



Sunday, June 5, 2011

**SEVENTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA:
THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL
COUNCIL; AFTERFEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
SAINT MICHAEL THE CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF SYNNA DA**

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!

ASCENSION TROPARION - TONE FOUR:

You have ascended in glory, O Christ our God, granting joy to Your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing they were assured that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world!

TROPARION TO THE HOLY FATHERS - TONE EIGHT:

Most glorious are You, O Christ our God! You have established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth! Through them You have guided us to the true faith! O greatly Compassionate One, glory to You!

TROPARION TO SAINT MICHAEL - TONE FOUR:

From your youth you dedicated your life to God, and you were proclaimed shepherd and hierarch of Christ, holy Michael. You endured afflictions and exile because you honored the icon of Christ; now you pour forth healings for us all.

KONTAKION TO SAINT MICHAEL - TONE EIGHT:

As a most honorable hierarch and champion of true piety, undaunted by fear of the notorious tyrant, you conquered his heretical opposition, freely proclaiming in a loud voice: "I venerate the icon of Christ and of His all-pure Mother!" Therefore, we honor you, O Michael!

KONTAKION TO THE HOLY FATHERS - TONE EIGHT:

The apostles' preaching and the fathers' doctrines have established one faith for the Church. Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology; great is the mystery of piety which it defines and glorifies.

ASCENSION KONTAKION - TONE SIX:

When You did fulfill the dispensation for our sake, and unite earth to heaven: You did ascend in glory, O Christ our God, not being parted from those who love You, but remaining with them and crying: 'I am with you and no one will be against you!'

INSTEAD OF "IT IS TRULY MEET...":

Magnify, O my soul, Christ the Giver of Life, who has ascended from earth to heaven! We magnify you, the Mother of God, who beyond reason and understanding gave birth in time to the Timeless One!

INSTEAD OF "WE HAVE SEEN THE TRUE LIGHT...":

THE ASCENSION TROPARION



The Fathers Of The First Ecumenical Council

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 4TH TONE:

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our Fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever!

ACTS 20: 16-18; 28-36

In those days, it happened that Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you; therefore take heed to

yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' ” And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting! Gather to me my venerable ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

COMMENTARY ON ACTS 20: 16-18; 28-36

“Savage wolves” and men “speaking perverse things” refer to external and internal trials in the future. Ephesus would be the scene of the Third Ecumenical Council in 431 AD, which preserved the doctrine of the two natures of Christ in one divine Person against the heretical teaching of Nestorius.



The Ascension Of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church, Butte, MT)

GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

JOHN 17: 1-13

At that time, Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given

Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”

COMMENTARY ON JOHN 17: 1-13

Jesus Christ, as the Lord over time, redeems all creation through the Cross and Resurrection – the purpose for which He was sent into the world. In this redemption, the Father and the Son are glorified. This is why the Cross is glorified in the Church as “life-giving” and the “weapon of peace.” Apostles, then, receive the word of the Father from the Son and pass it on to those “who will believe in Me through [the Apostles’] word” (John 17: 20).



The Last Supper (Stavronikita Monastery, Mt. Athos)

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From The Prologue for May 23/June 5 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:



Saint Michael, Bishop of Synnada

Michael, a holy and learned hierarch, dedicated himself to the service of Christ from early childhood. Together with St. Theophylactus of Nicomedia, he lived a life of asceticism. At one time during a period of drought, these two saints brought forth abundant rain on the earth by their prayers. Because of his ascetic and chaste life from his early youth, he was chosen and consecrated bishop of Synnada by Patriarch Tarasius. He participated in the Seventh Ecumenical Council [Nicaea, 783]. At the request of the emperor, he went to Caliph Harun-al-Rashid to conduct negotiations for peace. During the reign of the nefarious Leo the Armenian, Michael was removed from his episcopal throne because of his veneration of icons and was sent into exile. There, in misery and poverty but in faithfulness to Orthodoxy, he reposed in the year 818, and took up his habitation in the Kingdom of Christ the King.

The Venerable Martyr Michael

After the death of his parents, Michael distributed all of his goods to the poor and went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Thereafter he entered the Monastery of St. Sava the Sanctified, where he was tonsured a monk. Michael was quite young and handsome, but from much fasting he appeared withered and pale. At that time the Arabs ruled Jerusalem. One day Michael was sent by his spiritual father to the city to sell his handiwork. He was met on the street by a eunuch of the Arabian queen, who brought him to the queen to display his handiwork. When the queen saw this handsome monk she became inflamed with unclean passion and proposed carnal sin to him, as the wife of Potiphar had once proposed to the chaste Joseph. When Michael rejected the impure offer and began to flee, the angry queen ordered that he be beaten with canes and brought before the king with the charge that he had blasphemed the faith of Mohammed. The king proposed that Michael embrace the Islamic faith, but he refused. He was then given a potent poison to drink. Michael drank the poison but nothing happened to him. Then the king ordered that Michael be beheaded in the center of Jerusalem. Monks discovered his body and removed it to the Monastery of St. Sava, where they honorably buried it. St. Michael suffered for Christ and was glorified in the ninth century.

The Venerable Euphrosyne, Princess of Polotsk

Euphrosyne was the daughter of Prince Vseslav of Polotsk. When her parents wanted to betroth her, she fled to a convent and was tonsured a nun. An angel of the Lord appeared to her three times and revealed to her where she was to establish a new convent for virgins. She even attracted her sister Eudocia to the monastic life, together with many other maidens from the ranks of the aristocracy. Her cousin, Zvenislava, by birth Princess of Borisov, brought all of her riches, clothes and precious stones and said: "All the beauty of this world I consider vanity, and these adornments prepared for my marriage I give to the Church of the Savior. And I myself wish to be betrothed to Him in a spiritual marriage and place my head beneath His good and easy yoke." Euphrosyne tonsured her a nun and gave her the name Eupraxia. In her old age Euphrosyne desired to die in Jerusalem, and she prayed to God for this. God heard her prayers and, indeed, when she visited Jerusalem she reposed there. Euphrosyne was buried in the Monastery of St. Theodosius on May 23, 1173.

HYMN OF PRAISE: The Venerable Martyr Michael

The evil empress accused Michael
Of berating the Islamic faith.
To the monk, the emperor extended a strange proposal:
That he would adopt him as a son,
If only he would abandon the true Faith
And, as a Moslem, shave his head.
The monk warmed his heart with prayer
And laughed in the Sultan's face:
"Do you think, O Emperor, that you are stronger than I?
For me, death means a new life.
My soul cares not for the world.
Behold, I propose three things to you:
Either be baptized with the Cross of true believers,
Or slay me with the bloodthirsty sword,
Or release me to my spiritual father,
That I may return to my monastery."
The king was filled with fury:
With the flash of a sword, the saint's head fell.
The angels took his holy soul
And conveyed it to the Kingdom of Christ.

REFLECTION

A spiritual man interprets all things and all natural phenomena in a spiritual and symbolic manner, and from everything he draws benefit for his soul. Once, the brethren came to St. John the Dwarf and began to tell him how a heavy rain had fallen and watered the palms, and how new branches had begun to sprout on the palms so that the monks would have enough material for their handiwork. St. John thought and said to the brethren: "In the same manner the Holy Spirit enters the hearts of the saints, so that they are renewed and put forth the branches of the fear of God."

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the grace of God the Holy Spirit in the Mystery of Baptism:

1. How that grace gives power to the soul to follow Christ the Lord;
2. How it is a pledge of God's adoption of the baptized man.

HOMILY

on how we need not grieve the Spirit of God

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

Brethren, "The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit" is recited over all of us who are baptized by water and the Spirit. The Spirit of God is given to us not because of our merits—no one should ever think that—but according to the mercy of the Living God. Even in normal relations between men, happy is he who gives a gift and happy also is he who receives the gift. Giving is joy on both sides. The greater the gift, the greater the joy. God rejoices when He gives the grace of His Holy Spirit; why then should men who receive it not rejoice? The needy one who receives usually rejoices more than the rich man who gives; why then should not miserable men rejoice who receive this enormous gift from the rich God? In what way do men grieve the Holy Spirit? The Apostle who commanded that we not grieve the Spirit of God immediately adds by what means the Spirit is grieved. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice* (Ephesians 4:31), says the Apostle. In other words, the Spirit of God is grieved by our every sin. Let every sin be put away from us, and the Spirit of God will be joyful and by Him we will rejoice. When we have an important guest in our home we endeavor to do everything that is well-pleasing for that guest. Can there be a greater guest than the Holy Spirit of God? Since He is our greatest and most desired Guest, we need to invest the utmost effort into pleasing Him. We know with what we please the Spirit of God—with the same thing with which we please Christ the Lord. The Lord said: *If you love me, keep My commandments* (John 14:15). Therefore, he who keeps the commandments of Christ has love toward the Son and toward the Holy Spirit. He who pleases the Son, keeping His commandments, also pleases the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Apostle especially recommends: *Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another* (Ephesians 4:32). If we are kind, if we are tenderhearted, if we forgive one another, by this we please the Spirit of God Who is a Guest in our hearts. The Spirit of God then rejoices in us, and our entire being trembles from a certain inexpressible joy.

O my brethren, let us take care that we not grieve our Most-high Guest, Who comes to us with the richest gifts. O God the Holy Spirit, forgive our negligence toward Thine Immortal Majesty and do not leave us empty and worthless without Thee. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

2011 Dates to Remember

July 17 – August 6

Diocesan Summer Camp

Saint Sava Mission, Jackson, California

Registration Form available at <http://www.campstsava.org>

Week One begins July 17, 2011 - Week Two begins July 24, 2011 -

Week Three begins July 31, 2011

Friday, September 2nd

Annual Diocesan Assembly

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

Friday, September 2nd – Sunday, September 4th

15th Annual Diocesan Days Gathering

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

October 7th

Cathedral Slava,

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

December 4, 2011

Diocesan KSS Slava,

Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos



The Western American Diocese can earn a donation every time you search the Internet and shop online!!!

Our Search Box is on our homepage at <http://www.westsrbdio.org>

Add the Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Alhambra CA) toolbar at <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar/western-american-diocese-of-the-serbian-orthodox-church>

FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:

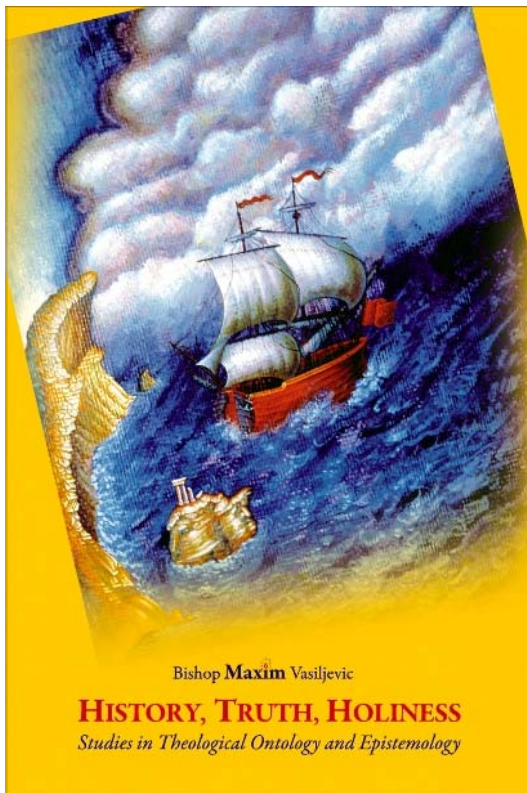
Visit our Online Bookstore at www.westsrbdio.org

**FREE SHIPPING
ON ALL ORDERS OVER \$60.00**

THREE OF OUR NEWEST PUBLICATIONS

History, Truth, Holiness

by Bishop Maxim Vasiljevic



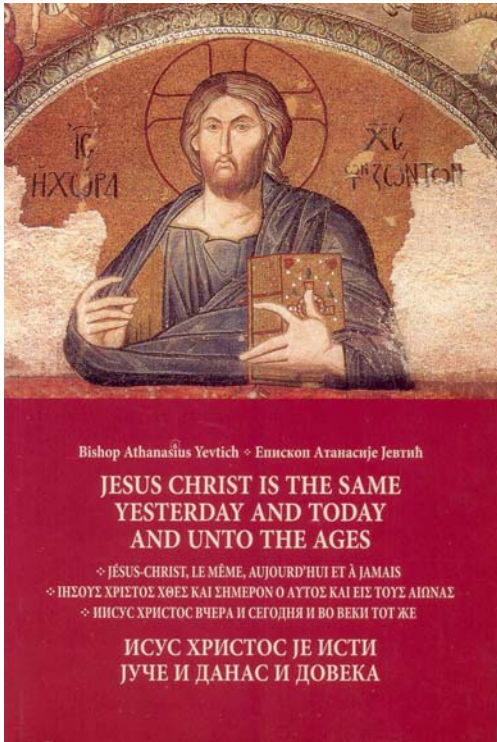
The first half of the book consists of studies concerned with theological ontology and gnoseology, while the second half is dedicated to the theological questions posed by modern theology. The first part includes studies on holiness as otherness, truth and history, as with the biochemistry of freedom, while the second half contains studies which consider the existential actuality of dogma and various Christological questions, along with a study in ecclesiology, another in liturgics, and a number dealing with the theology of icons.

Regular Retail Price: \$20.00

Soft Cover

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY AND TODAY AND UNTO THE AGES

Bishop Athanasius Yevtich



In this latest and, in every respect, meaningful study, Bishop Athanasius, in the manner of the Holy Fathers, and firmly relying upon the Apostles John and Paul, argues that the Old Testament name of God, “YHWH,” a revealed to Moses at Sinai, was translated by both Apostles (both being Hebrews) into the language of the New Testament in a completely original and articulate manner. In this sense, they do not follow the Septuagint, in which the name, “YHWH,” appears together with the phrase “the one who is”, a word which is, in a certain sense, a philosophical-ontological translation

(that term would undoubtedly become significant for the conversion of the Greeks in the Gospels). The two Apostles, rather, translate this in a providential, historical-eschatological, i.e. in a specifically Christological sense. Thus, John carries the word “YHWH” over with “the One Who Is, Who was and Who is to Come” (Rev. 1:8 & 22...), while for Paul “Jesus Christ is the Same Yesterday, Today and Unto the Ages” (Heb. 13:8).

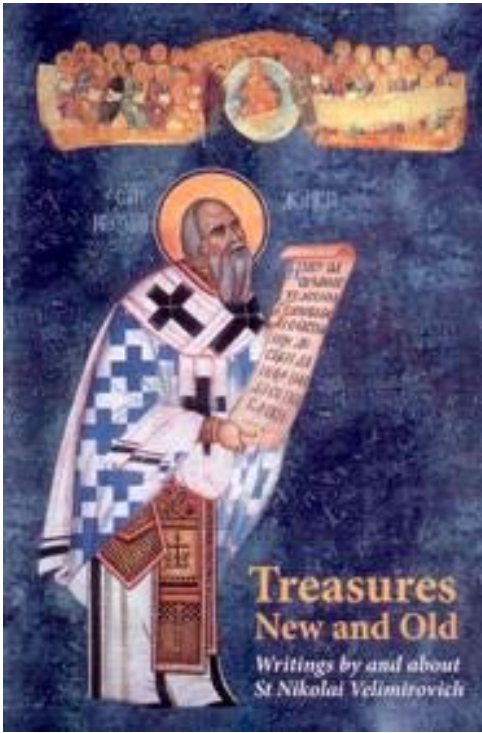
256 Pages, Soft Cover

Regular Retail Price \$18

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, Soft Cover

Visit our Online Bookstore at www.westsrbdio.org

FREE SHIPPING

ON ALL ORDERS OVER \$60.00
