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ORTHODOX BISHOP OF WESTERN AMERICA
ПРАВОСЛАВНИ ЕПИСКОП ЗАПАДНОАМЕРИЧКИ

May 14, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I greet you with joy in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

"Faith can save us only if united with and expressed in good works, inspired by the love of God" - St. Sava

With these words of St. Sava, I would like to express to you my great joy and thankfulness for the love, concern and commitment that you have expressed over the years for the continued growth of the Western American Diocese.

Last year at this time, I wrote to you and shared with you all of the exciting news about the many inspiring retreats, seminars, and programs provided by the diocese for our Orthodox faithful. I also appealed to you as stewards, to open your hearts and give generously to support our Annual Diocesan Days Gathering. You responded without hesitation, and provided all that was needed to ensure that this spiritual and social gathering would indeed be realized.

As I write to you now, I am pleased to tell you that it is an exciting time in our Diocese; filled with enthusiasm and energy! We have many volunteers, both clergy and laity, young and old, who are giving their time and sharing their talents to help in our Ministries. I would like to share some of these Ministries with you.

Perhaps you've received the most recent publication from our Christian Education Ministry. It is a pamphlet entitled "Orthodox Christian Education, an unending activity of our parishes and our homes". This pamphlet was mailed to every family in our Diocese to help parents help their children grow in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Our Weekly Bulletin provides our faithful and clergy with the Sunday Epistle and Gospel readings, educational articles, and the latest news. The Sebastian Press Bookstore is becoming increasingly busy. Our newest publication consists of the writings by our newly canonized Saint, the Venerable Justin Popovich. It is entitled, "Commentary of the Epistles of St. John the Theologian." Our semi-annual Iconography Workshop has captured the interest of even our teenagers. It has a nice following and the students are becoming skilled Iconographers.

Good things are happening and our Diocese is flourishing. However, as you know, it is only through your good works and generous donations that make all of this possible. Therefore, I appeal to you once again to give your time, share your talent, and offer your financial support. Please consider supporting our 14th Annual Diocesan Days on Labor Day weekend, September 3rd through September 5th, in Jackson, California. Every year this gathering is spiritually and educationally edifying to all in attendance. This year we are planning to invite other Orthodox Christians from all Orthodox Churches in Northern California which will make it very special. If you become a sponsor you will help to underwrite some of the many costs incurred in organizing such an event. We have two categories of sponsorship: Gold at \$1,000 and Silver at \$500.

I would also like to make an appeal to you to purchase an Ad/Greeting in our "Annual", a publication highlighting the events and progress that has been made in the Western American Diocese during the past year.

If you would like to contribute to our Diocesan Days gathering, as a sponsor or by submitting the enclosed Greeting/Ad Form, please make your check payable to "Western American Diocese" and mail your donation to: The Western American Diocese, 1621 West Garvey Avenue, Alhambra, CA 91803 by June 15th.

We pray that our Diocesan Days tradition continues to be a most blessed occasion for prayer, fellowship and witness for the life and work of our beloved Diocese. Once again, thank you for your generous support and thoughtful consideration. May the grace, love, and the communion of the Holy Trinity be with you and your loved ones as you continue your good works of stewardship in the Western American Diocese. *"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you: that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."* (Corinthians 9:7-8)

With brotherly love and esteem in Christ,

Right Reverend Bishop Maxim
Bishop of Western America