

**THE WESTERN AMERICAN DIOCESE  
OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA  
SAINT STEVEN'S CATHEDRAL  
1621 WEST GARVEY AVENUE  
ALHAMBRA, CA 91802**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS TO GATHER FOR HISTORIC CELEBRATION OF THE RESTORATION OF ICONS**

An historic gathering will take place at Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Alhambra this Sunday, February 21, 2010. For the third consecutive year, the Canonical Orthodox Christian Bishops on the West Coast will con-celebrate the Divine Liturgy on the first Sunday of Great Lent. This year, the event is hosted by the Right Reverend Bishop Maxim, PhD., Bishop of the Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America at the See of the Diocese, Saint Steven's Cathedral in Alhambra.

The highlight of the day will be the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great (4<sup>th</sup> c.) and the Procession of Holy Icons, concelebrated by His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos, His Grace, Bishop Joseph, His Grace, Bishop Maxim, and His Grace, Bishop Benjamin at 10:00 AM with clergy and hundreds of faithful from throughout Southern California. A fellowship luncheon will follow. Concurrently, a Pan-Orthodox Young Adult Conference and a Youth Rally will provide spiritual enrichment opportunities for all ages! The event will also highlight some of the charitable ministries of the Orthodox Church, specifically the work of International Orthodox Christian Charities and the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve (FOCUS). The children and teens will be preparing "*Haiti Relief Health Kits*" which will be donated through IOCC for their relief operations in Haiti following the devastating earthquakes.

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**PRESS INFO**

**EVENT CONTACT AND ADDRESS:**

1621 West Garvey Avenue, Alhambra, CA 91803  
Phone: 626-284-9100

Very Reverend Nikola Ćeko, Dean of Saint Steven's Cathedral  
626-284-9100  
frnicholas@saintstevens.org

## **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

Orthros (Matins) 9:00 AM

Divine Liturgy and Procession of Icons 10:00 AM

Fellowship Luncheon 12:00 PM

Young Adult Conference and Lunch 12:00 PM

Conversation with the Bishops 12:30 PM

Youth Rally (Grades 6-12) 12:30 PM

## **SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY-THE RESTORATION OF ICONS**

The Sunday of Orthodoxy is the first Sunday of Great Lent. The dominant theme of this Sunday since 843 has been that of the victory of the icons. In that year the iconoclastic controversy, which had raged on and off since 726, was finally laid to rest, and icons and their veneration were restored on the first Sunday in Lent.

## **GREAT LENT IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The 40 day period of time preceding the Feast of Christ's Resurrection (Easter) is known as Great Lent. This is a time of great reflection, during which the faithful are called to re-evaluate their calling as Orthodox Christians. It is a time of repentance--a time of mental, physical and spiritual renewal through which an Orthodox Christian can re-invigorate his/her faith. It is a time of asking for forgiveness, abstaining from certain foods, increased prayer, increased alms-giving, and other physical and spiritual exercises designed to help one truly live one's life in Christ's Love. This period culminates in the Feast of Feasts: Christ's Resurrection.

## **I.O.C.C.**

**The International Orthodox Christian Charities** is an organization, established in 1992 under the direction of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). This organization's focus is to provide humanitarian support to those in need throughout the world. International Orthodox Christian Charities was formed in the crucible of crisis and has continued to meet the needs of the world's most vulnerable people and communities in the midst of historic upheaval — from the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the wars in the former Yugoslavia, to the terrorist attacks on the United States. Over the past 16 years, IOCC has delivered over \$300 million in humanitarian and development programs in more than 33 countries. Currently, their efforts in Haiti have provided relief to thousands in need after the devastating earthquake. They are currently sponsoring a drive to provide personal hygiene kits for those who have lost all of the necessary supplies. Also, due to the unfortunate abundance of crippling injuries, they are providing equipment for those who have been handicapped by the earthquake, including wheelchairs, crutches, and other indispensable items.

## **FOCUS**

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve (FOCUS) is an organization dedicated to specific domestic charity. In the spirit of the Christian Gospel, it serves to feed the hungry, gives drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the sick and in prison, through its ministry to the homeless throughout North America.

### **CANONICAL BISHOPS ON THE WEST COAST**

His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, CA  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America

His Grace, Bishop Joseph of Los Angeles and the West,  
Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America

His Grace, Bishop Maxim of the Western American Diocese,  
Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America

His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West,  
of the Orthodox Church in America

### **PARISHES ORGANIZING THIS EVENT**

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Alhambra

Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles

Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles

Holy Virgin Mary Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles