



CHURCH NEWSLETTER

January – March 2010

Parish Center Location: 2148 Michelson Drive (Irvine Corporate Park), Irvine, CA 92612

Fr. Blasko Paraklis, Parish Priest, (949) 830-5480

Zika Tatalovic, Parish Board President, (714) 225-4409

Bishop of Nis Irinej elected as new Patriarch of Serbia



In the early morning hours on January 22, 2010, His Eminence Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral, locum tenens of the Patriarchate throne, served the Holy Hierarchal liturgy at the Cathedral church. His Eminence served with the concelebration of Bishops: Lukijan of Osijek Polje and Baranja, Jovan of Shumadia, Irinej of Australia and New Zealand, Vicar Bishop of Teodosije of Lipljan and Antonije of Moravica.

After the Holy Liturgy Bishops gathered at the Patriarchate court. The session was preceded by consultations before the election procedure. At the Election assembly Bishop Lavrentije of Shabac presided, the oldest bishop in the ordination of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Holy Assembly of Bishops has 44 members, and 34 bishops met the requirements to be nominated as the new Patriarch of Serbia. By the secret ballot bishops proposed candidates, out of which three bishops were on the shortlist, who received more than half of the votes of the members of the Election assembly. In the first round the candidate for Patriarch became the Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral, in the second round the Bishop Irinej of Nis, and a third candidate was elected in the fourth round, and that was Bishop Irinej of Bachka.

These three candidates have received more than a half votes during the four rounds of voting. The envelope with the name of the Patriarch from the Holy Gospel was chosen by Very Reverend Archimandrite Gavriilo, superior of the monastery of Lepavina (Metropolitanate of Zagreb-Ljubljana).

Immediately after the election a thanksgiving was served and wished unto many years to Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovac and Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, who addressed his brother Bishops pointed out that his election was the will of God and the will of the Holy Assembly of Bishops and that he will work on the Field of God in an association with all the Bishops of the Serbian Church.

Bells at the Cathedral Church rang at about 14 hours and 15 minutes indicating that the 45th Patriarch of Serbia was elected.

Patriarch Irinej was born **Miroslav Gavrilović** (Мирослав Гавриловић). After graduating from high school, he enrolled and completed Orthodox seminary in Prizren. He then entered the Theological Faculty in Belgrade, serving in the army after graduating. After military service, he was tonsured a monk in 1959 in Rakovica monastery, receiving the monastic name of Irinej (Irenaeus)^[4]. He was a professor at Prizren Seminary, and completed postgraduate studies in Athens. In 1969, he was appointed a head of the monastic school at Ostrog monastery. He later returned to Prizren, where he was appointed Rector of the Prizren Seminary in 1969.^[4] In May 1974, Irinej was elected Vicar Bishop of Moravica and consecrated by Patriarch German. In May 1975, he was elected Bishop of Niš and enthroned in the Holy Trinity Cathedral (in Niš) on 15 June 1975.^{[4][5]} Irinej headed the Niš eparchy for the next 35 years.

On January 22, 2010, he was elected the 45th Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church^{[6][7]}, after the death of previous Patriarch Pavle.



A Spiritual Giant Goes to God

Serbian Patriarch Pavle: 1914-2009

The people of Serbia, Serbian Orthodox Christians worldwide, and the entire Orthodox world were deeply saddened by the falling asleep in the Lord of His Holiness, the Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci and Serbian Patriarch Pavle, on Sunday, November 15, 2009. His passing came at 9:45am at the Military Medical Academy in Belgrade, where he had been under care for the past two years. He was 95 years old.

The news was announced following church services by a tearful Metropolitan Amphilohije, who has been carrying out some of the Patriarch's duties during his illness and who was named as *locum tenens*, or temporary caretaker of the Patriarchal throne following his passing.

As the news spread large numbers of the faithful gathered in churches throughout the world for memorial services. In Belgrade later Sunday the Patriarch's body was taken to the St. Michael the Archangel Cathedral, where it lay in state until funeral services on Thursday, November 19. Memorial services were held regularly during this time and the reading of Scripture continued around the clock. Hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life waited patiently for hours in a miles-long line for the chance to pass by the casket and offer their personal prayers and respect as the Cathedral remained open to visitors non-stop the entire time. The Serbian government declared three days of mourning, during which flags flew at half-staff. Media outlets gave full coverage of all details of the Patriarch's passing and funeral, with retrospectives on his life and legacy. Radio Television Serbia suspended regular programming to cover the entire funeral [portions of that video coverage are available on the Patriarchate's web site, www.spc.rs.]

Deep respect for a Godly man

The outpouring of emotion and love was a testament to the deep affection and respect which the Serbian people had for their Patriarch. He was commonly called "a saint who walks." A true monk and man of God, Patriarch Pavle was widely known for his humility, his inner peace, and his deep spirituality centered on Christ. This stemmed from his life of constant deep prayer, which was clearly his main occupation. He shunned limousines, favoring public transportation or walking when possible. He defended the Serbian people against their enemies, but was not afraid to also correct them and challenge them to be better. He fearlessly spoke truth to power and represented the best aspirations of the Serbian people. He spent many years as the Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Kosovo and Metohije, sharing in the trials of the Serbian people there and defending them to the best of his ability. He came to the Patriarchal throne at a time of tremendous change and challenges, when communism was collapsing and the Yugoslav state was breaking up, a time of upheaval, of war and lawlessness and all the suffering they can bring. But it was also a time when the people needed not just politicians, not just soldiers, but above all a conscience, a voice to remind them of and call them back to the deepest realities of their Orthodox Christian faith and the best examples and their history and culture, especially since these had been kept hidden from the people by communist rule for a half-century. It fell to him to be not so much a leader as a father to a people who needed one desperately. It was as a father that they mourned him.

As one commentator wrote, "The death of the Serbian Patriarch has united people across Serbia for a moment because there is no controversy about his life – everyone agrees that a great man has died."

On learning of the Patriarch's passing, Bishop Lavrentije of Sabac-Valjevo said the Patriarch's death is no reason to be sad because the Patriarch always had sought to reach out to God. His Grace said Patriarch Pavle "has been more in heaven" than on earth. "The Serbian people now have someone to represent them before God better than anyone else," he said.

On Thursday morning funeral services began with the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at St. Michael's Cathedral at 7:30am. Chief celebrant was His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. In addition to all the hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church, representatives of many of the other sister Orthodox local churches participated in the liturgy or the funeral service which followed: heads of local Churches Romanian Patriarch Daniel, Albanian Orthodox Archbishop Anastasios, and Metropolitan Christopher of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, and bishops representing the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Jerusalem, Russia, Georgia and the Churches of Greece and Cyprus, as well as of the Orthodox Church in America. Delegations represented all the other local Orthodox Churches and the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos. A message was read from Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kyril, who could not attend due to illness.

The Serbian government was represented by President Boris Tadic, Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic and scores of government ministers and members of Parliament from all political parties. Crown Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjevic led the mourners from the Serbian Royal House.

Following the Liturgy the funeral procession formed to go from St. Michael's to the St. Sava Memorial Church on Vracar. The open casket was placed on a motorized vehicle accompanied by bishops, priests, and a military honor guard. Thousands of people had waited patiently outside the church to accompany their Patriarch to Vracar, and the procession swelled as it moved on through the streets of Belgrade, until hundreds of thousands of people were participating. The funeral service was held on the plaza in front of the St. Sava Memorial Church in beautiful weather for the time of year. Again leading services were Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Metropolitan Amphilohije together with the representatives of other local Orthodox Churches. Present also were Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano, representatives of the European Protestant churches, and of faith groups in Serbia including Roman Catholics and Protestants and the Jewish and Muslim communities.

The presidents of Montenegro and Macedonia and the Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska were present, along with high-ranking delegations of the governments of Bosnia-Hercegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Cyprus and numerous members of the diplomatic corps.

Giving eulogies at the funeral were Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for world Orthodoxy, Metropolitan Amphilohije for the Serbian Orthodox Church, and Serbian President Boris Tadic.

Following the conclusion of the funeral services, the Patriarch's body was taken to Rakovica Monastery in suburban Belgrade for burial. Patriarch Pavle had often expressed his wish to be buried at the monastery, alongside the first Patriarch of the renewed Serbian Patriarchate Dimitrije.

A Life of Service to God and His People

Serbian Patriarch Pavle (in the world Gojko Stojcevic) was born on September 11, 1914 in the Slavonian village of Kucanci near Donji Miholjac, in what was then Austria-Hungary and is today Croatia. He was left an orphan at an early age. His father contracted tuberculosis in America and came home to die, and his mother died shortly thereafter. He and his brother were cared for by his aunt. He was sickly as a child and at one point nearly died himself.

He completed high school in Tuzla and Belgrade. He then continued his education at the seminary in Sarajevo and later at the Theological Faculty in Belgrade. During World War II he taught religion for a time at a school for refugee children from Bosnia. After saving a child from drowning in the Drina River, he contracted tuberculosis and was told by his doctors he had only three months to live. He was cared for by the monks of Monastery Vujan, where through prayer he regained his health. He became a novice, and in 1948 took monastic vows at Annunciation Monastery, taking the monastic name Pavle (Paul). From 1948 to 1955, during the fiercest persecution of the Church by the communists, he continued his monastic life at Monastery Raca. He taught at the seminary of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Prizren 1950-51. He was ordained a hieromonk in 1954 and became an archimandrite in 1957. He spent the years 1955 to 1957 in postgraduate studies at the Theological Faculty in Athens, Greece.

In 1957 he was elected as bishop of the diocese of Raska and Prizren, Kosovo and was consecrated by Serbian Patriarch Vikentije and other hierarchs in Belgrade. He was enthroned in the Cathedral Church in Prizren on October 13, 1957, where he was to remain as diocesan bishop for nearly 34 years. This was a very difficult time for Serbs and the Serbian Church. Bishop Pavle constantly notified both the church and civil

authorities about the attacks by Albanian extremists on Church property, on monks and nuns, and on the Serbian people who were being forced to flee into exile from their homes. He himself bore the insults and even physical attacks calmly and with patience. In 1989, he was severely beaten by some Albanian youths on the street. He forgave them.

In the Raska-Prizren diocese he built new churches and renovated old or ruined ones, and ordained priests and tonsured monastics. He cared for the Prizren seminary, where for a time he taught church singing and church Slavonic. He traveled often, serving in all parts of the diocese. With the exodus from Kosovo the Prizren seminary was temporarily moved to Nis, and the seat of the diocese from Pec to Gracanica Monastery.

As the bishop of Raska and Prizren he witnessed to the sufferings of his Serbian people before international representatives at the United Nations.

In recognition of his work in the field of theological education, the Theological Faculty of the Serbian Orthodox Church awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1988. He was similarly honored by St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York in 1992. He was the published author or editor of a number of theological books and articles which have had considerable influence throughout the Church, and the editor of a number of liturgical service books. He headed the Holy Synod's commission for the official translation of the New Testament into Serbian, as well as of the Synod's Liturgical Commission.

Bishop Pavle was chosen as Serbian Patriarch to succeed Patriarch German in December 1990. His name was chosen by lot from the three names put forward in nomination by vote of the Holy Assembly of Bishops: Sava of Sumadija, Stefan of Zica and Pavle. Following the selection and the service of thanksgiving which followed it, Bishop Stefan of Zica told the Assembly of Bishops, "For the first time in the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church we have used the apostolic method for the election of the patriarch. As you can see, it was very beneficial. I am crying with joy, because the most holy, the best and the most prayerful among us was chosen to sit on the Throne of Saint Sava. His coming to take the helm of the Serbian Orthodox Church at the time when prayers are so rare, although more needed than ever, is the expression of the will of the Holy Spirit that the Church of Saint Sava become spiritually strengthened."

Soon thereafter Yugoslavia was rent by the wars which accompanied its breakup. While understanding the aspirations of all peoples living throughout the former Yugoslavia, he called for mutual forgiveness, forbearance, reconciliation and peace. He warned that the Serbian people should guard itself against inhumanity from others, but not at the expense of becoming inhuman themselves.

With Patriarch Pavle at the forefront, the Serbian Orthodox Church, while being careful to remain outside of partisan politics, played a major role in changes in Yugoslavia leading to democratization. By appealing to the inner psyche of the Serbian people, Patriarch Pavle led the Church in calling for a peaceful resolution of conflict, recognition of democratic processes, and for the rule of law. On St. Sava's Day, 1997 Patriarch Pavle led a massive religious procession through Belgrade which was seen by some as endorsing demands for the recognition of opposition electoral victories against the ruling party. When it became clear that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and his government would not recognize the opposition electoral victory in 2000, the Church weighed in at the crucial time by being the first to recognize opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica as the "president-elect."

Above all, Patriarch Pavle led the Church during a time of great resurgence of religious faith and practice in Serbia. New churches were built, new educational institutions established, and religious instruction was increased. It was also during his time that the Church established its official Information Service.

Perhaps Patriarch Pavle's greatest service for the Serbian Orthodox faithful outside of the former Yugoslavia was his activity in healing the schism in the Church outside Yugoslavia in 1992. Starting in 1963, the schism was a great tragedy and burden to the entire Serbian Orthodox Church. A thaw in relations took place when Metropolitan Iriney of New Gracanica, leader of the church faction which had split from the Patriarchate, extended a message of congratulations to Patriarch Pavle on his election to the throne of St. Sava. Throughout 1991 work on bridging the divide continued, and on the feast of the Meeting of the Lord in 1992 eucharistic communion was reestablished at a liturgy served by Patriarch Pavle, Metropolitan Christopher representing the patriarchal churches in America, and Metropolitan Iriney at the Belgrade Cathedral. On that occasion Patriarch Pavle said in part: "Today, and tomorrow, and in the future, that which was —was and is past. Let it remain behind us. Leave it to God and to His wisdom to judge that which was, and reward everyone

according to righteousness. And before our spiritual eyes, let there be unity and evangelic love, that we may offer mutual forgiveness, guarding this as the pupil of our eye. Whoever maliciously asks us, 'Who is the vanquisher and who the vanquished,' we should peacefully and clearly know how to respond, for both ourselves and them: Here brothers, who were and remain as such, have encountered each other, neither as vanquisher nor as vanquished. One alone is the vanquisher—the God of peace, unity and love. And with God and in God, the vanquisher is St. Sava, he who reconciled his brothers and who, in the service of peace, went to his enemies bringing peace to them and to his people. And one is the vanquished—the demon of division, discord and turbulence, who always pits brother against brother.”

So also in God and with God was Patriarch Pavle, a worthy successor of St. Sava, a reconciler and peacemaker, not only in the case of the church schism but in every action and activity of his ministry. May God establish him where the saints and just repose, and may his memory to be eternal!

Events:

GALA CONCERT: JANUARY 9, 2010



A large crowd, close to two hundred people, gathered on January 9, at the Orange County Performing Art Center Samueli Theater in Irvine, California in support of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos. With the goal of serving the faithful in the growing metropolitan areas between Los Angeles and San Diego counties, Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos is preparing to acquire a permanent facility or land for its spiritual or cultural center. The parish intends to build a church, preschool, cultural center and, eventually, a parochial school. Following the examples set by early Serb immigrants, the Orange County community seeks to perpetuate the faith and pass a strong spiritual foundation on to future generations.

Towards these goals, the faithful are seeking support from individuals, Orthodox parishes and other organizations throughout the United States.

Those in attendance on January 9th, found the evening, coordinated by Mistress of Ceremonies Lolita Davidovich, a well known actor, to be extremely enjoyable, informative and inspirational as one of the best cultural events organized since the founding of the parish. Fr. Blasko Paraklis expressed his words of gratitude to all performers, all the faithful and supporters of the Orange County Parish. The audience was inspired by the moving performances of a world renown violinist, Stefan Milenkovic; pianists, Gorjana Zekic & Minako Horimura; and choir Istocnik. Members of the clergy including Protojerej-stavrofor and Protinica Lazar Vasiljevic and Hieromonk Jovan Babic joined in support of the parish. Other special guests were Ron Shelton, movie director, and Obren Milanovic, actor.

Lolita Davidovich summarized the parish's growth over the past years and outlined its goals to purchase land or a building in the near future. Fr. Blasko thanked all those present for their support and most especially thanked all board presidents including the current president, Zika Tatalovic, board members and faithful for their untiring efforts through the parish's past years. Inspired by the moving program, some of the guests offered words of encouragement and support.

The overwhelming artistic success of this event further added to the determination of the Orange County Serbian community to build a place of worship. To date the parish uses rented facilities for Liturgies and social events. Even with the limitations presented when using rental property, Divine Liturgy and other Liturgical services are held regularly and Church traditions are observed. Visitors from near and far have joined in worship and fellowship. The parish welcomes all the faithful and extends a special invitation to those who travel to Orange County to visit the many tourist attractions. Now these visitors will be able to attend Divine Liturgy and enjoy fellowship. Our church choir, Istocnik, under the leadership of Professor Gorjana Zekich has become an attraction for many Orthodox Churches and faithful in Southern California. With the choir and in other ways the parish intends to contribute to the religious, cultural and educational richness of the area. Towards this end, it is seeking to become involved in a variety of local events.

To continue its service to the Orthodox community, the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos needs a permanent location—a place to enhance spiritual growth, a place to practice cultural traditions. The words of St. Sava remind all Serbs of the importance of working together: "Faith can save us only if united with and expressed in good works, inspired by the love of God." Donations in any amount will be greatly appreciated and used with care. Please send inquiries or contributions to Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Serbian Orthodox Church, 2148 Michelson Dr. Irvine, CA 92612.

Choir concert a big success



Our choir ***Istocnik*** gave a concert of Serbian, Russian and Byzantine Liturgical music on January 3rd 2010 at St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in San Diego.

The large audience complemented our choir by a long standing ovation and singing “ZIVELI” at the end of a beautiful performance. This was a true experience of Orthodox music and spirituality and the best musical preparation for the feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our deepest gratitude to **Gorjana Zekic**, the choir director and to all the singers who unselfishly share their time and talents to the glory of God and His Holy Church. Special thank you goes to Fr. Bratislav Krsich and St. George Choir in San Diego for their concert at our Church in the month of November and their most kind invitation to our choir.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Our Church, from its very beginning, has been assisting people in desperate need. Our own parish has helped families and individuals in their time of need. Now, as ever, there are people without jobs, people who cannot pay for medical care, and individuals who are in a prison. Most recently, we have seen the reports of the severe damage caused by the tragic earthquake in Haiti. Truly, it breaks one's heart to see the suffering of the Haitian people.

We Orthodox Christians are called to help all of God's children. The Lenten season is a special time to give alms, to donate as much as we can to help alleviate suffering. There is no doubt that many people in Haiti and even here in the US need our love and assistance. As you know, the Orthodox Churches in this country have established an outstanding organization, IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) which is dedicated to charitable works throughout the world. IOCC field workers were the first to arrive in New Orleans to assist the people during the flood. Now IOCC is helping the people in Haiti.

I appeal to all of you to contribute to our parish Charity Fund to help the needy people in Haiti and in our community. Please make your loving donation as follows: Charity Fund Holy Theotokos Church. Once we collect all the donations, they will be sent to our diocese which will, in turn, forward the funds to IOCC. Let us all reach out with great Christian love to help the people in Haiti and in our community.

With gratitude and love in Christ,

Fr. Blasko

GREAT LENT Great Lent starts on Monday, February 15th, and will end on Pascha Sunday, April 4th

FOUR LENTEN PRIORITIES:

FASTING, PRAYER, REPENTANCE & ALMSGIVING

The Lenten prayer of St. Ephraim can be for us a great spiritual tool for us all and you might want to say this prayer before you rest for the evening, as this prayer is recited in the Orthodox Church during the week days except on Saturday and Sunday.

Reflection Our spiritual lives require us to practice all four of the Lenten priorities of fasting, prayer, repentance, and almsgiving (charity to be complete and balanced.) “Fasting is seen as a means to greater hope. Prayer is seen as means to greater faith. Repentance is to change our mind and move toward hope. Almsgiving is seen as a means to greater love”.

Fasting during Great Lent, as well as on Wednesday and Fridays and at other times of the Church year, involves abstaining from meat, poultry, eggs, dairy products, fish (except for shellfish), oils, and alcoholic beverages. It is easy to stuff ourselves with the allowable foods, but to follow the spirit of the fast; we should eat less food than normal during these periods. This is to help us focus more on God and to be reminded that we need God. It is important that we fast in secret and with humility (St. Matthew 6:16). More importantly, we are to fast from sins such as pride, gossip, envy, greed and all other sins. Our Lord Jesus Christ does not tell us, “if you fast” but “when you fast” (St. Mathew 6:16). He fasted and prayed and expects us to do so, also, “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer” (St. Luke 6:12). Attending as many Church services as you can during the Lenten period in a way to increase your **prayer** life during Lent. We pray the Prayer of St. Ephraim often during Lenten services but we can pray it at any time of the year. We are told to pray without ceasing (Thes. 5:17). The Jesus prayer is one that can be prayed continuously: “O Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” And when the apostles asked Jesus to teach to pray, He taught them the Lord’s Prayer (St. Luke 11:1-4). We are expected to think of other People’s needs even more during Great Lent and to perform charitable acts, or **almsgiving**. For example, the money we save from eating less during Great Lent can be given to those in need, by giving food to a local food bank or to the food project of our Church. We can volunteer at a favorite charity “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me.” (St. Matthew 25:40). **Repentance** is asking God to forgive us, loving one another and looking at our own faults.

Through our Lenten efforts, we look with anticipation and joy towards the coming of the Resurrection of Christ. Finally, our hearts are filled with joy because we realize the beneficence of God. In order to truly experience the joy of Resurrection, please make every effort to fast according to the best of your ability and to partake in the Sacraments of Holy Confession and Communion during this season on a regular basis.

Prayer of St. Ephraim:

“O Lord and Master of my life take from me the spirit of sloth, faint heartedness, lust of power and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to thy servant. Yea. O Lord and King grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother; for thou art blessed unto ages of ages Amen.”

Home Study/Activities

1. Read Holy Scripture and in particular The Orthodox Study Bible.
2. Read the lives of the saints and some other spiritually rewarding book.
3. Read St. Matthew 6:16-18 to learn Jesus’ instructions how to fast.
4. Begin a prayer routine by saying morning and evening prayers.

The Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts will be served on Wednesdays and Fridays during Lenten Season. The Presanctified Divine Liturgy will be served on Wednesdays at 5:00am and on Fridays at 9:30am. The Great Cannon of St. Andrew will be served every evening during the First week of Lent at 7:00pm.

• **March 7, 2010, 12:30pm - THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

You are hereby invited to attend the Annual Meeting of our Parish, which will be held at our Parish Center, 2148 Michelson Dr., Irvine, California, on Sunday, March 7th 2010, following the Divine Liturgy and lunch. It is imperative that all of our faithful attend this meeting to discuss the many important matters about the future of our Parish. The Parish Board will present the financial statement for 2009, and a budget proposal for 2010.

Please invite all Orange County Serbian Orthodox people members of our Community to join you. Also, it is essential that you submit your *Parishioner Application* and *Stewardship Pledge* Forms before the meeting to become a member in good standing. If you do not have these Forms, please contact Fr. Blasko @ (949) 830-5480. In anticipation of your presence at this meeting, we remain,

Yours in Christ, Fr. Blasko Paraklis, Parish Priest Zika Tatalovic, President

Elections for the 2010 Parish Board will be held at our Annual Meeting on March 7, 2010.

Who is eligible to serve on the Parish Board? The baptized Orthodox Christian, man or woman, who is a practicing member of the faith, participates in the sacramental life of the Church faithfully, who seeks to live his or her life fully in accordance with the Gospel and the canons of the Church and has been a member of the parish prior to elections.

We have a strong and active Board today, who fairly share the responsibilities so that none have any unreasonable burden. We are recruiting interested and active Board members as we pursue our long-term plans. If you would like to serve Christ and His church by serving on the Parish Board, please contact Zika Tatalovic, Board President, any member of the current Board, or our Parish Priest, Fr. Blasko Paraklis.

STEWARDSHIP

“How will we repay the Lord for all that He has given us?” - St. Basil the Great

I am writing you dear Brothers and Sisters to announce our 2010 Stewardship Drive and to ask for your much needed participation. As Christians – followers of Christ, we understand our life as a stewardship of all that comes to us from the love of God. We do this by giving sacrificially, praying daily, worship God each Sunday, witnessing to Christ in the world, and by helping our neighbor. All this is possible when love of Christ is the motivating force in our life. On the other hand, when love for Christ is not the motivating force, then these things become unpleasant duties.

Stewardship is a concept revealing who we are as people under God’s sovereign rule. The Psalmist David asks: “What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounties to me?” God has given us everything: our families, our children, our business, our health, our earthly possessions: literally everything. Stewardship is a demonstration of love for God and praise of Him for all his bounties. God deserves our praise. Stewardship is that praise.

As we enter into 2010, let us take a look back at this past year and ask ourselves how we have used the precious gifts of God. We are called to use them for the glory of God. Stewardship of all we have is responding to God’s love by offering ourselves to Him.

May we always use everything we have for a worthwhile purpose. May we turn everything about our life into a Christ-like purpose.

It is with this in mind that I humbly ask you to pledge your stewardship for the upcoming year.

You know the best your financial situation. Whatever you do, do it from the heart. All I can ask is that you consider and pray about our request for the support of the church. Only you know what you are able to give and whatever you choose to contribute will be appreciated. March 7th 2010 is a Stewardship Sunday and the annual meeting of the Parish. Please fill out the enclosed form, mail it to us before March 7th or bring it with you to the Annual meeting.

2010 Stewardship Pledge Form

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 Lord in the mission of spreading **His Gospel**...

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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ EMAIL _____

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

TOTAL PLEDGE FOR 2010: \$ _____

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

SIGNED _____ **DATE** _____

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 @ 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

JANUARY 6th БАДЊЕ ВЕЧЕ - CHRISTMAS EVE

Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m.

Nativity Vigil at 6:30 p.m.

Yule Log Ceremony and Lenten Dinner following church services (Освећење бадњака и вечера после вечерње службе) Parents, please arrive with your children no later than 6:00 p.m.

JANUARY 7th BOZIC - NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - CHRISTMAS

Festive Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. and Christmas lunch following. No charge for lunch, Donations only.

JANUARY 8th Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos –
Divine Liturgy 8:00 a.m.

JANUARY 9th St. Stephen the First Archdeacon and Martyr – Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

JANUARY 13th

SERBIAN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

Serbian New Year's celebration will be held at the Andrei's Restaurant in Irvine.

JANUARY 14th St. Basil the Great – New Year's Day – Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

NO FASTING FROM JANUARY 7TH THROUGH AND INCLUDING JANUARY 17TH

In celebration of Christmas we do not fast at all (even on Wednesdays and Fridays) from January 7 through and including January 17. On January 18, however, we fast rigorously (no meat/poultry, dairy products/eggs or fish) in preparation for the Feast of Epiphany on January 19th.

JANUARY 18th Theophany Eve – Krstovdan
Divine Liturgy & Great Blessing of Water 10:00 a.m.
Bring your empty bottles for holy water.

JANUARY 19th Theophany – Bogojavljenje.
Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m. Followed by Great blessing of Water.

JANUARY 20th St. John the Baptist –
Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

OSVEČENJE VODICOM - EPIPHANY HOME BLESSINGS TO BEGIN JANUARY 18

This service is essentially the “consecrating” of one’s home and/or business, a marking off and consecration of one’s living space and/or working space that declares your home and work and all who live in it as belonging to Christ! It coincides with the New Year and allows us to rededicate, renew and fortify not only ourselves with the blessings of the Epiphany but also our homes and work places. Those wishing to have their home and/or workplace blessed during this period are asked to contact me at my home number (949) 830-5480 or at email: fiparaklis@aol.com

PREPARATION FOR ST. SAVA PROGRAM If you want your child to participate in the St. Sava program, please contact the priest @ 949 830-5480 or Sanja Rakonjac at (949) 631-6622 as soon as possible. All children who are participating in the St. Sava program must attend rehearsals regularly.

JANUARY 25th ST. SAVA OBSERVANCE

We shall hold our St. Sava celebration on Sunday, January 25th. The Divine Liturgy as usual will start at 10:00 a.m. Banquet and children's program will follow Divine Liturgy. Dr. Katina Kostoulas will give a presentation on Orthodox parenting following the children program. If you want your child to participate in St. Sava's children program please contact Sanja Rakonjac @ (714) 723-2303 or Fr. Blasko @ 949 830-5480 as soon as possible.

JANUARY 27th ST. SAVA

Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m

FEBRUARY 12th САБОР СВ. ТРИ ЈЕРАРХА - SYNAXIS OF THE THREE HOLY HIERARCHS Св. Литургија почеће у 9:30ам часова пре подне. The Holy Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30 a.m.

FEBRUARY 14/15th СПРЕТЕЊЕ ГОСПОДЊЕ – MEETING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE – Presentation. Св. Литургија почеће у 10:00ам часова пре подне. Holy Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 a.m.

MARCH 22nd “Младенци” The Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m.

SCHEDULES OF EVENTS (continued)

MARCH 22nd LAZARUS SATURDAY Divine Liturgy at 9:30am VESPERS - ВРБИЦА at 5:00pm: I ask all of the parents to bring children. PLEASE ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 4:45pm 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.

MARCH 28th - ЦВЕТИ ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM: Divine Liturgy at 10:00am: 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.

MARCH 28th - 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.

MARCH 29th - Veliki Ponedeqak Great and Holy Monday Presanctified Liturgy at 5:00am: The readings from Exodus during these services tell of the Passover which precedes the Passover (Pascha) of Christ.

MARCH 29th - Bridegroom Matins at 7:00 pm.

MARCH 30 - Велики Уторак Great and Holy Tuesday Presanctified Liturgy at 5:00 am

MARCH 30th - Bridegroom Matins at 7:00 pm

MARCH 31st - Велика Среда Great and Holy Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy at 9:30 am

MARCH 31st - Велика Среда - Great and Holy Wednesday Holy Unction at 7pm, 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 1st - Велики четвртак - Great and Holy Thursday: Holy Vespers Liturgy of Holy Thursday at 9:30am: 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 1st - Велики четвртак - Great and Holy Thursday Matins of Holy Friday Thursday evening at 7:00pm. 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 2nd - Велики Петак - Great and Holy Friday Royal Hours at 9:00am: 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 2nd - Велики Петак - Great and Holy Friday Vespers at 4:00pm: 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 2nd - Велики Петак - Great and Holy Friday Matins of Holy Saturday on Friday evening at 7:00pm: 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 3rd - Велика Субота - Great and Holy Saturday Vespertal Liturgy of Holy Saturday at 10:00am: 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 3rd - Велика Субота Васкрсно јутрење - Great and Holy Saturday: The Services of the Great and Holy Pascha Saturday evening starting at 11:45pm: 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 Resurrectional Matins on Pascha night and again following Divine Liturgy on Sunday.**

APRIL 4th - "VASKRSENJE HRISTOVO"- EASTER CELEBRATION, Divine Liturgy at 10:00am 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.

Христос воскрес! Christ has Risen!

Vaskrsenje – Pascha

Celebration 2010

*Celebrate The Resurrection of Our
Lord Jesus Christ!*

Sunday, April 4th, 2010

***Divine Liturgy:* 10:00am @ Parish Center**

***Banquet:* 12:00pm – 4:00 pm**

***Where:* Parish Center @ 2148 Michelson, Irvine**

- VLADAN BELJIC ORCHESTRA
- Live Serbian Music and Kolo Dancing
- Delicious Lunch: Serbian Food and Pastries!
- Easter Egg Hunt, Gifts and Surprises,
- **Safe Enclosed Play Area for the Children**
- Plenty of Seating with Room for the Entire Family and Friends
- \$25 Adults, \$15 Teens, Kids 9 & Under Free!

***PLEASE R.S.V.P. IN
ADVANCE...***

Email to: frparaklis@aol.com

OR Buy Advance Tickets at Parish Center on
Sunday, March 28th

OR Mail Payment to 2148 Michelson, Irvine, CA
92612

We Expect a Big Turnout!

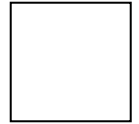
...RSVP Soon!

EASTER GIFT

- NAME / IN NAME OF: _____
- ADDRESS: _____
- CITY / STATE: _____ ZIP _____
- Easter Donation \$ _____
- Make your check payable to: Most Holy Theotokos Church and mail it to: 2148 Michelson Dr. Irvine, CA 2148 Michelson Dr. Irvine, CA 92612 **THANK YOU**



Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Missionary Parish
 2148 Michelson Drive
 Irvine, California 92612



J JOVANA JERINIC
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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.