



WESTERN
AMERICAN
DIOCESE



ЗАПАДНО
АМЕРИЧКА
ΕΠΑΡΧΙΑ



Western American Diocese
15TH ANNUAL DIOCESAN DAYS GATHERING
Special Guests:
His Grace, Bishop LONGIN, Diocese of New Gracanica and Midwestern America
His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH, Antiochian Diocese of Los Angeles and the West
His Eminence, Archbishop KYRILL of San Francisco
Archimandrite Vasileios Gontikakis
Guest Speaker from Mount Athos, Greece
SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2011
SAINT STEVEN'S SERBIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA
**Commemorating the Ninetieth Anniversary of the Establishment of the
First Serbian Diocese for America and Canada (1921-2011)**
WORSHIP SERBIAN PICNIC FOLKLORE PERFORMANCES MUSIC & DANCING SPORTS CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULT ACTIVITES

Presentations by
ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS GONDIKAKIS
from Mount Athos, Greece

Friday, September 2nd, 3:00 p.m.

CLERGY SYMPOSIUM

OPEN TO ALL ORTHODOX CLERGY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

RSVP to Saint Steven's Cathedral—626-284-9100

Friday, September 2nd, 6:00 p.m.

“The Holy Mountain”

Saturday, September 3rd, 11:30 a.m.

“The Diocese in North America: A Reflection”



Saturday, September 3rd, 4:00 pm—6:00 p.m.

**YOUNG ADULTS MEET WITH ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS
LIVING OUT OUR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FAITH
AS YOUNG ADULTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY!**

**WE WILL HAVE A TALK AND OPEN DISCUSSION WITH
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS BY ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS**

RSVP to Saint Steven's Cathedral—626-284-9100

TEEN ICONOGRAPHY PRESENTATION AND WORKSHOP

with Iconographer Fr. Stevan Kovacevic

Saturday, September 3rd, 2 - 5 p.m.

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT PROVIDED BY

Orchestra Srbija

Authentic Serbian Food

Folklore Performances—Las Vegas, San Marcos

Visit our website for more information.

http://www.westsrbdio.org/Diocesan_Days/diocesan_days_2011/index.html

Sunday, August 28, 2011

11TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST THE DORMITION OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE TWO:

When You did descend to death, O Life Immortal, You did slay hell with the splendor of Your Godhead! And when from the depths You did raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to You!

TROPARION FOR THE DORMITION – TONE ONE:

In giving birth you preserved your virginity; in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos. You were translated to life, O Mother of Life, and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death.

RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE TWO:

Hell became afraid, O Almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with You! And the world, O my Savior, praises You forever.

KONTAKION FOR THE DORMITION – TONE TWO:

Neither the tomb nor death could hold the Theotokos, who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions. For being the Mother of Life she was translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb.

HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD (REPLACES “IT IS TRULY MEET...”):

The angels, as they looked upon the Dormition of the Virgin, were struck with wonder seeing how the Virgin went up from earth to heaven. The limits of nature are overcome in you, O pure Virgin; for birthgiving remains virginal and death is united to life; a virgin after childbearing and alive after death, you ever save your inheritance, O Theotokos.

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 2ND TONE:

The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

FOR THE DORMITION, TONE 3:

My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!



FIRST CORINTHIANS 9: 2-12

Brethren, if I am not an apostle to others yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

FOR THE DORMITION, PHILIPPIANS 2: 5-11

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death,

even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

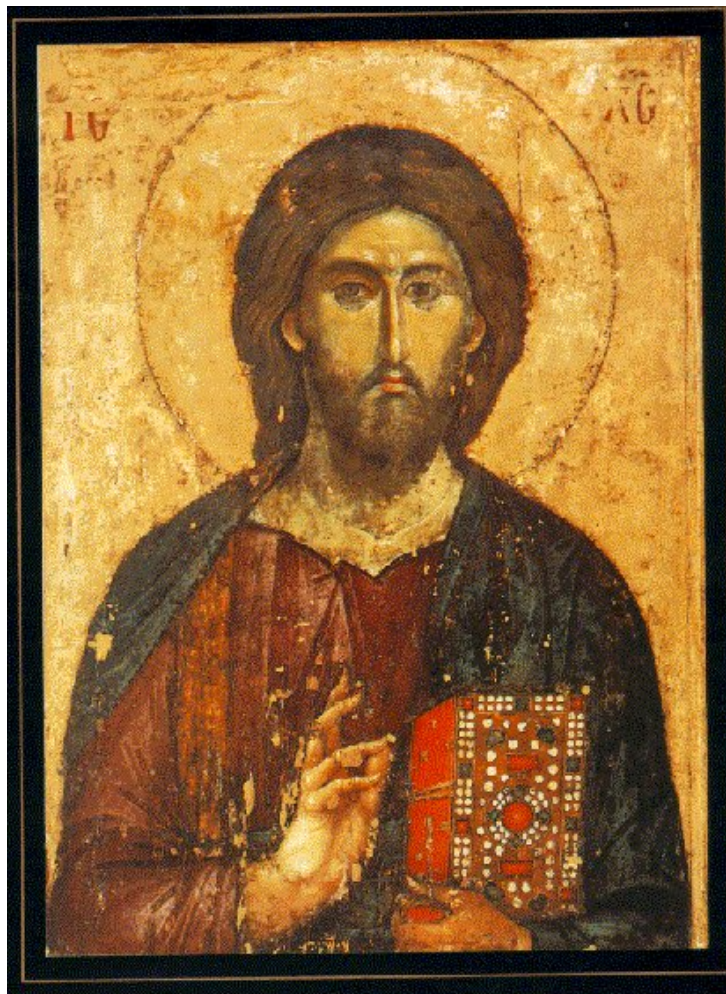
THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you! Save the the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call.

Arise, O Lord, and go to Thy resting place; Thou and the ark of Thy might. The Lord swore truth to David from which He will not turn back.

COMMENTARY ON FIRST CORINTHIANS 9: 2-12

Saint Paul writes concerning the wages of those who minister. Ordination does not assume an automatic vow of poverty; clergy aren't necessarily monastic just like monastics aren't necessarily ordained priests and deacons. Clergy have families and should not be unable to provide for their households simply because they do not labor in material goods. It is also important for clergy to have regular respite from their spiritual labors to prevent physical and spiritual exhaustion. These are basic expectations for anyone in any vocation and will allow everyone to take care of themselves in order to better serve others as our Lord calls us all to do.



GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 18: 23-35

At that time Jesus said, “Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

FOR THE DORMITION, LUKE 10: 38-42; 11: 27, 28

At that time, it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!” But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW 18: 23-35

Parables are meant to illustrate and instruct so it’s important to have contextual knowledge of what’s included in the parable to help with edification. A talent represents the annual wages for an average person, while a denarius represents a daily wage. Not only is forgiveness to be a two-way street, but the first servant received forgiveness for a debt that was incomparably larger than the one owed to him. We must forgive, no matter the trespass, in order to even entertain the notion of receiving God’s forgiveness of our trespasses.

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From The Prologue for August 15/28 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Dormition of the Most-holy Theotokos

The Lord Who, on Mount Sinai, gave the Fifth Commandment, *Honor thy father and thy mother*, showed by His own example how one should respect one's parents. Hanging on the Cross in agony, He remembered His Mother, and indicating the Apostle John He said to her: *Woman, behold thy son*. After that, He said to John: *Behold thy mother*. And so, providing for His Mother, He breathed His last. John had a home on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, in which the Theotokos then lived. She dwelt there to the end of her days on earth. By her prayers, kind guidance, meekness and patience, she greatly assisted her Son's apostles. She spent most of her remaining time on earth in Jerusalem, often visiting those places that reminded her of the great events and of the great works of her Son. She especially visited Golgotha, Bethlehem, and the Mount of Olives. Of her few distant journeys, her visit to St. Ignatius the God-bearer in Antioch is recorded; as is her visit to Lazarus (whom our Lord resurrected on the fourth day), the Bishop of Cyprus. She also visited Mount Athos, which she blessed; and she stayed in Ephesus with St. John the Evangelist during the time of the great persecution of Christians in Jerusalem. In her old age, she often prayed to her Lord and God on the Mount of Olives, the site of His Ascension, that He take her from this world as soon as possible. On one of these occasions, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and revealed to her that she would find repose within three days. The angel gave her a palm-branch, which was to be carried in her funeral procession. She returned home with great joy, hoping in her heart to see her Son's apostles just once more in this life. The Lord fulfilled her wish, and the apostles, borne by angels in the clouds, gathered together at the house on Mount Zion. With great rejoicing she saw them, encouraged them, counseled them, and comforted them. Then she peacefully gave her soul to God without pain or physical illness. The apostles took up her coffin, from which a heavenly fragrance arose—and, in the company of many Christians, bore it to the Garden of Gethsemane, to the sepulcher of her parents, Saints Joachim and Anna. By God's providence, the procession was concealed by a cloud from the evil Jews. Even so, Aphthonius, a Jewish priest, grabbed the coffin with the intention of overturning it, but an angel of God severed both his hands. He then cried out to the apostles for help, and was healed upon declaring his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Thomas was absent—again, according to God's providence—in order that a new and all-glorious mystery of the Holy Theotokos would be revealed. Thomas arrived on the third day and desired to venerate the body of the Holy Most-pure One. But when the apostles opened the sepulcher, they found only the winding sheet: the body was not in the tomb! That evening, the Theotokos, surrounded by a host of angels, appeared to the apostles and said to them: "Rejoice, I will be with you always." The Theotokos' age at the time of her Dormition is not known exactly, but the overwhelming opinion is that she was over sixty years of age.

HYMN OF PRAISE: The Most-holy Theotokos

Thus spoke the Lord Most-high:

"From thy heart, pure Virgin,
Living water will flow,
That those who thirst will drink Christ."

Life-bearing source,
We all boast of thee!

Those who thirst will drink Christ.
By Him, the bitter is sweetened;
By Him, the scales are washed from blind eyes;
And by Him, the grief of those in sorrow is healed.
Life-bearing source,
We all boast of thee!

Sweet drink sprung from eternity,
The brook filling our arid age:
Once more raised toward heaven,
Our exhausted world becomes refreshed.
Life-bearing source,
We all boast of thee!

Glory to thee, O Most-pure One!
Glory to thee, O Mother of God!
Thou didst bear for us the Living Christ,
The living water of grace!
Life-bearing source,
We all boast of thee!

REFLECTION

Each one of the faithful can learn much—indeed, very much—from the life of the Virgin Theotokos. I would like to mention just two things. First, she frequently went to Golgotha, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, Bethlehem, and other places which were redolent of her Son. She prayed on bended knees at all of these places—especially at Golgotha. Thus she gave the first example and impetus to the faithful of visiting holy places out of love toward Him Who by His presence, His passion and His glory made these places holy and significant. Also, we learn how she prayed for a quick departure from this life, so that, when separated from her body, her soul would not encounter the prince of darkness and his horrors, and hidden from the dark regions would not see the punishment of those darkened by sin. Do you see how terrible it is for the soul to pass through the toll-houses? When she—who gave birth to the Destroyer of hades, and who herself has tremendous power over demons—prayed thus, what then is left for us? Out of extreme humility, she commended herself to God, and did not trust in her own deeds. So much less should we trust in our deeds, and even more we should commend ourselves into the hands of God, crying out for His mercy, especially at the time of the departure of the soul from the body.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous sign by which Samuel confirmed his words before the people (I Samuel 12):

1. How Samuel told the people it was evil in the sight of the Lord that they sought a king for themselves other than the Lord, the true King;
 2. How, for the confirmation of his words, he called upon God for thunder and rain;
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3. How the thunder and rain descended, and how the people were in fear of God, and of Samuel.

HOMILY

on the Most-glorious Child

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Angel of mighty counsel, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, the Everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6).

In all of human history, to what mortal man could all of these titles, all of this authority, and all of this glory apply? There is no one. That is why St. John Chrysostom says: “It is impossible to understand this in regard to any other man, but only in reference to Christ.”

The prophet here clearly expresses two natures in the Savior: the human and the divine. *A Child is born*—this signifies a human nature. *Unto us a Son is given*—this unites the two natures in one person, the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin in the person of the Incarnate Lord. The remaining titles signify the Divine Nature of the Lord Jesus. His government is *upon His shoulder*—the government is His, His own, and is not borrowed. *Mighty counsel*—is this not the Holy Trinity? The angel—or messenger and herald—of this Triune Counsel is the Son of God, the Pre-eternal Word. *Wonderful Counselor*—for all that is wonderful, all that is new that has come to mankind is from Him and through Him. The *Mighty God*—what would Arius and his modern adherents, who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus, say to this? The *Prince of Peace*—for from Him is lasting peace; outside Him is war, without and within. *The Everlasting Father*— as He is the Lord of the past, so also is He the Lord of the future. Furthermore, He is also the Father of the Church, the Creator of the new world, the Founder of the Kingdom of God.

Isaiah himself, the son of Amoz, saw this wonderful and true vision some seven hundred years before it was revealed to the entire universe. O Lord Jesus, Thou art to the prophets the most glorious prophecy, and to the faithful the most glorious revelation. Unlock our minds, so that the wonderful glory of Thy majesty can enter into our minds; and unlock our hearts, so that they would be filled by Thy life-creating love. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.
