



Sunday, May 1, 2011

**ANTIPASCHA: SUNDAY OF SAINT THOMAS;
VENERABLE JOHN, DISCIPLE OF SAINT GREGORY OF DECAPOLIS**

PASCHAL TROPARION – TONE ONE:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

THOMAS SUNDAY TROPARION - TONE SEVEN:

From the sealed tomb, You did shine forth, O Life! Through closed doors You did come to Your disciples, O Christ God! Renew in us, through them, an upright spirit by the greatness of Your mercy, O Resurrection of all!

TROPARION TO VENERABLE JOHN - TONE EIGHT:

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Father, for you took up the Cross and followed Christ. By so doing you taught us to disregard the flesh for it passes away but to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal. Therefore your spirit, venerable John, rejoices with the angels.

THOMAS SUNDAY KONTAKION - TONE EIGHT:

Thomas touched Your life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God, when You did come to Your apostles through closed doors. He cried out with all: “You are my Lord and my God!”

PASCHAL KONTAKION - TONE EIGHT:

You did descend into the tomb, O Immortal; You did destroy the power of death. In victory did You arise, O Christ God, proclaiming “Rejoice” to the myrrhbearing women, granting peace to Your disciples, and bestowing resurrection on the fallen.

INSTEAD OF “IT IS TRULY MEET...”:

The angel cried to the Lady full of grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again I say: Rejoice! Your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb! With Himself He has raised all the dead! Rejoice, all ye people! Shine! Shine! O New Jerusalem! The glory of the Lord has shone on you! Exult now and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the resurrection of your Son!

INSTEAD OF “WE HAVE SEEN THE TRUE LIGHT...”:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! (*once*)



EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 3RD TONE:

Great is our Lord and abundant in power. His understanding is beyond measure.

ACTS 5: 12-20

In those days, through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all the earth!

COMMENTARY ON ACTS 5: 12-20

The grace of the Holy Spirit, sent by the risen Christ, works signs and wonders – not as ends in themselves – but to encourage and strengthen the Apostles to preach the Good News, uniting all people to the universal Church, where the power of God rests. While many people had great faith, Peter is given a particular grace to heal in order to draw people to the unity of the Church. This is done through the physical creation, as even light and shadow are given divine power.



GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

JOHN 20: 19-31

At that time, the same day at evening being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

COMMENTARY ON JOHN 20: 19-31

The Church calls the Apostle Thomas' doubt "blessed doubt" because it did not resist the truth, but rather, desired it. Thomas' doubt teaches Christ's Passion and Resurrection to all, leading to the clearest confession of Christ's divinity as Thomas addresses Him as "my Lord and my God."



SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From The Prologue for April 18/May 1 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Venerable John, Disciple of Saint Gregory of Decapolis

During the iconoclastic heresy, Emperor Leo the Armenian subjected John to torture, along with his teacher, Gregory, and St. Joseph the Hymnographer. When Gregory departed this life, John became the abbot of the Decapolis Monastery in Constantinople. Having become abbot, he intensified his ascetic labors for the sake of the Kingdom of God. He reposed peacefully in about the year 820. Following his death, St. Joseph buried him with honor next to the grave of St. Gregory.

Holy Martyr John the New of Ioannina

John was born in Ioannina, once the capitol city of King Pyrrhus. When his impoverished parents died, the young John moved to Constantinople and there continued his occupation, for he was a craftsman. Not long before, the Turks had surrounded Constantinople and many Christians, out of fear, had denied Christ and embraced the Islamic faith. St. John had his workshop in the midst of these converts to Islam. The more the young John burned with love for Christ the Lord, the more openly he exposed himself as a Christian before these traitors of Christ. He began to argue with them about the Faith and, finally, rebuked them for their betrayal of Christ. They dragged John before the judge and falsely accused him, alleging that he had earlier embraced Islam, and that he had again reverted to Christianity. After he was tortured and beaten with rods and iron flails, they cast him into prison. The next day was the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ, and again they brought him out for further torture. John emerged, singing: "Christ is risen from the dead!" To his torturers, he bravely said: "Do what you want, so as to send me as soon as possible from this transient life to eternal life. I am Christ's slave; I follow Christ; for Christ I die that I may live with Him!" After that, John was

bound in chains and brought to the place of burning. Upon seeing a large fire prepared for him, John ran and leaped into the flames. His torturers, seeing how he sought death in the fire, removed him from the fire and sentenced him to be beheaded. After they beheaded him, they threw his head and body into the fire. Later on, Christians sifted through the ashes and gathered some of the remains of his honorable and wonderworking relics, which they interred in the Great Church [Hagia Sophia] in Constantinople. Thus St. John of Ioannina died a martyr's death and received a glorious martyr's wreath on April 18, 1526.

The Holy Martyrs Victor, Zoticus, Zeno, Acindynus and Severian

All five were martyred during the reign of Emperor Diocletian. They were pagans until they witnessed the sufferings of St. George the Great Martyr. While witnessing the sufferings and bravery of this glorious martyr, as well as the many miracles that were manifested, they embraced the Christian Faith. Soon, they too suffered and were crowned with glory.

HYMN OF PRAISE: The Holy Martyr John the New

John the Artisan, of honest craft:

His soul was as bright as a nugget of gold.

Wonderfully illumined by the teaching of Christ,

He prayed to God to crown him with suffering:

“O Victorious Christ, Who wast crucified for me,

From sinful darkness, cleanse me by suffering!

Oh, do not give me the shameful glory of a traitor,

But crown me with the sufferings of Thy martyrs.

Prepare me for suffering by Thy Holy Spirit,

And do Thou grant suffering, directing it to me.

And thou, O Mother of God, of infinite mercy,

Who stood under the Honorable Cross of Thy Son,

Pray for me at the time of my sufferings,

That I may be firm as an impregnable wall.

And you, O holy apostles, have mercy,

That the enemy of the human race may not prevail against me.

Holy martyrs, my rejoicing,

Into your ranks receive me also!

And now torturers, traitors of God—

Yours is the sword and the fire—here is my body!”

REFLECTION

In one of the accounts of the martyrdoms of Christians during the reign of the Persian King Sapor, it is said: “The swords became dull, the sword-bearers fell and the sword-makers grew tired, but the Cross was lifted up even higher and shone from the blood of Christ's martyrs.” How many times, how many times the persecutors of Christians complacently thought they were through with Christianity forever! In essence, their lives have ended, while Christianity has always regenerated itself and blossomed anew. Nevertheless, even in spite of this, some of our contemporaries think that the Christian Faith can be uprooted by force. But they do not say by what means. They forget that all

those means have been tried and all without success. With reason Tertullian cried out to the pagans: “In vain do you spill our blood. For the blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity.”

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the resurrected Lord Jesus:

1. How His Resurrection brought unspeakable joy to those who loved Him;
2. How His Resurrection brought unspeakable bitterness to those who hated Him;
3. How His final coming into the world, in glory and power, will evoke different feelings among different people—either joy or bitterness.

HOMILY

on the testimony of reliable witnesses

We ... were eyewitnesses of His majesty (II Peter 1:16).

When the apostles speak of the glorious Resurrection of the Lord, they speak in the plural. For each one of them gives his testimony and the testimony of other companions. Thus, the Apostle Peter writes: *We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty* (II Peter 1:16). Nathaniel did not want to believe simply by hearing. That is why the Apostle Philip invited Nathaniel to *come and see!* (John 1:46). Nathaniel came, saw and believed. So it was with the other apostles: until they approached Christ, until they heard, and until they saw, they did not want to believe. Cleverly devised myths did not attract the apostles. Their healthy, natural minds sought visual facts and not myths. O my brethren, our Faith is well established and proven. The trail of God is well blazed in the world. No one has need to doubt. Christ's Resurrection is well witnessed. No one need despair. Doubt and despair are two worms that are born of that which sin spews forth. He who does not sin, clearly sees the trail blazed by God in the world and clearly recognizes the Resurrection of Christ. O resurrected Lord, strengthen us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, so that we sin no more and do not become blind to Thy trail in the world and to Thy glorious Resurrection. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

2011 Dates to Remember

Diocesan Camp St. Sava

GOLDEN JUBILEE - REUNION AND FUNDRAISER

Memorial Day Weekend, May 28 – May 29, 2011

July 17 – August 6

Diocesan Summer Camp

Saint Sava Mission, Jackson, California

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

From His Grace, Bishop Maxim...

СВИМ СВЕШТЕНИЦИМА ЕПАРХИЈЕ ЗАПАДНО-АМЕРИЧКЕ

Драга браћо свештеници,

Христос васкрсе!

Пишем вам ово писмо да вас обавестим о следећем:

Приликом боравка Министра Вера Републике Србије, Господина Богољуба Шијаковића, имали смо прилику видети добар део библиотеке покојног Професора Ђорђа Вида Томашевића, која је привремено смештена у просторијама наше цркве у Саратоги. По жељи покојног Проф. Томашевића библиотека је завештана нашем Универзитету у Београду. Библиотека укључује књиге од непроцењиве вредности, штампане у више светских језика, а којих у универзитетској библиотеци у Београду нема. Дагле, ова вредна дела послужиће генерацијама младих српских студената.

Сходно жељи покојног професора Томашевића, наша Епархија одлучила је да помогне у организацији транспорта наведене библиотеке. Контејнер који ће то преузети коштаће око \$4000 долара мада ће тек мали део контејнера бити заузет овим књигама, па смо решили да вам се обратимо и сугеришемо начин на који ово можемо значајно да ублажимо. То би било овако:

- Ако међу вама има оних који би хтели да пошаљу неке предмете као што су књиге, покућство, намештај итд., уз преузимање неког пропорционалног (простор, тежина) процента у надокнади за транспорт, било би то од велике помоћи.
- Ако сами ви свештеници нисте заинтересовани за тако нешто или се не покаже ваш интерес довољним, да онда у својима парохијама овакву могућност понудите вашим благочестивим парохијанима.

На овај начин сви ћемо уштедети значајна средства, па вас молим да ово што пре испитате и јавите о учињеном. Унапред хвала!

TO ALL PRIESTS OF THE WESTERN AMERICAN DIOCESE

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Christ is Risen!

I am writing you this letter to inform you about the following:

During the visit of Serbian Minister of Religion, Mr. Bogoljub Šijaković, we had a chance to see a good part of the library of the late Professor George Vid Tomasevic, which is temporarily housed in the premises of our church in Saratoga. By the will of late Professor Tomasevic this library has been bequeathed to our University in Belgrade, Serbia. The Library includes books of invaluable contents, printed in several languages (English, French, German, etc.), which University of Belgrade Library does not have. Therefore, these books will serve generations of young Serbian students.

Pursuant to the last will of the late Professor Tomasevic, our Diocese has decided to help the organization of transport of these books to final destination in Belgrade, Serbia. The container that will be used for transportation will cost about \$ 4,000.00, although only a small portion of the container will be occupied with books. In order to minimize the cost for this transportation we would like to present you with an idea and suggestion how you can help. That would be as follows:

- If there are those among you who would like to send to Serbia some items such as books, household items, furniture, etc., with the assumption of a proportional (space, weight) percentage of the fee for transport, it would be of great help.
- But, if you priests are not interested in something like this, or do not show enough of interest, you may ask your pious parishioners to use this opportunity.

This way everyone will save significant funds, so please act as soon as possible, and report back to me on what you have accomplished. Thank you in advance!

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F E A T U R E D I N

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What if Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Alhambra CA) earned a donation every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now it can!

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GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 30 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, eBay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

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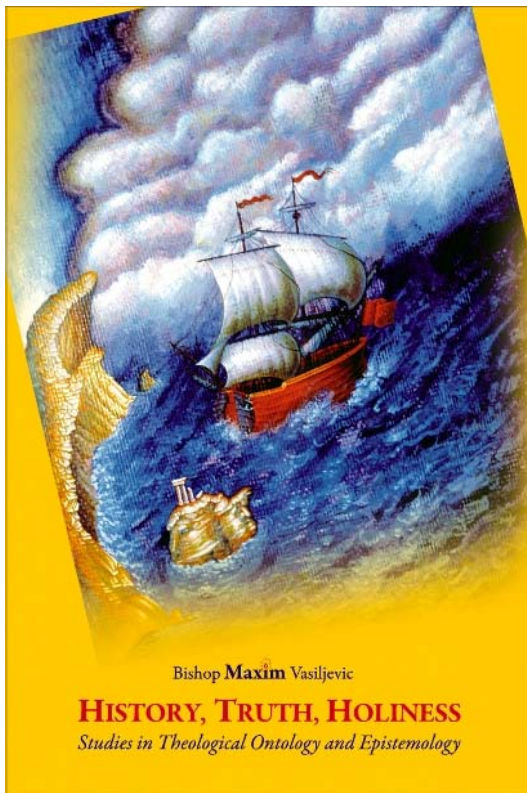
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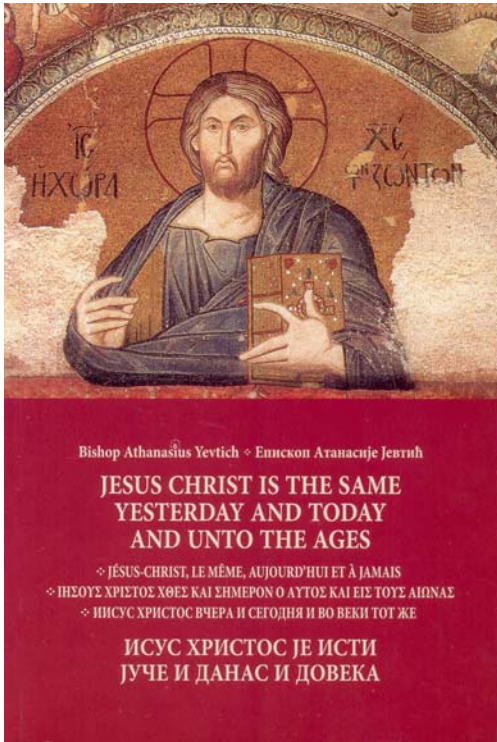
The first half of the book consists of studies concerned with theological ontology and gnoseology, while the second half is dedicated to the theological questions posed by modern theology. The first part includes studies on holiness as otherness, truth and history, as with the biochemistry of freedom, 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.

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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).

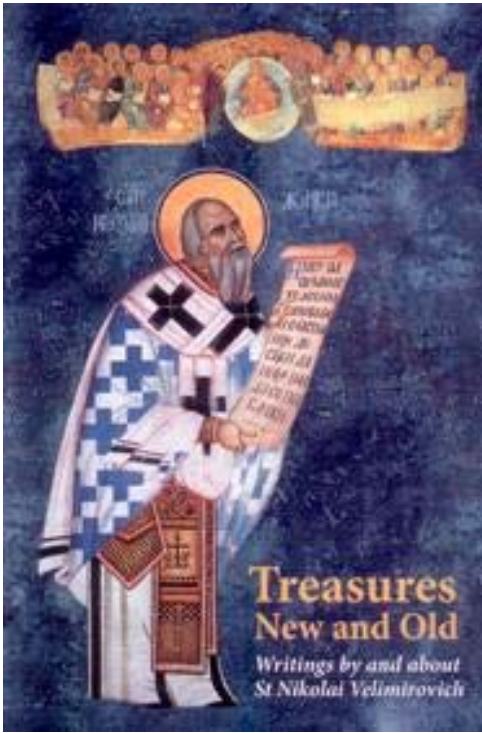
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Treasures New and Old

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

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