



**February 21, 2010**  
**SUNDAY OF THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY**

**RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE FOUR:**

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Your Resurrection; they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: Death is overthrown! Christ God is Risen, granting the world great mercy.

**TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY TROPARION TONE TWO:**

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One, and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God. Of Thy good will Thou were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, and deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the enemy. Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Savior, for Thou didst come to save the world.

**TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY KONTAKION, TONE EIGHT:**

No one could describe the Word of the Father; but when He took flesh from you, O Mother of God, He accepted to be depicted, and restored the fallen image to its former state by uniting it to divine beauty. We confess and proclaim our salvation in word and images.

**HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS, for the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great TONE EIGHT**

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace! The assembly of angels and the race of man, O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins from whom God was incarnate and became a child, our God before the ages! He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace, glory to you!



## 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!*

### **HEBREWS 11: 24-26, 32 - 12: 2**

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented - of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

### **ALLELUIA**

*Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His Name. They called upon the Lord, and He answered them.*

### **COMMENTARY**

Faith in Christ is truly the final frontier. This frontier is hampered by our sins, which obstruct our embracing of true faith in Him. All of the saints of the Old Covenant--the patriarchs, prophets and other martyrs--await what God has promised to grant to all of humanity. Receiving this promise, we must only follow in their example, turn from our sinfulness and "run with endurance the race that is set before us." May Christ our God grant us the strength and endurance to repent of our sins, and finish the race which He has set before us, so that, by joining Him, we too might obtain a good testimony through faith!

## GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

### **JOHN 1: 43-51**

At that time, Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit." Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel." Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

### **COMMENTARY**

The Apostle Nathanael, in this pericope, provides a worthy example to follow in our own lives, as we await the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Nathanael is praised for having no deceit. This quality infers that he is straightforward with others *and* has a pure heart. The phrase pure in heart causes us to recall Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount: "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*". It was only Nathanael's vigilance in maintaining purity of heart that allowed him to recognize that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. May Christ our God teach us to have the love and patience necessary to maintain a pure heart, strengthening our will by uniting it to His own, and helping us to recognize Christ as we encounter Him in His icons we see in the people we encounter everyday!

## SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

**From *The Prologue for Feb. 8/Feb. 21* by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:**

### **The Holy Great-martyr Theodore Stratelates**

There are martyrdoms that are beyond any price. The preciousness of martyrdom depends upon the greatness of the good things which a Christian abandons, and in lieu of which he accepts suffering. In addition, it depends upon the greatness of the suffering that he endures for Christ's sake. St. Theodore, a Roman commander in the army of Emperor Licinius and the governor of the town of Heraclea, scorned his youth, his handsome appearance, his military rank and the good graces of the emperor. In place of all this, he accepted horrible tortures for the sake of Christ. At first, Theodore was flogged and received six hundred lashes on his back and five

hundred on his stomach. After this, he was raised on a cross and was completely pierced with lances. Finally, Theodore was beheaded. Why all of this? Because St. Theodore loved Christ the Lord above all else in the world. He abhorred the foolish idolatry of the superstitious Emperor Licinius. He smashed the idols of silver and gold and distributed pieces of them to the poor. He converted many to the Christian Faith and called upon Emperor Licinius himself to reject idolatry and believe in the One Living God. During the entire time of his tortures, St. Theodore said repeatedly: "Glory to Thee, my God, glory to Thee!" St. Theodore suffered on February 8, 319, at three o'clock in the afternoon, and entered into the Kingdom of Christ. St. Theodore is considered the protector of soldiers who call upon him for assistance. His miracle-working relics were translated from Euchaita to Constantinople and interred in the Blachernae church.

### **The Holy Prophet Zechariah**

Zechariah was the eleventh of the minor prophets. Together with the Prophet Haggai, he persuaded Prince Zerubbabel to restore the Temple of Jerusalem. Zechariah prophesied the solemn entrance of Christ into Jerusalem *on a colt, the foal of an ass* (Zechariah 9:9). He also prophesied Judas's betrayal of Christ for thirty pieces of silver: *And they counted out my wages, thirty pieces of silver* (Zechariah 11:12), as well as the abandoning of Christ by the apostles during the time of His passion: *Strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be dispersed* (Zechariah 13:7). The Prophet Zechariah is called the "beholder of the sickle" because he saw, in a vision, a sickle coming down from heaven to mow down the unjust, especially thieves and blasphemers of the name of God. Zechariah reposed during the latter half of the reign of Darius Hystapes, in about the year 520 b.c.

### **Saint Sava II, Archbishop of Serbia**

Sava was the son of King Stefan the First-crowned and the nephew of St. Sava I. Before his tonsure, Sava was called Predislav. Following the example of his great uncle [St. Sava], Predislav was tonsured a monk and zealously dedicated himself to a life of asceticism. He was chosen Archbishop of Serbia, succeeding St. Arsenius, under the name Sava II. He governed the Church with great devotion and love. Sava II reposed in the year 1268. His relics lie in the Monastery at Peć.

### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

#### **Saint Sava II, Archbishop of the Serbs**

Predislav stared;  
The young Predislav wept.  
The queen mother asked him:  
"Where does your gaze roam?  
At what are you gazing, Predislav?"  
"At St. Sava, the face of my uncle."

King Stefan said to his son:  
"I must marry you off, my sweet son.  
Time flows, and I am aging.  
Whom do you love? Tell me the name!"  
Predislav heard to his father,  
But did not want to hear about a wife.

Predislav became a monk.  
In the words of Christ he took delight,  
And he was called Sava the Second.  
Shedding tears, he spoke:  
"St. Sava, place me  
On the true evangelical path!"

The king and queen died,  
And also Patriarch Arsenius.  
The Church remained a widow,  
And Sava hid from honors.  
But a double honor fell upon him:  
He was a bishop and also a saint.

## **REFLECTION**

St. Seraphim of Sarov writes about despair: "Just as the Lord is concerned about our salvation, so the devil, the slayer of men, concerns himself with bringing the soul of man to despair. Judas, the betrayer, was fainthearted and inexperienced in struggle, which is why the devil, seeing him in a state of despair, attacked and persuaded him to hang himself. Peter, the formidable rock, falling into great sin but being experienced in struggle, did not despair and did not lose the presence of the Spirit. Rather, he shed bitter tears from a warm heart; and the devil, seeing that, fled from him as though burned by fire. Thus, brethren, the Venerable Antiochus teaches that when despair befalls us, we should not succumb to it, but, strengthened and enveloped by holy faith, we should say with great bravery to the cunning spirit: 'What have you to do with us, O apostate from God, fugitive from heaven and slave of evil? You are unable to inspire us to do anything, for Christ, the Son of God, has authority over us and over all. And you, O murderer, depart from us! Strengthened by His Honorable Cross, we trample upon your serpent's head.'"

## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

My beloved in Christ,

Blessed be Holy Paschal Lent to all of you from our divinely saving Diocese!

During our ascetical journey of this Lenten Season I would like to share with you some edifying prayers and guidance in preparation of the Holy Confession. It was taken from the Prayer Book, printed by St. Arseny Press. (See email attachment)

I trust that you'll find selected text helpful in examination of our con-science (and conscience is our relationship with others), but more importantly that through Holy Confession we restore our relationship with God, the Church (our "blizni", "neighbor") and the entire creation.

These prayerful reflections are just a small aid to encourage our whole being to immerse ourselves into salvific Holy Mysteries, prescribed by the Church.

Bishop MAXIM

*This excerpt from the Prayer Book printed by St. Arseny Press is also available online at: [http://www.westsrbdio.org/pdf/holy\\_confession.pdf](http://www.westsrbdio.org/pdf/holy_confession.pdf)*

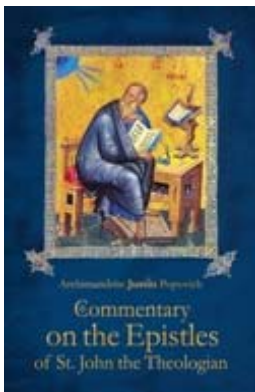
### **Clergy Confession & Retreat**

Tuesday & Wednesday, March 2 & 3, 2010  
St. Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church  
Saratoga, California

### **Annual Woman's Lenten Retreat**

Friday & Saturday, March 19 & 20, 2010  
St. Sava Mission, Jackson, CA

## **FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:**



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

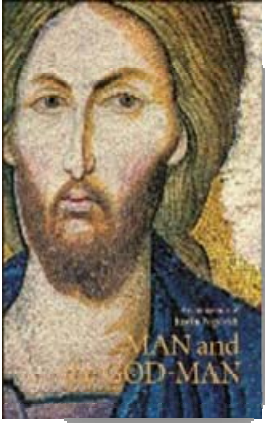
By Archimandrite Justin Popovic

*Retail price: \$7.*

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.

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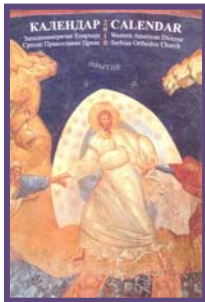
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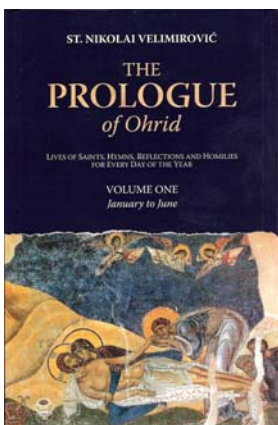
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**THE PROLOGUE OF OHRID**

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*

For **Continual Education in Liturgy and Theology**, we recommend the following article: [http://www.westsrbdio.org/pdf/Orthodox\\_Church\\_Third\\_Millennium.pdf](http://www.westsrbdio.org/pdf/Orthodox_Church_Third_Millennium.pdf)

We will offer the same article here in sections on a weekly basis; today, Part III of III.

## The Orthodox Church and the Third Millennium

by Metropolitan John Zizioulas

III. What should the Orthodox Church do in the face of the challenges of the third millennium?

Here are some personal thoughts on this crucial question. First, Orthodox theology must review its language. We have inherited a rich dogmatic tradition and we must keep it faithfully and not change anything in it. We probably need no new dogmas. But this does not mean that we must conserve dogmas as archeological treasures. We certainly need an interpretation of our dogmas in existential terms.

What for example does it mean for today's man that God is Trinity? Does it throw any light on problems such as those created by individualism, or universalism, that mark our present culture? What does an ecclesiology of the catholicity of the local Church have to say to the issue of globalization, which is beginning to dominate the world's agenda as we have noted it?

We can mention any dogma of our Church, since there is no dogma of our Church that does not have to say something about the actual problems of humanity. Orthodoxy must begin to answer cultural questions not with ethics but with dogmas; that is it must interpret its dogmatics existentially. The Orthodox Church must draw more and more from its liturgical life, particularly the Eucharist. The Eucharist is not one sacrament among many. It is the summing up or the ἀνακεφαλαίωσις of the entire reality of the salvation of the world. We have to bring our Liturgy more into the discussion of the new cultural problems. In order to do that we must first pay attention to the way we celebrate the Eucharist and worship. Liturgical rite is not mere ritual. It is theology and it has profound existential significance. We must celebrate the Liturgy properly if we are to offer anything to the world of existential significance. Secondly, we must interpret our Liturgy in existential terms. We need, in other words, a liturgical dogmatics, or a dogmatics understood and expressed liturgically. This will be our particular gift to the world in the twenty-first century.

Together with our Liturgy we must cultivate our monastic tradition, in the true spirit of the monasticism of the Desert Fathers. There is a remarkable revival of Orthodox monasticism in our times. But the spirit of the Desert Fathers—that is, the spirit of self-blaming or taking upon oneself the sins of the world—is often replaced in our monasticism by that of aggressive zealotism, which defeats the very purpose of asceticism. The world will need the spirit of genuine monasticism more and more, as it is overcome by the greed of utilitarianism and self-justification that mark today's culture.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, the Orthodox Church enters the third millennium with no political or economic power. On the contrary, it enters it with secular

weakness to the point of putting into question its very survival in the next millennium. All Orthodox Churches are in difficulties, and they will be more so in the future. The strength of Orthodoxy is not in any secular power. It is in its Tradition, both dogmatically and liturgically, yet only on the condition that this Tradition is interpreted in a way that would make it relevant to the existential needs of humanity. It is no longer enough to preserve our Tradition. Our forefathers did that very well. We must not make Orthodoxy an exotic religion, as it appears to so many Western Christians. We must engage in its interpretation in the light of today's and tomorrow's basic existential concerns. Theology is and will be more and more the *sine qua non* condition for the survival of the Orthodox Church in the new millennium. Theology is the strength of the Orthodox Church. Orthodox theology should not fear dialogue with anyone. Its duty is to engage in dialogue. It is the only way for it to assert its uniqueness, its importance, its indispensability. It is the only way to avoid turning the Orthodox Church into a ghetto in today's world.

We are celebrating today the patron saint of this faculty, St. John of Damascus, a local saint who became a universal theologian. As in his own time, Orthodox theology today is preached in a non-Christian cultural context. And this will be the more so in the coming century. The vigor of this faculty promises that its contribution to the witness of the Orthodox Church in the years to come will be important. We wish it the blessing of God, so that together with the rest of the Orthodox theological resources, it may bring the witness of Truth that the Orthodox Church confesses to a world that will need it more and more in the coming millennium. It has been said by a renowned British Byzantinologist that the twenty-first century will be the century of Orthodoxy. This should not make us boast. It should rather make us feel more strongly the immense responsibility placed on our weak shoulders to witness to the Truth. It is with such a feeling that I have presented to you my modest reflections this evening. The End

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