be found in Egypt, for all the other water in Egypt comes from the Nile River, which branches off into innumerable canals. And thus, like brought forth like: the Lord Jesus, the Immortal and Heavenly Spring of living water, by His presence called forth this spring of living water from the earth.

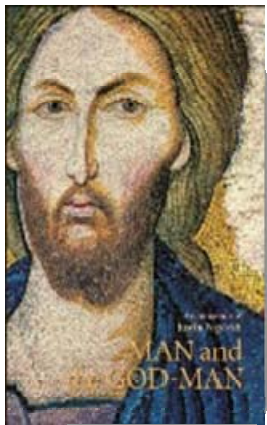
### **IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **ANNUAL DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY - January 28-30, 2010**

*Mark Your Calendars*

Saint Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, Nevada will host the Annual Diocesan Assembly on January 28-30, 2010.

**FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:**

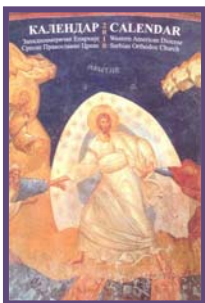


**MAN AND THE GOD-MAN by Archimandrite Justin Popovic**

This newest publication of our Sebastian Press Publishing House is now available for purchase online at:

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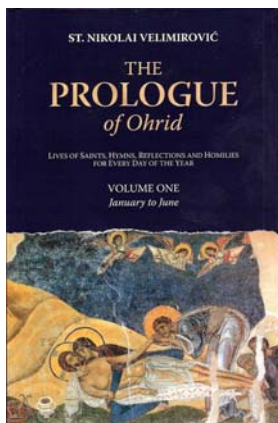
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**THE PROLOGUE OF OHRID**

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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*