



**March 7, 2010**

**THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:  
SUNDAY OF THE EXALTATION  
OF THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS**

**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!

**EXALTATION OF THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS TROPARION - TONE ONE:**

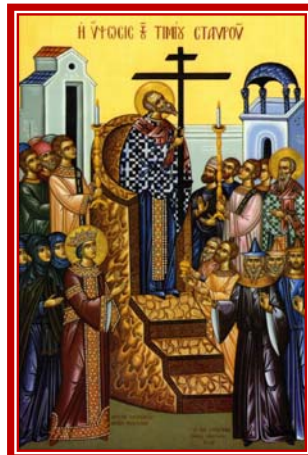
O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by virtue of Your Cross, preserve Your habitation.

**EXALTATION OF THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS KONTAKION - TONE SEVEN:**

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden; it has been mysteriously quenched by the wood of the Cross! The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished, for You, O my Savior, have come and cried to those in hell: "Enter again into paradise."

**HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS (INSTEAD OF "IT IS TRULY MEET"):**

All of creation rejoices in you, O full of grace; the assembly of angels and the race of men. 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 6<sup>TH</sup> TONE:**

*O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance.*

### **HEBREWS 4:14 - 5:6**

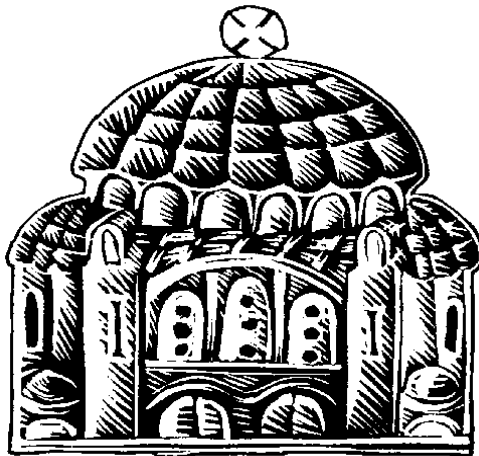
Brethren, seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You." As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

### **ALLELUIA**

*Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast acquired from old. God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth.*

### **COMMENTARY**

Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest, provides the fulfillment of all that we aspire to be as human beings. His priesthood is not just perfect; it is complete in its perfection. When the Son of God took on our humanity, He also took on the ability to sympathize with our weakness to sin. This, combined with God's perfect love for humanity, transforms the throne at the right hand. No longer is it solely a throne of judgment. Now, because Christ was tempted as we all are, it is a throne of grace, through which He grants mercy and help to us in time of need. And as often as we repent, and turn toward Christ, this grace will be granted to us! May our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, grant us the humility to turn from our wickedness and beg for His grace as we make our journey through this Great Lenten season!



## GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

### **MARK 8:34 - 9:1**

At that time, when Jesus had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

### **COMMENTARY**

Every day as Orthodox Christians we are called to deny the self, take up our cross, and follow Christ. And every day we falter, grabbing hold of our own agendas, believing our will to be more important than God's. Yet, continually, Christ asks us to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him. This gospel proclaiming the good news of the cross may strike us as rather contradictory. Is it good news to suffer? Absolutely! For Christ tells us that the suffering of this world prepares us for the joy of the next when He says, "whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it." May Christ our God grant us the discernment to understand that the trials and tribulations of this world are for our salvation, and the perseverance and strength to endure for the glory of God.



## SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

**From *The Prologue* for Feb. 22/Mar. 7 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:**

### **The Holy Martyr Maurice and the Seventy Soldiers with Him**

During the reign of Emperor Maximian there was a great persecution of Christians. In the Syrian town of Apamea, Maurice was commander of the local army. The pagans reported him to the emperor as being a Christian and a sower of the Christian Faith among the soldiers. The emperor himself came and conducted an investigation. Along with Maurice, seventy Christian soldiers were also brought before the emperor, among whom was Photinus, the son of Maurice. Neither the emperor's flattery nor his threats could sway these heroes. To the threats of the emperor, they replied: "O Emperor, there is no fear in the powerful and sound souls of those who love the Lord!" When the emperor ordered that their military belts and garments be removed, they said to him: "Our God will clothe us with incorruptible garments and belts, and with eternal glory!" When the emperor rebuked them because they despised the military honor he had given them, they replied: "Your honor is without honor, for you have forgotten God, Who gave you imperial power!" Then the emperor commanded the executioner to behead Maurice's son, Photinus, before his father's eyes, in order to instill fear in the father and the others. But Maurice said: "You have fulfilled our wish, O torturer, and have sent Photinus, the soldier of Christ, before us." Then the emperor sentenced them to a most inhuman death: they were brought to a marshy place, stripped, bound to trees and rubbed with honey, in order to be bitten by mosquitoes, wasps and hornets. After ten days in the most painful sufferings, they gave up their souls to God and departed to rejoice eternally with the holy angels in heaven. Christians secretly removed their bodies and honorably buried them. These courageous soldiers of Christ suffered in about the year 305.

### **The Many Martyrs of Eugenius, near Constantinople**

During the reign of Emperor Arcadius, the relics of many martyrs of Christ were unearthed, among whom was the Apostle Andronicus and his helper Junia (Romans 16:7). These relics were discovered through a revelation from God to a cleric, Nicholas Calligraphus. "Their names are known only to God, Who has written their names in the Book of Life in the heavens." In the twelfth century, Emperor Andronicus I built a beautiful church over the relics of the Apostle Andronicus.

### **The Venerable Thalassius and Limnaeus**

Both Thalassius and Limnaeus were Syrian ascetics. One of their particular ascetic labors was silence. Following the death of St. Thalassius in 440, Limnaeus joined St. Maron (February 14) and with him labored in asceticism on top of a mountain under the open sky.

### **Saint Papius of Hierapolis**

Papius was a disciple of the holy apostles and a patristic author. From Papius we have testimony concerning the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, the four Marys, and the brothers of the Lord, as well as an incomplete but preserved manuscript, *An Interpretation of the Words of Our Lord*.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

Saints Maurice and Photinus, Soldiers of Christ  
Of noble root—of noble vine,  
The young Photinus: a beautiful and well-pleasing sacrifice to God.  
The father was a witness as they beheaded his son.  
As streams of red blood poured out,  
The heart of Maurice, the courageous father, was overcome;  
Neither did he scream, nor sorrow, nor shed a tear.

“Dear God, Thou didst give him to me,” he said.  
“O Good One, for all of Thy love what better gift could I give?  
Make me worthy of death as Thou didst Photinus,  
Thou, Who for us didst sacrifice Thine only Son!”  
Maurice, a glorious soldier of the Heavenly Kingdom,  
Did not receive a gift from earthly rulers,  
But he encouraged his company, the proud legion,  
Not to bow down before the soulless idols.  
His company he led to death and through death to life.  
The tongue is too weak to express this rare beauty.

“Let the wasps and hornets feed on our flesh;  
Nevertheless, O soldiers, we are not conquered.  
Let the mosquitoes suck our blood, let them be fed.  
O my brothers, we shall soon be on the other side,  
Where all of those who fought for the Cross reign.  
To Christ God we shall say: ‘We did not betray Thee!’”

## REFLECTION

Concerning uninterrupted abiding with God, St. Anthony teaches: “Let your soul abide with the Lord at all times, and let your body abide on earth like a statue. Always stand upright before the face of the Lord. Let the fear of God remain constantly before your eyes, as well as the remembrance of death and the repulsion of everything worldly. Die every day that you may live, for whoever fears God will live forever. Be constantly vigilant, so as not to fall into laziness and idleness. Abhor all that is worldly and distance yourself from it, or else it will distance you from God. Abhor all that will bring ruin to your soul. Do not stray from God for the sake of transitory things. Do not take the example of one weaker than yourself, but emulate the one who is more perfect. Attend to the example of those who have loved the Lord with all their hearts and have done good works. Before all else, continually pour out prayer, giving thanks to God for all that befalls you. If you fulfill all that is commanded, you will receive the inheritance that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man* (I Corinthians 2:9).”

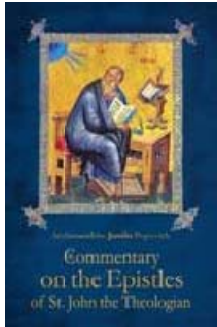
## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

Friday & Saturday, March 19 & 20, 2010

St. Sava Mission, Jackson, CA

### **FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:**

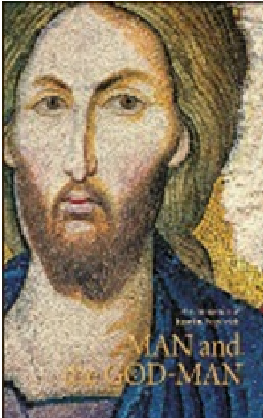


#### **Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian**

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. 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 Series, number 5, First Edition

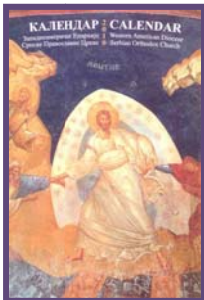


#### **MAN AND THE GOD-MAN by Archimandrite Justin Popovic**

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)

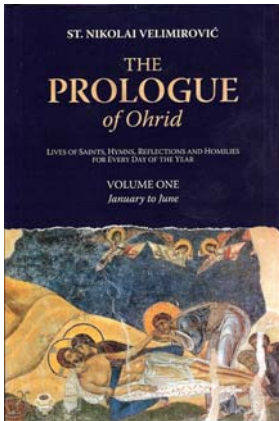
*Retail Price: \$15.00*



#### **2010 POCKET DIOCESAN CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE**

Be sure to watch for your order in the mail. If you have not already received them, you will shortly! Contact the Diocesan office if you have any questions.

*Retail Price: \$5.00*



## **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*

