



Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Serbian Orthodox Church, O.County, California

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Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen! “I Will Not Leave You Alone”

The Orthodox Church has often been referred to as the “Paschal Church.” This compliment, which refers to our deep and abiding understanding and reliance upon the resurrection of the Lord in our worship, while true, hardly sums up the “paschal existence” of the Church. No matter how much we would like to stress Pascha, it only receives its fullness and depth of meaning when we also understand and connect the Ascension of the Lord and His sending of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles (Pentecost) with the paschal celebration. The Resurrection must be followed by the Ascension and Pentecost.



time of preparation. Forty days becomes very important for our understanding of the ascension, then, to assure us that Christ's earthly mission was indeed completed and His ascension to the Father was the fulfillment of that mission.

Beyond that, however, what does the Ascension of Christ have to do with us? We would answer that by saying that although His earthly mission was completed, His divine mission in accomplishing our salvation was not. He goes to the Father to resume His place in the Council of the Trinity and to do two more things for His creation. First, the verses of the feast make it quite clear that the Holy

The Great and Holy Feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ commemorates the ascent of the resurrected Christ into heaven forty days after the Resurrection. His ascension took place after forty days to show that the time for His sojourning among His disciples was complete and full. The number forty has many instances of use in the Scriptures and has come to mean “completeness” in the sense that even if the exact time were not forty days (i.e., like the churching of a new mother in contemporary practice), the number is used to show us that the time is complete and the action which follows (like the ascension or even the churching of a mother) fulfills and completes the

Spirit is to be sent to the faithful and that Christ is the One to send the Comforter:

The Lord ascended to heaven to send the Comforter into the world! The heavens prepared His throne, the clouds His royal mount! The angels were amazed, seeing a Man exalted! The Father awaits His co-everlasting Son, the Holy Spirit commands the angels! Lift up your heads, O you gates! Clap your hands all you nations, for Christ has ascended to where He was before! (*Lord I Call, Feast of Ascension*)

The Comforter must be sent to give the Breath of Life to the Body (the Church) which Christ left on earth in

place of His physical body, which has ascended to heaven. He never would simply leave the disciples (or us!) alone:

"I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also... it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." (John 14:18-19; 16:7)

Secondly, the mission of Christ was precisely to return us to the Father. When man sinned, death and corruption entered the world and disconnected us from the Father. Christ took upon Himself all of fallen humanity when He came to redeem man. By assuming ALL of humanity, even unto death, Christ restores fallen mankind to communion with God - which was the original creation of God anyway (paradise) - and completed that action by taking our humanity, now re-created in the risen Christ, back to the Kingdom (our true home) and the right hand of the Father. The first Adam has been restored by the second Adam.

God has gone up with a shout! The Lord with the sound of a trumpet, in order to raise the fallen image of Adam, and to send the comforting Spirit who will sanctify our souls! (*Lord I Call, Feast of Ascension*)

The ascent of Christ into heaven is our assurance that He will send the Holy Spirit to us, to enlighten us, guide us, and lead us to the Kingdom of God, where Christ has gone to "prepare a place for us."

The descent of the Holy Spirit is known to the Church as the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost was an ancient Jewish feast which celebrated the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses by God. The reception of the Law was a great moment in the salvation history of Israel, but even the Law was to be fulfilled by the Messiah Who was to come. The feast of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ is transformed from the feast of the reception of the Old Testamental Law to the feast of the New Law in Christ - the life of grace in which the Holy Spirit gives breath to our new life in Christ. All has now been revealed and the only task left to Christians is to learn and live the revelation through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen the true Light! We have received the heavenly Spirit! We have found the true Faith, worshipping the undivided Trinity, who has saved us! (*Verse from the Aposticha, Feast of Pentecost. This is also sung following Holy Communion at every Divine Liturgy between Pentecost and the next celebration of Pascha.*)

The feast of Pentecost is also known as "Trinity Sunday." The Trinity is manifested throughout the Scriptures and in many of the feasts of the Orthodox Church, but

Pentecost is the feast of the Trinity "par excellence." The full revelation of the Holy Trinity occurs with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the People of God.

Come, O people, let us worship the Godhead in three Persons: the Son in the Father, with the Holy Spirit. The Father timelessly begets His co-reigning and co-eternal Son; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is glorified in the Son; one Power, one Essence, one Godhead! Let us all worship Him, professing our faith: Holy God, who made all things through the Son, with the Holy Spirit's co-operation. Holy Mighty, through Whom we know the Father, through Whom the Holy Spirit came into the world.

Holy Immortal, the Spirit and Comforter, proceeding from the Father and resting in the Son. O Holy Trinity, glory to You! (*Lord I Call, Feast of Pentecost*)

The confusion of tongues that occurred at Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), the result of pride and the fall of man, is overcome on Pentecost. The Holy Spirit descends as tongues of fire on the Apostles and the Theotokos, and they began speaking in different tongues, and those who heard them each heard their the words in their own native language, and speech becomes a sign of the Holy Spirit made manifest in man. Because of sin, words became the source and sign of confusion and separation between God and man and between different peoples. With the descent of the Holy Spirit, words (by the Word) become the source and sign of the triumph of Christ over sin. The Word is the source of communion and the Holy Spirit enlightens the faithful to knowledge of God.

The arrogance of those building Babel's tower caused men's languages to be confused in days of old, but now the tongues are gloriously enlightened by the knowledge of God. There God punished infidels for their sin, but here Christ enlightens fishermen with His Spirit. There the confusion of languages was done in vengeance; here they are joined in unison for the salvation of our souls! (*Aposticha Verse, Feast of Pentecost*)

Pascha. Ascension. Pentecost. The events of all three are essential for our salvation. All three reveal the victory of Christ in His Incarnation. But all three are inseparable. It is impossible to imagine the resurrection of Christ without His returning to the Father, and it is impossible to imagine Christ returning to His Father while leaving the faithful without the Holy Spirit. It is essential for the faithful of the Orthodox Church to be a "Paschal Church," but to remember that a "paschal" Church does not forget faith in the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it includes and depends on that faith.

(By Archpriest John J. Dresko)

СВЕТИ ЈОВАН ЗЛАТОУСТИ

БЕСЕДА

о васкрсењу мртвих

Д о сад смо вам говорили о догматима вере и о части јединородног Сина Божијег, јер хтедосмо затворити уста онима, који његово достојанство поричу и од Оца га отуђују, а данас намеравам да на практично поље пређем и о часности живота поуку изнесем. Али и ова поука, уз све то може се и догматском сматрати, јер мислим да се повести о васкрсењу мртвих латим, а ово што ћу представити наизглед је различито, јер нас поука о васкрсењу мртвих уједно и у животу поправља и живот наш управља и промисао Божији од сваког оспоравања брани. Јер као што неверје у васкрсење мртвих живот човеков у неред доводи, много му несреће причињава, па и оно што би требало да је горе, доле обрће, тако нам и вера у васкрсење сталне доказе о Божијем промислу износи, подстичући нас да добродетељни будемо и од греха се клонимо како би мирно и срећно поживели. Пошто, ко се не нада да ће васкрснути и за почињене овде грехове једном одговарати, но мисли да се овим животом и цело наше биће нестаје и да иза овог живота ништа даље нема и неће бити, тај неће много о добрим делима мислити, а како би и мислио кад за такав труд свој никакву награду не очекује, а исто тако се неће ни порока клонити кад се не боји да ће муке какве за зла своја дела трпети, но срљаће у разне безаконе похоте и у свакој се врсти греха наћи; док ће се онај, који је у опште васкрсење мртвих уверен, па и онај строги испит и непромењиви суд пред очима има, на сваки начин трудити да целомудрен, кротак и добродетељан



буде, па чувајући се од неуздржљивости, наглости и сваког другог порока затвараће уста онима, који Божији промисао опоричу и оповргавају.

И заиста, док ће онај, што у васкрсење сумња указујући на то да су људи који су добродетељни, добронамерни и целомудрено и праведно живе сиротињом притиснути, клеветама и увредама обасути, а често немајући нужно препитање и дуготрајним болестима и жестоким боловима изложени па су без икакве заштите, те су на сваки начин у неимаштини, док напротив људи чараоци, погани и свим безакоњима одани у богатству обилију, раскошно живе, светле хаљине носе, велико мноштво слугу за собом вуку, славе се, чи-

нове добијају и код цара велики утицај имају: сасвим ће ћутати и ништа неће противречити онима који промисао Божији поричу и говоре: „какав ли је то промисао, такав ли суд праведни, честити и ваљан у несрећи, а неуздржљив и развратан у срећи; и овај је од свих хваљен а онај у сиротињи и беди стење“; док ће, велим, онај који у васкрсење не верује то слушајући ћутати и баш ништа против тога неће говорити, онај ће се што о васкрсењу уме расуђивати, лако против таквог хуљења подићи и насртљивцима одлучно рећи: „Престаните ви језицима вашим клеветати саздаатеља Бога, јер наша дела не утичу само на садашњи живот, јер другом, неупоредиво дужем животу гредимо и тамо ће они који овде у оскудици, али праведно поживеше, плату за све патње примити, као што ће они који овде грешно живеше за своје безаконо и не-



пристојно сластољубље муку поднети“. Јер кад о промислу Божијем расуђујемо, не смемо то по ономе што је сада, но и по ономе што у будућности скривено лежи, чинити.

И заиста. Данашње је време време труда, рада и борбе, будуће је, наплате, венаца и части. И као што је борац дужан да се са знојем, прашином, великом жегом, трудом и упорношћу на месту битке бори; тако треба да и праведни много претрпи и све то великодушно поднесе, ако жели да тамо светле венце придобије. А то што срећа неваљалих људи, понекад обеспокојава, такви треба ово да узму у обзир, да као што се разбојници и пљачкаши гробница и човекоубице и гусари на мору само дотле сладострашћу наслађују, за своју срећу туђе несреће користе, неправедним богатством владају, и сваки дан у пијанчењу проводе, док под судску истрагу не потпадну, а пошто пред суд стану за све се то казне, тако ће и они који блуднице купују, раскош на столовима подржавају, обрве у вис

дижу, на трговишту остале разгоне и сироте прогоне, кад јединородни Син Божији са анђелима својим дође и на престо онај, пошто све људе пред себе постави, седне, голи и без сваког великолепија изведени бити, па никаквог заштитника и заступника немајући, без икакве ће штетње у огњену реку послани бити. Зато, немој ни ти на ове срећне по њиховој садашњој наслади гледати, но заплачи ради муке која их чека, нити пак праведника несрећним немој сматрати због његових садашњих осудица, но благосиљај га ради будућих блага, па пошто поуку нашу о васкрсењу у срцу своме укоренио будеш, постарај се, да ако си добродетељан а у искушења западнеш, да искуснији отуд изађеш и већу наду прибавиш, а ако си злотвор да се безакоња ослободиш и да се страхом од будуће казне исправиш. А зато нам и Павле често о васкрсењу говори као што сте га ето и данас могли чути: „знамо – каже – ако се наша земаљска кућа, тјелесни шатор, разруши, имамо здање од Бога, кућу нерукотворену, вјечну на небесима“ (2. Кор. 5, 1). Или, да кажемо још и више и да разумемо зашто се он у расуђивање о васкрсењу упуштао. Јер није он просто и случајно о томе често поучавао; но зато што је желео да нас о ономе што нас чека у будућности, обавести и у борби за благодат утврди.

Сада, по милости Божијој, сви смо ми у миру, јер и цареви благодасно живе и велможе су истинитог Бога познали и народи и градови па и незнабошци клањају се Христу пошто се преваре ослободише. Али онда, при почетку проповеди, кад се семена благодести тек сејашу, велики се рат на разне начине и свакојаким средствима вођаше пошто су цареви и кнезови и домаћи и сродници и једном речју сви верне нападали те се чинило да је и сама природа у завери против верних била. Јер често је и отац сина, мати кћер и господар слугу свог издавао. И не само градови и села, но домови један против других беху, те настајаше све љући немир, љући но и онај, што услед међусобне побуне бива, пошто и имања отимана беху, слобода савести ускраћивана и смртоносне беде претеше са свих страна варварског или разбојничког напада, но и од оних, који се за заступнике и владоце народа сматраше а са потчињенима горе него сви варвари поступаху. Као што је и Павле посведочио кад је рекао: „поднијесте многе подвиге страдања, Изложени, с једне стране, поругама и невољама, а са друге, поставши састрадалници онима који то исто доживљавају. Јер сте и оковима мојим саосећали, и с радошћу подносили отимање имовине ваше“ (Јев. 10, 32), а то је и Галатима признао рекавши: „Зар толико пострадасте узалуд? Кад би било само узалуд!“ (Гал. 3, 4). А и Филип-

љанима је кратко казато и свима којима год писао то је исто посведочио.

А и не беше само то несносно, што је споља од идо-лопоклоника велика и свакидашњи рат на верне подизан, но што се и међу самим вернима догађаху са-блазни, распре, свађе и суревњивости по написаном: „Споља су ратови, а изнутра бојазни“, а ово унутарње комешање беше опасније како за ученике, тако и за учитеље те се и Павле више од унутарњег грехопада и хришћанских законопреступа чувао, него од оних непријатељских узнемиравања као што се зна, да је плакао и у себи се гризао као када је оно неко међу Коринћанима застранио.

А беше и треће нешто, ни по чем мање, од горе споменутог, што вернима многе проблеме причиња-ваше, а то је сама природа добродетељи, која је вели-ки труд и зној захтевала. Јер не беше лак и утрвен пут коме апостоли хришћане водише но рапав и не као онај, којим се олако пролази но потребоваше мудро-љубиве, бодре и на сваки начин опрезне душе. Зато га је и Христос „уским и мучним“ назвао. А зашто? Хри-шћанима не беше дозвољено да по примеру незнабо-жаца непрестано у теревенкама, пијанству, преједању, сладострасти и забавама живе, но имаше дужност да гнев обуздају, од безаконе се похоте уздржавају, има-ња презиру, славу газе и да се никада завишћу и зло-бом овладати не дају. А како је ово тешко извршити, знају сви они, који се у томе свакодневно боре. Јер шта је од умирења непотребне похоте теже, реци ми, која вас као неко бесно псето напада и сваки час узне-мирава, и само пред опрезном душом узмиче! Шта је и од гнева горе? Горе је да увређеном освета прија. Али то чинити не беше дозвољено. А шта ја то гово-рим, кад се од оних, који се увређенима сматраху, чак и то тражило, да добро чине, укорнике своје благоси-љају и да им се речима не супротстављају, а и телесну чистоту мораху не само у делима, но и у самом срцу чувати, јер није се требало само од безаконог дела но и од самог погледа на њ склањати па, не наслађивати се ни погледом на лепе жене, пошто би се већ и за та-кав поглед, свако и најтежој казни изложио.

Али и осим оне велике напасти од туђинаца, осим многих унутрашњих опасности и осим великог напо-ра који се мора подносити у вршењу добрих дела, беше још и четврта тешкоћа, која је из овога произи-лазила, а то је што они, који су се требали у овако ве-лику борбу упустити, сасвим неискусни беху. Јер људи који су одрасли уз науку апостолску не наследи-ше благодат својих предака, но беху у размажености и раскоши, у пијанству и ономе што скрнави па и у својевољности васпитани, а што је, код оних који не

беху од раног детињства и од самог почетка од роди-теља својих на вршење добродетељних дела привик-нути, не мали напор при борбама причињавало, по-што се често догађало да се многи, и кад већ у борбу загазили беху, против ње бунеше.

И то дакле што толике невоље у овом времену за сваког поборника добродетељи беху и што жељаше да им напор у томе, ма и у чему ублажи, беше разлог што је Павле често васкрсење спомињао подстичући их на борбу и повест о властитим страдањима, пре него што би се у објашњења о васкрсењу упуштао, као пример износио, говорећи: „Свачим смо угњетавани, али не потиштени; збуњивани, али не очајни; Прого-њени, али нисмо остављени; оборени, али не погуб-љени“ (2. Кор. 4, 8), а тиме је о свакодневним смртима упозоравао јер беху сматрани духовним мртвацима и сваки дан смрти излагани. Па тек што је ово што их је обеспокојавало набројао, почео је беседу о васкрсењу и то овако говорећи: „Знајући да ће Онај који васкрсе Господа Исуса, и нас васкрснути кроз Исуса, и преда се поставити с вама. Због тога ми не малаксавамо“ у борбама и надању на будуће, све док такву утеху има-мо (2. Кор. 4, 14 и 16). И није рекао: зато „не малакса-вате“ показивајући тиме да је и он сам непрестано у борби.

У атлетском такмичењу и борбама борац се унутар арене креће, а учитељ му далеко од њега само савети-ма помоћ пружа и само му толико помаже, колико речи и глас помоћи могу, јер стати близу њега и рука-ма му помагати, никакав му закон не допушта. У бор-бама благодати пак, није тако, но један је исти и на-ставник и борац. Па зато не седи ван борилишта но и сам у борбу ступа и подстиче оне који се с њим заједно боре говорећи им: „Због тога ми не малаксавамо“. И не рече: зато ја не малаксам, но: „Зато ми не малака-савамо“, да их похвалама подстакне, додајући и ово: „ако се наш спољашњи човјек и распада, ипак се унутрашњи обнавља из дана у дан“ (2. Кор. 4, 16).

Погледајте апостолску мудрост. Подстицао их је властитим својим патњама рекавши: у свему имамо невоље, али „Због тога ми не малаксавамо“. Подсти-цао их је васкрсењем Исусовим говорећи да ће: „Онај који васкрсе Господа Исуса, и нас васкрснути“. Па на крају се и другог начина латио. А како? Пошто је ви-део да многи међу људима некако малодушни, слаби и бедни постају, па иако су се у васкрсење уверили, опет се због дужине времена не хране духовном хра-ном, лење и очајавају; зато им другу корист и награду, и то пре васкрсења износи.

(Наставиће се у следећем броју)

Христос Васкрсе! Васкрс 2015

Драга браћо и сестре,

Више од две хиљаде година, Хришћанство је објавило свету радосну вест о Христовом васкрсењу. Ова радост, пре свега, била је одговор човечанству на вечито питање, вечито туговање, о животном дуалитету, радости и патњи, животу и смрти. Ако ово разумемо, разумећемо и велики значај јеванђеља о Св. Васкрсењу. Христос је васкрсао првог дана седмице, дан после суботе. Први дан је постао „дан васкрсења“. Недеља је постала тај први дан новог времена и новог живота који је обасјан Христовим васкрсом из гроба. По речима Св. апостола Павла, „над тим животом, смрт није више имала власти“ (Рим. 6:9).

Хришћанство је представило нови смисао, нову идеју о животу, по којима живот престаје да буде жртва смрти. „Смрти где ти је жалац? Пакле, где ти је победа?“ пита Св. ап. Павле (1Кор. 15:55). Искуство васкрсења праведника из смрти је срце и дар хришћанства. Идеја о ништавилу смрти је одбачена, смрт више није безнадежан развод од живота. Дошао је нови дан, први дан у коме су Јеванђељске свете поруке постале свевременска вредност, јер су безнађе замениле надом и вером у вечни живот. То искуство је хришћанска основа за прославу Васкрса. Нека ово ново искуство живота, кроз Христово васкрсење, постане наше искуство заувек!

Свима вама који прослављате Христово васкрсење, у име Распетог и Васкрслог Христа, шаљем Божиј благослов са жељом да непрестано тежите да се духовно усавршавате у речима, делима и мислима. Са таквом надом искрено и скрушено поздрављам вас са најпобедоноснијим поздравом:

ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕСЕ!

Са љубављу, у Васкрслем Господу,
Отац Блашко Параклис



Christ is Risen! Pascha 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

More than two thousand years ago, Christianity conquered the world with the joy of Easter, the resurrection. This joy was above all an answer to humanity's perpetual question and grief about life's duality, joy and mortality. It is only when we understand this that we can appreciate the great importance the first Christians attached to what might otherwise appear to be an inconsequential detail in the gospel account of the resurrection: Christ arose on the first day of the week, the day after the Sabbath. The first day became „the day of resurrection.“ Sunday became the first day of that new time and of that new life which shone from the tomb. And over that life, as St. Paul wrote, „death no longer has dominion“ (Rom. 6:9).

Christianity introduced a concept of life in which life ceases to be the victim of death. „O death, where is thy sting? O hell, where is thy victory?“ (1Cor. 15:55). This new experience is the very heart of Christianity and its fire. Death is overthrown; no longer is death a hopeless divorce from life. A new day has arrived, the first day of a new creation which overcomes the limits of time and brings eternal joy and eternal life. That experience is the Christian basis for the celebration of Pascha. May this new experience of life through Christ's resurrection become our experience now and forever!

For all of you who celebrate our Lord's Resurrection in the name of the Crucified and Risen Christ, I pray from my heart for God's blessings to be upon you and your family that you may continually strive for spiritual fulfillment in your words, your actions and your thoughts. With such hopes, I greet you all humbly and sincerely with the victorious Paschal greeting:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

With love in The Ressurrected Lord,
Fr. Blasko Paraklis

Pascha in the Liturgical Year

†Fr Alexander Schmemmann

In the center of our liturgical life, in the very center of that time which we measure as year, we find the feast of Christ's Resurrection. What is Resurrection? Resurrection is the appearance in this world, completely dominated by time and therefore by death, of a life that will have no end. The one who rose again from the dead does not die anymore. In this world of ours, not somewhere else, not in a world that we do not know at all, but in our world, there appeared one morning Someone who is beyond death and yet in our time.

This meaning of Christ's Resurrection, this great joy, is the central theme of Christianity and it has been preserved in its purity by the Orthodox Church. There is much truth expressed by those who say that the real central theme of Orthodoxy, the center of all its experience, the frame of reference of everything else, is the Resurrection of Christ.

The center, the day, that gives meaning to all days and therefore to all time, is that yearly commemoration of Christ's Resurrection at Easter. This is always the end and the beginning. We are always living after Easter, and we are always going toward Easter. Easter is the earliest Christian feast. The whole tone and meaning of the liturgical life of the Church is contained in Easter, together with the subsequent fifty-day period, which culminates in the feast of the Pentecost, the coming down of Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.

This unique Easter celebration is reflected every week in the Christian Sunday, which we call in Russian "Voskresenie" (Resurrection Day). If only you would take some time to read the texts of Sunday Matins you would realize, though it may seem strange to you, that every Sunday we have a little Easter. I say "Little Easter," but it is really "Great Easter." Every week the Church comes to the same central experience: "Having seen Thy Resurrection..." Every Saturday night when the priest carries the Gospel from the altar to the center of the church, after he has read the Gospel of the Resurrection, the same fundamental fact of our Christian faith is proclaimed: Christ is risen! St. Paul says: "If Christ is not risen, then your faith is in vain." There is nothing else to believe. This is the real center, and it is only in reference to Easter as the end of all natural time and the beginning of the new time in which we as Christians have to live that we can understand the whole liturgical year.

If you open a calendar, you will find all our Sundays are called Sundays after Pentecost, and Pentecost itself is fifty days after Easter. Pentecost is the fulfillment of Easter. Christ ascended into heaven and sent down His Holy Spirit. When He sent down His Holy Spirit into the world,

a new society was instituted, a body of people, whose life, though it remained of this world and was shared in its life, took on a new meaning.

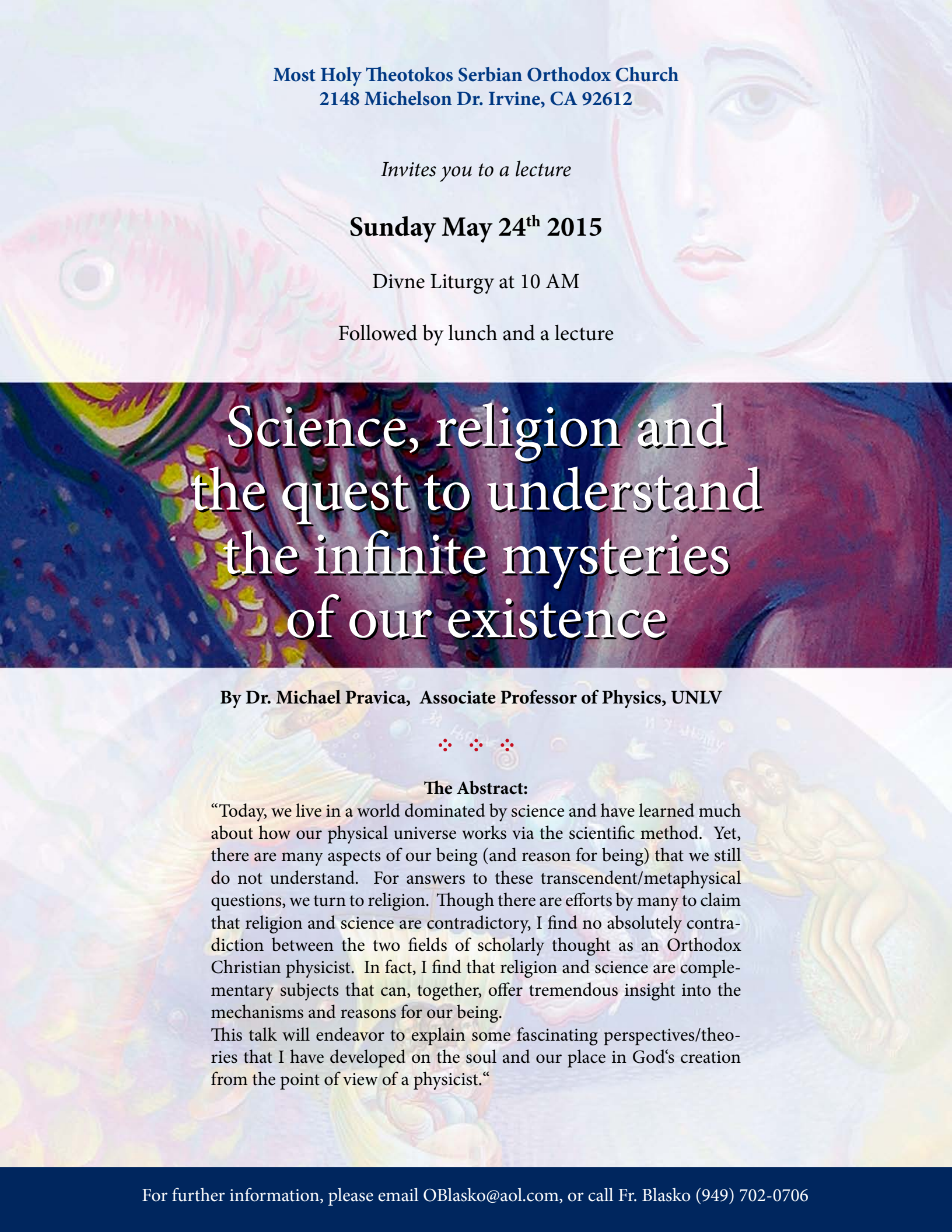
This new meaning comes directly from Christ's Resurrection. We are no longer people who are living in time as in a meaningless process, which makes us first old and then ends in our disappearance. We are given not only a new meaning in life, but even death itself has acquired a new significance. In the Troparion at Easter we say, "He trampled down death by death." We do not say that He trampled down death by the Resurrection, but by death. A Christian still faces death as a decomposition of the body, as an end; yet in Christ, in the Church, because of Easter, because of Pentecost, death is no longer just the end but it is the beginning also.

It is not something meaningless which therefore gives a meaningless taste to all of life. Death means entering into the Easter of the Lord. This is the basic tone, the basic melody of the liturgical year of the Christian Church. Christianity is, first of all, the proclamation in this world of Christ's Resurrection. Orthodox spirituality is paschal in its inner content, and the real content of the Church life is joy. We speak of feasts; the feast is the expression of joyfulness of Christianity.

The only real thing, especially in the child's world, which the child accepts easily, is precisely joy. We have made our Christianity so adult, so serious, so sad, so solemn that we have almost emptied it of that joy. Yet Christ Himself said, "Unless you become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of God." To become as a child in Christ's terms means to be capable of that spiritual joy of which an adult is almost completely incapable. To enter into that communion with things, with nature, with other people without suspicion of fear or frustration.

We often use the term "grace." But what is grace? *Charisma* in Greek means not only grace but also joy. "And I will give you the joy that no one will take away from you..." If I stress this point so much, it is because I am sure that, if we have a message to our own people, it is that message of Easter joy which finds its climax on Easter night. When we stand at the door of the church and the priest has said, "Christ Is Risen," then the night becomes in the terms of St. Gregory of Nyssa, "lighter than the day." This is the secret strength, the real root of Christian experience. Only within the framework of this joy can we understand everything else.

(Excerpts from the lecture "The Sanctification of Life" on the Third Annual Church School Conference sponsored by the Metropolitan Council Religious Education Committee, July 1963.)



Most Holy Theotokos Serbian Orthodox Church
2148 Michelson Dr. Irvine, CA 92612

Invites you to a lecture

Sunday May 24th 2015

Divne Liturgy at 10 AM

Followed by lunch and a lecture

Science, religion and the quest to understand the infinite mysteries of our existence

By Dr. Michael Pravica, Associate Professor of Physics, UNLV



The Abstract:

“Today, we live in a world dominated by science and have learned much about how our physical universe works via the scientific method. Yet, there are many aspects of our being (and reason for being) that we still do not understand. For answers to these transcendent/metaphysical questions, we turn to religion. Though there are efforts by many to claim that religion and science are contradictory, I find no absolutely contradiction between the two fields of scholarly thought as an Orthodox Christian physicist. In fact, I find that religion and science are complementary subjects that can, together, offer tremendous insight into the mechanisms and reasons for our being.

This talk will endeavor to explain some fascinating perspectives/theories that I have developed on the soul and our place in God’s creation from the point of view of a physicist.”

Schedule of Services

The Divine Liturgy is served regularly at 10:00 am every Sunday and on major Feast days at our Parish Center at Irvine Corporate Park, 2148 Michelson Drive, Irvine.

10:00 am: *Divine Liturgy*

11:30 am: *Sunday School*

12:00 pm: *Lunch*

Vespers service followed by the Sacrament of Holy Confession will be served every Saturday at 5:00 pm and on the eve of major Feast days at 7:00 pm.

Akathist Service to the Mother of God is served on Fridays at 7:00 pm

ЛИТУРГИЈА ПРЕЂЕОСВЕЋЕНИХ ДАРОВА

PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY
During Great Lent, Presanctified Divine Liturgy is served each Wednesday at 5:00 am, and each Friday at 10:00 am.

April 4th
LAZARUS SATURDAY

Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am: The gospel clearly relates how six days before Christ's own death, He raised his friend Lazarus from the dead (John 11:42). We see the humanity and divinity of Christ combined as well as the foreshadowing of his own death.

April 4th
LAZARUS SATURDAY VESPERS – VRBICA at 5:00 pm: I ask all of the parents to bring children.
PLEASE ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 4:45 pm to receive vrbica/palms and zvonice on this great Feast of Christ's entry into the city of Jerusalem.

THE SERVICES OF HOLY WEEK

Since the early days of the Church, there has been a cycle of services celebrated during Holy Week and Pascha.

Evidence of this goes all the way back to Egeria, a female from the West who experienced Orthodox Holy Week and Pascha in 383 AD in Jerusalem. She stated that the tradition was already long established.

These exact same services are still conducted today by the Orthodox Church. Here is a brief outline of the services of Holy Week. Many of the services are anticipated or served the day before.

April 5th
ЦБЕТИ
ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am: This liturgy heralds the end of the Great Fast and the beginning of Holy Week as Christ triumphantly enters into Jerusalem. The tradition, as the tropar states and the icon shows, is for a procession of palms led by the children. So begins our journey into Holy Week. During Holy Week, we fast from meat, poultry, dairy products, eggs, fish, wine and oil.

April 5th
Bridegroom Matins at 1:00 pm:
Known in the Church as The End, the imagery here is about the Last Judgment. It relates the deep anguish of Christ as He prepares for His Passion. The services tell us to be ever vigilant for we do not know when God will come. These services are a triumph of the eschatological (last days) imagery in the Church.

April 6th
Велики Понедељак
Great and Holy Monday Presanctified Liturgy at 10:00 am.

The readings from Exodus during these services tell of the Passover which precedes the Passover (Pascha) of Christ.

April 7th
БЛАГОВЕСТИ
THE ANNOUNCIATION
Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 10:00 am.

April 7th
Велики Уторак
Bridegroom Matins at 7:00 pm.

April 8th
Велика Среда
Great and Holy Wednesday
Presanctified Liturgy at 10:00 am.

April 8th
Велика Среда
Great and Holy Wednesday
Holy Unction at 7 pm, at St. Steven Serbian Orthodox Cathedral at 1621 West Garvey Ave., in Alhambra.
For Holy Unction there should be more priests serving, therefore, all of us Serbian priests gather together at the Cathedral to perform this Holy Sacrament for all the Faithful. This service relates to the event when the harlot anoints Christ and is forgiven. On this day we customarily anoint the people with Holy Oil as a sign of healing and remission of sins.

April 9th
Велики Четвртак
Great and Holy Thursday:
Holy Vespers Liturgy of Holy Thursday at 10:00 am: This solemn Liturgy commemorates the First Eucharist also known as Red Thursday. The darkness of the week is broken slightly because of the importance of the Eucharistic event. Traditionally the priest prepares the reserve sacrament of the year. The passion of Christ is now close.

April 9th
Велики Четвртак
Great and Holy Thursday
Matins of Holy Friday Thursday

evening at 7:00 pm. The service, commonly known as “The Twelve Gospels” as the Church, remembers the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ by reading the twelve Gospel accounts. A climatic point of Holy Week emphasizing the reality of actions.

April 10th

Велики Петак

Great and Holy Friday

Royal Hours at 10:00 am: Known as Royal because there is a Gospel reading and the Emperor would attend this service. It recounts the entire Gospel and Passion of Jesus Christ.

April 10th

Велики Петак

Great and Holy Friday

Vespers at 4:00 pm: Remembering the crucifixion and death of Christ. There is a solemn procession as the burial shroud (plashtanica) is brought out to the people. Christ is laid in the tomb and our vigil of the Resurrection begins.

April 10th

Велики Петак

Great and Holy Friday

Matins of Holy Saturday on Friday evening at 7:00 pm: Known as the Praises of the Lamentations, the service begins the Sabbath as Christ lays in rest in the tomb. Often seen as a funeral service for Christ, in fact it is a commemoration of the law and love of God towards His people.

April 11th

Велика Субота

Great and Holy Saturday

Vespertal Liturgy of Holy Saturday at 10:00 am: The death of Christ is linked with the creative acts of God. It is here that Christ descends into Hell and breaks the doors. The service inaugurates the paschal celebration as the service is bright and uplifting. The tomb is revealed as a place of life.

April 11th

Велика Субота – Вакрсно јутрење
Great and Holy Saturday

The Services of the Great and Holy Pascha Saturday evening starting at 11:30 pm: The Joy of Joys, Holiday of Holidays, celebrating Christ's Resurrection. The service begins with nocturn anticipating the Resurrection. The procession follows at midnight announcing the Resurrection to the world. We then celebrate the Paschal matins. **Baskets will be blessed after Ruserrecional Matins on Pascha night and again following Divine Liturgy on Sunday.**

April 12th

„ВАСКРСЕЊЕ ХРИСТОВО“

PASCHA CELEBRATION

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am at Parish Center, 2148 Michelson Dr., Irvine.

This is the Great and Joyous Liturgy celebrating the Pascha of our Lord. The Parish celebrates the Resurrection with a feast and events for the children and adults. Banquet will be held after the Divine Liturgy. See the detailed information later in this Newsletter. Musical entertainment will be provided by Serbian music.

April 13th

Васкршњи понедељак

Divine Liturgy at 10 am.

April 14th

Васкршњи уторак

Divine Liturgy at Sretenje Monastery in Escondido at 10 am.

May 6th

Ђурђевдан

St. George the Victorious

Great Martyr

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

May 12th

Св. Василије Острошки

St. Basil of Ostrog Wonderworker

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

May 21st

Вазнесење Господње

SPASOV DAN ASCENSION of our

Lord Jesus Christ

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

May 22nd

Transfer of the Relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

May 24th

Св. Кирило и Методије

Sts. Cyril and Methodius:

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

May 30th

Задушнице

Memorial Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am:

Please bring the names of your deceased members of the Family.

May 31st

Силазак Св. Духа на Апостоле

СВЕТА ТРОЈИЦА - ДУХОВИ

Pentecost Sunday HOLY TRINITY

DAY - PENTECOST

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

June 1st

Pentecost Monday Divine Liturgy at 10 am.

June 2nd

Pentecost Tuesday Div. Liturgy at 10 am.

June 3rd

Holy Constantine and Helen

Divine Liturgy (See the monthly Calendar on the Web site)

June 28th

Св. Великомученик Лазар и Св.

Мученици српски - Видовдан

St. Lazarus

The Divine Liturgy – at 10:00 am

THE APOSTLES FAST

Just a reminder that the fast leading up to the Feast of Apostles Peter and Paul begins June 8th. It, of course, ends on the Feast Day of Sts. Peter and Paul, July 12th.



Past events: St. Sava Celebration

This year we celebrated St. Sava on the day of His actual repose on Sunday January 25th. We all enjoyed a beautiful poems of our children, lovely performance of our kolo group Soko and a wonderful performance of El Camino College Orchestra under the direction of Professor Dr. Ljubomir Velickovic. Our deep gratitude to all the participants of St. Sava program for this year.



CHILDREN'S SUMMER CAMP

July 12th through August 2nd 2015

Summer camp is a unique opportunity for our children to learn about our Orthodox faith and culture as well as to meet other children from within our diocese. Every summer our Diocese organizes summer camp at St. Sava Camp in Jackson where many children from parishes within our diocese attend.

• **New this year, the individual registration form will be filled out exclusively online. You will still have to print and mail your Health, Insurance, Consent and Policy forms by mail. Also new this year, all forms are to be sent to Jackson at P. O. Box 965, Jackson, CA 95642. Go to www.CampStSava.org to begin the registration process.** Adult volunteers are needed to work in the kitchen, or as counselors, etc.

FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT FOR HOMELESS AT OUR PARISH

Our Parish has sponsored an independent homeless project every Sunday. We collect any food, fresh or canned, which we ask you place on the table located next to the playroom. We gather all your donations along with the left-overs from our parish meals and the change from the collection box on the same table, and donate it all to the Salvation Army Shelter located in our neighborhood. We urge you to leave food each week on that table. If you would like to help deliver it to the shelter, please tell Fr. Blasko, or Sanja Rakonjac. It is such a great help. Big thank-you's to volunteers for delivering our donations. Check your fridge and cupboards before coming to Church on Sundays and bring whatever you can donate.

HELP YOUR PARISH THROUGH CAR DONATION

You can now help the parish by making a tax-exempt donation of a car, truck, RV, or boat. All DMV details will be handled for you, and your vehicle will be towed for free. The church will receive funds equaling the full value of the vehicle. Please call with any questions. Also, if you have any ideas or suggestions for fundraising activities to benefit our parish, please pass them along to the Church Board or Fr. Blasko.

ENDOWMENT FUND

Another way to help our parish is to establish an endowment fund in memory of deceased members of your family. While the principal will always stay in tact, the income from the fund is used for various church needs and programs, as the donor may designate. The main thing is that the parish will pray regularly for the donor and his/her family members.

STEWARDSHIP APPEAL

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

“Abide in Me” Stewardship Update:

How do we abide in Jesus? We abide in Him when we follow His example and love, serve, and support the Church in His Body. When we abide in Jesus, we express this through generosity and devotion in our stewardship and acts of personal generosity. Bearing fruit in the world is the visible result of our abiding in Christ.

You are invited to fill out and to submit your 2015 Stewardship Commitment Card indicating the time, talent, and treasure that you will offer this year as a branch of the True Vine, the Body of Christ on earth.

I humbly urge you to become a steward and demonstrate your commitment by pledging the specific amount you are willing to donate on a regular basis. A stewardship form is attached to this letter. If you prefer, you can go to our website and complete the form online, www.mostholytheotokos.com *It is imperative for the parish to have a fully defined, consistent income in order to complete the business transactions that will allow us to realize our goals.*

You are, of course, welcome to call me if you have any questions, 949 702-0706

In Christ,
Father Blasko Paraklis

This commitment I make to secure a Christ-centered life for myself and my family.

...to return to God the first fruits from the gifts He has bestowed upon me.

...to assist my Lord in the mission of spreading His Gospel.

...to anchor my personal commitment in Christ, and to do my share in serving His people.

2015 Stewardship Pledge Form

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

TELEPHONE _____

I COMMIT MYSELF TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH THROUGH THIS PLEDGE.

TOTAL PLEDGE FOR 2015: \$ _____

To be paid: ____ weekly ____ monthly ____ quarterly ____ in full

SIGNED _____

DATE _____

Митрополит Сурожский Антоний

Вербное воскресенье. Вход Господень в Иерусалим

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.

Мы вступаем сегодня в страстные дни Господни, во время, когда сгустилась тьма и когда поднимается заря нового света, заря вечности, постижимая только тем, кто вместе со Христом вступает в эту тьму. Это – тьма и полумрак, сумерки, где перемешалась правда и неправда, где перемешалось все, что только может быть перемешано: Вход Господень в Иерусалим, такой торжественный, исполненный такой славы, одновременно весь построен на страшном недоразумении. Жители иерусалимские встречают Спасителя Христа с торжеством и ликованием, потому что ожидают, что Он освободит Свой народ от политического гнета; и когда окажется, что Спаситель пришел освободить людей и весь мир от греха, от неправды, от отсутствия любви, от ненависти, тогда от Него отвернутся с горечью, разочарованностью, и те, кто так торжественно Его встречали, обратятся во врагов. И в течение всей недели, все время тьма, сумрак чередуются с проблесками света...

И мы должны вступить в этот сумрак. Мы должны не только со Христом, но вместе со всеми теми, кто тогда Его окружал, войти в эти дни и найти свое подлинное место в этой тьме и в этом сумраке... Шаг за шагом мы можем следить за тем, что совершается со Спасителем Христом; но одновременно мы должны себе ставить вопрос: где *мы* стоим, где стою я, лично? Что у меня общего с Пречистой Девой Богородицей, Которая видит, как Ее Сын идет на погибель, как сгущается вокруг Него ненависть, как кольцо окружает Его: как страх и трусость, ненависть и ложь постепенно готовят Ему смерть? И как нам не понять, что может переживать Божия Мать перед лицом предательства Иуды, отречения Петра, бегства учеников, лжесвидетельства на Сына Ее, суда несправедливого, осмеяния, избиения – и наконец, крестной смерти Спасителя Христа? Как *мы* на все это отзываемся? Когда мы услышали об этом в святом Евангелии, когда мы слышали весть об этом в церковной молитве и песне – с чем выходим мы из храма? Большею частью идем забыться, отдохнуть душой, отдохнуть телом, готовясь к следующей службе, или уходя вовсе в мирскую жизнь. А Страстная седмица длится изо дня в день, из часа в час, из мгновения в мгновение, – нет ей прерыва, она, как огненная река, течет, жгучим огнем попаляя все; одно сгорит, и ничего от него не останется, кроме пепла и позорного воспоминания, а другое устоит, как золото и серебро... Где мы будем тогда? Как



переживем эти дни? С чем выйдем мы каждый раз из храма, и с чем встретим светлое Христово Воскресение? Оно – провозвестник *нашей* встречи в конце времен, нашей встречи после нашей смерти, со Христом, Который нас возлюбил до креста и Который нам поставил вопрос: А ты – отозвался ли на все, что тебе было дано знать о Божественной любви, воплощенной, распятой, воскресшей? Поставим себе вопрос о том, на кого из апостолов мы можем быть похожи? На Фому ли, который говорил своим соапостолам: Пойдем с Ним и *умрем* с Ним, если нужно?... На Петра, который по страху отрекся от Него трижды? На Иуду, который Его предал? Где мы находимся в этой людской толпе? *Кто* мы? Поставим себе этот вопрос каждый раз, когда мы выйдем с богослужения, каждый раз, когда мы будем на него приходить: и тогда, может быть, что-нибудь проснется в нашей душе, что-нибудь дрогнет. Может быть, тогда эта Страстная седмица окажется и для нас, как в прошлом для стольких она оказывалась, началом: началом нового понимания, новых переживаний и новой жизни. Аминь.

Hristos Voskrese!

Великденската божествена и спасителна нощ радостно вълнува сърцата ни, тя възвестява Христовото възкресение – празник на празниците, чудо на чудесата, светлина на светлините!

У Бога не остава безсилна нито една дума, “защото Той рече – и всичко стана; Той заповяда – и всичко се яви” /Пс. 32:9/, Той е “Господ на силите” /Пс. 23:10/. Всемогъществото е свойство на Божиата воля и Бог без никакво затруднение привежда в изпълнение всичко, което е в Неговата мисъл.

Без да нарушава свободната воля на човека, Той съдейства в следването на доброто и ограничава злото до пълното прекратяване на действията му в света. Той знае минало, настояще и бъдеще, знае “тайните на сърцето” (Пс. 43:22) и “ще изнесе на виделина тайните на мрака” (I Кор. 4:5), като “въздаде всекому според делата му” (Рим. 2:6). Затова Той открито каза на учениците Си: “Син Човечески трябва много да пострада, ... да бъде убит и на третия ден да възкръсне” (Марк. 8:31). Така Спасителят самовластно прие смъртта и бидейки началник на живота (Деян. 3:15), победи смъртта и дари живот на света.

Ние прославяме Христа, възкръсналия от мъртвите, и като очистим чувствата си, благоговейно Му се покланяме, за да ни озари светлината Христова, да видим в нея Победителя на смъртта и да чуем сладчайшия Му глас: “Радвайте се! Мир вам! Хвърлете мрежите отядна на кораба, донесете от рибата, що сега уловихте, дойдете, обядвайте. Вие повярвахте, защото Ме видяхте. Блажени, които не са видяли и са повярвали! Вървете подире Ми! Научете всички народи, като ги кръщавате в името на Отца и Сина и Светаго Духа, и като ги учите да пазят всичко що съм ви заповядал, и ето, Аз съм с вас през всички дни до свършека на света”.

С възторга от тези божествени слова да влезем в радостта на Възкресението, да възлюбим един другия, да живеем в мир и справедливост, да служим на правдата и истината, да следваме пътя на живота.

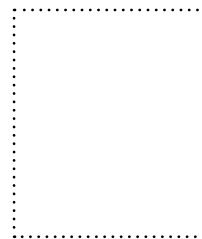
Честито Възкресение Христово!





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DIRECTIONS...to the Parish Center:

Location: Irvine Corporate Park
2148 Michelson Dr., Irvine
Between MacArthur & Von Karman

Directions: From North take San Diego Fwy 405 South. Exit at MacArthur Blvd., south toward airport. Turn left onto MacArthur. Turn left onto Michelson Dr. Pass Dupont. Parish Center on right side of street.

From South take San Diego Fwy 405 North. Exit at Jamboree Rd. Left onto Jamboree Rd. Over the freeway bridge to turn right onto Michelson Dr. Pass Von Karman. Parish Center on left side of street.