



Приходскій листокъ

Свято-Вознесенской церкви

въ городъ Сакраменто

Западно-Американская епархія

Русская Православная Церковь Заграницей

№ 419

24 мая/6 июня, 2010 года

Икона Божіей Матери «Споручница грѣшныхъ»



Тропарь гласъ 4-й

Умолкаетъ нынѣ всякое уныніе / и страхъ отчаянія исчезаетъ, / грѣшницы въ скорбѣхъ сердца обрѣтають утѣшенія / и небесною любовію озаряются свѣтло. / Днесъ бо Мати Божія простираетъ къ намъ спасающую руку / и отъ Пречистаго образа Своего вѣщаетъ, глаголя: / Азъ Споручница грѣшныхъ къ Моему Сыну, / Сей даль Мнѣ за нихъ рудѣ слышати Мя выну. / Тѣмже людіе, обремененніи грѣхми и скорбьми многими, / припадите къ подножію Ея иконы со слезами, вопіюще: / Заступнице міра, грѣшныхъ Споручнице! / Умоли Матерними Твоими молитвами Избавителя всѣхъ, / да Божественнымъ всепрощеніемъ покрыетъ грѣхи наша / и свѣтлыя двери райскія отверзетъ намъ, / Ты бо еси предстательство и спасеніе рода христіанскаго.

Икона Божіей Матери «Споручница грѣшныхъ»

29-го мая/11 іюня



Название этой иконы принадлежит числу трогательнѣйшихъ среди наименованій иконъ Богоматери. Поручительница за грѣшныхъ! Какая глубочайшая мысль заключена въ этихъ словахъ!.. Люди согрѣшили. Люди праведнымъ судомъ Божиимъ признаны достойными наказанія, гибели. Но есть за нихъ въ высокомъ небѣ неусыпающая Ходатайница: Богоматерь борется за ихъ спасеніе. Она выискиваетъ способы привести человѣка къ покаянію. Когда человѣкъ и не думаетъ еще объ исправленіи, Она поручается Богу, что человѣкъ исправится... И что побѣдитъ: человѣческое ли ожесточеніе, или милующая и ведущая людей ко спасенію благодать Богоматери?

Изображеніе иконы Богоматери Споручницы грѣшныхъ таково: Богоматерь изображена по поясъ, лѣвою рукою Она держитъ Божественнаго Младенца, Который обѣими руками Своими сжимаетъ правую

руку Богоматерь, какъ это обыкновенно дѣлается при заключеніи сдѣлокъ. Въ четырехъ углахъ иконы написано: «Азь Споручница грѣшныхъ къ Моему Сыну; Сей даль мнѣ за нихъ руцѣ слышати Мя выну (постоянно), да ти, иже радость выну Мнѣ приносятъ, радоватися вѣчно чрезъ Меня испросятъ». Сколько утѣшенія, сколько счастливыхъ обѣщаній для вѣрующихъ въ этихъ словахъ, что Христось «даль руцѣ», то-есть торжественно завѣрилъ Свою Мать, что всегда будетъ внимать мольбамъ Ея!

Происхожденіе иконы неизвѣстно. Полагаютъ, что мысль объ изображеніи иконы Споручницы подали слова одного изъ акаѳистовъ Богоматери: «Радуйся, руцѣ Твои въ порученіи о насъ Богу приносящая!» Появилась икона въ Орловской епархіи, въ Николаевскомъ – Одринѣ монастырѣ. Долго икона эта оставалась безъ вниманія. Она стояла въ часовнѣ за монастырскими воротами, среди другихъ старыхъ иконъ, и отъ времени такъ почернѣла, и столько на нее насѣло пыли, что изображеніе было еле видно, а надписи и совсѣмъ нельзя было разобрать.

Лѣтомъ 1844 года явилась въ Одринѣ монастырь купеческая жена Почепина съ двухъ-лѣтнимъ сыномъ. Мальчикъ этотъ былъ подверженъ ужаснѣйшимъ припадкамъ, и врачи не могли оказать ему никакой помощи. Почепина просила отслужить ей молебенъ предъ иконою Споручницу, находящейся въ часовнѣ, – и мальчикъ получилъ мгновенное исцѣленіе. Затѣмъ совершились другія чудеса. Икона стала почитаться чудотворной.

Икона была омыта, причемъ обнаружилась знаменательная на ней надпись, затѣмъ, торжественно перенесена изъ часовни въ церковь.

Скоро въ городѣ Карачевѣ и въ Орлѣ появилась холера. Къ иконѣ Споручицѣ грѣшныхъ въ Одринѣ монастырь стекались не только здоровые, но и зоболѣвшіе. Несмотря на страшную заразительность болѣзни никто изъ приходившихъ не умиралъ. Орловскіе жители пожелали принести икону къ себѣ, и тогда холера въ Орлѣ совершенно прекратилась. Недавно въ Одринѣ монастырѣ въ честь иконы воздвигнутъ каменный трехпрестольный храмъ...

«Богоматерь», Полное иллюстрированное описаніе Ея земной жизни и посвященныхъ Ея имени чудотворныхъ иконъ, Е. Поселянина, С-Петербургъ, стр. 183-184.

Богослов.Ру

Митрополитъ Навпактскій Іерофей (Влахось)

21.04.2008



Преподобный далъ развернутое интервью газетѣ "Элевферосъ Типосъ", въ которомъ отвѣтилъ на актуальные вопросы, въ настоящее время волнующие греческое общество. Среди нихъ договоръ о свободномъ сожительствѣ, однополые браки, открытіе экзархата Вселенскаго Патріархата въ Афинахъ, собственность Церкви и другіе. Текстъ интервью приводится ниже съ небольшими измѣненіями.

Церковь, государство и договоръ о свободномъ сожительствѣ

Не могу понять, вѣдь такъ или иначе совмѣстное проживание двухъ людей не является свободнымъ, поскольку предполагаетъ принятіе на себя опредѣленныхъ обязательствъ, а любовь нельзя ограничить договорами и нотаріально завѣренными документами! Во всякомъ случаѣ, для Церкви и для насъ зарегистрированный государствомъ бракъ и договоръ о свободномъ сожительствѣ — одно и то же.

Для Церкви отношенія между людьми лежатъ не просто въ сферѣ чувствъ, въ биологической, юридической или нравственной плоскости, а главнымъ образомъ въ плоскости богословія. Любое дѣйствіе, совершаемое безъ благословенія Божія, не благословлено и лишено благодати. Пространство внѣ Церкви — "область паденія".

На языкѣ Священнаго Писанія слова "блудъ" и "прелюбодѣянiе" указываютъ не только на сексуальное поведеніе, но и на отступничество и удаленіе человѣка отъ Бога внѣ зависимости отъ того, находится ли онъ въ Церкви или нѣтъ. Но въ любомъ случаѣ государство обязано регулировать вопросы, касающіеся тѣхъ людей, которые не принадлежатъ Церкви, а если принадлежатъ, то выбираютъ иной образъ жизни.

Однополые браки?

Еще въ древности римскій юристъ Модестинъ (II-III вв.) давалъ такое опредѣленіе браку: "...союзъ

мужчины и женщины, соединеніе всей жизни, общность божественнаго и человѣчскаго права". Соотвѣтственно, Церковь не допускаетъ въ отношеніи своихъ членовъ однополые браки или связи. Также не можетъ принять Церковь и бисексуальные и полигамныя отношенія. Въ данномъ случаѣ рѣчь идетъ о духовныхъ заболѣваніяхъ.

Болѣзнь — это одно, а больной человѣкъ — другое. Мы любимъ духовно больного и пытаемся его излечить. Еще Достоевскій писалъ, что старецъ это тотъ, кто любитъ и самого послѣдняго грѣшника. Такъ поступалъ Христосъ. Какъ пастыри, мы должны научиться врачевать съ любовью, а не осуждать людей. А вотъ самихъ себя мы должны осуждать съ помощью самоукоренія.

Церковь и національные вопросы

Церковь играла главенствующую роль въ трудныя для Греціи времена турецкой оккупации, когда не было ни государства, ни правительства. Въ періодъ демократии приоритетъ въ рѣшеніи вопросовъ принадлежитъ правительству, которое проводитъ свою политику и дипломатію. Поэтому все, что способствуетъ счастливому разрѣшенію подобныхъ вопросовъ, является хорошимъ.

Такъ или иначе, мы, клирики, должны рассуждать больше, какъ люди церковные, чѣмъ какъ политики. Церковь всегда находится выше понятій "нація" и "родина", но въ то же время и не отмѣняетъ ихъ. Въ концѣ концовъ, живя церковной и духовной жизнью, мы стремимся къ нѣкому бесклассовому обществу. Когда-нибудь перестанутъ существовать и націи, и государства, а останется одна лишь Церковь.

Открытие Экзархата — поводъ для новаго противостоянія Фанару?

Мы всѣ признаемъ, что необходимо уважать Вселенскій Патріархатъ, но Эладская Церковь должна оказывать особенное уваженіе. Представительство Константинопольскаго Патріархата въ Афинахъ должно быть настолько значительнымъ, чтобы въ сотрудничествѣ съ нимъ можно было рѣшать различные

вопросы. Въ какомъ видѣ оно будетъ функционировать — эта тема, которой должны заниматься компетентныя Синодальныя комиссіи, послѣ чего Священный Синодъ приметъ соотвѣтствующее рѣшеніе. Во всякомъ случаѣ, необходимо подчеркнуть, что между Эладской Церковью и Вселенскимъ Патріархатомъ должны существовать тесныя связи.

Оцѣнка имущества Церкви?

Вопросъ о церковной собственности является мифомъ. Она не настолько велика, насколько пытаются это представить, но имѣющаяся собственность подлежитъ оцѣнкѣ, чтобы это принесло пользу многострадальному греческому народу. Весь вопросъ заключается не въ томъ, какой собственностью обладаетъ Церковь, но какъ избавиться отъ страсти сребролюбія, овладевшей многими клириками всѣхъ степеней.

Я не могу понять менталитетъ нѣкоторыхъ клириковъ, особенно безбрачныхъ, которые живутъ со всей роскошью, какъ нувориши, увеличиваютъ свои состоянія, ведутъ себя, какъ феодалы, а народъ, который находится въ ихъ духовной отвѣтственности, мучается и страдаетъ. Это равносильно плотскому паденію, и въ какомъ-то смыслѣ представляетъ собой профанацію церковной жизни.

Чего не хватаетъ Церкви сегодня?

Церковь, Тѣло Христово, обладаетъ полнотою благодати, и поэтому абсолютно ни въ чемъ не испытываетъ недостатка. Когда кажется, что ей чего-то не хватаетъ, то этотъ недостатокъ слѣдуетъ приписывать тѣмъ клирикамъ, у которыхъ отсутствуетъ церковное мышленіе. Если сегодня чего-либо не хватаетъ многимъ или немногимъ клирикамъ, такъ это миссіонерскаго мышленія, жертвеннаго настроя, духа исповѣдничества и опыта пастырскаго служенія, что происходитъ въ томъ случаѣ, если они сами обмирщаются и ведутъ себя, какъ мірскіе начальники. Многіе хотятъ жить за счетъ Церкви, получаютъ званія, мѣста, власть, финансовый доходъ, но не хотятъ жить для Церкви. А отсюда въ Церкви и обществѣ возникаютъ проблемы.

По материаламъ агентства церковныхъ новостей "Ромфэа"

<http://bogoslav.stack.net/text/296319.html>

<http://rusk.ru/st.php?idar=26771>

За 2009 годъ совершилось восемь Бракосочетаній на Приходѣ. Смотрите фотографии нѣсколько изъ нихъ. Поздравляемъ всѣхъ молодоженъ и желаемъ имъ многая и благія лѣта!

Фото 1

Махимъ и Наталія Хювенень,
4-го Октября

Фото 2

Романъ Титчу и Таисія Нафталева,
10-го мая

Фото 3

Павель Дроздовскій и Елизавета Волменская,
12-го іюля

Фото 4

Власій Гульдъ и Любовь Жартунъ,
25-го октября

Фото 5

Михаиль Глобусъ и Софья Лемойнь,
22-го ноября

In 2009 Holy Ascension Church witnessed the greatest number of weddings for a single year – a total of eight. See photos of five of the couples. Congratulations to all of the newly-weds.

Photo 1

Maxim & Natalya Khyuvenen,
October 4th

Photo 2

Roman Titcu & Taisiya Naftalyeva,
May 10th

Photo 3

Paul Drozdowski & Elizabeth Volmensky,
July 12th

Photo 4

Blaise Gould & Lubov Zartun,
October 25th

Photo 5

Mikhail Globus & Sophia Lemoine,
November 22

фото/photo 1



фото/photo 2





фото/photo 3



фото/photo 4



фото/photo 5

INTERVIEW

The Existential Problems of a New-Historical Church

by the Most Reverend Metropolitan of Nafpaktos and St. Vlassios Hierotheos

Printed from "Sobornost" a journal published by the Archbishopric of Ochrid.

Your Eminence, the world nowadays is faced with the emerging challenge of globalization. How do you think the Orthodox Church should respond to these trends? Is globalization an opportunity for the mission of the Church or maybe represents a threat to it?

The whole structure of the Orthodox Church with Patriarchates, Autocephalous churches, Bishoprics, Parishes and Monasteries unites people, while preserving their distinctiveness. The Church has always faced challenges and will always face challenges. The Orthodox Church "responds" to this challenge by expressing and experiencing its revealed truth, by speaking about freedom, love and peace, by praying so that they prevail in society and by engaging in Orthodox pastoral care for its members. So, it reacts to such challenges not in a convulsive but in a pastoral manner, trying to assist its members to experience revealed truth in practice. Basically, I believe we should stop seeing enemies around us. The Church as Body of Christ has nothing to fear. Instead, we should see people who have a fragmented view of the truths about God and the world.

A question that presently preoccupies a number of local Orthodox Churches is the relationship between the Church and the State. On one hand we see fervent efforts of many Orthodox hierarchs who try at all costs to preserve the constitutional links of the state and the Church, but on the other hand a dilemma could be put forward of whether it is in the interest of the Orthodox Church itself to have such constitutional links with a state which in its legal system denies the most fundamental tenets of Christian ethics (as seen, for example, in the legalization of abortion, euthanasia, homosexual marriages...). How would you comment on these opposing views?

First of all, I have to emphasize that while we refer to the relation between Church and State, in older times there was a debate about the relation and difference between Priesthood and Kingship, meaning the relation and difference between ecclesiastical and political administration. The latter terminology one is the Orthodox one.

In each individual case, the relations "between Church and State" depend on the historical memory and the cultural tradition of each people. This means that in different States there may prevail different traditions regarding this issue.

Nevertheless, the basis is that each Local Church has

to teach and express the whole revealed truth, has to live the way the apostolic Churches lived, as described in the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles. In these Churches there existed Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, that is, members who felt deeply the gift of the Holy Spirit and had experiences of deification. It is also important that political administration neither enters the internal life of the Church nor regulates it by laws.

In general, we have to be careful so that the spirit of secularism does not permeate theology, pastoral care and the administration of the Church. On the other hand, no State can be completely "Christian", because it will be forced to pass antichristian laws, but, at least, it should respect the Church and not intervene in its internal affairs.

When speaking about questions of bioethics, the usual attitude of the secular establishment is that these are morally "neutral" issues of science, and therefore, there is no place for religion or ethics in them. What the Orthodox Church should do in response and how it can make a difference in respect to these problems?

Bioethics is indeed the reaction of science itself to the potential negative applications of genetic engineering and molecular biology. That is, genetic engineering and molecular biology have advanced to discoveries which may exert a type of imperialism on mankind, the so-called genetic imperialism, on the one hand destroying man himself and on the other hand creating a genetic pollution to the environment. Because of this, several scientists have attempted to set some limits to this potential catastrophe and thus developed the science of bioethics which links genetic engineering with humanities.

There are certain bioethics scientists who argue that bioethical problems are scientific and religions should keep out of them. However, the truth is that genetists, bioethicists and theologians all deal with man, thus they have a common objective, and man is a whole consisting of soul and body. If we restrict our attention only to the body, it is possible that we perceive man as a living machine and leave his existential problems unsolved. It is known that in the past, because medical science was to a large extent mechanistic, psychoanalysis developed in order to balance things.

For this reason, the message of the Orthodox Churches after the Constantinople Congress of September 2000, under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, mentioned

that bioethical problems should be dealt with through bio-theology, as well. This is why in recent years many clerics and Synods of Local Churches deal with theological problems revolving around the beginning, the extension and the end of biological life, as well as with the protection of the environment.

Of course, Orthodox theology is not opposed to science, when the latter remains within its limits. It is the science of bioethics which sets the limits of science and Orthodox theology deals with man's pastoral care and leads him from where science ends to deification.

The question of the participation of the Orthodox Church in what is called "ecumenical dialogue" with heterodox confessions raises great unease and disagreements inside the Church community. Between the overenthusiastic immersion in such rapprochement with the heterodox, which bleaches in a sense the boundaries dividing the Church and the world, and the often too easy scandalization by every move unjustifiably suspected of even slightly compromising the identity of the Orthodox Church as Una Sancta, which had led occasionally to schism, what is the right course that should be taken in dealing with this issue? Do you consider that such "ecumenical dialogue" could be of any use to the Church?

The two temptations you mention are dominant in our days. Sometimes there is an ultra-optimism leading to secularism and doctrinal minimalism, while sometimes there is a reaction leading to fundamentalism-fanaticism.

The point is not dialogue per se. The Apostles and the Fathers engaged in dialogue. The problem is a dialogue which alters theology as revelation of truth, and the Church as the unique Body of Christ, and pastoral care as the practice of the Church which leads to deification. The problem of the so-called Ecumenism lies on these points. The Orthodox Church is Ecumenical, that is, catholic-Orthodox, because it possesses the wholeness of theology and the wholeness of life, but cannot be ecumenistic, that is, live a doctrinal minimalism and an ecclesiological aberration.

The fundamental point is that in such a dialogue between the Orthodox Church and other Denominations one must set an Orthodox ecclesiological basis and the participants must be people who live empirically the truth of the Church and have a patristic mind and view the doctrines in an inner way, not externally and conceptually. This means that they will see how the doctrine answers man's existential problems, namely, what life is, what man is, and how man is united with God.

This is why in the Divine Liturgy we refer to the unity of faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit and neither to the "union of the Churches" and the communion of firms, organizations, even "Christian" ones, nor to public

relations actions.

Blessed Elder Paisios of Mount Athos frequently had stated that one of the most serious problems experienced by contemporary humanity is the ever increasing spread of mental illnesses. Would it be right to think that these ailments of the soul have a spiritual background, and consequently, the only true psychotherapy for them should be the one which the Orthodox Church could provide?

Mental and spiritual illnesses, even illnesses of the body, are related to man's existential problems, that is, his distancing from God and the entry of death to our existence. Sin is viewed as a spiritual illness. The death of the body, which we inherit from our parents and lies in our cells with the genes of aging, is a consequence of man's distancing from God.

The Orthodox Church preserves this therapeutic method, the neptic tradition, which we may call Orthodox psychotherapy. According to St. Gregory Palamas, the Church is the Body of Christ and a Communion of Deification. The phrase "Communion of Deification" shows the way one experiences deification by Grace in his personal life.

Mental illnesses have repercussions on the body, the same way illnesses of the body affect the soul. Beyond this, there are neurological illnesses due to physical exhaustion, there are demonic influences, or sometimes God allows an illness for man's spiritual aid. This is why in some cases illnesses of the body assist man's spiritual life more than health does.

I believe that spiritual fathers who work on man's therapy must distinguish between bodily, spiritual, psychological and demonic illnesses. This distinction is the objective of Orthodox theology. A theologian is Orthodox if he is able to discern between the created and the uncreated, the demonic and the divine, the psychological and the spiritual, the physical and the spiritual.

Since you mentioned Father Paisios, I have a personal view that on various illnesses he referred the ill ones sometimes to spiritual fathers, sometimes to physicians and other times to Saints. He used to say often: "this kid needs a Saint" and would send him to Saint Nektarios, to Saint Gerasimos, et al., while other times he would send him to physicians he knew.

A key problem faced by the Church in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe is, of course, the question of the so called nominal Christians. Namely, large proportion of the populace of these countries formally declare themselves Orthodox Christians, but in spite of that they do not confess the Orthodox faith (instead they confess either agnosticism or atheism), and subsequently, they don't partake in the prayer-kept and liturgical life of the Church, and the only thing seen by them in Orthodoxy is mere folk-

lore and ethnic mark. What stand should be upheld towards those people, especially if it is taken into consideration that quite often they aspire to influence and control the Church? Finally, in which way the Church itself should approach these nominal Christians in order that they be gathered in its bosom?

The “nominal Christians” or the “nominal clerics” is a basic problem for the Church, because they cause Church schisms with their various passions. They consider the Church a social institution, a social organization, a religion, even the best one, a religious association or a national institution.

It has to become clear, as I said before, that the Church is the “Body of Christ and a Communion of Deification”, according to the teaching of Saint Gregory Palamas. It is the Body of Christ, because its Head, Christ, is closely tied with its members through the Sacraments and the Doctrines. It is also a Communion of Deification, because its members participate, in various degrees, to cleansing, illumination and deification.

Those members of the Church that do not live within this perspective are gradually led to agnosticism and atheism and are secular members, ailing members of the Church, irrespective of whether they pretend to belong to the Church.

We have to realize that the Church is a spiritual hospital and not a competitive field for passions to dominate. The Saints are the physicians, and Christ is the physician *par excellence* and the Shepherds who work in the name of Christ and within the framework of the Saints perform a healing function. All Christians must be in the process of being healed.

In this context, the Church cannot be transformed to folklorism and nationalism. St. Paul defines clearly the task of the Christians when he writes: “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor., 10,5)

In the end, however, the Church heals Christians with its pastoral care, regardless of their spiritual age. What is required is that clerics know the method of healing.

Furthermore, remembering that the Gospel starts with the message of repentance, a question could be asked whether repentance is only a personal experience or is there such a thing as collective repentance where an internal transformation of entire peoples could take place? Can we find examples of this in the history of the Church?

Repentance is the basic prerequisite for experiencing the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ started His teaching with repentance, because He continues the dialogue with man which was interrupted in Paradise. There, Adam with his sin discontinued his dialogue with God and now

Christ with repentance starts the dialogue for the reestablishment of man’s relationship with God.

In Greek the word repentance (“metanoia”) denotes the change of the nous. According to the Orthodox teaching, the nous is the eye of the soul and is not identified with the reason. The nous is distinguished from reason. With sin, man’s nous is darkened, so with repentance his illumination starts. This is why the Orthodox neptic teaching of the Church maintains that the road to God is marked by these three words: cleansing, illumination and deification. The heart is cleansed from the passions with cleansing, the nous is illumined and begins to pray unceasingly with illumination, and in deification one beholds the glory of God.

Therefore, in principle, repentance is a personal experience. But it is also a collective experience, because when entire local Churches lose the truth and their pastoral mission they must repent. This is why we talk about theological and ecclesiological sins. This is how we should interpret God’s epistles to the Angels of the Church, as described in the first chapters of the Revelation of John.

For this reason we attach great importance to heresy and schism. Because through heresy we are cut off from the truth revealed by Christ and through schism we break apart the Church of Christ, with terrible consequences for our life, because, as Saint John Chrysostom says, not even the martyrdom of blood can save a man who molests the Church of Christ.

Therefore, collective repentance is the return to the doctrinal truth of the Church and our reintegration with the unity of the local Churches.

Now we would like to tackle the sensitive question of the relation between monastic experience and the Catholicity of the Church. Namely, we are witnessing cases when in some circles (especially in our country) opinions are being put forward that assert certain superiority of “asceticism” and “prayer of the heart and mind” even in the respect of the canonical order of the Church and its One Liturgy; and this is going as far as to use such claims often as a justification for seceding from the Church and persisting in schism. In brief, we would like to hear your stance concerning this phenomenon; specifically, whether “asceticism” and “prayer of the heart and mind” have any meaning outside the liturgical and canonical unity of the entire Orthodox Church?

Ever since Saint Irenaeus, the Fathers of the Church have taught us that the Church is very closely connected with Orthodoxy and the Holy Eucharist. The Church is the “Body of Christ and a Communion of Deification”, Orthodoxy is the correct teaching and life of the Church and the Holy Eucharist is the true praxis of the Church. All three of them are connected to each other and none is overemphasized or underrated versus the others. A “Church” without Orthodoxy and Holy Eucharist is a conventicle. “Orthodoxy” without

Church and the Holy Eucharist is a heretical school, and “Holy Eucharist” without Orthodoxy and Church is a simple religious gathering.

We should view the relationship between asceticism, the noetic prayer of the heart and the Holy Eucharist in this context. The Holy Eucharist is in the center of Church life, because through the Holy Eucharist we receive Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, but the Holy Eucharist presupposes asceticism and the noetic prayer of the heart. Both asceticism and the noetic prayer of the heart refer to the Holy Eucharist. Neither is the Holy Eucharist performed without preconditions nor is the noetic prayer separated from the Holy Eucharist. Both of these extreme autonomous situations cause ecclesiological problems. He who lives ascetically and has noetic prayer of the heart without the Holy Eucharist is influenced by misbegotten and erring conditions. He who lives the Holy Eucharist without the preconditions of asceticism lives in a mechanistic way in the Church.

Furthermore, it is not possible for spiritual gifts to revoke the canonical order of the Church, which is constituted by the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit “constitutes the whole institution of the church” through the Local and Ecumenical Councils. At the same time, we should not underrate spiritual gifts in the name of canonical order.

In general, a great deal of attention is required regarding autonomous movements and cases of overemphasis on particular aspects of church life.

Over the last several decades the societies which in the past considered themselves to be Christian are falling victims to the flood of different pseudoreligious cults (represented in numerous Yoga and meditation systems, UFO hysteria, neopagan sects...), all of them under the umbrella of the so called New Age movement. What do you think is the reason for the popularity of these movements and how the Orthodox Church should act in the presence of the abovementioned New Age “spirituality”?

The reason for the spread of various pseudo-religious heresies, the so-called religious or neopagan sects, which many members of the Church fall victims to, is that a lot of people have separated from the neptic tradition of our Church. As it is known, the neptic/hesychastic tradition of the Church, which constitutes the prophetic, apostolic and martyrdom spirit of the ancient Church, is the criterion by which it can be discerned whether some action comes from God or from the devil.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa teaches that heresies flourish where Prophets are absent. This is so because Prophets and Apostles know how to distinguish falsehood from truth.

In addition, in our days, people, and mostly the young ones, do not find comfort in conventional manners, in an externally moralistic life. Instead, they search for answers to existential questions, they look for inner peace and exist-

tential freedom.

Therefore, what is needed above anything else in our times is the hesychastic tradition, which forms the basis of the Gospel, the context of the Holy Eucharist, the essence of the Apostolic and Patristic sermon. This spirit is found abundant in the Philokalia and the Sayings of the Elders (Gerontikon). When these texts are read within the canonical structure of the Orthodox Church, they help us avoid fallacy and everything associated with it.

Statistics say that in some countries of the EU more than half of all marriages end up in divorce. Do you think that besides social there are also spiritual reasons for the alarming dissolution of the family in the modern societies, and consequently, what precise attitudes and measures could be taken by the Orthodox community to resist this trend?

The cause of divorces is the various passions developing in man, such as self-love, indulgence, and selfishness.

When one reads the service of the sacrament of marriage carefully, he will find out that the joint life of man and woman, which must be in Christ, is lived within a certain framework. When someone trespasses this framework, he first experiences what is called emotional divorce and then he ends up in a final divorce.

The way the dance of Isaiah is performed during the sacrament of marriage is indicative. The priest leads the couple, holding the Gospel and chanting “Holy Martyrs who have fought well and have been crowned”. This means that the steps of the new couple will resemble martyrdom and this is why the Priest should always be ahead of them to guide them on the basis of the Gospel. This means that there is asceticism within the marriage, the asceticism of the Church. When this is not observed, marriage is secularized.

Orthodox Communities should help people from their young age to learn clearly what the purpose of man’s existence is, what the purpose of marriage is and what its conclusion is. Because the purpose of marriage is not simply a social cohabitation but the experiencing of paradise on earth and a road to paradise.

Coming now to the contemporary Orthodox monasticism, what would you consider to be its primary role in the present circumstances compared to that in the past? Would you say that every epoch puts a different challenge before the monastic community, and if that is so, what specific mission it has in our time?

In the Orthodox Church, genuine monasticism is the one that lives fully the hesychastic tradition we mentioned above, and the monks should be, according to an ancient saying, “the ones who live by the Gospel”.

It is significant that anchoritism developed as a reaction to the “spirit” of secularism, when the persecution of the

Church ceased in the 4th century and the “spirit” of secularism entered the Church. Because of this, Orthodox Monasticism, in contrast to western monasticism, is the experience of the Prophetic, Apostolic, Martyric life and, unlike in the West, it is not the monks who save the Church but they are saved by remaining within the Church.

Consequently, monasteries function, and have to function, as spiritual Medical Schools of the Church. The physicians learn at Medical Schools what physical illness is, what a healthy organism is and how the sick are cured. Similarly, the monks learn in these spiritual medical schools the method for men’s spiritual cure. When Monasticism misses this objective, it is secularized and causes greater disappointment to Christians. Because in such cases Monasticism becomes a secular organization, a place where all passions, aggressiveness and fanaticism are cultivated.

At the end, your Eminence, what would be your message and advice to the Orthodox Christians in our country in these moments of tribulation for them?

I think that what I have said so far on your questions can be considered as an answer to this last question. In general, at present there is a great need for unity in Church life, so that spiritual gifts are united with the canonical structure of the Church, neptic life with the Holy Eucharist, man’s cure with the doctrinal teaching of the Church.

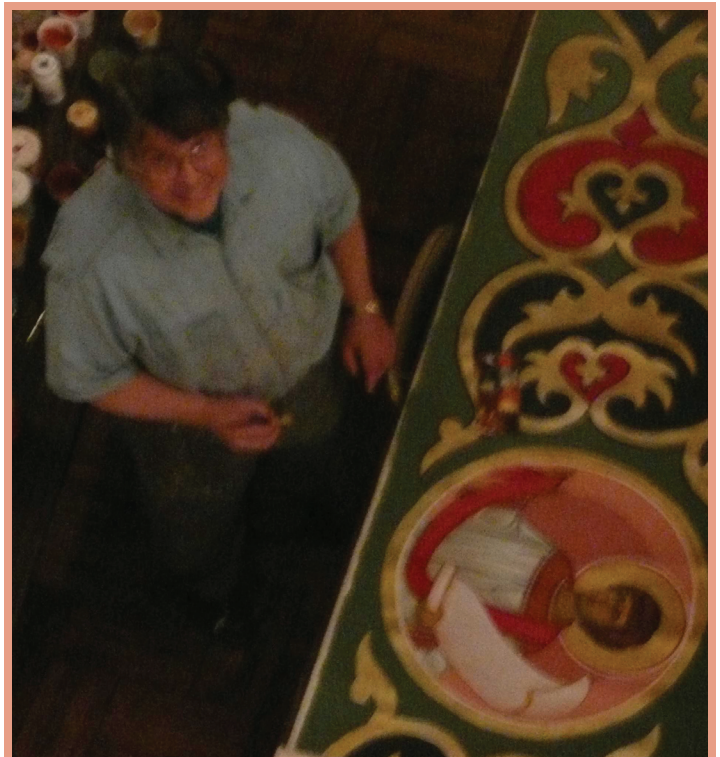
Regarding your country, in particular, I think a proper way must be found in order to obtain canonical unity with the other Orthodox Churches under the head of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. God does not bless schisms and divisions, and no correct Orthodox spiritual life can be developed within such schisms. Above all, we have to realize that the Orthodox Church exists beyond nations and countries, and this is why the Churches cannot be considered as national and as bastions of nationalism.

Saint Paul the Apostle clearly recommends: “our citizenship is in heaven” (Philip., 3, 20). Our center of attention, our vision, our expectation, and our hope is the heavenly polity, where the Saints are now, united with Christ. When we think this way, that other saying by Saint Paul the Apostle is applicable: “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things”. (Col., 3, 1-2) and then all personal and social problems are resolved.



Роспись потолка храма

За шестой недѣлей Великаго поста, с.г., завершился проект росписи потолка святого храма нашего. Последняя икона — «Сошествіе Святаго Духа на апостолов». Стоимость всего проекта была 60.000.00 долларовъ, а работа продолжалась много лѣтъ. Поздравляемъ иконописца Владиміра Вадимовича Красовскаго и приносимъ глубокую благодарность ему, всѣмъ жертвователямъ и всѣмъ, кто своими руками трудился надъ этимъ проектомъ. Поминаются имена всѣхъ жертвователей и благоуукрастелей за Литургіей.



Iconography Project has met a goal:

In the Sixth Week of Great Lent, 2010, the Iconography Project for our church ceiling was completed with the "installation" the image of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. In total, this was a \$60,000.00 undertaking and many years in the making. Congratulation and much gratitude are expressed our iconographer Vladimir Vadimovich Krassovsky and to all of the benefactors of this worthy project. You are remembered at the Divine Liturgies. (See photos on page 11.)

In January of this year our parish received a donation of \$7,000.00 which was deposited into the "Iconography Fund" for the future adornment of our holy temple. Gratitude for this sum goes to "A Woman's Place." May God bless all of those who love the beauty of His house.

A Woman's Place, A Medical Corporation.

729 Sunrise Avenue #800

Roseville, CA 95661

916-782-1717

916-969-6626 (In Sacramento)

"Parish Bulletin"

**Holy Ascension Russian Orthodox Church,
Diocese of San Francisco and Western America,
Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.**

Address: 714 — 13th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Telephone: (916) 443-2271. FAX (916) 443-5079
Sisterhood: (916) 446-7473.

Website: <http://www.holyascensionchurch.com>

Rector: Rev. Paul Volmensky, home (916) 443-2271 Choir conductor: Catherine Volmensky (916) 320-1316
mobile (916) 730-2680 Head Sister: Veronica Klimoff (916) 362-8567
Church Warden: Leonty Naumov (916) 308-1918 Cemetery Treasurer:

**The Holy Ascension Russian Orthodox Church
714 -- 13th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814**