

# light of the east



NEWSLETTER OF THE YOUNGSTOWN-WARREN CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM  
VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2, MARCH-APRIL, 2015

VITO R. CARCHEDI, EDITOR, 35 SCHENLEY AVE. STRUTHERS, OH 44471, PHONE: 330-755-5635  
EMAIL: vitossjcytown@gmail.com WEBSITE: [www.byzcath.org/stjohnchrysostom/](http://www.byzcath.org/stjohnchrysostom/)

## FROM THE EDITOR...

Dear Members and Friends, the next regular chapter meeting will be Tuesday May 12, 7pm at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, 220 N. Walnut St. Youngstown 44503. Our speaker will be the Very Reverend Protopresbyter Dr. Steylios S. Muksuris, Ph.D., Professor of Liturgy and Languages at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA. Father Steylios serves Dormition Greek Orthodox Church in Aliquippa. His talk is entitled "Setting Aside All Cares and Differences: The Divine Liturgy as the Locus Theologicus Where Diversity Gives Birth to Unity."

**Chapter dues 2015 paid:** Demiduk, Fr. Conoboy, Fr. Rohan, Br. Calabro, Br. Scalise, Sleever, Tavolario, Billcheck, Sarantopoulos, Limbert, Fr. Gage, Carchedi, Fr. Hilinski, Joan Binsley, Jenna Binsley, Fr. Schmidt, Chorbishop Kail, Msgr. Spinosa, Fr. Bleahu, Jim Dershaw, Esther Dershaw, Beri Berardi, Chris Berardi, Kolitsos, Basista, Jacquet, Borak, Msgr. Siffrin, Fr. Manning, Fr. Feicht, Fr. Witmer, Mattiussi, Fr. Rudjak, Perantinides, Benedictine Sisters, Hudak, Comichista, Chiu, Fr. Fiala, Fr. Loveless, Vasilchek.



## WHO ARE WE?

The Society of St John Chrysostom promotes greater appreciation of the spiritual, theological and liturgical traditions of Eastern Christendom, works and prays for the unity of the Churches of East and West, and encourages support for the Eastern Churches :

- the Byzantine and Oriental Catholic Churches

- the Orthodox Church
- the Oriental Orthodox Churches and
- the Church of the East.

In the United Kingdom and Europe the Society was founded in 1926

In 1998 the Society was also founded in the United States, where it runs the annual North American and international Orientale Lumen conferences

Following some exploratory and preparatory meetings in 1998 and early 1999, the first regular meeting of the Youngstown-Warren Chapter took place May 4, 1999.

\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THAT IN THE INTEREST OF INQUIRY, OUR NEWSLETTER SOMETIMES PRESENTS ARTICLES WITH POINTS OF VIEW WITH WHICH WE DON'T NECESSARILY AGREE.\*\*\*

# Eastern Catholics rejoice in the restoration of married priests

'I can't be a good pastor if I'm a lousy dad or lousy husband'

February 8, 2015



Michael Henninger/Post-Gazette

Rev. Jason Charron, a priest at Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church in Carnegie, carries his youngest daughter Natalia, 1, while helping another of his daughters Katya, 10, with her backpack after driving them home in January. Charron is married and has six daughters.

By Peter Smith / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
On a January weeknight, Halyna Charron was finishing preparations of a dinner of spinach pie, pork and tabouli salad. Her husband, the Rev. Jason Charron, and all but the youngest of their six daughters, who range from 2 to 13 years old, pitched in at various times, slicing vegetables and setting the table in their Carnegie home. In between, one daughter played piano in the living room, another a brief video game in the TV room. When they gathered at the table, they stood for a dinner blessing and faced a display of icons as the

parents led the children in chanting prayers in English and Ukrainian. During the meal, the parents asked the daughters what they learned in school, and the girls talked of homework and upcoming tests. After dinner, Father Charron buttoned up his black cassock and headed out to do a house blessing in Upper St. Clair for a family of parishioners — a January tradition for Ukrainian Catholics. He and two daughters, brought along for the ride, gathered with the host family in their dining room for a prayer. The whole group then processed up and down stairs as Father Charron chanted blessings and sprinkled each room with holy water.

It was another day in the life of balancing work, marriage and family. "I can't be a good pastor if I'm a lousy dad or lousy husband," said Father Charron, 38.

That's not the typical challenge for a Catholic priest.

But throughout North America, the ranks of married priests have slowly been growing in Eastern Catholic parishes such as Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church in Carnegie, where Father Charron became pastor last year.

Eastern Catholics are now preparing for more married priests. A historic decree last year by Pope Francis lifted a generations-old ban on married priests serving Eastern Catholic rites in the Americas and Australia.

Eastern Catholics, estimated around 600,000 in the United States, are barely 1 percent of the nation's Catholic population. But they are some of its most diverse members, with distinct heritages in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and beyond. They are loyal to papal authority and Catholic dogma while practicing ancient liturgies and traditions similar to those of Orthodox and other Eastern churches.

Those traditions have included married priests — at least in the Old World.

When Ruthenian Catholics, an Eastern European Slavic group, began emigrating in the 19th century for jobs in the mills and mines of Pennsylvania and elsewhere, American Roman Catholic bishops protested that their own parishioners were scandalized by the presence of married Ruthenian priests. (Continue next page)

In 1890, the Vatican forbade married Ruthenian priests in the United States, the first in a widening ban that, by 1930, covered all Eastern Catholics outside their traditional territories. An estimated 200,000 Ruthenians broke with Rome and returned to their Orthodox roots.

But in recent years, the Vatican has been tacitly allowing some married Eastern Catholic priests to work in North America on a case-by-case basis, either through ordination or immigration. Francis' decree lifts the ban wholesale.

"It's one of those things that from the time you're a little kid, you were reminded that it's something that shouldn't have been done," said Archbishop William Skurla of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, which traces its roots to the Ruthenian immigration. "It's kind of a happy time."

### **Reclaiming Eastern identity an 'affirmation' of Catholicism**

At SS. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh, one of its five students is married.

"It's very clear to me in my work in vocations that God is calling married men to serve as priests," said the Very Rev. Robert M. Pipta, rector of the seminary. "With the incredible maturity they have in being married, and fathers very often ... they have potential to be excellent priests."

Eastern Catholics see the papal decree as the latest in a half-century of steps by Rome to reaffirm their status, dating back to the Second Vatican Council's 1964 declaration that their rites are "of equal dignity" with the Roman rite.

Said Father Charron: "We Eastern Catholics in North America are at a crossroads because we live in a Western context, but we fiercely hold to our roots. Reclaiming one's identity is not an affront to Catholicism, it's an affirmation of it." But that identity faces a challenge in the American melting pot for churches historically linked to ethnicity.

Among the Slavic-based rites — Ukrainian and Byzantine, which represent virtually all the dozens of Eastern Catholic parishes in the Tri-State area — membership is down.

The two rites' combined membership is down 41 percent in local eparchies (dioceses) and 61 percent nationally in the past 20 years. Current

statistics show 47,257 Ukrainian Catholics and 81,832 Byzantines nationwide.

New generations are growing up with no memory of their ancestral homelands, or even of their forebears' immigrant neighborhoods. In much of the country, even those wanting to maintain a Catholic faith are far more likely to find a Roman Catholic parish close by than an Eastern one. Such trends overshadow recent Vatican affirmations of Eastern rites and the married priesthood.

"To be painfully blunt, without the Holy Spirit, it's too little, too late," Father Charron said. "But I'm convinced the Holy Spirit is alive and well. For those who want to have a vibrant parish and who love evangelizing, this couldn't be a better time to rediscover our roots."

Father Charron has gone door to door in Carnegie to introduce himself to neighbors. He was well-received. He found the parish is best known for its pyrohi sales; he hopes it becomes better known for spiritual offerings, but "it puts us on the map."

He said Eastern Catholics' challenges aren't unique in an era in which 20 percent of Americans claim no religious affiliation.

"For too long, we've been a passive church — 'You know where we are, you come to us,' " he said. "That's a recipe for death. Priests have to be proactive and search for the sheep."

Among the new adherents to Eastern Catholicism is Father Charron himself. He grew up a Roman Catholic in Canada. He entered seminary, expecting to become a celibate priest in the Roman rite.

Then he attended an Eastern Catholic liturgy, experiencing its full sensory impact of icons, incense, chants and rituals. At first, he saw it as an "ornate, antiquarian hobby," but eventually he was intrigued enough to do a month-long internship in Ukraine — then return for a longer stay.

He got to know the Ukrainian Catholic Church, emerging from decades of Soviet persecution. And he got to know Halyna, who was earning a master's degree in theology at Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv.

Between the two encounters, "my life was turned upside down," he said. "Meeting my wife and falling in love with her — and seeing there's (Cont. next page)

no way that the life of married men who went to Siberia along with their wives and children for the principle of being united with the pope is any less Catholic than the way we live our faith here — that was the tipping point,” he said.

He and Halyna married, and he returned to North America with her for seminary.

Father Charron was ordained in 2008 in Ohio and had assignments in North Carolina and rural Ontario before coming to Carnegie last year.

Halyna Charron said she had some preparation for her current role, having gotten to know priests and their wives in Ukraine.

Mrs. Charron said living in a rectory means less privacy, with visitors coming and going and the church office in the front.

“But I’ve been blessed,” she said. “You have this unique opportunity of being part of different people’s lives. People get married, people have baptisms, people are grieving their loved ones, and you are part of that.”

Often, she said, women parishioners will approach her with questions before her husband. “The wife is always a bridge,” she said. Their daughters are, to varying degrees, learning Ukrainian language, culture and traditions such as the bandura, a stringed instrument.

The girls said they like having a priest for a father. It’s easier to explain in Pittsburgh, where Eastern Catholic traditions are more common than Ontario.

“In Canada, it was like, ‘Wow, your dad’s a priest?’ ” said Katya, 10. “They were shocked.”

“Here it’s not as big a deal,” added Maria, 12.

The school-age girls attend Our Lady of Grace, a Roman Catholic parish school in Scott. Their parents prepare them well for religion class, they say. Sometimes, Maria said with a smile, her religion questions get the answer, “Ask your father.”

### **‘All positive’ from the pews**

A married priest is new for Holy Trinity parishioners.

“For us it’s been all positive,” said Mark Medwig of Upper St. Clair, whose house Father Charron blessed on the recent evening. Mark and Mayda Medwig, as young parents themselves, like having a priest who shares their challenges.

“I believe it’s very hard to understand what married life and parenthood is unless God gives

you the grace to understand it,” said Mayda Medwig.

Having married priests does pose challenges. Small parishes may struggle to pay a salary and benefits to support a family. Married priests often take a second job such as a chaplaincy, or the spouse may work. Frugality is a must. “If someone wants to be a parish priest, he and his wife have to realize they have to sacrifice,” said Father Charron.

Eastern Catholic leaders say they don’t expect their resumption of married clergy to influence debate in the Roman rite, where celibate priests are the norm.

“The Roman Catholic Church seems to go to the theological level,” citing the example of Jesus as celibate, said Father Pipta of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, located in Perry North.

“They’re always going to see a much closer connection between celibacy and the priesthood.” But, he added, a church with multiple rites “can have distinct theologies. When you get to the essence of it, we believe the same things.”

Added Bishop David Zubik of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh: “I still see a tremendous value for the discipline of celibacy,” he said. It’s enabled him “to give my entire life to the church.”

Among those studying at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh is Joseph Wargacki, 59, of Olympia, Wash. Like Father Charron, he grew up Roman Catholic, and he and his wife weren’t very involved as young adults.

Then they attended a Byzantine liturgy.

“We kind of fell in love with it from the first minute we stumbled upon it and we never left,” he said. “Once we discovered the Eastern rite and spirituality and the beauty of the liturgy, we became more interested in our Catholic faith and more active members.”

Mr. Wargacki was ordained a deacon in 2003.

Recently, with his wife’s support and their children grown, he ended his 26-year nursing career and entered seminary.

“The church is in need of priests. If I can help by moving forward and being elevated to the rank of priesthood, that is what I would like to do,” he said.

Peter Smith: [petersmith@post-gazette.com](mailto:petersmith@post-gazette.com) or 412-263-1416; Twitter @PG\_PeterSmith.

## AT LAST, A COUNCIL FOR THE AGES?



The Great Council of the Orthodox Church in 2016

by John Chryssavgis

<http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/03/at-last-a-council-for-the-ages>

A Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church has been scheduled for 2016. In March of 2014, the leaders of all the autocephalous (independent) Orthodox Churches met in Istanbul, the sacred see of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which *historically* (since at least the fifth century) coordinates such assemblies, facilitating unity while serving as a center of appeal among these churches. Arguably the foremost decision unanimously agreed upon at that assembly of church heads was the convocation of a Great Council in 2016, tentatively planned to be held in the Church of Haghia Irene—the site of the second ecumenical council of 381, which completed the “creed” recited by most Christians today. Haghia Irene is now a museum in Istanbul,

never having been converted into a mosque since the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

The council of 2016, which has been on the table for discussion and preparation since at least 1961 (although there were earlier proposals for such a council in the 1920s and 1930s), will for the first time ever gather representatives from all fourteen independent Orthodox Churches. The very conception, let alone the convocation of such a great or general council, is entirely unprecedented. It will be attended by patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops from the fourteen autocephalous Orthodox Churches, including those from all of the ancient patriarchates, with the exception of Rome.

Theological commentators and historical analysts should bear in mind that the process in the Orthodox Church may undoubtedly not appear as orderly or organized as that in some Western churches precisely because it involves a consensus among all churches, rather than the imposition of one church or leader. However, it is naïve to dismiss disagreements among various churches sweepingly, implying that these merely result from rivalries of power. While such a perception may not be entirely erroneous, and while such a process may be frustrating to those inside as to those outside the Orthodox Church, it is in some ways a profoundly—even if often painful—democratic method than frequently perceived.

The issues for discussion and decision at the Great Council have been painstakingly determined since the early 1970s, with some of them going back to the early 1960s. The topics and texts include some esoteric items, such as the ranking of churches and discussion about a common calendar; but they also include problems that emerge from adapting an ancient faith to a modern reality—like precepts of fasting and, in particular, regulations of marriage in a multicultural and interreligious world. (Continue next page)

Most importantly, the documents tackle sensitive matters, such as relations of the Orthodox Church with the other Christian confessions, the role and response of the Orthodox Church to the contemporary challenges of our age, as well as “unorthodox” (or uncanonical) governance issues facing the Orthodox Church in the Western world. While the last three issues may seem uncomplicated or unsophisticated to the outsider, they are vital to the growth of the Orthodox Church. For instance, the ecumenical openness of an otherwise profoundly traditional church is of crucial importance, especially in light of conservative and traditionalist circles in the Greek and Slavic worlds. The way that the Orthodox Church handles modernity is of profound relevance for the resonance of its teaching in the public sphere.

The third item concerns the role of the Orthodox Church in non-Orthodox countries (often referred to as Orthodoxy in the “diaspora”). This relates to the manner of achieving the proper canonical status of one bishop per diocese (or city) when an existing diocese currently has a number of ethnic Orthodox Churches and, therefore, more than one bishop. Will church leaders grant some standing of autonomy? More importantly, will leaders in countries such as the United States of America be interested in a unified, collaborative organization? Or will they remain obsessed with narrowly nationalistic interests? Certain commentators are quick to criticize the forthcoming council as being of little significance or consequence. Detractors are fond of claiming that no doctrinal issue will be discussed or defined. I’m not quite sure that bishops attending earlier councils were themselves aware that they were about to settle theological disputes and ecclesiastical controversies in an inspired way; they simply dealt with the issues at hand.

However, there are at least two issues up for discussion at the Great Council that encompass universal and unparalleled authority. The first is the way in which the Orthodox Churches will respond to religious fundamentalism and

fanaticism. A united and unequivocal response to extremist and subversive elements and factions—sometimes within circles influenced by rigid or reactionary monastics—would be a compelling and committed emphasis on the “royal way” of discernment and moderation adopted by the classic teachers of the early church. Will we see a condemnation of separatist groups and a new commitment to ecumenical openness?

Perhaps the most consequential and enduring pronouncement of the great council will be its deliberation and determination regarding the organization and administration of the Orthodox Church throughout the world. The question is whether churches abroad, such as in the United States, Western Europe, and Australasia—comprised of Orthodox immigrants and converts long established in their new homelands, miles away and cultures apart from the “mother Churches, where they originated—have reached the maturity or acquired the single-mindedness and commitment to minister to their people and manage their affairs in unity. Regrettably, however, most Orthodox Churches seem to be retreating into a stifling, sheltered and safe provincialism, which they explain—or excuse—as attending to internal affairs, which in turn are reckoned as more important pastorally than concerns for collaboration or collegiality. What is more unfortunate is that contemporary bishops, who have been exposed to and educated in the modern world and its global challenges—at least by comparison with their predecessors, who were restricted by the “iron curtain” or oppressive xenophobia—appear less interested in transcending any prejudice and parochialism.

Time will show just how much the Orthodox want to realize the Great Council of 2016 and how the status of this council will be received by the Orthodox Churches themselves. It will be telling indeed to observe just how much each independent church is willing to lay aside trends of supremacist nationalism and the temptations of secular power.

***Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis is Archdeacon and theological advisor to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.***

## Local Church **New Association of Women**

By Pete Sheehan, March 2015 Exponent

VIENNA – With the blessing of Bishop George V. Murry, S.J., a small group of women is preparing to launch the Missionary Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi here.

The three, including superior Mother Mary Francis and two candidates, have been approved as a private association of the faithful, a group who come together for ministry and who hope to, over time, develop into a diocesan religious institute of sisters.

Bishop Murry will perform a liturgical ceremony at Queen of the Holy Rosary Parish



here March 19, which will include a reading of the decree establishing the association, investiture of their foundress, Mother Mary Francis, and acceptance of the two candidates. Mother Mary Francis will receive the habit of the novice for the Missionary Sisters of St. Francis – a traditional black habit with brown scapular and white veil. “People are very curious about the habit,” she said.

“We’re very excited,” said Father Denis Bouchard of the Priestly Society of St. Peter, pastor of Queen of the Holy Rosary Parish here, and spiritual guide of the three women as they have worked to develop their association. All three minister at the parish’s St. Joseph the Protector Learning Center, which works to support parents who are home schooling their

children.

They also assist Father Bouchard at the parish, which offers Mass in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite approved by Pope Benedict XVI, also known as the traditional Latin or Tridentine Mass.

“We also have a website, ‘Oremus’ (Latin for ‘Let us pray’),” Mother Mary Francis said. It broadcasts a Holy Hour of Reparation for video viewing through the Internet on Sunday ternoon d a Miraculous Medal Novena on Wednesday morning.

In addition, Oremus carries a First Friday devotion and a morning First Saturday Devotion each month – along with the Stations of the Cross each Friday evening during Lent.

“We have people watching and praying with us from over 70 countries,” Mother Mary Francis said. The website address is <http://www.dominusvobiscum.org/>.

Mother Mary Francis, who has a background in medical administration and is administrator of the learning center, said that she came here about six years ago in her process of discernment. “I felt that I had a vocation” to religious life but was uncertain as to how to follow it and in what religious community. While assisting Father Bouchard at the parish she became involved in various ministries. “One day I asked her if she thought she might have a vocation to religious life,” Father Bouchard said. After further thought and discernment, they began their initial efforts.

Although there are some opportunities for women to join traditional religious orders, most of them are contemplative, emphasizing prayer and cloistered from the larger world, Father Bouchard said.

“The Missionary Sisters of St. Francis will be active,” Mother Mary Francis said, continuing their involvement in the parish’s learning center, as well as repairing religious statues and assisting at the parish library and bookstore, and Oremus.

The learning center, which offers classroom instruction and online courses in religion, science, and other subjects, primarily works with students in grades four to 12 who are home schooled. In addition, (Continue next page)

the center teaches adult education classes in theology and languages during the summer. Two women, one from the Mahoning Valley and one from St. Louis, were drawn to the group, which began as a voluntary association. “We have been living in community for two years,” Mother Mary Francis said. “We have already received many inquiries from word of mouth.” Mother Mary Francis offers thanks to Sister Joyce Candidi of the Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who directs the diocesan Office for Vowed Religious, and Msgr. Michael Cariglio, diocesan judicial vicar, for helping guide them through the canonical process. “We’re also very grateful to the bishop,” Mother Mary Francis added. “I understand that the bishop is happy that this is happening in the Year for Consecrated Life.”

Sister Joyce explained that the Missionary Sisters of St. Francis had been operating as a voluntary association, following canon law. With Bishop Murry’s approving their statutes, they become a private association of the faithful. In time, Sister Joyce continued, should they demonstrate growth and stability, they could apply for recognition as a public association of the faithful, whereby they would be operating in the name of the Church.

Once a public association grows to 40 members, it can apply to become a diocesan religious institute of sisters. With 100 members, a diocesan institute can apply to become a pontifical institute.

Mother Mary Francis noted that children in the learning center, such as the altar servers, who have seen the process of the private association beginning and developing, will participate in the investiture ceremony. “They feel connected to this.”

**PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH**

**Unity of Hearts! Unity of Christians!  
Unity of the Feast of Easter!**



**BRING A FRIEND TO OUR MEETING!**

**Announcing Summer Chant Intensive**

**2015**

**Duquesne University – Pittsburgh, PA**

**June 23-26, 2015**

The **Chant Intensive** lives up to its name: though no previous experience with chant is required, beginners and intermediate chanters should be prepared for full immersion from the start. You will learn or review how to read and fully navigate all aspects of traditional Gregorian notation (square notes) with a masterful teacher.

The course will also address correct Latin pronunciation, the sound and mystery of the eight Church modes, Psalm tones and their applications, questions concerning the rhythm of plainsong, and more. Compline will be sung to allow participants to experience the beauty of a portion of the sung Divine Office. Gregorian repertoire will be used for Divine Office, Mass and for a concert on Thursday evening.

The CMAA Summer Chant Intensive is intended for beginning and continuing students and all who love and appreciate the central role that chant plays as the prayerful song of the Roman Rite—not only at cathedrals and basilicas but in any parish. The conference will inspire and prepare participants to continue the renaissance of sacred music in our time, in both the ordinary and extraordinary forms of the Mass. In the years since the first CMAA Chant Intensive course was taught in 2008, hundreds of students have benefited from this in-depth course in Gregorian chant.

Register online here:  
<https://shop.musicasacra.com/>



# Armenian saint proclaimed Doctor of the Church by Pope Francis

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/>

by [David V Barrett](#), 23 Feb 2015



*A depiction of St Gregory of Narek*

## ***10th-century Armenian mystic, poet and monk St Gregory of Narek to be a Doctor of the Universal Church***

Pope Francis has declared a 10th-century Armenian mystic, poet and monk to be a Doctor of the Universal Church.

Born around AD 950, St Gregory of Narek “is widely revered as one of the greatest figures of medieval Armenian religious thought and literature”, [Vatican Radio reported today](#).

St Gregory was educated by his father, Bishop Khosrov, author of the earliest commentary on the Divine Liturgy, and by the abbess of Narek Monastery, Anania Vartabed. He became a priest at the age of 25 and spent most of his life at Narek monastery.

His first written work was a commentary on the Song of Songs. A later work, the Book of Lamentations, which he called an “encyclopedia of prayer for all nations”, consists of 95 prayers on man’s separation from God and his quest to reunite with him.

Many of the prayers that St Gregory wrote are still used in the Divine Liturgy in Armenian churches today.

Pope Francis was close to the Armenian community in Buenos Aires when he was

Cardinal Bergoglio. The announcement comes two months before he is expected to celebrate a Mass commemorating the 100th anniversary of the massacre of over a million Armenians by Ottoman Turks, an event which led to the coining of the word “genocide”.

St Gregory brings the number of Doctors of the Church, recognised for their contribution to theology or doctrine, to 36. He is the third to be given the rare honour this century, following St John of Ávila and St Hildegard of Bingen, both in 2012.

## Ecumenism existential

IOANNIS ZIZIOULAS

Created: 03 February 2015

For a thousand years the two "lungs" of the ancient Church, the Eastern and Western theological traditions, have ceased to breathe together. The East and the West went their separate ways and independent, often in opposition to each other, at the expense of what the late Father

Georges Florovsky called "the ancient Catholic ethos." This period ended when the brave leader of the Eastern Church and the Church of the West, such as the deceased Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI on the Catholic and Ecumenical Patriarch



Athenagoras Orthodox aside, opened a new chapter in the history of the Church introducing the dialogue of love and truth between the two ancient churches, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox, with the (Continue next page)

prospect of restoring full communion between them in obedience to the will of our Lord "that all may be one; as thou, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17, 21). This ecumenical rapprochement is taking place at different levels. There is first an ecumenism of space that unites the Christian churches and denominations from around the world in the form of meetings and organizations. At the same time there is also what Father Georges Florovsky called "ecumenism of time," that is, the attempt to relate the search for Christian unity to our common past, the Christian scripture and tradition of the Church, including the patristic heritage, which is crucial especially for the Orthodox and Roman Catholics. And there must also be what we call a spiritual ecumenism, that the effort to reunite divided Christians in terms of spirituality, as this is expressed in the ascetic life of prayer. These forms of ecumenical rapprochement I would add a fourth would call existential ecumenism. By this I mean the effort to relate the search for Christian unity to the deepest existential concerns of human beings, such as the issues of life, love, freedom, who care about each person in every age and in every place. This kind of ecumenism, we tried to ignore or bypass in the past, seems to be of crucial importance especially in our time. If we look at the situation in which Christians live today in places such as the Middle East, we will realize that all the dogmatic and other differences that have divided them for centuries are replaced by basic existential problems common to all of them as human beings, such as freedom and personal dignity, or even life and death. Those who persecute and kill Christians in these areas are not asking them to what church or denomination they belong. An ecumenism of martyrdom is taking place there, uniting all Christians to the level of fundamental

life situations, such as life, death, freedom and dignity. In this situation, what emerges as the most important issue is the value of the human person and his fundamental existential meaning. This problem is not limited to situations of conflict and war. It is present in all societies and cultures; is the problem that permeates our daily life, no matter where we live. The question that underlies and characterizes our attitude and behavior always and in every culture is this: we give to the human person a fundamental existential meaning, or consider it and we treat it as a medium that can be sacrificed for a higher value? As the Christian faith and theology consider the human person? My aim is to show that personalism is central to our common Christian faith and can serve as the foundation of an existential ecumenism that can make our units relevant to the basic needs of humanity. Trinitarian theology does not indicate an understanding of the term person as a rational individual but a wholly different concept. A person can never be conceived in itself but only in relation to another person. Being a person, therefore, means to be in communion. A person is not only relational but at the same time another. The mystery of the person lies in the combination of unity and being more. A person is unique, unrepeatable and irreplaceable. One is a person only in love, and one just loves because he allows the person who likes to be other than himself, to exist as another. And freedom in its highest ontological meaning is to be free to be more, not be absorbed by the municipality and the general. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Trinitarian faith gave humanity its most precious idea: the understanding of the human being as a person. This is what distinguishes man from the rest of creation and makes it in the image of God. This precious gift of our faith in the triune God is to serve as the ground on which divided (Continue next page)

Christians can build their units. The model of Christian unity can not be anything other than God himself. "That they may be" one as we are one "(John 17, 22) was the prayer of our Lord to his Father about the unity of those who believe (Continue next page) in him. A theology of communion inspired and derived from the existence of personal Trinitarian God is the only solid basis for the unity of Christians. Making the communion ecclesiology un'ideachiave, the Second Vatican Council addressed ecumenism in the right direction. Not enough has been done, however, to explore this idea so that its roots in the Trinitarian faith and its anthropological meaning can emerge clearly. The task of Orthodox theology and Catholic, which go back to the common patristic heritage, is to work towards the integration of Trinitarian theology. Christology and anthropology to serve the unity of the Church, not for herself but so that "the world may believe" (John 17, 21). A theology of communion with its implications personalistic inspired by the Trinitarian faith is an imperative task of Christian theology in our time. The Church does not exist for itself but for the life and salvation of the world. Today the human being is threatened by depersonalizing trends hidden behind the successes which the human technological and scientific progress, economic growth, globalization. Even religion seems to depersonalize the human being by separating faith from love and sacrificing the uniqueness of the human person to religious purposes. Those of us who believe in a triune God can not believe that even in the absolute value of every human person for whom Christ died (I Corinthians, 8, 11). Christian theology again confronts the task of interpreting and making his doctrines existentially relevant to the human being. © Osservatore Romano February 4, 2015

## **Pope raises Byzantine-rite Hungarian Catholic Church to status of *sui juris* Metropolitan See**

[Catholic World News](#) - March 20, 2015

Pope Francis has reorganized the hierarchy of the Byzantine-rite Hungarian Catholic Church, raising it to the level of a *sui juris* metropolitan Church.

The Pope has raised the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog to the status of a metropolitan see, naming



Bishop Fülöp Kocsis as its metropolitan. He also raised the Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc to the status of an Eparchy, to be headed by Bishop Atanaz Orosz. Finally he erected the Eparchy of Nyiregyhaza from territory previously within the See of Hajdúdorog. The two eparchies are suffragans of the Hajdúdorog see.

## **Potlucks, Eucharist, and Ecumenical Dialogue**

MAR12,2015 Posted by [Nicholas Denysenko](#)  
from: <http://www.praytelligblog.com/>

In the January 2015 issue of *Worship*, Archimandrite Robert F. Taft, S.J., appealed to Catholic and Orthodox Christians to reinvigorate efforts for an authentic restoration of ecclesial intercommunion between the two Churches. Taft's article adds another layer to the (Continue next page)

growing corpus of positive developments in Catholic-Orthodox dialogue at the national and international levels. Taft's invitation deserves serious responses, and the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Vatican II has provided a platform for experts to reflect on this matter from diverse perspectives. I am glad to belong to an institution that is contributing to this discussion by honoring Unitatis Redintegratio, on [March 28, in Los Angeles](#).

As a lifelong member of the Orthodox Church, I am familiar with the opposing views on interfaith efforts to restore communion. Orthodox Christians who desire restoration call for decisive action by the primates of the Orthodox Churches, sometimes citing progress by joint theological commissions on theological issues that have been historically invoked as justifying division (e.g., filioque, purgatory, original sin, the Immaculate Conception, and especially Papal infallibility). Orthodox opposed to interfaith dialogue believe that the Roman See is schismatic and heretical, and would require repentance and the recanting of specific points of faith to be restored to the Orthodox Church. In fact, this Orthodox view has been ritualized, as evidenced by the renunciations required by Catholics in variants of the rite of reception into the Orthodox Church via anointing with Chrism. The interest in ecumenical dialogue and desire for restoring communion differs by region among Orthodox people.

I am an advocate for reunion, and I believe that the renewed sense of urgency for restoring communion would constitute a more faithful response to the eschatological dimension of the Church, and the constant outpouring of the Holy Spirit received by the people at the Divine Liturgy. In fact, I am among the few who would engage a serious discussion on restoring communion before all of the thorny theological issues are resolved, with the understanding that the ecclesial structures and juridical mechanisms of the Eastern Orthodox Churches would not be subject to revision by Rome. I have many motivations for choosing a more progressive approach to intercommunion, and I will share one of them here. I beg readers for patience, because I am still in the process of organizing my thoughts and am not advancing this anecdote as THE model for reunion, just a source for reflection. Every day, I drive my six-year old daughter to her Catholic School. I usually leave right away, and I can hear the school praying "Our Father" or "Hail,

Mary." She prays in class and learns the fundamentals of the Bible, God, Jesus, Trinity, Mary, Lent, and Easter. She has been embraced and invited to participate, and the school and host parish have also welcomed us, inviting us to share prayer. We belong to this community. Last week, her Kindergarten class had a potluck supper. We shared food and fellowship. My wife and I were welcomed; we belong.

Afterwards, I realized that we are a community. We live in the same neighborhoods and have the same concerns as the other parents. Our children break bread together every day, and we do as well. Yet we do not share the Lord's Supper together. And this troubles me.

Is a Kindergarten potluck the Eucharist? It is not my intention to claim equivalence between a potluck and the Eucharist. I am not saying that theological differences are relative or that commissions should cease their work since there are no longer problems requiring resolution. But I cannot dismiss the potluck as "nothing" or "irrelevant." The experience of sharing life with others is real and meaningful, even if it is fleeting. If we seriously consider the reality we experience when we participate in community life, we cannot sustain the notion of a chasm dividing Catholics and Orthodox which cannot be bridged until all theological differences are satisfactorily resolved. The reality of a Catholic school which welcomes everyone and folds them into the community is the result of serious ecumenical toil within the Catholic Church to heal wounds for reconciliation. The source of this toil is a genuine love for others, especially estranged brothers and sisters in Christ, and a desire to be one. The result is the creation of a community to which one belongs, even if one is a non-Catholic.

The ecumenical dialogues and theological commissions should continue their rigorous work. But perhaps we might pay greater attention to the smaller living communities that are realities experienced on a daily basis by us and our children. Even a school potluck can communicate the love of Christ that alone has the power to rekindle cold hearts and reconcile those who would prefer to remain in division.

## **PRAY FOR UNITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES**

## East and West Before the Mystery of the Trinity

In His Second Lenten Homily, Father Cantalamessa Reflects on the Different Ways that Catholics and Orthodox Express the Trinitarian Mystery and the Common Need to Adore It

Vatican City, March 06, 2015 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)) [Federico Cenci](#) |

We should have no obsessive insistence on our differences but rather bring together what we have in common and what unites us in one faith. This is the ecumenical theme that runs through this Friday's Lenten meditations of Father Raniero Cantalamessa. The Preacher of the Papal Household said he was convinced he should make this choice following Pope Francis' recent meeting in Turkey with the Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew, and especially the Pontiff's exhortation "to share fully the common faith of the Christian East and the Latin West."

A desire to share that is not "new," says Father Cantalamessa. Glancing at the more or less recent past, he refers in particular to Vatican Council II's *Unitatis redintegratio*, and to John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Oriente lumen* of 1995.

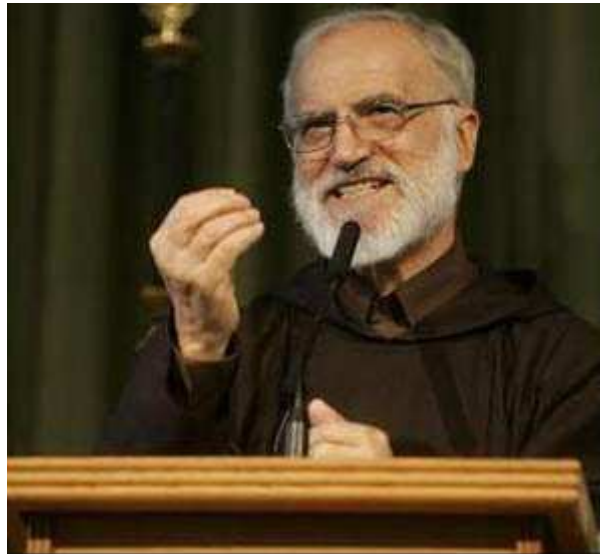
Father Cantalamessa recalled that St. John Paul II promoted the invitation "to put in common the many things that unite us and which certainly are more than those that divide us." The priest points out that in today's world, in which questions and interests are posed that are different from those of the past and that "no longer understand the meaning of many of our subtle distinctions," it is necessary to "reverse the tendency" to insist on what distinguishes us for the benefit of an ecumenism based on the

following formula: "To share what we have in common to then resolve the differences, with patience and mutual respect."

Father Cantalamessa noted that "the most surprising result" of this change of perspective is that the doctrinal differences, rather than appearing as "errors" or "heresies," "begin to appear ever more often as compatible with one's position and often, in fact, as a necessary corrective and an enrichment of it." However, quoting Quinto Aurelio Simmaco, a pagan thinker of the 4th century, the Capuchin Friar reminded: "one cannot come to such a great mystery just one way."

Therefore, Father Cantalamessa showed "the beauty and joy of meeting again at the summit (Orthodox and Catholics *ndr*) to contemplate the same wonderful panorama of the Christian faith, even if reached from different slopes." And the first ascent begins addressing the mystery of the Trinity, what the Capuchin Father calls "the highest mountain, the Everest of the faith."

However, among the mainstays of the faith of Christians of the East and West, the mystery of the Trinity is expressed in a different way. Father Cantalamessa synthesized the question thus: "In the consideration of the Trinity, the Greeks and the Latins move from opposite slopes; the Greeks begin from the Divine Persons, namely, from plurality to arrive at the unity of nature. The Latins begin vice versa from the unity of the Divine Nature, to come to the three Persons." Preferred usually today is the Greeks' expression of the Trinity, which Father Cantalamessa describes in the following words: "The Father is the source, the absolute origin of the movement of love. The Son cannot exist as Son if, first of all, He does not receive from the Father all that He is." Therefore, "the Father is the only one, also(Continue next page)



in the realm of the Trinity, who does not need to be loved to be able to love. Only in the Father is the perfect equation realized: *to be is to love*; for the other Divine Persons, *to be is to be loved.*”

Greek Theology has described thus “the scheme and the right approach to speak of the Trinity,” reflects Father Cantalamessa, who adds, however: “With Augustine, the Latin thought has ensured the underlying content of this and the spirit, which is love. The well-known Bishops of Hippo based his discourse on the Trinity on the definition ‘God is love,’” therefore, he sees “in the Holy Spirit the mutual love between the Father and the Son, according to the loving triad lover, beloved, love.” According to the Papal Household Preacher, the Church has the need to “keep open and passable both ways to the Trinitarian mystery.” Said schematically: the Church is in need of accepting fully the approach of Orthodoxy to the Trinity in its internal life, namely in prayer, in contemplation, in the liturgy, in mysticism; she needs to keep the Latin approach present in her evangelizing mission *ad extra.*”

However, to evangelize contemporary society by speaking of the Trinity the way theologians speak about it would mean, “to put on people’s shoulders a weight they are incapable of bearing.” Therefore, “the Church must find a way of proclaiming the mystery of the One and Triune God with appropriate and comprehensible categories for the men of their time,” highlights Father Cantalamessa. To do this, she can draw on Saint Augustine’s thought, which has love as its pivot.

From love, the Papal Household Preacher went on to explain adoration. The need to adore the Trinity is what unites East and West “without any other differentiation.”

“To adore the Trinity, according to a stupendous oxymoron of Saint Gregory Nazianzen, is to elevate to it ‘a hymn of silence,’” affirms Father Cantalamessa, who added: “To adore is to recognize God as God and ourselves as creatures of God. It is to ‘recognize the infinite qualitative difference between the Creator and the creature, to recognize it, however, freely, joyfully, as children, not as slaves.”

## Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko Reposes in the Lord



Father Hopko, shown here at one of our chapter meetings with Bishop John Michael (Botean) and Father Daniel Rohan, was a supporter of our chapter and spoke to us several times. We will miss his presence among us. He passed March 18, 2015. Eternal be his memory! (Members Fr. Dan Rohan and Rich Mattiussi represented our chapter at services)

### ST. VINCENT'S LATROBE, PA-CHANT

Gregorian Chant Workshops 2015 Historical Performance Practice Level One: June 15-19, 2015 Introduction to Historical Performance Practice Level Two: June 22-26, 2015 Gregorian Semiology and the New Science of Gregorian Modality Fr. Stephen Concordia, O.S.B To register online, please visit [www.stvincent.edu/sacredmusic](http://www.stvincent.edu/sacredmusic) Scholarships covering all, or part, of tuition, room and board, and travel expenses are available. For details and application forms, please visit [www.stvincent.edu/sacredmusic](http://www.stvincent.edu/sacredmusic). The Novus Ordo Mass is sung in Gregorian Chant each day of the workshops. Contact Us Fr. Stephen Concordia, O.S.B. Director of Programs in Sacred Music

[stephen.concordia@stvincent.edu](mailto:stephen.concordia@stvincent.edu)

# United States : Bishop Schneider visits USA seminary

14-02-2015

Filed under [From Tradition](#), [News](#)



On February 11, 2015, Bishop Athanasius Schneider, auxiliary bishop of Astana in Kazakhstan, met with Bishop Bernard Fellay, SSPX Superior General, and also with several priests of the Society, at St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in Winona (United States).

This was the second visit by Bishop Schneider to one of our seminaries. On January 16, 2015, he had visited the St. Cure d'Ars Seminary in Flavigny (France). Both meetings pertained to the question of the liturgical reform of Paul VI and the doctrinal presuppositions of the *Novus Ordo Missae*.

On December 5, 2014, Cardinal Walter Brandmuller, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences, [had visited Sacred Heart Seminary in Zaitzkofen](#) (Germany), where the discussion focused on the magisterial authority of Vatican Council II.

These meetings are a way of continuing the doctrinal discussions between the Society of St. Pius X and the Roman authorities « in a larger and less formal context than that of the preceding meetings », according to [the decision made during the meeting of Bishop Fellay with Cardinal Gerhard Muller](#), Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on September 23, 2014.

These meetings are also an opportunity for the visitors to become better acquainted with the

Society of St. Pius X, and also to learn more about what has been accomplished by the works of Tradition.

The visit in Winona coincided with the annual meeting of priests, during which 80 priests of the United States District met at the seminary for a week of studies.

(Source: FSSPX/MG– DIC1 dated February 14, 2015)

## Learn from the ancient Churches.

from:<http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/images/stories/SFM-Feb2015.pdf>

The deepest theological statement I have heard in the last ten years came from my friend the Orthodox priest. I asked him if it was possible to be justified by faith alone, apart from works, because some of his rhetoric sounded pretty evangelical. He thought for a moment and replied, “It is possible to be justified by faith without work, but it is better to be justified by faith and works.” Or with the same man (who received no theological training), when he was put in charge of a church in a neighboring town that had been without a priest for a long time, I asked him, “So how do you start?” He answered, “I will call every family on the membership list and visit them at their home.” The idea of an American pastor calling and visiting every person/family on their membership list and then actually visiting them at home was shocking to me. But then I realized that he was right. The man with no training was following the genuine Christian tradition of being a pastor, and I had never seen that in the USA.

### The Local Church

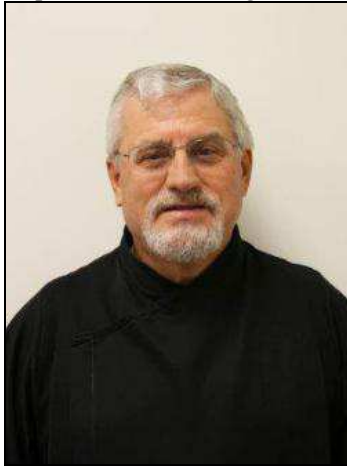
#### **Vienna St. Thomas to build new church**

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish will break ground for a new church April 27.

(edited by LOE from Catholic Exponent 3/27)

## **POPE NAMES MELKITE PRIEST SERVING IN PITTSBURGH ARCHEPARCHY AS BISHOP OF BYZANTINE EPARCHY OF PIANO DEGLI ALBANESE IN PALERMO**

March 31, 2015  
<http://www.usccb.org/>



WASHINGTON—Pope Francis has named Father George D. Gallaro, 67, a priest of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton, Massachusetts, as bishop of the Byzantine Eparchy of Piano degli Albanesi in Palermo, Italy. Father Gallaro currently serves as professor of Canon Law at St. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Seminary in Pittsburgh and as judicial vicar of the Byzantine Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

The appointment was publicized in Washington, March 31, by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

George D. Gallaro was born January 16, 1948, in Pozuolo, Sicily. He received a bachelor's in philosophy from the Seminario Diocesano Noto, Italy, in 1968. He received a certificate in liturgical theology from the Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Rome, in 1980, a doctorate in Eastern Church Law from the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, in 1981, and a licentiate in ecumenical theology from the University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome, in 1994.

He was ordained May 27, 1972, in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and incardinated in the Greek-Melkite Eparchy of Newton in

September 1987. He served as a parochial vicar and instructor of catechesis in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. For the Melkite Eparchy, he served in the marriage tribunal (1982-1986), as a seminary instructor (1982-1991), secretary to Archbishop Joseph Tawil (1983-1990), judicial vicar (1986-1992), chancellor and eparchial consultor (1983-1992). He was a member and collaborator of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity from 1992-1994 and rector of St. Gregory Melkite Seminary in Newton from 1994-1996.

Bishop-elect Gallaro is the author of dozens of articles, dealing largely with issues from the perspective of Eastern Catholics, including ecumenism, marriage and Canon Law. He is a member of the Canon Law Society of America and the Society for the Law of the Eastern Churches. He speaks English, Italian, French, Spanish, Latin, Greek, some Albanian and Portuguese, and a little Arabic.

The Byzantine Eparchy of Piano degli Albanesi has been vacant since the retirement of Bishop Sotir Ferrara in April 2013.

**+++Father Gallaro has spoken to our  
Youngstown-Warren Chapter on the Italo-  
Greek-Albanian Church.**

### **SLOVAKIA: CONFERENCE ON SACRAMENTO MARRIAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF DISCIPLINARY ORIENTAL CHURCHES**

(Sir Europe - Bratislava) - The Pontifical Oriental Institute, the Slovak Bishops' Conference, the Slovak Society of Canon Law and the Faculty of Theology of the University of Trnava held an international conference on the theme of "the sacrament of marriage in the disciplinary context of the Eastern Churches". Intervene as speakers prominent academics from different European countries, including Astrid Kaptijn University of Freiburg, father and father Lorenzo Lorusso Sunny Kokkaravalayil the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, Peter Szabo Peter Pazmany Catholic University in Budapest, Msgr. Cyril Vasil, secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, and Father Janusz Kowal and Msgr. Christmas Praise Lateran University in Rome. The conference will take place from 9 to 11 April in Bratislava. Among the topics that will animate the discussion include the marriage bond in the system of canon law, the natural dimension of Christian marriage, the catechumens and matrimonial particular, the issue of mixed marriages with followers of the Orthodox denomination as well as various aspects of exclusion from ' Eucharist couples divorced and remarried.

(Google translation from Italian)