



Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Missionary Parish, Orange County, California

# CHURCH NEWSLETTER

January – March 2013

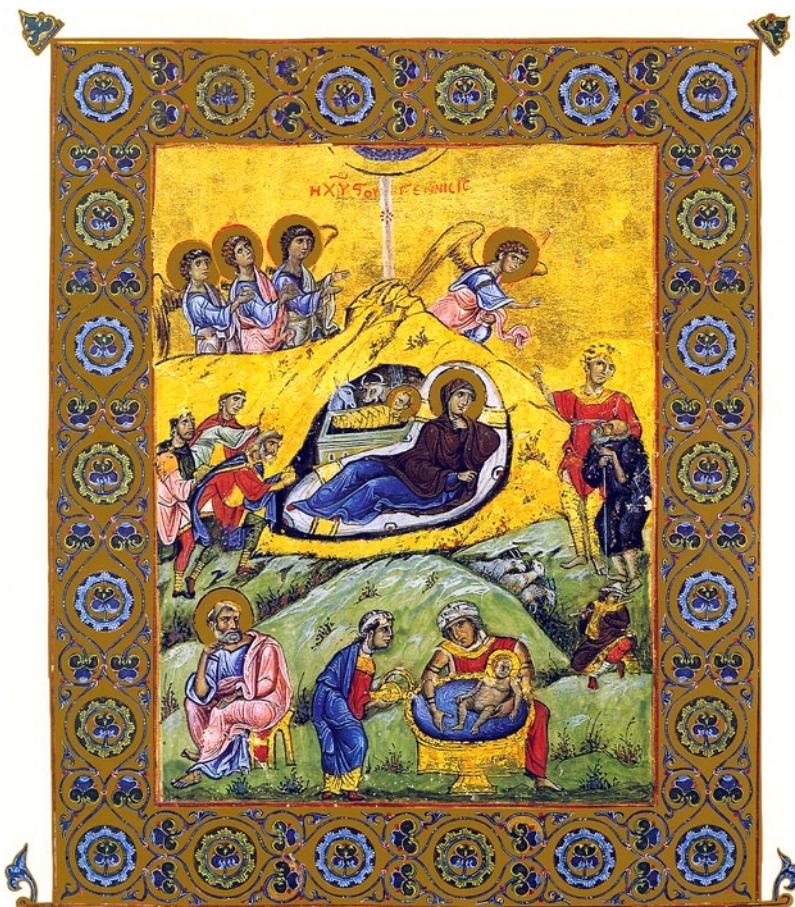
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## From the Church Fathers

*Below are extracts from a sermon delivered on the Feast of Our Lord's Nativity, ascribed to St. John Chrysostom. The opening is a model of rhapsodic prose, a treasured style of past centuries. The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers, 4 Volumes, tr. & ed. M.F. Toal, pp.110-117 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000).*

**I** behold a new and wondrous mystery. My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven: hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices, and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of Justice.



And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed, He had the power, He descended, He redeemed; all things move in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. For When He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any

loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassibility, remaining unchanged...

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing

with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Yet He has not forsaken His angels, nor left them deprived of His care, nor because of His Incarnation has He departed from the Godhead. And behold kings have come, that they may adore the heavenly King of glory; soldiers, that they might serve the Leader of the Hosts of Heaven; women, that they might adore Him Who was born of a woman so that He might change the pains of childbirth into joy; virgins, to the Son of the Virgin, beholding with joy, that He Who is the Giver of milk, Who has decreed that the fountains of the breast pour forth in ready streams, receives from a Virgin Mother the food of infancy; infants, that they may adore Him Who became a little child, so that out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings, He might perfect praise; children, to the Child Who raised up martyrs through the rage of Herod; men, to Him Who became man, that He might heal the miseries of His servants; shepherds, to the Good Shepherd Who has laid down His life for His sheep; priests, to Him Who has become a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech; servants, to Him Who took upon Himself the

form of a servant that He might bless our servitude with the reward of freedom; fishermen, to Him Who from amongst fishermen chose catchers of men; publicans, to Him Who from amongst them named a chosen Evangelist; sinful women, to Him Who exposed His Feet to the tears of the repentant; and that I may embrace them all together, all sinners have come, that they may look upon the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of Days has become an infant. He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, Who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infant's bands. But he has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His Goodness. For this He assumed my body, that I might become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His Spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit, that He may save me.

## ❖ БОГ, ВРИЈЕМЕ И ЧОВЈЕК ❖ (Христо Јанарас)

Бог се уплиће у вријеме да би човјека ослободио од времена. Рођење (Христово) у времену јесте један рез у времену, оно побија ток времена, временост као робовање „претходном“ и „наредном“. Бог се једном пукотином могућности уплиће у појавну стварност – а могућност је лични однос са Њим; Рођење је једна пукотина у објективној времености, која (пукотина) открива бездимензијално вријеме личног односа, превазилажења времена у безграничној садашњости заједнице у љубави. Без Бога, без личног односа и упућености на *par excellence* личносну Другојачијост, човјек постаје вријеме, један измјериви процес напредујућег мијењања: мјера његовог живота јесу мијењање као временост и временост као пропадљивост. Без Бога, човјек постаје објекат који је у потпуности одређен временом и потчињен истом: на нашем овдашњем, технолошком језику рекли би смо да човјек постаје конкретна временска јединка произ-

водње и измјерено трајање потрошње – људски живот постаје осам часова, ограничено временско прибијегавање „разоноди“, годишњи приходи и годишњи расходи, пензионерско доба, и на крају два датума: датум рођења и датум смрти.

Рођење Христово побија вријеме, зато што у вријеме уводи вјечност „природне“ заједнице човјека и Бога. Вјечност није материјално вријеме у неком свом бесконачном продужавању, него садашњост личног односа, бездимезионални догађај заједнице у љубави, дакле *онај начин њостојања* који поново успоставља човјека у пуноћи његове личносне истине, изнад сваке ограничености временом, простором или пропадљивошћу природе. Унутар литургијског времена Цркве, вјерни се дотичу укуса тог оневештаственованог времена личне заједнице. Сваки литургијско-евхаристијски скуп није понављање, опонашање, нити симболизовање, него наше



живо учешће у Тијелу Христовом, у чињеници „природног“ уједињења Бога и човјека. А на границама тог догађаја прошлост, садашњост и будућност се сажимају у непосредност присуства: Евхаристију приносимо сви скупа; живи и упокојени, пророци и мученици, преподобни и исповједници, праоци, апостоли, заједно са нама, овдашњим цариницима, разбојницима и проституткама – сви присутни „пред лицем“ Божијим, у непосредности личног односа са Њим. Вјечност Цркве се не тумачи (до једино релативно и сликовно) философским појмом „бесмртности душе“, Црква не спасава „дух“, него цијелога човјека, онаквог каквим га је Христос примио у свом Богочовјечанском Тијелу: вјечност за Цркву јесете непосредно искуство преображавања времена у перспективама Догађаја спасења, Оваплоћења Христовог савременог присуства Тијела које врши евхаристију.

Рођење Христово побија вријеме зато што временски слијед догађаја претвара у празнично свједочанство садашњости спасења. Упосредо са, и, у суштини, изван и изнад астрономског времена измјерљиве пропадљивости, Црква има свој циклус времена, празнични циклус радости, радост њеног Јеванђеља артикулисану у виду свакодневног празника. Циклус њених празника је покретан и непокретан – непремјестиво кретање и покретна сталност – Божић, Богојављење, Васкрс, Педесетница, Успеније, Крстовдан, Ваведење – један за другим пресеци у хоризонталном времену пропадљивости промјене, периодично понављање које живот и вријеме сједињује у неизмјестивом тежишту које је Догађај спасења. И сваке седмице Васкрсење у недјељу, на границама бројчане пуноће и надилажења бројева којих је седам, и сваки дан циклус часова (*дневних бојослужења, њ.п.*) са поменом неког светитеља, тријумфом једног личног уласка у садашњост вјечности као центром – сваки дан празник побједе над смрћу.

Рођење Христово побија вријеме, зато што побија историју, ту утопију временске објективности, измишљену вјечност једног окамењеног „дешавати се“ које је саткано од људских страсти, насиља, надметања, интереса, од ужасности мржње, од звјерства изабљивања. Зато што је историја само оно што може да се објективизује у времену, и због тога непосредност личног односа и није историја – богослужење, љубав, умјетност, политика као правда и самоодрицање. И све оне пројаве личног живота које остају као рјечити споменици и побјеђују вријеме, нису историјски фосили објективизирани у сјећању, него непосредности личног присуства,

непрекидно актуелне могућности личног учешћа у животу. Рођење Христово побија историју јер људско дешавати се обухвата у садашњост егзистенцијалног одмеравања човјека са истином, живот изражава, обухвата истином и истину откорива као живот. Тако се историја као настављање показује као вид робовања објективном времену, човјек је у оквирима историје временска јединка, потчињена или побуњена у оквирима објективних „стања“ које је одређују, безизлазно заробљена у канхама друштвеног одмјеравања права и обавеза. Историју препуштамо рукама њених вичних тумача, свих оних који човјека мјере као вријеме и вријеме као производњу, и живот као временост потрошње – капиталистима и социјалистима свих нијанси (сваког кова), у истом врзином колу времена – новца, извитоперења човјека у „новац“ (средство), било да су средства за производњу државна, било приватна. Христос прави расцјеп у Историји корјеним разликовањем Бога и ћесара, ово-свјетске организације ради доброг живота индивидуе и слободе личносног остварења у оквирима заједнице љубави.

Рођење Христово побија вријеме јер, проображавајући жељу у љубавну пуноћу трајања, побија првенственост „тренутка“. Христос се „рађа од Дјеве“, и то безсјемено рођење истиче и остварује љубав као свеобухватно прожимање: цијели Бог и цијели човјек се несливено, нераздјељиво, неизмјениво и нераздвојно сједињују у оквирима пуноће љубавног „из-ступања“, које је дјевичанско, јер је ослобођено нештољиве индивидуалне жеље. Одатле па на даље, љубав постаје „тајна“ пројављивања јединства Христовог са човјечанством, и свака љубав јесте једна могућност испуњавајућег трајања као дјевичанство самонадилажења. Чежња се ослобађа временске везаности за „тренутак“, љубавно вријеме више није понављање Данајске трагедије, љубав поново постаје могућност да човјек изађе из самога себе, из ропства временског слиједа тренутка чежње, да оствари тајну заједнице природа у оквиру љубавног самоприношења.

Бог се уплиће у вријеме да би човјека ослободио од времена. Али, слобода је увијек једна лична могућност, једна актуализована – динамичка потврда истине. Због тога Рођење Христово увијек остаје Тајна страна и чудесна, вјероватноћа личног открочења – не објективност празника, него могућност учешћа у празнику и у вишезначном „благостању“.

(Вигослов др. 28, јог. 2003,  
са ирчкој ирвела Маја Раиовић)

# Мир Божји, Христос се роди!



# Peace of God! Christ is born!

Као и сваке године узнесимо њесме да ѡрославимо велики догађај рођења Христѡа Сѡасиѡеља драѡа браћо и сесѡре. Више од месец дана Црква нас сѡрема за овај ѡразник ѡредивним химнама: Христѡс се рађа, ѡрославѡе Га! Христѡс с неба долази, дочекајѡе Га! Христѡс је на земљи- ѡносиѡе се! ПодиЖиѡе се и усавршавајѡе се. Разаѡнана је ѡама ѡнева Божјеѡ. Сада има лека ѡроѡив рана, ѡреха и сѡрасѡи. Униѡиѡени су окови роѡсѡива, синовсѡиво је усѡановљено.

Која би искрена ѡудска душа осѡала хладнокрвна ѡред овим великим догађајем, а да не узвикује:

Слава ѡи Госѡоде, ѡиѡ се на земљи родио Христѡс!

Христѡс је на земљи - ѡносиѡе се! Расѡиѡе у Христѡу! Друѡим речима лик Христѡов нека се уреже у ваѡу дуѡу, у ваѡа срца. Нека дуѡа наѡа чезне за Боѡм као сува земља за киѡом. Нека дуѡа наѡа и срце наѡе усађује у себе сваку реч о Христѡу, о ѡеѡовом рођењу и науци Њеѡвој. Тада ћемо осѡиѡиѡи неѡисану радосѡи.

Верујем, драѡа браћо и сесѡре, да ћемо и ми не само да Га ѡрославимо, већ и да Га дочекамо и да му се ѡклонимо. Да му ѡринесемо на дар све чистѡ и досѡјѡно ѡиѡ моЖемо нађи у дуѡама наѡим. Да му дамо срце наѡе као ѡеђину и јасле, да би се уселио у нас, да бисмо моѡли заједно са целом земљом да му ѡевамо с весељем и с радосном анђелском ѡесмом: Слава Боѡу на висини и на земљи мир, међу ѡудима добра воља.

Њему нека је слава и хвала, сада и увек и у векове векова. Амин!

Са овим мислима желим вам срећне и блаѡсловене ѡразнике Св. Рођења Христѡовоѡ и нову 2013. годину.

Ваѡ молиѡвеник ѡред  
Боѡмладенцем  
Христѡм  
О. Блашко  
Параклис



The great event of the Nativity of Christ the Savior is, once again, here, and as Christians have done every year for 2000 years, let us also, dear brothers and sisters, offer our praises again this year to celebrate His birth. For more than a month the church has been preparing us for this feast as we sing hymns that remind us: "Christ is being born, glorify Him! Christ is coming from Heaven, meet Him! Christ is on earth, be gracious!" His role as the Son of God has been established. Lift up your spirits and rejoice, for the darkness has been destroyed, and the chains of slavery have been broken. We now have the remedy for our wounds, for sin and death,

What human soul could remain cold and silent before such a great event without being able to say: "Glory to you, oh God, for the birth of Christ on earth!" Christ is on earth, be exulted! Grow in Christ! May the Image of Christ enter into your souls and your hearts. May your soul long for God like the dry earth is longing for rain. May your soul and heart soak up every word about Christ, about His birth, about His teachings. Let us take to heart the lessons He taught us on how to lead our lives so that we shall experience indescribable joy!

I believe, dear brothers and sisters, that we will not only celebrate His birth, but we are also going to welcome Christ into our lives and bow down before Him, to offer Him, as a gift, everything that is pure and worthy in our souls and our hearts. Let us offer Him our hearts as if it were a cave and a manger, a place of refuge like the one in which He came into our world, so that He can settle in us, and we can joyfully sing to Him, with the whole creation, the joyful Angelic hymn: "Glory be to God in the Highest, peace and good will on earth among men.

Glory be to Him, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen!"

With these prayerful thoughts  
I wish you all a most blessed  
Christmas and a Happy  
New Year!

Your intercessor before  
the Christ God,  
**Fr. Blasko Paraklis**



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## Past Events:

# Remembering the Future Things

16<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Days Gathering in the West Brings Together Clergy, Monastics  
and Pious Faithful for Three Days of Spiritual and Social Activities

This year marked the 16th gathering of the local Church in the West. The presiding hierarchy, His Grace Bishop Maxim, convened the clergy, monastics, and laity of his diocese, affirming the Eucharistic dimension of the local Church of God; that the Liturgy itself is the center of our life and a very act of passage and ascension into the Kingdom of God and the Future Life. The theme for the 2012 diocesan days pointed to this often forgotten dimension of the Church and her Eucharistic gathering. "Remembering the Future Things: an End even greater than the beginning," points to the very function of the *leitourgia* as the gathering and the work of God's Church to reveal that the true meaning of all things is in Christ - to actually become the manifestation of the new creation redeemed by Jesus Christ.

So, "remembering (this as) future things," places us at the beginning and at the end of all things, giving us a new perspective on our present and future life. We no longer look upon spiritual life and the Divine Liturgy (or Eucharist) as some 'external rites' to be observed and fulfilled, but rather as our participation in, and passage and ascension into the Kingdom of God.

The Church being aware of the struggle in the present world always references the Kingdom of God. While addressing so called "issues of the day," the Church never loses Her main dimension, that is, the participation in the

Heavenly Liturgy, and thereby empowering Her members and the world to overcome the mundane in order to ascend to Her level, the level of the Church of God – the Body of Christ.

The blessed gathering over the Labor Day weekend (August 31 through September 2 of this year), as established by the local bishop of Los Angeles and the West, began on Friday afternoon with a clergy seminar. Frequent clergy gatherings for pastoral meetings and seminars is an ongoing activity blessed by His Grace Bishop Maxim for the purpose of continued education of his clergy, assisting them in their pastoral work in today's ever so challenging society.

Visiting Hierarchs for Diocesan Days were: His Grace Bishop Ignjatije of Branicevo diocese, His Grace Bishop Grigorije of Zahumlje-Herzegovina-Littoral diocese, His Grace Bishop Longin of New Gracanica-Midwestern America diocese, and His Eminence Archbishop Joseph of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West, part of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese in America.

While His Grace Bishop Grigorije addressed the youth on Saturday afternoon, reminding them of the importance of participating in the Liturgy and Church's ministries, His Grace Bishop Ignjatije was a keynote speaker for the entire weekend. His Grace Ignjatije became a bishop in 1994 hav-

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ing his cathedra in Pozarevac. After 1988 he taught as a professor of Dogmatics and Systematic Theology at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the University of Belgrade, Serbia. His theological conceptions are mostly influenced by St. Maximus the Confessor and Metropolitan John Zizioulas. He is one of the most renowned contemporary Orthodox theologians and thinkers of this generation. He has written several books and many articles published in scholarly journals and theological magazines.

During his address to clergy on Friday, Bishop Ignjatije underlined the importance of knowing what the Church is according to the Holy Fathers, where some of them see the Church as an eschatological community gathered around one bishop to serve the Eucharist. According to St. Ignatius of Antioch, the Liturgical gathering is the actual presence of Christ - in the person of the bishop, apostles, and in the person of the presbyters and the people gathered round them. The Eucharist then is the icon of the last event of the Kingdom of God and of the Church.

The existing divergence in the approach to the ecclesiology (teachings about the Church), where one approaches the ecclesiology from the above mentioned Eucharistic perspective, and the other from an ascetical perspective, are

reconciled when we see asceticism as a way of assisting and helping us on the road that leads into communion with God who is Holy. Therefore we become holy only when we enter communion with Him, but not through our own ascetic struggles. His Grace Ignjatije reiterated that our communion with God should always be seen and realized through the person of Jesus Christ.

On Saturday morning the Hierarchical Liturgy was presided over by Bishop Maxim, while His Grace Ignjatije gave a key note address following the Liturgy on the theme of salvation. Here too, His Grace brought in his deep and insightful thoughts inspired by the Holy Fathers of the Church. Salvation (as opposed to Western thought that sees it as salvation from sin), according to Orthodox teaching is salvation from death. Hence, the central event, according to Orthodox theology, is not the cross; rather, it is the Resurrection.

The essence of our salvation is salvation from death itself. Death is defined as the discontinuation of personal relationships, e.g., hugging, kissing, smiling, etc. Here too we find two perspectives. The first one approaches death as a change of form. The positive science employs this approach. The second one views death from the perspective of per-



sonhood. A unique person finds his or her identity in unity with other person.

When you express love towards another person, you find that that person's response to be unique. When you love somebody, you find that person becomes a source of life for you. What happens when we see life from this perspective? When that person dies we begin to realize that the person we knew no longer exists. For example, a mother, if she loses her child cannot say, "Oh, I will have another child," she cannot conceive that.

So, from this perspective, death is really that enemy which threatens, and ultimately destroys, our lives. This is why the Holy Fathers approached theology from the standpoint of personhood. Our God is a communion of persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God wants us to live in communion with Him, because He is a God of love and out of love He creates the world.

On the afternoon of the second day, the Diocesan Assembly took place, during which various reports on ministries of the diocese and parishes were presented. Bishop Maxim expressed his profound joy in seeing all gathered for the annual Diocesan Days and the assembly touched upon the following theme found in Bishop Ignjatije's interview:

*It reminds us that the Future Age measures and judges every aspect of our life. The Truth of the Church heals human weaknesses and transcends linear historicism by making the Kingdom of God an essential part of the anamnesis, i.e., the historical consciousness of the Church and of Christians. Thus, the Church can say in the Eucharist remembrance that she – paradoxically – “remembers the...Second Coming [of Christ].” This is done “in the Holy Spirit” and this “transcendence” of history takes place both within and through history, thereby sanctifying and affirming history even more...The existence of the Church is revealed in the Liturgy. The ancient practice of going to the temple for the Liturgy meant bringing and offering the gifts which had been taken from the world and the people, offering the gifts, revealed themselves in the Church. It is this same Church, beloved in the Lord, with which you commune in every Eucharist gathering in your parish and with which you participate today in our 16th Diocesan Days Assembly, realizing, affirming, and invoking the unity of the Heavenly Kingdom of God. May the fullness of the Life that never ends be ours, both today, and always.*

Following the assembly, Folk Fest took place with dance groups from St. George parish of San Diego; St. Archangel Michael's, Salt Lake City; St. Petka, San Marcos; and St.





Simeon the Myrrh-flowing, Las Vegas. The program was led by Mrs. Ljiljana Pantovic who, together with the chairman of the 16th Diocesan Days, Fr. BlaskoParaklis, prepared an outstanding program. All participants attended the Vespers service held later that evening.

The following day, the Lord's Day (Sunday), a Hierarchical Liturgy was presided over by His Grace Bishop Ignjatije, concelebrated with the guest hierarchs, diocesan clergy, and monastics. Bishop Maxim, once again, greeted everyone, expressing his joy and thanks for this blessed gathering of his diocese. His Grace once again invited all to attend the banquet and wine symposium scheduled for that afternoon.

During the banquet address His Grace bishop Ignjatije spoke on the theme of family life and contemporary challenges facing Orthodox Christians:

*I am not an expert in economic issues; as every man, I too observe this contemporary situation from my perspective, that is, the perspective of the Orthodox Church, Scripture and our common witness. First of all I don't think it is necessarily a crisis, rather a monetary dilemma, one that has to do with our currency. In other words, it seems the crisis that we are speaking of has to do with the industrial goods that technology has*

*provided - such as mobile telephones, computers - that somehow we just don't have enough of, or that we think we don't have enough of. So the crisis today is often defined in terms of how many types of gadgets we have, or that we might no longer be able to afford as many of them - we have identified this as some sort of monetary crisis, because we can no longer live within the means that we have grown accustomed to...crises do exist, but they are not crises of a monetary nature. The Holy Fathers make it clear that for us there are things that can work against us. It is not that I reject advances in technology, but we have to be critical in our approach to today's technology and everything that it has to offer us. Be careful, because we are called to live and to help one another, to be careful with our life and not to abuse it in any way, especially with the technological advances that have now seemingly produced the type of monetary crisis that we are addressing.*

Regarding contemporary families and the problems faced by them (and what spiritual experience from the last century can we use in order to enhance our spiritual lives today in contemporary society), His Grace Ignjatije related the following:

*As with every problem we have to look at the source of these problems we are aware of. Just as a doctor looks at the*





source of a disease in order to administer the right medicine, so I too will make an attempt to make a diagnosis of the source of the problems of family life today. We know that families in our society are in great crisis, both here in America, and in Serbia where I live. The source seems to be in the individual's approach to family life, and that our way of living today seems to be one of concentrating on the self-sustaining person rather than on a shared life with others. As a matter of fact, we know that contemporary European philosophers have chosen to define hell as the other person, "my hell is the other person with whom I have to live." And of course, hedonism has its impact on life as a constant search for pleasure. So, when individuality and hedonism are combined, there is no room for community living and society is destined to fall apart. We also observe that marriages often last for only for a few months. There is a general lack of respect for each other; somehow we lose the uniqueness of the other person... So the crisis that we are identifying is with the family, rather than the concept of the family unit itself. It seems that everyone in the family today wants to live as an individual, though under the same roof. The child's room becomes off limits to the parents so that parents cannot even go inside their own child's room. Somehow we have given them an individualistic perspective on life. This is probably a result of the influence of protestant theology, this individualistic approach to organizing our families and our society.

Not wanting only to criticize, I would offer suggestions on how to resolve these problems. How do we get out of such a crisis? I propose that we teach ourselves and our children that we cannot live without each other that we belong to one another. We have to rediscover that we live not only for ourselves, but for each other. Our blessing and task is rediscovering that we live for each other and that there is not only the individual. I as a person do not exist without you. We see in the other person a brother and a sister. This even has an influence in our church life... Marriage and family life requires sacrifice. Husband and wife are called to sacrifice for each other. When we serve the other we actually serve God. We need to see God in the other person and recognize that God is the one who controls the other. Today, married couples often times delay having children because they want to enjoy life together now and think that later on they may want to have children, only after they have experienced all the comforts of this life. Unfortunately for some, it then turns out that they

cannot have children later. So, you see how that works out. I think that we have to go back to the basics. We need to learn and teach that we belong to each other. Salvation is in the other person; there is no salvation in isolation, but only in communion with each other. An old Latin proverb, *unus cristianus nulus cristianus*, "one Christian is equal to no Christian," speaks much to today's spiritual and societal problems, albeit it is individuality that we are addressing at this time. Death is defined as rejection of the other person. Let's learn together that the other belongs to us and that we belong to each other. Let's teach this to our children. Let's teach this Biblical truth from the first chapter in Genesis when God looked and said: "it is not good for man to be alone on the earth."

The Wine Symposium featuring wines from Tvrđos and Hilandar Monasteries in a comparison tasting with local California wines, started at five o'clock in the afternoon. According to abbot Sava of the Tvrđos monastery, their wines recently garnered three awards at the *Decanter Magazine* wine competition in London: Vranac, Bronze Medal; Zilavka, Bronze Medal; and Cabernet Sauvignon, Honorable Mention. This first wine symposium was well attended.

Grateful to One God in Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - for this is blessed gathering of God's Church, His Grace Bishop Maxim, clergy, parish representatives, and the faithful of this God protected diocese in the west are already making plans for the 50th anniversary of diocesan establishment and the Eucharistic gathering which will take place in 2013.

We offer our thanks to His Grace Bishop Maxim for his guidance, to members of the Diocesan Council, the chairman of the 2012 Diocesan Days, Fr. BlaskoParaklis, the hosting parishes: St. George parish, San Diego; St. Archangel Michael, Salt Lake City; St. Petka, San Marcos; and the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, Orange County, as well as to their parishioners and the chairpersons of each meal and activity.

We extend our special thanks to St. Steven's Cathedral and their clergy: Fr. Nikola Ceko, dean, and Fr. Norman Kosanovic, Choir "Istocnik" from Orange County Church, the Wine Symposium organizers, folklore groups, and all of the guests and faithful who support the work of the Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Protopresbyter Bratso Krsic



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## *Parish Slava*

# NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

Прослава славе наше парохијске Рођење Пресвете Богородице у недељу 23. септембра био је велики успех и велика радост за све нас. Хвала свима који су допринели успеху прославе својим учешћем и радом. Посебна захвалност Његовом Преосвештенству нашем Епископу Максиму за служење Св. Архијерејске Литургије нашем хору Источник, који својим благољепијем појања увек доприноси лепоти Светих Литургија и кумовима славе Зорану и Милени Владисављевић.

**T**he celebration of our Parish Slava, the Nativity of The Most Holy Theotokos, on September 23rd, was a huge success! The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, served by His Grace Bishop Maxim, was well attended by many of the faithful from our parish, as well as from other parishes, who enjoyed the day with good food and good music that created a lively ambience of friendship and camaraderie amongst all the various parishioners. We extend our most sincere thanks to His Grace Bishop Maxim, to the choir who gave a superb singing, as well as to all



of the faithful from neighboring parishes who, with their attendance and support, gave us great encouragement. Yet another special thank you goes to Zoran and Milena Vladislavljevic and their children for being kumovi, and to Dejan Tufegdzcic and the ladies of our KSS for preparing a wonderful luncheon with so many delicious selections to satisfy our palates, with special mention for the outstanding roast pork, superbly prepared by Dejan. May God grant many, many years of good health and prosperity to all who attended and all who contributed to the preparations that made this a memorable slava celebration!





## CONCERT OF THE FOLK GROUP TALIJA

„Taliја“ Art Company has been established in 1998 in Belgrade. First members were exceptionally good dancers who had a great experience in performance all over the world. Soon, the ensemble pulled toward a lot of youngsters and the children ensemble was also found, as well as musical orchestra. The excellent selection of program and great quality of performance opened the door of the world's stages for this ensemble, and a lot of tours and concerts on four continents followed. Most Holy Theotokos Church of Orange County hosted a concert performance of TALIIJA on November 4, 2012 at the Holy Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in Long Beach. The crowd enjoyed a two-hour international program of Eastern European dances in a most spectacular and most professional way. The next performance will be in October of 2014.



## ЛЕГЕНДА О КОСОВСКОМ БОЈУ ОСНОВА ВЕКОВНОГ ОПСТАНКА СРПСКОГ НАРОДА У ТУРСКОМ РОПСТВУ

– н а с т а в а к –

(Проф. Др. Радмило Достанић)

Срби се нису прославили бојем, него песмом о Косову, опевањем а не стварним јунацима.

Песма је кнеза произвела за цара. Цару је дала царицу, царици браћу, браћи имена. Није заборавила ни слуге Милутина и Голубана. Дала је имена хртовима и коњима. Сазнала је ко је и коме био кум, ко побратим, ко девер и тако довела у сродство цео народ. Призвала је и оне који су умрли пре боја и повратила оне који су се родили после њега. Учила је какве ко има очи а однекуда је сазнала и боју гласа својих јунака.

Поезија је изроила сазвежђе од 9. Југовића. Бановић Страхињу, Топлицу Милана, Косанчић Ивана, Срђу Злопоглеђу, Косовку девојку, Стевана Мусића, Рељу Крилатицу. То су само неке личности Косовске епопеје, личности непознате историји, али у свести српског народа нико није ни дуже ни више постојао. У памћење су ушли из поезије и одатле их нико није могао ишчупати. Може ли се истинскије постојати него што у свести српског народа постоји Бошко Југовић и његов барјак крсташ?

Песму “Пропаст царства српскога” чуо је Лукијан Мушицки на вашару код манастира Шишатовца од непознате следе жене из Гргујевца. Тако смо тек 1817. године, после оба српска устанка добили песму која је накнадно заузела место на почетку Српске илијаде.

У њој се налази онај значајан стих и у њему реч, која је одредила судбину српског народа:

**„Цар воледе царсѣву небескоме“**

Полећела соко ѿишца сива  
Од Свеишње од Јерусалима  
И он носи ѿишцу ластѣвицу  
То не био соко ѿишца сива  
Већ је био светишњенъ Илија  
Он не носи ѿишце ластѣвице  
Не ѿ књиѣ од Богородице  
Однесе је Цару на Косово  
Сѣишѣ књиѣ цару на колѣно  
Сама књиѣ цару бесѣдила.



Књигу не носи нико други до свети Илија – онај кога су као дете анђели повијали огњем и хранили пламеном. Онај кога је Бог често слао у Израил да грешнике приведе покајању. Књигу не шаље нико други до Богородица. А коју би другу књигу од Светиње од Јерусалима слала Богородица по светом Илији ако не ону једну једину, књигу свих књига, књигу о свом Јединцу. И шта би кнез Лазар читао уочи одсудног боја, него Нови завет. На Косову ће се поновити судбина Христова, јер кога би другога мати Бога нашега у Лазару препознала и чија би се друга судбина на Косову обновила. У српском народу ће се догодити Јеванђеље.

Кнезу Лазару је исход боја био познат. Казала му га је књига сама. Изабере ли царство небеско није рекла

да ће изгубити бој, већ нешто поразније: „сва ће твоја изгинути војска и ти ћеш кнеже с њоме погинути.“

Приносећи на жртву себе и свој народ и он најпре приређује вечеру, а позива у бој и старозаветном кљетвом проклиње сваког ко изостане. Три недеље тридесет калуђера исповеда и причешћује војску која за дату реч одлази у смрт. Није поштеђен ни соко на руци, сестри не остаје ни брат од заклетве, а јунак венчава девојку речју коју свет до тада није чуо: „Ево т’ идем погинути душо.“

Косовска легенда је неимар који је запослио цео српски народ, показао му путоказ спасењу и постао препрека његовом уништењу. Оборен ударцем споља, српски народ је почео долазити себи изнутра. Од својих духовних вредности начинио је бедем опстанка. Споља је пристао на све да унутра не би примио ништа.

Оно што му је требало за опстанак, српски народ је испевао, а оне које је изгубио на бојном пољу, повратио је и оживео у стиховима. Ономе што је изгубио у реалности, дао је трајност и оплакао у десетерцима. Барјак, пао на бојном пољу, пренет је и подигнут на виши, духовни план, и одатле га нико никада није могао оборити. Зато се са правом каже да је Косово легенда која је сачувала Српски народ у вековном ропству – Косово је легенда из које је израстао Српски народ. Косово је име за оно највредније што смо дали Хришћанској цивилизацији.

И како рече наш велики песник Матија Бећковић: „Право је чудо што се сва Српска земља није назвала Косово.“

*(У грѣом делу овој излајања коришћен је и ѿексѣ Матије Бећковића)*

## Plan Ahead: PARISH BOARD ELECTIONS

Elections for the 2013 Parish Board will be held at our Annual Meeting on February 24, 2013.

### 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 David Williams, Board President, any member of the current Board, or our Parish Priest, Fr. Blasko Paraklis.





## THE ORTHODOX VIEW ON STEWARDSHIP

*Glorify the Lord with your generosity, and do not reduce the first-fruits of your hands. In every gift, let your face be cheerful, and sanctify your tithe with gladness. Give to the most High as He has given to you and give to Him with generosity according to your windfall. For, the Lord is He Who repays and He will repay you sevenfold.”*  
(Wisdom of Sirach, Chapter 35, verses 7-10)

### “Abide in Me”

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 join us in stewardship program and bring your 2013 Stewardship Commitment Card here bellow 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. Currently, we are in the process of ensuring that all parishioners receive their 2013 Stewardship Commitment Card. Via this newsletter or our Web site. [www.mostholytheotokos.com](http://www.mostholytheotokos.com).

### 2013 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 my Lord in the  
mission of spreading  
**His Gospel.***

*...to anchor my personal.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

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

**TOTAL PLEDGE FOR 2013: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

To be paid: \_\_\_\_ weekly \_\_\_\_ monthly \_\_\_\_ quarterly \_\_\_\_ in full

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# 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 p.m.**

**JANUARY 6<sup>th</sup>**

**БАДЊЕ ВЕЧЕ - CHRISTMAS EVE**

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

Nativity Vigil at 6:00 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 7<sup>th</sup>**

**БОЖИЋ -**

**NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - CHRISTMAS**

Festive Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m. and Christmas lunch following. No charge for lunch, Donations only.

**JANUARY 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos**  
– Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**JANUARY 9<sup>th</sup>**

**St. Stephen the First Archdeacon and Martyr** – Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**JANUARY 13<sup>th</sup>**

**SERBIAN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION**

Serbian New Year's celebration will be held at Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine. See enclosed flyer!

**JANUARY 14<sup>th</sup>**

**St. Basil the Great** – New Year's Day  
– Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**NO FASTING FROM JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup> THROUGH AND INCLUDING JANUARY 17<sup>TH</sup>**

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 19<sup>th</sup>.

**JANUARY 18<sup>th</sup>**

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

**JANUARY 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Theophany – Богојављење.**

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Followed by Great blessing of Water.

**JANUARY 20<sup>th</sup>**

**St. John the Baptist** - Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**ОСВЕЋЕЊЕ ВОДИЦОМ - EPIPHANY HOME BLESSINGS TO BEGIN JANUARY 18**

We begin this new year with a great joy. Joy for the growth and stability of our beloved parish. Joy for our brotherhood in Christ in His Holy Church. As such, we should manifest that joy by asking for His blessings each year. A way to concretely ask for such a blessing is to have our homes

blessed each year by a priest.

This is long-standing tradition in the Orthodox Church. Each year after the Feast of Theophany, we schedule the blessing of homes. The priest performs a short service and goes to every room in the house, sprinkling each room with the Holy Water that was blessed at the Theophany service or at home. The priest also prays for all those in the house. It is a beautiful custom that not only asks God for the blessing of the upcoming year but allows the priest to see each of the families in the parish. As the Evangelist John the Theologian writes, *"I know My Sheep and am known by my own."* (John 10:14) The priest must know those people in his parish so that he can better serve them.

So my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, schedule a home blessing after the feast of Theophany. I have been in the parish for quite a few years and am yet to visit some of your homes. We should have our houses blessed every year. And it would be a great joy for me as your priest to do so and thank you in person for all of your love and support for my family and myself.

I wish all of you a prosperous and peaceful new year and again thank you for your love and support.

**PREPARATION FOR ST. SAVA PROGRAM.**

If you want your child to participate in the St. Sava program, please contact the priest @ 949 830-5480 All children who are participating in the St. Sava program must practice the poems at home and attend rehearsals.

**JANUARY 27<sup>th</sup>**

**ST. SAVA**

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

We shall hold our St. Sava celebration



on Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>. The Divine Liturgy as usual will start at 10:00 a.m. Banquet and children's program will follow Divine Liturgy. If you want your child to participate in St. Sava's children program please contact me via email OBlasko@aol.com or @ 949 830-5480 as soon as possible.

#### **FEBRUARY 12<sup>th</sup>**

#### **SABOR SV. TRI JERARHA - SYNAXIS OF THE THREE HOLY HIERARCHS**

Св. Литургија почеће у 10:00 часова пре подне. The Holy Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 a.m.

#### **FEBRUARY 15<sup>th</sup>**

**СПЕТЕЊЕ ГОСПОДЊЕ –  
MEETING OF OUR LORD JESUS  
CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE –**  
Presentation. Св. Литургија почеће у 10:00 часова пре подне. Holy Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 a.m.

#### **MARCH 9<sup>th</sup>**

Задушнице - Memorial Saturday Div.  
Liturgy @ 10:00 am

#### **MARCH 22,**

“Mladenci” The Divine Liturgy at  
10:00 a.m.

**GREAT LENT** Great Lent starts on  
Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> and will end on  
Paschal Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>

**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 5:00 a.m.  
and on Fridays at 10:00 a.m. The  
Great Cannon of St. Andrew will be  
served every evening during the First  
week of Lent at 7:00 p.m.

#### **• FEBRUARY 24, 2013, 12:30 p.m.**

#### ***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, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013, 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 2011, and a budget proposal for 2012.

Please invite the people you know 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  
David Williams, President

#### ***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 in the kitchen. 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 or to Focus program. 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, Danijela or Sanja. It is such a great help. Check your fridge and cupboards before coming to Church on Sundays and bring whatever you possibly can donate.

#### ***CARPOOL NEEDED FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE***

In our Parish we have a few elderly people who cannot drive to Divine Liturgies on Sundays. We need volunteers to take turns and bring our senior citizens to church. If you know any other elderly or disabled person who is in such need or any other kind of need, please contact Fr. Blasko immediately at (949) 830-5480.

#### ***OFFERINGS***

of wine for Holy Communion, oil for the vigil lamps, candles for the Holy Altar table, and incense for services may be made by contacting the parish priest. The customary donations are as follow: for vigil lamps, \$20.00; wine, \$10.00 per bottle or \$65.00 per case; candles for the Holy Altar, \$30.00; and incense, \$40.00

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа!  
- Христос Рождается!  
- *Славийте Его!*

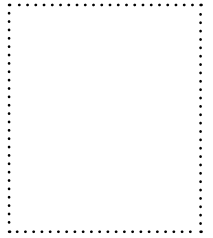
Христово Рождество дает нам особую весточку с Неба. И эта весточка с Неба в словах Ангела Божия, который явился Иосифу и сказал ему, что Младенец, Которого дает ему Господь от Духа Святого, будет Иисус, что значит Спаситель, потому что Он спасет людей от грехов их. Это имеет огромное значение для всего мира и для каждого из нас лично. Иисус, что значит Спаситель, спасает нас и весь мир не просто от кого-то другого, как думали в то время, не просто прощает нам наши грехи, не просто избавляет нас от наказания за грехи. Нет. Он спасает нас от грехов, Он избавляет нас от самих грехов. И в этом есть суть и смысл всего Евангелия и всего Нового завета, завета человека с Богом через Иисуса-Спасителя.



## Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Missionary Parish

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