



Sunday, December 26, 2010  
(Nativity Fast)  
(Serbian Mother's Day)

**THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST:  
SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS;  
HOLY MARTYR EUSTRATIUS; HIEROMARTYR GABRIEL OF SERBIA; REPOSE  
OF THE VENERABLE HERMAN OF ALASKA**

**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!

**TROPARION TO THE HOLY FOREFATHERS - TONE TWO:**

Through faith You justified the Forefathers, betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles. These saints exult in glory, for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit: she who bore You without seed. So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us!

**TROPARION TO SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA - TONE FOUR:**

O blessed Father Herman of Alaska, North star of Christ's holy Church, the light of your holy life and great deeds guides those who follow the Orthodox way. Together we lift high the holy Cross you planted firmly in America. Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ, singing His holy Resurrection.

**RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE SIX:**

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and God of all.

**KONTAKION TO SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA - TONE THREE:**

The eternal light of Christ our Savior guided you, O blessed Father Herman, on your evangelical journey to America to proclaim the Gospel of peace. Now you stand before the throne of glory; intercede for your land and its people: Peace for the world and salvation for our souls!

**KONTAKION TO THE HOLY FOREFATHERS - TONE SIX:**

You did not worship the graven image, O thrice-blessed ones, but armed with the immaterial essence of God, you were glorified in a trial by fire. From the midst of

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unbearable flames you called on God, crying out: 'Hasten, O compassionate One! Speedily come to our aid for You are merciful and able to do as You will!'



*Russian Icon of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & His Twelve Sons*

### EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 4<sup>TH</sup> TONE:

Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers; and praised and glorified is Your name forever.

### COLOSSIANS 3: 4-11

Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

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### THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

Moses and Aaron are among His priests, and Samuel is among those who call upon His name. They called upon the Lord, and He hearkened unto them.

### COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS

As baptized Christians we are becoming in practice what we are already in spirit. As we died with Christ, we must then will to experience death daily by “killing” old sinful and disintegrating passions. As we were raised with Christ, we must then will to experience life daily by the virtuous and unifying desires of the “new man” which we all are in the body of Christ.

## GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

### LUKE 14: 16-24

The Lord spoke this parable: “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it; I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them; I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you, that none of these men who were invited shall taste my supper.’”

### COMMENTARY ON LUKE

This parable exemplifies God’s Kingdom, imaged in the ministry of Christ and later in the Church. The Kingdom is filled with outcasts and Gentiles, while the unresponsive privileged guests shut themselves out with their excuses.

## SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From The Prologue for December 13/26 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

### **The Holy Martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius and Orestes**

These five courageous men shone like five shining stars in the dark days of the Christ-persecuting Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. St. Eustratius was a Roman commander in the city of Satalionus; Eugene was his companion in the army; Orestes was likewise a distinguished soldier; Auxentius was a priest; and Mardarius was an ordinary citizen who came, like Eustratius, from the town of Arabrak. The imperial deputies Lysias and Agricolus tortured Auxentius first since he was a priest. Seeing the innocent suffering of Christians, Eustratius appeared in front of Lysias and declared that he was also a Christian. While Eustratius was being tortured, Eugene appeared before the judge and cried out: “Lysias, I too am a Christian.” When Eustratius was led through the town of Arabrak with the other martyrs, Mardarius saw them from the roof of his house. He took leave of his wife and two young children and rushed after the martyrs, shouting into the

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faces of the tormentors: "I too am a Christian, like my lord Eustratius." When St. Orestes was target-practicing in the presence of Lysias, the cross he was wearing fell from his chest and Lysias realized that he was a Christian, after which Orestes openly confessed his faith. Orestes was a young and handsome soldier and towered above all the other soldiers in stature. Auxentius was beheaded, Eugene and Mardarius died while being tortured, Orestes expired on a red-hot iron grid, and Eustratius died in a fiery furnace. St. Blaise (February 11) administered Holy Communion to St. Eustratius in prison before his death. Their relics were later taken to Constantinople and buried in the church dedicated to them: The Holy Five Companions. They were seen alive in that church, and St. Orestes appeared to St. Dimitri of Rostov (October 28). A beautiful prayer by St. Eustratius is extant, which is read at the Midnight Service on Saturday: "Most highly do I magnify Thee, O Lord."

### **The Holy Martyr Lucy the Virgin**

With her mother, Lucy visited the grave of St. Agatha in Catania, where St. Agatha appeared to her. Her mother, who had dropsy, was then miraculously healed in the church. Lucy distributed all her goods to the poor, and this embittered her betrothed, who accused her of being a Christian before Paschasius the judge. The wicked judge ordered that she be taken to a brothel in order to defile her. However, by the power of God she remained immovable, as if rooted to the earth, and not even a multitude of people was able to move her from that spot. Then an enraged pagan pierced her throat with a sword and she gave up her soul to God and took up her habitation in the Kingdom of Eternity. Lucy suffered in the year 304.

### **The Hieromartyr Gavril, Patriarch of Serbia**

During the terrible period of Turkish rule over Serbia, this great hierarch traveled to Russia, where he participated in the Moscow Synod of 1655. Upon returning, he was accused of high treason. Certain evil Jews also accused him of having converted several Jews to the Christian Faith. In their accusation, the Jews cited that he was attempting to convert the Turks. The Jews did this to enrage the Turkish authorities even more. Brought before the tribunal, he was condemned and sentenced to embrace Islam. Since Gavril would not even hear of this, he was, after a period of imprisonment, sentenced to death and hanged in Brusa in the year 1659. Thus, he departed for his beloved Christ to receive from Him a double crown, that of a hierarch and that of a martyr.

### **HYMN OF PRAISE: The Holy Martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius and Orestes**

O Five Companions, soldiers of Christ,  
Fearless heroes, honorable martyrs—  
Mockery and tortures, fire and scaffolds  
Were merely childish games for you.  
None of you consented to the wantonness of Rome.  
With joyful hearts you suffered for Christ.  
Eustratius, the wonderful and heroic commander,  
Despised imperial clemency and this weeping world.  
With him, as with a living fire that burns leaves,  
The other companions went to torture.

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Auxentius the priest, a faithful servant of Christ,  
Endured much mockery for the sake of Christ.  
Eugene the soldier and wondrous Orestes  
Ridiculed death, being conscious of the Resurrection.  
Mardarius left his wife and children,  
So that both they and he would be forever glorified.  
O heroic clan, children of grace,  
Only the Church can give such men as you;  
Only the Spirit of God creates such hearts as yours—  
He that transforms the dark abyss into flame!  
Glorious martyrs, remember us also;  
And by your prayers, strengthen the Church.

### REFLECTION

To give alms out of that which one needs: this is true almsgiving. Not to sin when one is most exposed to sinning: this has value before God. When St. Lucy saw her sick mother miraculously healed, she suggested to her that she use her possessions as alms for the needy. To this her mother replied that she did not want to part from her possessions until her death, but she agreed that after her death her possessions could be used for the good that Lucy wished. “First, cover my eyes with earth,” her mother said, “and then do what you wish with my possessions.” Lucy said: “It is not very pleasing to God for a person to give to Him that which he cannot take with him to the grave or which he himself does not need. But if you want to do a God-pleasing deed, give to Him that which you yourself need. Otherwise, after death, when you need nothing, you will be offering Him that which you could not take with you. But while you are still alive and healthy, give to Christ what you possess, and all of that which you intended for me begin even now to give to Him.” The good mother of the wise daughter agreed to this. When the torturer Paschasius was attempting to force this holy virgin to carnal sin, Lucy did not, even in thought, assent to this. And when the torturer threatened that his men would defile her by force, saying with a smirk, “When you become defiled, the Holy Spirit will flee from you,” Lucy, full of grace, replied: “The body cannot be defiled without the consent of the mind.” Thus St. Lucy went to her death, having distributed all her goods beforehand and guarded her young and pure body from defilement.

### CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the fulfillment of Noah’s words upon his descendants (Genesis 9):

1. How the sons of Japheth spread throughout the whole world;
2. How they settled in the tents of Shem, that is, in the Church, in the spiritual tent of Christ, which began with the Semites, the Jews.

### HOMILY

on Isaac

And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee (Genesis 26:24).

Brethren, from time immemorial, the path upon which the righteous walk has always been difficult. From time immemorial, they have been hard pressed either by those who do not believe in God or by those who maintain an incorrect belief. Abel was hard

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pressed by his brother Cain; Noah and Lot, by a completely corrupt generation; and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by the pagans. However, God does not forsake the righteous to walk the difficult path alone. This we also see with Isaac: I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not. Isaac understood these very meaningful words. By these words, God encouraged and reminded him. He was saying: “Because of Abraham, I will bless thee also; and, as I protected Abraham among the pagans, so in a like manner will I protect thee.” And further: “Be faithful to Me as was Abraham thy father.” Isaac followed the example of his father and did not turn away from God at any time in his life. Isaac was a farmer and a cattle-breeder as was his father; he was righteous and meek, avoiding strife with men and doing good for people. We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee (Genesis 26:28), as his haters and persecutors finally had to admit. And Isaac was made worthy that God be called His God: just as God was called the God of Abraham, so later He was called the God of Isaac.

O Lord, wondrous in Thy saints, remember our names also along with the names of Thy righteous ones and saints in Thy Kingdom. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



*Icon of Saint Herman with scenes from his life*

The Venerable Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America (from [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org))

A spiritual mission was organized in 1793, made up of monks of the Valaam Monastery. They were sent to preach the Word of God to the native inhabitants of northwestern America, who only ten years before had come under the sovereignty of Russia. St Herman was among the members of this Mission.

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In the second half of the 18th century the borders of Holy Russia expanded to the north. In those years Russian merchants discovered the Aleutian Islands which formed in the Pacific Ocean a chain from the eastern shores of Kamchatka to the western shores of North America. With the opening of these islands there was revealed the sacred necessity to illumine with the light of the Gospel the native inhabitants. With the blessing of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Gabriel gave to the Elder Nazarius the task of selecting capable persons from the brethren of Valaam for this holy endeavor. Ten men were selected, and among them was Father Herman. The chosen men left Valaam for the place of their great appointment in 1793. (The members of this historical mission were: Archimandrite Joseph (Bolotoff), the Hieromonks, Juvenal, Macarius, Athanasius, Stephan and Nectarius, Hierodeacons, Nectarius and Stephen, and the monks Joasaph, and Herman.)

In America Father Herman chose as his place of habitation Spruce Island, which he called New Valaam. This island is separated by a strait about a mile and a quarter wide from Kodiak Island on which had been built a wooden monastery for the residence of the members of the mission, and a wooden church dedicated to the Resurrection of the Savior. (New Valaam was named for Valaam on Lake Ladoga, the monastery from which Father Herman came to America. It is interesting to note that Valaam is also located on an island, although, this island is in a fresh water lake, whereas, Spruce Island is on the Pacific Ocean, although near other islands and the Alaskan mainland.)

Spruce Island is not large, and is almost completely covered by a forest. Almost through its middle a small brook flows to the sea. Herman selected this picturesque island for the location of his hermitage. He dug a cave out of the ground with his own hands, and in it he lived his first full summer. For winter there was built for him a cell near the cave, in which he lived until his death. The cave was converted by him into a place for his burial. A wooden chapel, and a wooden house to be used as a schoolhouse and a guest house were built not too distant from his cell. A garden was laid out in front of his cell. For more than forty years Father Herman lived here before his repose in 1837. On August 9, 1970, Saint Herman was canonized in ceremonies at the Church of the Holy Resurrection in Kodiak, Alaska.

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## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **APPEAL FOR EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS IN KRALJEVO**

**WE WHOLEHEARTEDLY THANK ALL OF YOU WHO PARTICIPATED IN MAKING A  
DONATION TO HELP OUR SUFFERING BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN KRALJEVO.**

**\$4,456.00 was collected and the entire amount will be sent  
to the Zicha Monastery for immediate use!**

To the God-protected Western American Diocese, Serbian Orthodox Church,

My dear Brothers and Sisters, our Children in the Lord,

On November 3rd, a 5.4 magnitude earthquake struck at 1:56 a.m. in central Serbia, killing two and leaving more than 100 injured as well as thousands of residents in the city of Kraljevo without homes. Many buildings were completely destroyed while several thousands were critically damaged.

With the emerging picture of the extent of the tragedy, there is serious concern about the city's recovery. This earthquake, with its aftershocks, is so much more tragic than it first appeared. Kraljevo, one of the poorest regions in the country, is still struggling to recover from the post-war collapse of industry and the enormous aid for tens of thousands refugees from Kosovo and Metohija in recent years.

It is now estimated that the damage caused by the earthquake is over \$150 million.

So far, it has been confirmed that about 1100 buildings and homes are not in livable condition. There is a great danger that, with the weather turning worse (coming into winter season), the whole situation will become even more desperate, unless help comes in a timely fashion.

A great number of people affected by this tragedy are appealing to the nearby Zhicha Monastery for help!

At a time like this, our help can make a huge difference for the suffering people in Kraljevo. Our donations will fulfill the most immediate needs of the population, provide shelters, and rebuild homes, schools, hospitals, and churches.

We are urging all our faithful flock to unselfishly extend their help to the suffering people in our homeland in the heart of Serbia!

We are asking all parish priests and their respectful boards to respond to this appeal as soon as possible. All funds should be sent to our Western American Diocesan. Please make checks payable to Western American Diocese indicating "for Kraljevo" in the memo section. This will be transferred to Zhicha Monastery's account for immediate distribution.

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## DIOCESAN EVENTS

### 2011 Dates to Remember

#### **Thursday, February 17, 2011**

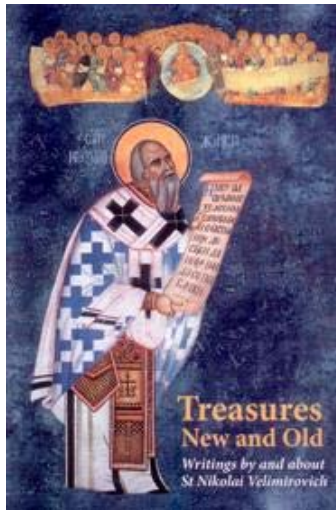
Diocesan Clergy Seminar & KSS Annual Assembly  
Luncheon 1:00 pm followed by Seminar & KSS meeting  
Diocesan Council Meeting 7:00 pm  
St. John the Baptist Church, San Francisco, CA

#### **Friday, February 18, 2011 (One Day Event)**

Diocesan Assembly - St. John the Baptist Church, San Francisco, CA

## FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:

### A NEW PUBLICATION



### Treasures New and Old

Writing by and about St. Nikolai Velimirovich

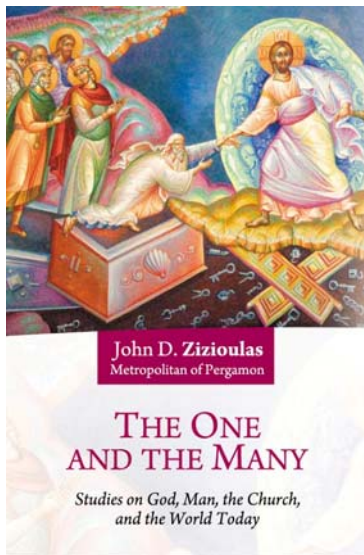
Before us is a book about a theologian, a minister, a missionary, a writer, a poet, an apostle, a saint, a man of dialogue: this book is about St. Nikolai Velimirovich, Bishop of Ohrid and Zhicha (1880 - 1956), who along with his many other attributes is regarded, with good reason, as an Enlightener of the Americas. The renewed interest in this man and his works has resulted in the materialization of this book for English-speaking readers who wish to become acquainted with this extraordinary person. The collected texts provide an extensive overview of his life, present important testimonies about his personality, and offer essential insights into his theology. The authors penetrate the depths of his thought with remarkable precision and also elucidate his actions. The authors agree that the appearance of Nikolai Velimirovich marks an era of change in the ecclesiastical and theological paradigm as a result of his spirituality, ecclesiastical work, and theological position.

Retail price: \$18.00 Paperback

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## THE ONE AND THE MANY

### Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today



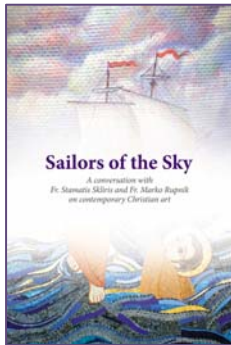
This volume offers a collection of Zizioulas articles which have appeared mostly in English, and which present his trinitarian doctrine of God, as well as his theological account of the Church as the place in which freedom and communion are actualized. The title, *The One and the Many*, suggests the idea of a profound relationship that exists between the Persons in the Holy Trinity, between Christ and the Church, between one Catholic Church and many catholic Churches. On each of these levels of communion, each one is called to receive from one another and indeed to receive one another. And while this is understandable at the Triadological and Christological levels, it raises all sorts of fundamental ecclesiological questions, since the highest point of unity in this context is both the mutual ecclesial-eucharistic recognition and agreement on doctrine and canonical-ecclesiological

organization. The book has the Preface written by Bishop Athanasius Yevtich, and an extensive and valuable Introduction (pp. xi-xxi) written by Paul Mc Partlan. Part one contains Zizioulas *STUDIES IN TRIADODOLOGY* (Trinitarian theology): *The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today* (pp. 3-16: The need for a fresh study; The question of God's being in relation to the world; The problem of God's being in Himself; The place of Trinitarian theology in Ecclesiology; Conclusion). *The Being of God and the Being of Man* (pp. 17-40: The need for a serious theological dialogue; A controversial issue: Trinitarian theology and the human person; Personalism-Existentialism and the theological concept of the person; Neoplatonism and patristic theology; Apophaticism and ontology; The personal existence of God and the human person; The importance of Christology and history; The eschatological character of salvation; Conclusion). This part ends with an article *One Single Source: An Orthodox Response to the Clarification on the Filioque* (pp. 41-45). Part Two: *STUDIES IN ECCLESIOLOGY*: *The Church as Communion* (pp. 49-60: Introduction; Koinonia as a theological concept; The Church as koinonia; Conclusion). *Ecclesiological Presuppositions of the Holy Eucharist* (pp. 61-74: Historical background; The Eucharist makes the Church and the Church constitutes the Eucharist; Conclusions; Our ecumenical situation today). *The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church* (pp. 75-90: The place of Pneumatology in ecclesiology; Pneumatology and the actual structure and life of the Church). *Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist* (p. 91). *Symbolism and Realism in Orthodox Worship* (pp. 101-117: Introduction; The notion of symbol; Symbolism in the Christian Faith; Symbolism in Orthodox worship; Iconic symbolism in worship; A look at the situation today). *The Theological Problem of Reception* (pp. 118-125: Introduction; The classical idea of reception and its theological significance; The actual ecumenical situation); *Eschatology and History* (pp. 126-135); *The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition* (pp. 136-146: Some basic theological presuppositions; The importance of these principles for ecclesiology); *The Early Christian Community* (pp. 147-169: Primitive Christianity; Aspects of the Faith of the early Christian

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community; The early Patristic period; The challenge of Gnosticism; The emergence of a Christian Gnosticism; Martyrdom as a form of spirituality; Toward medieval spirituality); Preliminary Considerations on the Concept of Authority (pp. 170-176); The Meaning of Ordination (pp. 177-180); Ordination and Communion (pp. 181-189; Some preliminary considerations; Ordination in the light of communion; Some concluding remarks); The Development of Conciliar Structures to the Time of the First Ecumenical Council (pp. 190-213; Primitive conciliarity on the local level; The transition to provincial conciliar structure; Toward an Ecumenical Council; Some concluding remarks); Comment on Communal Spirit and Conciliarity (pp. 214-220).

**Retail Price: \$80 Hardcover \$35.00 Paperback – Available Now**

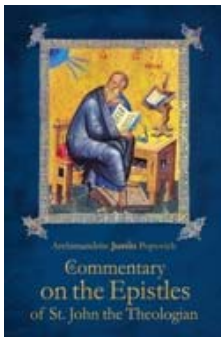


## **Sailors of the Sky**

*A conversation with Fr. Stamatis Skliris  
and Fr. Marko Rupnik on contemporary Christian art*

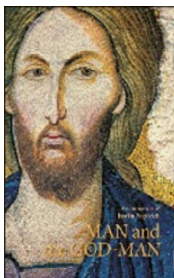
In these timely conversations led by Fr. Radovan Bigovic, many issues are introduced that enable the contemporary reader to deepen and expand his or her understanding of the role of art in the life of the Church. Here we find answers to questions on the crisis of contemporary ecclesiastical art in West and East; the impact of Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, and Abstract painting on contemporary ecclesiastical painting; and a consideration of the main distinction between iconography and secular painting.

This book is adorned with striking full-color icons by Fr. Stamatis Skliris and Fr. Marko Rupnik, renowned as iconographers and as writers and lecturers on Byzantine iconography. Highly recommended! 94 pages – Retail Price - \$15.00



## **Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian**

By Archimandrite Justin Popovic - This Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian - published now, three years after the blessed repose of Venerable Fr. Justin (on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1979) - was written by the tireless Messenger of Christ forty years ago, in circumstances similar to those in which Christ's Holy Evangelist John wrote his sacred Epistles. The text of this 93-page soft-bound book has been translated from the Serbian by Radomir M. Plavsic. Published by Sebastian Press, Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Contemporary Christian Thought - *Retail price: \$10.*



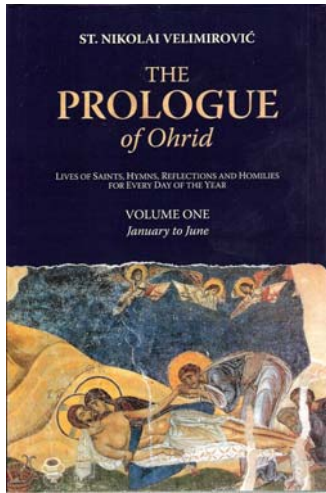
## **MAN AND THE GOD-MAN by Archimandrite Justin Popovic**

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

[http://www.westsrbdio.org/ads/man\\_and\\_the\\_godman.html](http://www.westsrbdio.org/ads/man_and_the_godman.html)

*Retail Price: \$15.00*

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**THE PROLOGUE OF OHRID** - 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

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