



Sunday, December 5, 2010
(Nativity Fast)

**TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST:
AFTERFEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD INTO THE
TEMPLE; THE HOLY APOSTLES PHILEMON, APPHIA & ARCHIPPUS; THE
HOLY MARTYR CECILIA**

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE THREE:

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm! He has trampled down death by death! He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted the world great mercy!

ENTRANCE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD TROPARION - TONE FOUR:

Today is the prelude of the good will of God and the announcement of the salvation of mankind. The Virgin appears in the temple of God, in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all. Let us rejoice and sing to her: Rejoice, O divine fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation!

**TROPARION TO THE HOLY APOSTLES PHILEMON, APPHIA, ARCHIPPUS &
ONESIMUS - TONE THREE:**

O holy Apostles Philemon, Archippus, Apphia and Onesimus, intercede with the merciful God to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions.

RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE THREE:

On this day You did rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Your power!

**KONTAKION TO THE HOLY APOSTLES PHILEMON, APPHIA, ARCHIPPUS &
ONESIMUS - TONE TWO:**

Let us praise the Apostles of Christ, who illumine the ends of the earth like all radiant stars: glorious Philemon and dedicated Archippus, Onesimus, together with Mark and Apollos and the all-wise Apphia. Let us cry to them: 'Unceasingly pray for us all!'

ENTRANCE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD KONTAKION - TONE FOUR:

The most pure temple of the Savior, His most precious chamber and Virgin; the sacred treasure of the glory of God, is presented today to the house of the Lord. She brings with her the grace of the Spirit, the one whom the angels of God do praise: Truly this woman is the heavenly tabernacle!

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

The angels beheld the entrance of the Pure One and were amazed! How has the Virgin entered into the Holy of Holies? As you are a living Temple of God let no impure hand touch you, O Mother of God! But let the lips of all believers sing, constantly magnifying you in joy with the angelic salutation: Truly you are above all creatures, O Pure One!



EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 3RD TONE:

Sing praises to our God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises!

COLOSSIANS 1: 12-18

Brethren, give thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance in the saints of the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

In You, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be put to shame! Be a God of protection for me, a house of refuge, in order to save me!

COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS

As God, Christ is eternally and consubstantially the image of the Father. As Man, Christ is the image in which man was made and toward which man is moving. In both natures, He fully represents and manifests the Father. As God, Christ is the “firstborn over all creation” in that the Father created everything through Him, the only-begotten Son. As Man, Christ is the firstborn in that He has authority over creation. Contrary to the Colossian heresy, in which Christ was considered one of the created mediators, Christ is the only Mediator and Lord of all.

GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

LUKE 17: 12-19

At that time as Jesus entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

COMMENTARY ON LUKE

The major theme of Luke’s Gospel is the universality of the Gospel message. In fact, he addresses it (and the Book of Acts) to Theophilus, a prominent Gentile who received Christian instruction. As a result, Luke records Jesus’ interactions with non-Jews not found in the other Gospels, like this example of one man, a Samaritan, out of ten who returned to thank Jesus for being cleansed of leprosy. In addition, parables exclusive to Luke (Prodigal Son, Good Samaritan, Lazarus & the Rich Man, Seat of Honor) emphasize that God doesn’t care about who we are by race or social standing or earthly accomplishment, but rather He wants to save all who freely come to Him. The purpose would be not only to encourage Gentiles to be saved through Christ but to alert Jews that they have no exclusive right simply by way of their birth to the same eternal salvation.



SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From The Prologue for November 22/December 5 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Holy Martyr Cecilia

Cecilia was born in Rome of wealthy and eminent parents. She had great faith in Christ the Lord and a great zeal for the Faith. Vowing life-long virginity to God, St. Cecilia wore a coarse hair shirt beneath the costly raiment that her parents gave her. When her parents coerced her into marriage with Valerian, a pagan, Cecilia counseled her bridegroom on their wedding night to go to Bishop Urban to be baptized, and then live in chastity. Accepting the Christian Faith, Valerian also converted his brother Tiburtius. Soon after, both brothers were condemned to death for their faith. But their faithfulness did not falter, even in the face of death. Led to the place of execution, these wonderful brothers also succeeded in converting the captain of the guard, Maximus, to the Faith. Then all three suffered together for Christ the Lord. St. Cecilia buried their bodies together. Cecilia was then brought to trial, for she tirelessly won pagans over to the Christian Faith. In only one evening, she won over four hundred souls. When the judge asked her from whence such boldness came, she answered: "From a pure conscience and undoubting faith." After cruel torture, Cecilia was condemned to beheading. The executioner struck her three times on the neck with the sword, but he was unable to kill her. She was only wounded, and blood flowed from her wounds, which the faithful collected in handkerchiefs, sponges and bowls for the sake of healing. Three days after this, the martyr and virgin of Christ gave her soul to her Lord, with Whom she eternally rejoices. St. Cecilia suffered with the others in about the year 230. Her relics lie in Rome, in the church dedicated to her. In the Western Church, St. Cecilia is regarded as the patroness of church singing and music.

Saint Callistus, Patriarch of Constantinople

Callistus is called "Xanthopoulos" after the cell of that name on Mount Athos, where he lived for a long time in asceticism with his companion, Ignatius. With this same Ignatius, St. Callistus wrote in one hundred chapters of his personal experience of a life of stillness. This work occupies a very prominent place in ascetical literature. Callistus was greatly influenced by his teacher, St. Gregory of Sinai, and wrote his Life. Having become Patriarch of Constantinople, St. Callistus became ill and reposed while on a journey to Serbia. Before he undertook his journey this was prophesied to him by St. Maximus of Kapsokalyvia of the Holy Mountain.

The Holy Martyr Menignus

Menignus was born on the Hellespont. He worked as a linen-bleacher, for which he was called "the Fuller." At the time of Emperor Decius, he tore up the imperial decree declaring a persecution of Christians. For this, he was thrown into prison, where the Lord Himself appeared to him and encouraged him, saying: "Be not afraid, I am with thee." At that moment his chains melted like wax, the prison opened of itself, and he went out. He was arrested again and tried. They tortured him inhumanly, severing his fingers and toes and beheading him. At night, his severed head glowed like a lamp.

The Holy Righteous Michael the Soldier

Michael was a Bulgarian by birth. With his companions, he fought in the Greek army against the Hagarenes and Ethiopians, where he displayed marvelous fearlessness. He killed a terrible serpent and freed a maiden. Soon afterward, this righteous man took up his abode in eternal life. He lived and reposed in the ninth century. He was first buried somewhere in Thrace, but Emperor Kalo-John translated his relics to Trnovo in 1206.

The Holy Apostles Philemon and Archippus, and the Holy Martyr Apphia

Archippus was one of the Seventy Apostles. The Apostle Paul mentions him in his Epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 4:17) as well as in his letter to Philemon, calling him *our fellow soldier* (Philemon 1:2). The center of Christianity in the town of Colossae was in the home of Philemon. Here Christians gathered for prayer. In writing to Philemon, the Apostle Paul called this *the church in thy house* (Philemon 1:2). At that time the apostles consecrated their disciples to the bishopric, some of them in permanent dioceses and others as missionaries traveling to various places. Philemon was one of the latter. Apphia, Philemon's wife, hosted and served in the domestic church. At the time of a pagan feast to the goddess Artemis, all the faithful in Colossae, according to their custom, gathered in the home of Philemon for prayer. Learning of this gathering, the pagans rushed in and apprehended all the Christians. As the leaders, Philemon, Apphia and Archippus were first whipped and afterward buried up to their waists and stoned. Thus, they slew Philemon and Apphia. Archippus they removed from the pit barely alive and left him to the amusement of the children. The children stabbed him all over with knives. In such a manner did this "fellow soldier" in battle finish well the course of his earthly path.

HYMN OF PRAISE: The Holy Martyr Cecilia

Cecilia—strong in faith, rich in faith—
Her faith is more beautiful than the stars, more precious than gold.
She nailed herself to the Lord, as to the Cross,
And sacrificed youth, joy, marriage and honor for Christ!
The cruel demon could steal nothing from her;
And when only her body remained, she gave it to Christ.
For the love of Christ, she gave the whole world—
Even two worlds: her body and her pure soul.
Thus does the flame of faith burn, and the flame of love,
And by that flame, Cecilia glorified herself.

REFLECTION

Every effort of learning is in vain without the effort of attaining purity of faith and life. The heavenly world is revealed not to the learned but to the pure. When St. Cecilia was led to the bridal chamber with her bridegroom Valerian on the first night, she said him: "I want to tell you a mystery: standing here is an angel of God, the guardian of my virginity, whom you do not see. He stands ready to protect me, his handmaid, from assault. If you only touch me, he will kill you." Valerian begged Cecilia to show him the angel, so that he could see it, too. The virgin replied: "You are a man who knows not the true God. You cannot see the angel of God until you cleanse yourself of the foulness of your unbelief." When Valerian was baptized, he saw the angel in great light and ineffable beauty. So, too, when Valerian's brother Tiburtius changed his life from impurity to purity in

baptism, he saw holy angels and spoke with them. Maximus their fellow sufferer as well, when the two brothers were beheaded, vowed with a great oath before the executioners and the people, saying: "I see angels of God shining like the sun, taking the souls of these martyrs from their bodies like beautiful virgins from the bridal chamber, and leading them to heaven with great glory." But that which he saw, none of the impure unbelievers were able to see.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous creation of the world (Genesis 2):

1. How God planted a paradisaal garden in Eden and placed man there;
2. How God made trees in Paradise, beautiful to look at and good for food;
3. How God brought all the animals before man and he named them.

HOMILY

on that which constitutes the unity of the faithful

... *One Lord, one Faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all* (Ephesians 4:5–6).

Here is the all-important and extremely obvious reason for all Christians to keep *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:3) and be *one body and one spirit* (Ephesians 4:4). For the One Lord Jesus Christ is our Creator, Redeemer and Resurrector. There are not two true Christs, that there should be division among us. One and the same blood was shed upon the Cross for us all, just as one and the same mouth prayed for us all in Gethsemane. We have one Faith in the Holy Trinity, undivided and life-creating—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one in Essence and three in Persons—the Unbegotten Father, the Begotten Son and the Spirit proceeding from the Father. We have one Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This Baptism is by threefold immersion in water, for death to sin and the devil, and for the resurrection and life in Christ the Lord. *One God and Father of all*—the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, Who through Christ and because of Christ adopts us and gives us the right to say to Him, *Our Father*.

Do you see, my brethren, how strong are the bonds that unite us? Not even the stars themselves are bound by stronger bonds, nor the water to the earth, nor fire to the air. Do you see the overwhelming reasons that we have for unity? Everything else that, from the left hand, would urge us to division is inconsequential compared to these reasons, like a grain of sand compared to the high mountains. The devil cannot destroy our unity if we do not help him. The devil can never conquer us if we do not surrender ourselves to him. O Lord Jesus, sweet and gracious, how firmly Thou hast bound us for eternal good! Keep us, we pray, in this bond.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

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.
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.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

Pan-Orthodox Clergy Retreat in Dunlap, California

Registration form and Schedule is available at <http://www.westsrbdio.org>

December 7-9, 2010

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

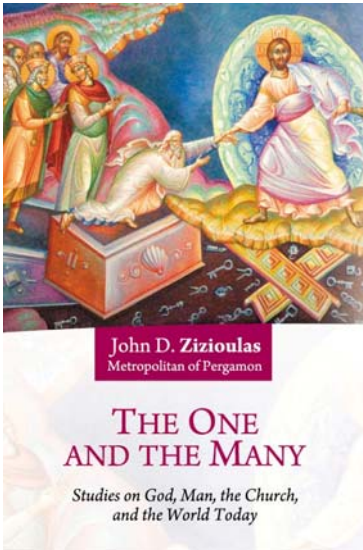
Friday, February 18, 2011 (One Day Event)

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

FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:

THE ONE AND THE MANY

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

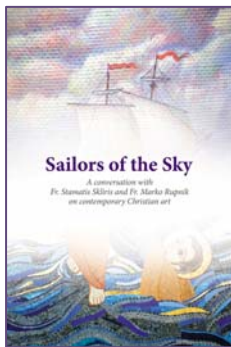


This volume offers a collection of Zizioulas articles which have appeared mostly in English, and which present his trinitarian doctrine of God, as well as his theological account of the Church as the place in which freedom and communion are actualized. The title, *The One and the Many*, suggests the 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 TRIADODOGY* (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 (p.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 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

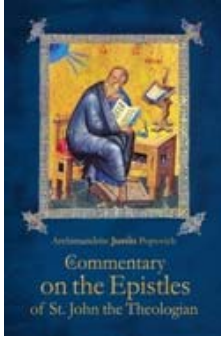


Sailors of the Sky

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

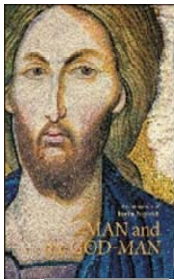
In these timely conversations led by Fr. Radovan Bigovic, many issues are introduced that enable the contemporary reader to deepen and expand his or her understanding of the role of art in the life of the Church. Here we find answers to questions on the crisis of contemporary ecclesiastical art in West 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.*

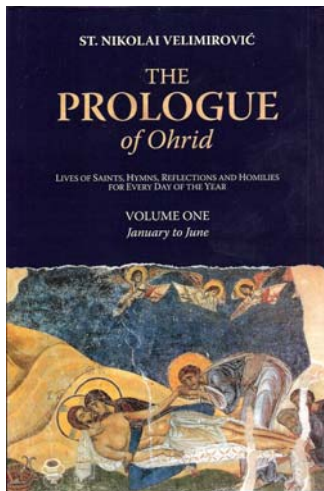


MAN AND THE GOD-MAN by Archimandrite Justin Popovic

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

Retail Price: \$15.00



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*