

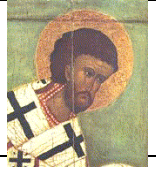
LIGHT OF THE EAST

"GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS."

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, YOUNGSTOWN-WARREN OHIO CHAPTER
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FROM THE EDITOR...

Dear Members and Friends, The next regular meeting of the chapter will be **Tuesday, November 12, 7pm** at St Mary & St John The Beloved Coptic Monastery 8640 Squires Ln NE, Warren, OH 44484 (330) 856-2007. Our speaker will be Fr. Mauritius El-Anba Bishoy, Monk Priest who serves the monastery among his other duties. He is originally from Sydney, Australia and one of the initiators of the CYC (St. Moses the Black Coptic Youth Centre). He now authors the show, "Know Your Church" on Coptic Youth Channel. Father will speak on **"The Copts of Egypt Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow."**



being held near the Turkish border, in an area under rebel control. Orthodox officials have been unable to establish contact with the kidnapped bishops or their captors. For weeks, rumors had circulated that they were dead.

CHAPTER MEMBER BECOMES "ARCHIMANDRITE"

Edited from the Diocesan Newsletter of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma 9-1-13

On the vigil of the feast of Sts. Peter & Paul, Bishop John of the Ukrainian Eparchy of St. Josaphat conferred the rank of archimandrite on Msgr. George Appleyard, who serves as his *protosyncellos* (literally "first cell mate" or vicar general in Western terms) and vicar for religious. The new archimandrite is also the prelate of the American Priory of the Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem, and Bishop John allowed a representative of

MEMORIALS

A monetary contribution has been made to our chapter by Martha Katz and Ray Nakley in memory of **Barbara Hutchinson**, Vito's sister and **Nicolina Carchedi**, Vito's mother. May their Memory Be Eternal! Any future contributions to the chapter in memory of those you wish to commemorate will be noted in our newsletter.



Orthodox bishops kidnapped in Syria in April reported still alive

CWN - September 27, 2013

Two Orthodox bishops who were kidnapped in April by rebel forces in Syria are still alive, according to a news agency specializing in the Middle East.

AI-Monitor reports that the two prelates-- Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim and Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi, both of Aleppo—are

the Order to present the candidate for the *cheirotesia* (literally, the "laying on hands," and usually translated as "ordination"). The rites took place at Holy Trinity Church in Carnegie, PA.

Catholic archimandrites in the Slav recension may wear a purple mandyas with four patches embroidered with crosses and no other banding on their mantle. This easily distinguishes an archimandrite from a bishop. Archimandrites use a pastoral staff called a *bacterion*, usually made of wood and looking like a primitive crutch.

Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission meets after 10 years

Published 08 October 2013

<http://www.christiantoday.com>



The Archbishop of Canterbury with members of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission (Photo: ACO/Neil Vigers)

After a ten-year postponement, the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission concluded its second meeting in England on Monday. Discussions were held on questions of Christology and the Holy Spirit.

On Saturday evening, prayers were said for Egypt, Syria and the wider Middle East during a special service.

His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of The Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, and acting Co-Secretary of the commission this year said:

"Having reconvened after a long postponement, we met with the aim of continuing our good relations and establishing greater unity between our Churches, while still tackling difficult and challenging issues.

"This has been an opportunity to re-establish a valuable platform for common understanding, leading to a greater witness of solidarity, not only for members of our own Churches but for the wider Christian Church and the whole world, especially our brethren in Egypt, Syria and throughout the Middle East for whom we prayed."

The meeting follows the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, to Egypt in June where he was hosted by His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, 118th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa.

Bishop Geoffrey Rowell, Co-Chair of the Dialogue said: "We rejoice that we have met together once more, here in England, and within this Diocese of Guildford. We

have gathered to reflect on our common faith in Christ." Archbishop Aphrem Karim of the Syriac Orthodox Church said: "What is happening in Syria and the Middle East is the cost we have to pay for our faith. But the whole people of the Middle East, Christians and Muslims are suffering."

Archbishop Welby, who met with members of the consultation on Sunday, said: "I am delighted that Anglican and Orthodox Christians will worship together and remember in prayer the very difficult, indeed life-threatening circumstances in which some of the Churches are living."

The third meeting of the Commission is planned to take place in Cairo, Egypt, in October 2014, hosted by the Coptic Orthodox Church, addressing the themes of ecclesiology, primacy and collegiality, and pastoral co-operation.

Metropolitan Hilarion meets with Coptic Bishop Serapion of Los Angeles

by OCP on OCTOBER 4, 2013

On 30 September 2013, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), met with a hierarch of the Coptic Church, Bishop Serapion of Los Angeles.

They were joined in the meeting by archpriest Dimitry Sizonenko, DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations, and Ms Margarita Nelyubova, a DECR staff member. While talking about persecution against Christians in Egypt, the guest said that radical Islamists had burnt over sixty churches during the last two years, and many Coptic Christians had been killed or forced to leave their homeland. On behalf of the Coptic Church Bishop Serapion thanked the Russian Orthodox Church and the government of Russia for support and solidarity with the Coptic community.

Metropolitan Hilarion said: "We are worried over the rise of fundamentalism in the Middle East in general and in Egypt in particular as Christians, the native residents, have to leave their homeland. We are willing to exert all necessary efforts for putting an end to the profanation of the shrines and violence against the ancient Coptic community."

Also discussed were the re-opening of the work of the Commission on Dialogue between the Ancient Oriental Churches and the Local Eastern Orthodox Churches and a possible visit of the head of the Coptic Church, Pope Theodoros II, to Russia and pastoral care for the Coptic community in Moscow.

PRAY FOR THE UNITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES!

Patriarch Youhanna of Antioch: The encounter with Pope Francis was warm and historic

by Fady Noun

Between September 26 and October 1 the pontifex met Greek Orthodox Patriarch:

"Together against the crises afflicting the Mashreq countries".

Beirut (AsiaNews) - "The meeting between the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, Youhanna X Yazigi and Pope Francis in the Vatican - in the week



between September 26 and October 1 - was warm and historic" announced yesterday a statement issued by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and circulated in Beirut. The text reads: "The Patriarch of Antioch, of the Greek Orthodox and all the East, Youhanna X Yazigi, joins and prays with the sister Church of Rome, for peace in Syria, in Lebanon, in the Mashreq and worldwide".

"The visit", the statement specified, "was not of an official nature; rather its goal was to make known to the world the position of the Greek Orthodox Church on the war in Syria, and to join its voice to that of the Holy See, in the appeal to dialogue as a solution to the crises afflicting the Mashreq countries".

During the meeting, Youhanna X Yazigi thanked the Pope for his call to prayer and fasting for the sake of peace in Syria and around the world.

The Patriarch, likewise, shared with the Holy Father the "pain" that afflicts his people following the abduction of two bishops: Youhanna Ibrahim (Syrian Orthodox) and Boulos Yazigi (brother of the Patriarch and Bishop of Aleppo), of whom there has been no information for five months. Youhanna X Yazigi demanded their release and that "of all the hostages," and he called on "the divine mercy for priests who have given their blood and their consolation for all the broken-hearted".

In front of the Patriarch, the Pope reaffirmed "his opposition to all forms of extremism, violence and terror, in addition to his appeal for a peaceful political solution [...] as the sole guarantor of the survival of the Christians and their compatriots in the motherland [...] and a dignified life, founded on citizenship, mutual acceptance and sharing."

To consolidate the fraternal bonds between the Patriarchate of Antioch of the Greek-Orthodox and the Holy See, the Patriarch Youhanna X Yazigi met many senior leaders of the Catholic Church, to whom he expressed "the need to move towards unity".

For this reason he met the Vatican Secretary of State,

Cardinal Bertone, especially thanking him "for the wise decision to have kept as Apostolic Nuncio in Damascus Mario Zenari, direct witness of the problems facing Muslims and Christians".

Pope Francis takes inter-faith dialogue to a new level

Argentina's Rabbi Abraham Skorka, who has stayed with Pope Francis since September 25, tells how Pope Francis and he are making history by their friendship, and reveals that they dream of travelling together to the Holy Land soon', TUESDAY, OCTOBER 01, 2013

BY GERARD O'CONNELL



'Never before in the history of Christian-Jewish relations have a Pope and a Rabbi celebrated their friendship by living in the Vatican together for several days, sharing all meals, including on two Jewish festivals and the Sabbath at which the Rabbi said prayers in Hebrew, and discussing what more they can do together to promote dialogue and peace in the world.

That is what actually happened over the past four days at the Vatican guesthouse (Santa Marta) where Pope Francis lives and where his friend from Buenos Aires, Rabbi Abraham Skorka, has been his guest from September 25 to this day.

"I eat with him at breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. He cares for me, and controls everything regarding my food to make sure it is all kosher, and according to my religious tradition. These are festive days, and I have to say certain prayers at meals and, I expand the last prayer and translate it. He accompanies me together with the others at table -his secretaries and a bishop, and they all say 'Amen' at the end", the Rabbi said.

By acting in this way, the Pope and Rabbi are sending an extraordinary message of friendship, dialogue and peace not only to their respective religious communities but also to the whole world. And they plan to do even more together, Rabbi Skorka revealed when we talked together at Santa Marta, on September 27.

He and the Pope are planning to travel together to the Holy Land next year. The Israeli and Palestinian authorities have invited Pope Francis, and the (Continue next page)

Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, wants him to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the historic meeting of his predecessor, Athenagoras, with Paul VI in the Holy City.

“We are dreaming of traveling together to Israel soon, and the Pope is working on this subject”, the Rabbi said. “I dream of embracing him at the Kotel, or Wailing Wall, and I will accompany him to Bethlehem, in the Palestinian territories. His presence can help a lot at this moment when the peace talks are starting again”, he added.

Skorka sees a deep spiritual significance for both of them in being together at the sites that are sacred to their respective religions. “I do not cease to be a Jew for him, and he goes on keeping his own faith. But the two spiritualities have to have a point of encounter. We cannot live in a world where we reject each other, we must build bridges.”

He believes his friend “has become a spiritual reference point for the whole world, not just for the Catholic Church” as was evidenced recently when he called for a day of prayer and fast for peace in Syria.

“Ours is a spiritual journey”, he said of their friendship which dates back to 1997 when Bergoglio became coadjutor bishop of Buenos Aires archdiocese. “Like him I don’t much like the protocol, and like him I too go for the essentials”, he added. Since then, they have done many things together, including producing an interview book – *Sobre el cielo y la tierra* (‘On heaven and earth’) that has been translated into several languages and will soon be in Hebrew too.

“We hold to different traditions, but we are creating a dialogue that has not existed for centuries. Both of us believe that God has something to do with our friendship and with what we are doing. There are too many coincidences for it all to be mere chance”, said Skorka, 63, who is Rector of the Latin American Rabbinic Seminary.

“We come together without burying our identities. I spoke to him about evangelization, and he stated emphatically that the Catholic Church cannot engage in proselytism”, he said..’

*Gerard O’Connell writes for the **Vatican Insider**, from where this article is adapted.*

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

Time Is Not Ripe For Pope’s Visit To Serbia – Patriarch Irinej

Blic, InSerbia

BELGRADE – Serbian Patriarch of the Orthodox Church said, in an interview for the German daily



“Frankfurter

Zeitung”, he was for the convergence of the Orthodox and Catholic Church, as well as for the arrival of the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Serbia, but he said that the time for his coming is not yet “ripe”.

As an ideal place for the meeting of the Catholic and Orthodox Church, the Patriarch named Nis, noting that the anniversary of 1700 years of the Edict of Milan an opportunity for numerous representatives of Christian churches and communities to, after centuries, meet in the place of great importance and enter into a dialogue. Patriarch Irinej also said that, especially for Catholic and Orthodox Church, “which are close to each other, would be of great significance that after so many centuries come a conversation” and suggested holding of an ecumenical council.

When asked about the possibility of the coming of the Pope to Serbia, Patriarch Irinej said that more than 200,000 Serbs had to leave their “homes and churches” in Croatia and they now live in bad conditions in Serbia, saying that among them “there are very many of those who would not be glad to see the Pope coming”. Irinej warned that, “if some of those unsatisfied people would do harm to the Pope, than it would cast a dark shadow on our Church and our people,” and said that the time for the Pope’s visit is “not ripe”. “We do not know if his safety can be taken care of enough in the country. At the end, even in Rome an assassination was performed on the Pope,” said Patriarch Irinej in the first interview that a Patriarch of Serbian Orthodox Church gave to the German media. Patriarch Irinej also said that there are pessimists in Serbia “who see every contact with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church as detrimental to Orthodoxy, which is absolutely wrong and cannot be accepted”.

BRING A FRIEND TO THE NEXT MEETING!

UKRAINIANS PURCHASE CHURCH IN SENLIS, FRANCE

27 September 2013, 21:04 |risu.org.



On September 27, 2013, the Ukrainian Eparchy of St. Volodymyr in Paris, led by Bishop Borys Gudziak, president of the Ukrainian Catholic University, purchased the church of St. Vincent Abbey in Senlis (45 km from Paris), which the Queen of France,

Anna Yaroslavna, founded in 1060. Senlis is where the daughter of Yaroslav the Wise lived in the eleventh century. Starting in November, the church will function as a church of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), and will also house the Anna Yaroslavna Cultural Center, whose purpose is to represent and promote Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian-European cooperation.

The newly acquired church will open its doors on November 16. On this day at 10:00 a.m. a Hierarchical Liturgy will be celebrated. And on November 17 Ukrainians can take part in a memorial Hierarchical Liturgy in the Cathedral of Notre Dame to pray together for the victims of the Holodomor.

“Today is a great day for the Ukrainian community in Paris, France, in all of Europe, and for all Ukrainians, wherever they may be. We purchased the church in Senlis, the royal town in which lived Anna Yaroslavna, known to the world as Anne of Kyiv, Queen of France. With this ecclesiastical and legal act, we have shown that the sources of the Ukrainian Christian European tradition are alive and viable,” said Bishop Borys Gudziak.

He also said that the church will bear the name of the martyrs Borys and Hlib, Anna’s uncles. “Boris and Hlib represent virtue, which today we need the most – love and harmony among brothers, rejection of fratricidal strife. Anna represents high culture and Europeanism and Christian spirituality,” said the bishop of the Eparchy of Paris.

He said that the timing of the signing of the documents for the purchase of the church is very symbolic, because the progressive Ukrainian and world community hopes for rapprochement between Ukraine and the European

Union. The church was bought for 203,000 euros using donations from Ukrainians from Ukraine, France, Britain, the United States, and Canada. According to preliminary estimates, 1.5 million U.S. dollars are needed for renovation, because the church has not served as a place of worship for nearly a century, as it was private owned. According to Bishop Borys Gudziak, renovation will begin next year. “The church is of hewn stone, in structurally very good condition. It also has large vaults with catacombs from Roman times. The building will be divided into two parts – a chapel and a cultural center. The aim of the cultural center is to represent Ukraine in the context of European history and culture. This is symbolic because Anna Yaroslavna was the first person from Ukraine to be recorded in European history,” said the bishop.

The project envisages that the church will hold a variety of exhibitions and cultural events. The Anna Yaroslavna Center will become for the French, French Ukrainians, and Ukrainians in Ukraine and in the diaspora a place in Europe that respects Ukrainian culture and develops Ukrainian-European cooperation.

» 09/30/2013 14:23

VATICAN

Pope establishes a "Council of Cardinals " to help govern the Church and reform the Curia

Vatican City (AsiaNews) - *With a Chirograph , Pope Francis has officially established the Council of Cardinals , whose members were announced 13 April and which has the task of helping the Pope in governing the Church*



and in the revision of the Apostolic Constitution Pastor Bonus on the Roman Curia. The number of components may vary "as deemed appropriate". The group "will be a further expression of Episcopal communion and auxiliary service to munus petrinum that the Bishops scattered around the world can offer." Below is the full text of the Chirograph .

Among the suggestions that emerged during the course of the General Congregations of Cardinals prior to the Conclave, was the convenience in instituting a small group of Members of the Episcopate, from different parts of the world, that the Holy Father could consult with, either individually or collectively, on particular issues . Once elected to the Roman See , I had occasion to reflect often on this subject , believing that such an initiative would be of considerable help in carrying out the pastoral ministry of the Successor of Peter, with which I was (Continue next page)

entrusted by my brother Cardinals.

For this reason, on 13 April I announced the establishment of the aforementioned group, indicating, at the same time, the names of those who had been called to become part of it. Now, after mature reflection, I consider it opportune, through this Chirograph, to officially institute as a "Council of Cardinals", whose task is to help in the government of the universal Church and to study a draft revision of the Apostolic Constitution Pastor bonus on the Roman Curia. It will be composed of the same persons mentioned above and may be consulted, both individually and as a Council, on matters I feel worthy of attention. Said Council, the number of components of which I reserve the right to configure as deemed adequate, will be a further expression of Episcopal communion and auxiliary service that the Bishops around the world can offer to munus petrinum.

Rome, at Saint Peter's, September 28th of 2013, the first of my Pontificate.

FRANCIS

METROPOLITAN VOLODYMYR MAKES PILGRIMAGE TO ITALIAN CITY OF BARI

23 September 2013,
10:52 | UOC (MP) |
On September 20-21
Metropolitan
Volodymyr of the
Ukrainian Orthodox



Church-Moscow Patriarchate make a long pilgrimage to the Italian city of Bari, where the relics of Saint Nicholas, the wonderworker and Bishop of Myra in Lycia, are kept. In the evening of September 20, Metropolitan Volodymyr celebrated the Akathist service before the relics of St. Nicholas.

On September 21, on the day of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church led the liturgy in the crypt of the Basilica of Saint Nicholas in Bari. The Primate said a prayer for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, peace, and the well-being of the Ukrainian state and its people, the official website of the [UOC-MP](http://www.uoc-mp.com) reported.

Metropolitan Hilarion meets with Catholic Archbishop Vincent Nichols of Westminster

September 24,
2013

On September 24, 2013, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow



Patriarchate's department for external church relations, during his working visit to London, met with Archbishop Vincent Nichols of Westminster (Roman Catholic Church). They talked about Orthodox-Catholic relations, the state of religion in the modern society and prospects for students' exchange between theological schools.

The DECR chairman informed Archbishop Nichols about the present state of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, the Church's situation in Russia and the character of church-state relations in the post-Soviet space. The Archbishop of Westminster told his guest about the initiatives of the Roman Catholic Church in England, her charity projects, priority tasks and the difficulties experienced by the Church in the secular society.

They gave special attention to the crisis situation in Syria. Metropolitan Hilarion told the head of the Catholic diocese of London about the initiatives made by the Russian Orthodox Church to help overcome the crisis and the cooperation of leaders of various Christian Churches in these efforts.

They were joined in their talk by Archbishop Elisey of Sourzh, Hieromonk Ioann (Kopeikin), assistant to the DECR chairman, the Rev. Alexander Vasiutin, a DECR staff member, and Protodeacon Dimitry Nedostupenko, the Russian Cathedral of the Assumption in London.

Source: [DECR](http://www.decr.ru)

PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH

Unity of Hearts!

Unity of Christians!

Unity of the Feast of Easter!



Synodality, Collegiality, and Orthodoxy

Friday, September 20, 2013 Dr. Adam DeVille

From: <http://easternchristianbooks.blogspot.com/>

In the interview that has generated headlines around the world, Pope Francis said many noteworthy and important things, but for obvious reasons I fastened on to this particular passage:

We must walk together: the people, the bishops and the pope. Synodality should be lived at various levels. Maybe it is time to change the methods of the Synod of Bishops, because it seems to me that the current method is not dynamic. This will also have ecumenical value, especially with our Orthodox brethren. From them we can learn more about the meaning of episcopal collegiality and the tradition of synodality. The joint effort of reflection, looking at how the church was governed in the early centuries, before the breakup between East and West, will bear fruit in due time.... We must continue on this path.

Where have we heard much of this before? Oh, that's right, in Orthodoxy and the Roman Papacy: *Ut Unum Sint* and the Prospects of East-West Unity.

Now, when I wrote that book I never for a moment thought that I was prescribing the answer to the problems of synodality, collegiality, and the papacy and thus to East-West unity. I have many failings, but that kind of scaldingly presumptuous approach to the nature and unity of the Church is not one of them. I've only ever seen what I wrote as a possible proposal, and certainly not a panacea. But I proposed what I did because an awful lot of other tremendously smart and "discerning" (to use a favored papal verb) people also said it--the leading lights of Orthodox and Catholic theology in the last half-century all agree with what I wrote, and what the pope has now said (echoing, of course, his two immediate predecessors, albeit more directly), viz., we require greater synodality in the Latin Church, and to learn what that means, the West must look to the East. In so doing, the Church can only be strengthened.

Such a proposal for greater synodality is welcome news indeed. But it will, predictably, give a case of the vapors to certain Catholics for whom a strongly centralized papacy is the only thing between us and the marauding barbarians at the gates--and the heretics inside many sanctuaries, chanceries, universities, etc. To those of this mindset, for whom the word "ultramontane" seems both outdated and anemic, even the barest hint of anything other than a Roman retrenchment will be greeted with alarm. For this crowd, the only thing necessary is a ringing denunciation--a syllabus of errors--at least once a month from the loggia in St. Peter's while we all kneel in the piazza; they yearn to see headlines like "Pope Sacks

500 Bishops, Tells Theologians to Shape Up or Face New Inquisition."

My response to these "arguments" is always the same: from the end of the nineteenth century onward, we have seen a steady centralization in the papacy and it doesn't work today. (For a history of this centralization, see such reputable historians as Owen Chadwick in his splendid *A History of the Popes 1830-1914* as well as John Pollard's *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy: Financing the Vatican, 1850-1950* and Eamon Duffy's *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, which notes that it was only with the 1917 Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law that a new canon was smuggled in, giving the pope exclusive right to appoint all the bishops of the world--a development so staggering that Duffy rightly and memorably calls it a "coup d'Église." One cannot thus argue with a straight face that a centralized papacy is "traditional" when it's only a century old; even more problematic are attempts to argue that such a model is theologically grounded, when plainly it is not. But what I find truly intolerable is the sheer fatuousness of this: in a time of great crisis for the Church, this strongly centralized papacy has not helped matters in most instances--and in fact has made the crisis worse in some cases. How, then, is more of the same supposed to arrest the crisis when it has failed to do so until now? This is like the doctor who, seeing that the penicillin he prescribed has not killed the bacteria after years of treatment, refuses to countenance another drug and instead simply applies more of the same failed pharmaceutical to the infection.

Now, to be clear, greater collegiality and synodality will not be a panacea. No system of governance is perfect, and each brings its own problems. But the idea that the current *modus operandi* for the papacy is the only theologically, historically justifiable model, and that we are not permitted to try something different, is simply not a serious proposition. Greater synodality will doubtless be messy, but why should that be thought a problem, still less an argument against proceeding? In addition to demonstrating to the Orthodox that the Catholic Church is serious about unity, greater synodality and collegiality has the very real potential--however counter-intuitive this may sound to some--not of weakening the Church but of strengthening her. For those Roman Catholics who fear that synodality=chaos=heresy, I always counsel, as the pope has done here, turning *ad orientem*: look at the Eastern Churches, including the Eastern Catholic Churches in your very midst: they are governed with a far higher (but not high enough!) degree of synodality and they have not fallen apart. Look, moreover, to the Eastern Orthodox Churches (with their various models, and varying degrees of centralization and synodality). They have plenty of problems, to be sure, but nobody--nobody--thinks that turning the patriarch of Moscow, Constantinople, Antioch, Bucharest, Sofia, or Alexandria into a pope on the Roman model is the answer.

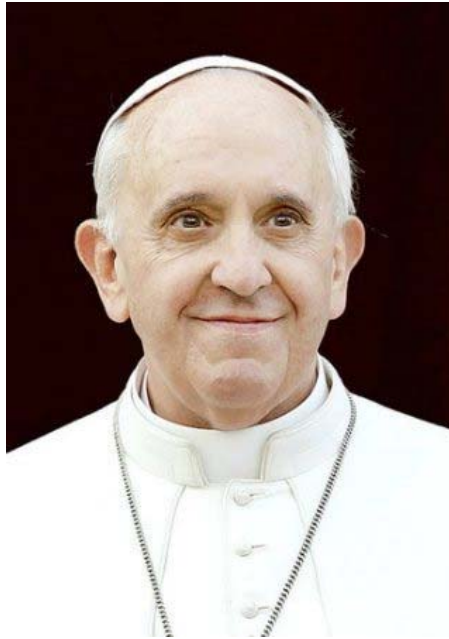
THE CHURCH IS ONE FOR ALL, AND CANNOT BE PRIVATISED BY ANY GROUP

Vatican City, 25 September 2013 (VIS) – The unity of the Church, dispersed around the world, was the theme chosen by Pope Francis for his catechesis during today's general audience in which over 40,000 people participated. “In the Creed”, he said, “we profess our faith in the Church, which is one, and this Church is in itself unity ... even though it spreads across all the continents”.

Unity in faith, in hope, in charity, in the sacraments and the ministry, are “like the pillars that support and hold together the single great edifice of the Church. Wherever we go, even in the smallest parish, in the furthest corners of this earth, there is the One Church; we are at home, we are with our family, we are brothers and sisters. And this is a great gift from God! The Church is One for all. There is not one Church for Europeans, one for Africans, one for Americans, one for Asians, one for those who live in Oceania, but she is the same everywhere. And the Church is just like a family: the members may be far away, spread around the world, but the strong bonds that unite us all hold firm regardless of the distance”.

The Pope recalled that during the recent World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, which brought together so many cultures and languages, from so many places of origin, there was nonetheless a “profound unity, which formed a single Church, in whom all were united, and this could be felt”. “Let each one of us ask: do I feel this unity? Do I live this unity? Or am I not interested, am I one of those who would 'privatise' the Church for their own group, their own nation, their own friends? It is sad to encounter a privatised Church, as this form of selfishness indicates a lack of faith. Do we pray for each other? I wonder how many of you you pray for persecuted Christians, for those brothers or those sisters who suffer as a consequence of their faith? It is important to look over one's own fence, to feel part of the Church, of the single family of God”.

Francis then went on to ask whether there were any casualties of this unity, whether it could inflict harm, since “at times there arise misunderstandings, conflicts, tensions and divisions, which cause harm and then the Church does not have the face we would like, she does not manifest her charity, as God would want. We create



those lacerations! And if we look at the divisions that still exist between Christians - Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants – we become aware of the effort that it takes to make this unity fully visible”. The Pope explained that

although “God gives us unity”, we sometimes find it difficult to manifest it in our lives. “It is necessary to seek, to build communion, to educate in communion, to overcome misunderstandings and divisions. ... Our world needs unity, reconciliation and communion, and the Church is the Home of Communion”.

Quoting St. Paul to the Ephesians, the Pope reiterated that in order to conserve unity it is necessary to have “humility, gentleness, magnanimity and love”, but this is not primarily the result of our consent or efforts, but rather comes from the Holy Spirit, which continually recreates the Church and creates “unity in diversity, which is harmony”. The Holy Father concluded by asking the Lord, as in the prayer of St. Francis, to help us never to become instruments of division,

but rather to bring love where there is hate, forgiveness where there is injury and union where there is discord.

The proximity of Orthodox and Protestant



GENEVA, 4. Even Orthodox, Lutherans and evangelicals have expressed deep solidarity with the Syrian people affected by the atrocities

of war. The metropolitan Siluan, archbishop of Buenos Aires and throughout Argentina, the Orthodox Church of Antioch, has decided to dedicate a day of solidarity, September 15, on the occasion of the commemoration of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The initiative is a response to the request for help in recent days launched by the Patriarchate of Antioch. The Metropolitan also invites the faithful to pray and hopes soon as possible a peaceful and definitive solution to put an end to the suffering. Even the Lutheran World Federation (flm) expressed great sorrow and deep concern about the continuing brutality and or r ro king of the conflict in Syria. In a joint statement, (Continue next page)

the President of the film and Lutheran bishop in Jordan and the Holy Land, Munib A. Younan, and the Secretary-General Martin Junge, urged governments "to refrain from any military action as a means to address the complex issues at stake" and seek, instead, a political and diplomatic solution to the conflict. President and Secretary General emphasized the appeal of the film to the international community "to work together through the instruments of the United Nations, to support the efforts for a lasting peace process and conflict resolution without the use of violence." Younan explained that "the only ones to benefit from a Western military intervention in Syria will be the extremists. As an Arab Christian, I am concerned about the effects that violence has on all communities in Syria, whether they are Sunnis, Shiites, Alawites, Druze and Christians. " In their joint statement, Junge Younan and condemn the use of chemical weapons in a strong and decisive, complaining about the difficulties of the international community in addressing the challenges posed by developments in Syria and call for urgent reform of the systems and instruments of the United Nations can effectively serve humanity as they try to live together in justice, peace and dignity. The film is present in Jordan, where it offers psychological support and material assistance to the Syrians seeking refuge in the refugee camp Zaatari. "Our direct involvement in the field of Zaatari, Jordan, the second largest in the world, has brought our attention to the plight and suffering of the civilian population. Looking refugees and civilians suffering - have concluded the president and the general secretary of the film - we are convinced that the UN Security Council should work for the security of those who are deprived of their rights and that bear the burden of conflicts and of violence. " The invitation of Pope Francis was welcomed by the Federation of Evangelical Churches (FCEI) in Italy. "Peace - said the president of FCEI, Massimo Aquilant - is a matter for all Christians, regardless of denomination they belong to. Our reflection and action on peace in the wake of that drawn by the international ecumenical bodies who have long pressed for a negotiated solution to the Syrian conflict. " © Osservatore Romano - September 5, 2013

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New Maronite Church of Saint Charbel in Bucharest



BUCHAREST, 18. The bells of a new church, dedicated to St Charbel, have resonated Sunday, September 15 in Bucharest, capital of Romania. To

consecrate the altar of cedar wood was the patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites, Cardinal Bechara Boutros Rai, who offered a reflection to the representatives of Orthodox and Muslims and many faithful present for or ccasione. It is, according to reports from the site of the Lebanese newspaper "L'Orient-Le Jour," the first Maronite church in Eastern Europe. The church will be at the service of the Eastern Catholics of Romania and Bulgaria and has been realized thanks to the efforts of the small Lebanese community in Romania formed after the end of the Ceausescu regime. The bells of the new sacred building in particular have come from Beit chebab, a village located in Lebanon. The Patriarch presided over the ceremony with four other Lebanese bishops, Archbishop Ioan Robu of Bucharest and the apostolic nuncio in Romania and Moldova, Francisco-Javier Lozano. Before the consecration of the altar and anoint him with holy oil at the four corners, the patriarch gave the homily, in which he touched on some issues, including pluralism in Lebanon. The patriarch called for a solution regarding the formation of a new government and examined the situation in the wider context of the Arab world, referring in particular to the difficult situation in Syria, with respect to which insisted on the need for a political solution to the crisis Syria. "The Pope - said the cardinal - has altered the course of the crisis, launching the app ello for the day of prayer and fasting." To attend Mass, always refers to the agency Asia News, were also representatives of the state authorities of Romania and the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Daniel. The Cardinal Rai, among other things, invited the representative of the Orthodox Church to go on a visit to Lebanon. Finally, the cardinal stressed the risks of the spread of violence, particularly in some areas of the world. "Today more than ever - he concluded - the Arab world needs its Christians to light the way and reach the best there is in modernity, rejecting the negative."© Osservatore Romano - September 19, 2013

“THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE”

Without unity there is no future

BAGHDAD, 18. Without unity there is no future for Christians in the Middle East. Are the words of the Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, The Raphael Louis Sako, in a letter to the Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Dinkha IV on the occasion of his seventy-eighth birthday, celebrated on September 15. The patriarch Sako took the opportunity of the message of good wishes to address the spiritual leader of the Assyrian Church also an explicit invitation to start a new journey of dialogue to restore full ecclesial communion between the Chaldean Christian community, together with the bishop of Rome, and the Assyrian. In the letter - as reported by the agency Fides - Sako is the interpreter, therefore, the "desire of the Chaldean Church regarding the activation of a dialogue for the unit, which is the desire of Jesus The beginning of this dialogue is urgent today, in the face of great challenges that threaten our survival. Without unity, there is no future for us. The unit can help protect our presence. "

The Assyrian Church of the East and the Catholic Church as a whole in the recent past have already started a theological dialogue, which in 1994 led to the drafting of a Common Christological Declaration, in which John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV acknowledged that they share the same faith in Jesus Christ and the mystery of the Incarnation. However, until now has never officially started in an ecumenical dialogue and ecclesiological bilateral agreement between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, who share the same theological, liturgical and spiritual. "If we have recognized to confess the same faith - says the patriarch Sako - at this point I'm wondering what are the obstacles to walk together towards the recognition of full unity among us. Maybe just need a little 'courage in seeking the right method. There is the possibility of bringing together our synods, and confront on our common concerns, such as the escape of our people from the lands of origin and dissipate the secular heritage shared by our Churches. I await with trepidation the response of our Assyrian brothers. " A renewed call for unity and to serve the faithful with humility - as reported by the website baghdadhope - has been turned on, always by the patriarch Sako participants ACCTNO the i ro, held in Istanbul, which had the theme of the reorganization of the pastoral service of the Chaldean priests operating in Europe. Meeting, which saw among the participants also apostolic visitor, Ramzi Garmou, elected by the Chaldean synod which met in June. In particular, we



have chosen four priests, which was entrusted with the task of helping the apostolic visitor in European countries that have the greatest number of Chaldean Christians: France, Germany, Belgium, Sweden. According to the announced reorganization of the Chaldean priests serving in Europe will be transferred every six years in another parish, to switch their work with many of the faithful in churches and other smaller ones, in big cities or small towns. The task of the apostolic visitor to make a detailed list of the priests and the duration of their service to fixing the transfer. To the priests to be supported permanent deacons of which must undertake the preparation. Despite the Chaldean priests in Europe depend, even economically, from the Latin dioceses, it was nevertheless decided to create a committee to audit the accounts of individual churches to encourage greater financial transparency. Another item on the agenda of the meeting in Istanbul was the one concerning the unification of the liturgical rite, waiting for the A pp ro approval by the Holy See of the missal renewed presented last Chaldean synod. (© L 'Osservatore Romano, September 19, 2013)

The Coptic Pope asked that the constitutional reform extends the guarantees already provided for Christians and Jews to all non-Muslims

GIORGIO
BERNARDELLI

The Coptic Pope Tawadros II wants the guarantees recognized by the Constitution Egyptian Christians and Jews should be applied to all non-Muslims. It is one of the demands that the spiritual leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church - the thickest among the Christian Churches of Egypt - addressed during a meeting former Secretary General of the Arab League Amr Moussa, a few days ago elected head of the committee of fifty States that is working on the revision of the Charter adopted last December by the Islamists. 's meeting - took place in the Cathedral (Continue next page)



of San Marco, on the sidelines of celebrations for the Nayrouz, the Coptic New Year - it was an opportunity for a discussion on the amendments to the Constitution theme regarded as crucial by the Churches of Egypt. And to emphasize that this is a battle for the protection of all minorities has come to change the invitation of Tawadros also Article 3, one dedicated to the kind of guarantees that are granted to Jews and Christians in a Muslim state. After stating, in fact, in the previous article that Islam is "the religion of the State and the principles of *Sharia* are the main source of legislation, "the current text of the Egyptian Constitution states that 'the canonical principles of the Christians of Egypt and Jews are the main source of legislation with regard to their personal status, their religious matters and the selection of their spiritual leaders. " It is a formula that refers to the Islamic tradition, where some aspects of civil law (eg family law) is recognized to the other two religions of the Book jurisdiction own communities. Now - though - the Coptic pope, confirming this same system, requesting that the new Constitution does not speak more specifically of "Christians and Jews", but the same principle extends to all "non-Muslims." This would be a significant step forward on the path of transition from one form of limited tolerance to the other two monotheistic religions (encouraged by the Quran itself) to a full recognition of the principle of religious freedom. Just the recognition of the status of other religions limited to Christians and Jews had been one of the points on which the international associations for the defense of human rights had raised criticism of the Constitution passed by the Muslim Brotherhood. In particular - looking at the specific situation in Egypt - aroused concern about the situation of the Ba'hai: the Egyptian faithful of this post-Islamic religion (a few thousand depending on estimates), in fact, live in a state particularly hard: they are persecuted since the time of Nasser, their children can not even access to public schools. But the situation could further widen the Shiites, who are in Egypt three million. Just the Constitution of December 2012 effectively excluded them from the Islamic community through article 219, quoting explicitly Sunni Islam as the only legitimate form. A clear stance on the part of the Muslim Brotherhood in the sectarian strife between Shiites and Sunnis that now inflames the entire Middle East. Clash in Egypt last June - just a few days before the deposition of Mohammed Morsi - had resulted in a lynching in Giza even some Shiites accused of proselytizing, with the death of four people and wounded dozens. © <http://vaticaninsier.lastampa.it> - September 13, 2013

Ukrainian Catholics will not change to Gregorian calendar

CWN - September 10, 2013

Citing "very painful calendar wars in North America," the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church said that his Eastern Catholic church will continue to follow the Julian calendar in the Ukraine.

"The introduction of the calendar historically reveals that it was not the main instrument of convergence or unity of the Church," Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk told the Religious Information Service of Ukraine. "It is rather a question of internal discipline, which can contribute to unity or stand in the way."

"As for our church in Ukraine, we do not see the necessary prerequisites nor do we have the required consensus among our bishops, among our clergy and faithful, in order to switch to the Gregorian calendar in Ukraine," he said, acknowledging that his church "lives according to the Gregorian calendar in various countries according to local needs."

Churches that use the Julian calendar celebrate Christmas on January 7

Primate to Depart to Moscow, Russia for the Opening of St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral



<http://www.armenianchurchwd.com/>

On September 15, the Primate will depart for Moscow, Russia. Archbishop Derderian will join His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, high-ranking clergymen, representatives of the Diaspora, and government (Continue next page)

officials for the opening of St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral on September 17. With construction commencing in 2008, the Cathedral will serve as the residence of His Grace Bishop Ezras Nersisyan, Primate of the New Nakhichevan and Russian Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Russian Orthodox Church Seeks to Heal Centuries-Old Schism

From: <http://www.orientalelumen.org.uk/>
MOSCOW, September 13 (RIA Novosti) – Russia’s dominant Orthodox Church said Friday it would discuss a draft document that will “heal” a schism with some of the smaller Russian Christian denominations known collectively as Old Believers.

An expert on religions in Russia hailed the document as a “timely” effort by the increasingly powerful Russian Orthodox Church, but some of the Old Believers rejected the initiative, claiming it will not redeem centuries of persecution. The Old Believers split from the mainstream Russian Orthodox Church after a reform initiated by Moscow Patriarch Nikon in the 1650s. The reform sought to clarify service texts, the spelling of Jesus’s name in the Cyrillic alphabet and other rituals such as the number of fingers believers should use when crossing themselves.

The Moscow Patriarchate chose three fingers, the Old Believers stuck to two – and fled purges and mass executions in central Russia by settling in the Urals and Siberia and splitting into yet more groups over doctrinal disagreements. Some of these groups managed to retain their distinct rituals and lifestyle under the officially atheist Communist regime, and enjoyed a revival after the 1991 Soviet collapse.

“There is a certain number of members of the Russian Orthodox Church who observe the old ritual,” Archimandrite Savva Tutunov told RIA Novosti. “There are some Old Believers who, being separated from the Russian Orthodox Church, strive to be reunited with it.”

The cleric added that the draft document is aimed at restoring the uniformity of rituals that will facilitate the reunification effort.

“Unfortunately, to this day, the latter [Old Believers seeking reunification] differ significantly in their church and legal practices,”

he said. “We needed to introduce a canonical uniformity.”

The draft document published on the Moscow Patriarchate’s website Wednesday stipulates that any Christian baptized under any of the Old Believers’ rites may be “reunited” with the mainstream Church after being anointed by an Orthodox cleric.

It said that couples married under the Old Believers’ rites “do not necessarily” need to remarry in accordance with the mainstream church canons, and that Old Believer monks will not have to retake their vows after reuniting with the Moscow Patriarchate.

An expert on religions practiced in Russia said that the draft document may help “solve” the problems between the Moscow Patriarchate and Old Believer groups. “The document’s emergence is timely, the problem had to be solved,” Boris Falikov of the Russian State University for the Humanities told RIA Novosti. “But it will hardly satisfy the Old Believers; they demand more radical steps.”

A cleric with the Russian Orthodox Church of Old Believers said that he had not heard about the draft document and rejected the initiative.

“Nobody wants to reunite,” the cleric with the church, which claims to have parishes in 14 of Russia’s 83 provinces, told RIA Novosti. “We remember all the horror, how they exterminated millions of Old Believers.”

Some of the visitors to an Old Believer website that published the Moscow Patriarchate’s draft document also expressed a negative opinion about the initiative.

“One can only heal a healthy organism; to attach ashes to a living body is to create death,” a user registered under the name of Grem said in a comment posted Thursday on the samstar.ucoz.ru forum of Old Believers in the Volga River city of Samara. “A devilish business!”

CHAPTER MEMBER SPEAKS TO UKRAINIANS

Rev. Joseph Hilinski, a priest of the Latin Diocese of Cleveland and a member of the Youngstown Chapter of the Society of St. John Chrysostom, was the featured speaker for the clergy conference of the Eparchy of St. Josaphat. Besides being a parish pastor, he is a member of his diocese’s Interfaith Commission and for the Continuing Education for Formation of Ministers.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 2013

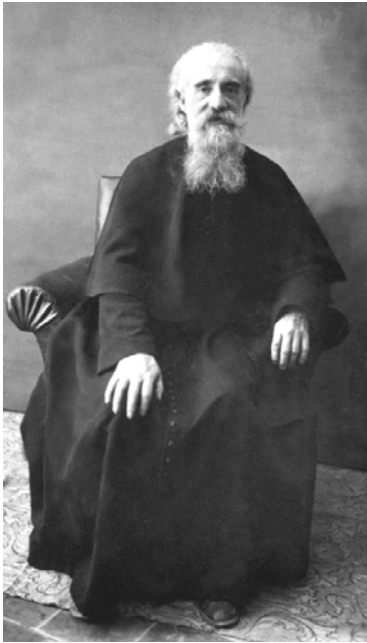
The Beatification of Mons. Vladimir Ghika, Priest and Martyr in Romania

BY GREGORY DIIPPO

FROM:

<http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/>

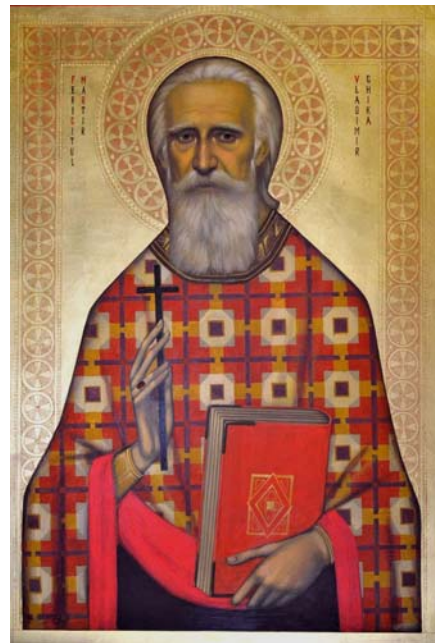
A reader from Romania, Viviana Dimcev, has sent us the following information about a Romanian priest, Mons. Vladimir Ghika, who will be beatified as a Martyr today, August 31. The Mass of Beatification will be celebrated in Bucharest, the capital of Romania, by Angelo Cardinal Amato, the prefect for the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints.



A descendent of a princely family, Vladimir Ghika was born on Christmas Day of 1873 to an Orthodox family. After studying in France and Rome, he became Catholic in 1902. (Today, Catholics of both Latin and Byzantine Rite together make up just over 5% of the population of Romania; most of them, however, are in Transylvania, which was not part of Romania in 1902.) After years of dedication to various charitable works, he was ordained a priest in 1923, with faculties to celebrate the liturgy in both the Roman and Byzantine Rites. He traveled all over the world in service to his countrymen and the Holy See; he was the founder of a hospital in Bucharest, and served as an envoy of Pius XI, who jokingly called him his "apostolic vagabond". Despite continued service to his country in the trials of the Second World War, he was arrested by the Communist authorities in 1952; after 18 months of violent beatings, cold and starvation, he passed to eternal life on May 16, 1954. This day will be kept as his feast day.

A Romanian website to promote his cause has the following prayer to ask for his intercession:

Lord, Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest, you sent your apostles and disciples into the whole world to bring the good news of your love to all peoples. At the Last Supper, just before your supreme self-offering for the Salvation of the world, you prayed to your Heavenly Father that your church might become One. Look with kindness upon the people of Romania from whose midst you chose Vladimir Ghika, noble by birth and noble by vocation. He was your witness throughout the world, confirming his faith in you through his martyrdom, with the zeal of an apostle. May his example of faith and love shine ever more brightly amongst us. During his earthly life, he accomplished great deeds of charity through your power and brought East and West together in harmony. We pray for the grace that through the merits and the sanctity of his martyrdom, he may be recognized as a saint and that through his intercession, in the near future, all Christians may be united. We ask this for your greater glory, you who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.



The new icon of Blessed Vladimir Ghika, Priest and Martyr.

August 31st was a great day for Catholics in Romania. In the morning, the Holy Mass of Beatification of Mons. Vladimir Ghika was celebrated by Cardinal Angelo Amato; about twenty bishops, two-hundred priests of both the Latin and Byzantine rites, and eight-thousand faithful attended. (Continue next page)

In the afternoon, at the Greek Catholic Vicarial Church of St Basil in Bucharest, H. E. Bishop Mihai Fratila, Greek Catholic Vicar of Bucharest, presided over a ceremony in the Byzantine Rite, during which he consecrated the icon of Blessed Vladimir Ghika, painted by the Rome-based Ukrainian Greek Catholic artist Ivan Karas.

The blessing of the icon was followed by the chanting of the Akathist Hymn of the new Blessed. A special guest was Cardinal Vingt-Trois, Archbishop of Paris, in whose diocese Mons. Ghika was active before returning to his native country. All the members of Catholic Bishop Conference in Romania (of both Latin and Byzantine rites) attended. The well-known French writer, Fr. Daniel Ange, was also present. At the end of the ceremony, the faithful venerated the icon and the relics of Blessed Vladimir Ghika.

The event held a special significance for the Greek Catholic community in Bucharest, since the Church of St. Basil was built with the contribution of Blessed Vladimir Ghika, a bi-ritual priest held in great esteem by the Greek Catholic Church. He also gathered there a community of students in the years before World War II, lecturing to them and involving them in charitable works. In 1948 the church was confiscated by the Communist authorities and handed over to the Orthodox Church. It was only in 2006 that the Greek Catholic community regained the church. So it may be said that the Blessed Vladimir Ghika was coming home again.

British Orthodox submission to the Holy Synod on Catholic baptism

Posted on: Wednesday, 21st August, 2013 <http://britishorthodox.org/>

The Synod of the British Orthodox Church has submitted a recommendation to the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, that in the reception of those who have previously been members of churches accepting the Council of Chalcedon (including the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches) it should be by confession of faith and prayer, without any requirement for the reception of Baptism or Chrismation. This recommendation is made on the basis that:

(1) The Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate has always received Chalcedonians by confession of faith and prayer on the clear and authoritative instruction of our holy Fathers including St Timothy, the 26th Pope of Alexandria, St Philoxenus of Mabbugh and St Severus. Even during periods of violent persecution our Orthodox Church has not deviated from this procedure.

(2) This has been consistently used as the only method of receiving Chalcedonians from the 5th century to the 19th century. Our own Coptic Orthodox Tradition shows that even Nestorians were received in such a manner.

(3) It is only in the most recent times that Catholics have been required to be baptised on their reception which is an innovation and contrary to the teaching of our holy Fathers.

(4) The development of various doctrines in the Catholic Church in later centuries is no justification for requiring the baptism of Catholics, since even Nestorians were not required to be baptised.

(5) His Holiness Pope Shenouda III of blessed memory signed an agreement with Pope Paul VI of Rome which spoke of the sacrament of baptism being present in both communities, and Bishop Gregorios, the Coptic president of the Theological Commission with the Catholics also insisted that there be mutual respect and regard for the baptism of Catholics.

(6) The Armenian, Syrian and Indian Orthodox all continue our ancient and authoritative Tradition of receiving Catholics without baptism.

Wednesday, September 11, 2013

<http://morningoffering.blogspot.com/>

Clergy Gathering



Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Clergy Meet Together

The monastery hosted a gathering of local clergy serving Oriental and Eastern

Orthodox parishes in the greater Seattle area. Priests of the Ethiopian, Coptic, and Armenian churches met together with members of the Washington Orthodox Clergy Association.

With the Islamic attacks taking place against Orthodox Christians throughout the Middle East, this gathering was particularly poignant. That the two Syrian bishops who were kidnapped some time ago, represented both the Oriental Orthodox, and the Eastern Orthodox churches, and were on a humanitarian mission together when kidnapped, made this gathering all the more important. It gave us all a chance to share our common Orthodox roots, and begin the process of building up brotherly support and friendship.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

Prayer Vigil On 07 September 2013 for Syria



<http://socmnet.wordpress.com/> As per the call of His Holiness Pope Francis and His Holiness Patriarch Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch Gregory III Laham, head of Greek Melkite Catholics, praying in Damascus along with Mor Timotheos Matta Fadil Alkhouri, Patriarchal Assistant of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, and others in Damascus on 07 September 2013 for the peace in Syria and the return of kidnapped Bishops.

Pope together with Syro-Malankara Orthodox to face the challenges of our time

Vatican City (AsiaNews) - The Catholic and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church will "continue and intensify the commitment to ecumenism, encounter and dialogue towards full communion," following a path that since 1990 "has brought us to significant steps on themes such as the common use of buildings of worship and cemeteries, the mutual concession of spiritual and even liturgical resources in specific pastoral situations, and the necessity to identify new forms of collaboration when faced with growing social and religious challenges."

This morning, Pope Francis met with Moran Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, Catholicos of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, at the end of his visit to the Vatican yesterday and today. The Catholicos is the primate of a Church that has 2.5 million members, mostly in India.

In his address, the Pope focused on the relationship between Catholics and "a Church that was founded upon

the witness, even to martyrdom, that Saint Thomas gave to Our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostolic fraternity which united the first disciples in their service of the Gospel, today also unites our Churches, notwithstanding the many divisions that have arisen in the sometimes sad course of history, divisions which, thanks be to God, we are endeavouring to overcome in obedience to Lord's will and desire."

"Thirty years ago, in June of 1983, Catholicos Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Mathews I paid a visit to my venerable predecessor, Pope John Paul II and to the Church of Rome. Together, they recognised their common faith in Christ. Afterwards, they met again at Kottayam, in the Cathedral of Mar Elias, in February of 1986 during the pastoral visits of the Pope in India. On that occasion, Pope John Paul II said: 'With you I desire that our Churches may soon find effective ways of resolving the urgent pastoral problems that face us, and that we may progress together in brotherly love and in our theological dialogue, for it is by these means that reconciliation among Christians and reconciliation in the world can come about. I can assure you that the Catholic Church, with the commitment she made at the Second Vatican Council, is ready to participate fully in this enterprise'."

"From those encounters began a concrete path of dialogue with the institution of a mixed commission, which brought to birth the agreement of 1990, on the day of Pentecost, a commission which continues its important work".

"I wanted to recall some of the steps in these 30 years of the growing closeness between us, because I believe that on the ecumenical path it is important to look with trust to the steps that have been completed, overcoming prejudices and closed attitudes which are part of a kind of 'culture of clashes' and source of division, and giving way to a 'culture of encounter', which educates us for mutual understanding and for working towards unity."

Monk takes devotion to new heights

http://cnnphotos.blogs.cnn.com/2013/08/02/monk-takes-devotion-to-new-heights/?hpt=hp_c3

Maxime the monk lives on a pillar. When he wants to step down out of the clouds, the 59-year-old scales a 131-foot ladder, which takes him about 20 minutes. After living on Katskhi pillar for 20 years, Maxime's climbs have slowed, but having worked as a crane operator in a past life, he's never feared heights. Photographer Amos Chapple heard about Maxime while working in the country of Georgia, and when he first arrived and asked to go up, (he was told no. Only priests and some of the troubled (Continue next page)

young men learning from Maxime and living in a monastery underneath the pillar were allowed to go up. Chapple stayed with the men at the base for four days before he was told he could ascend the pillar. He participated in prayers seven hours a day, including four-hour night prayers from 2 a.m. to sunrise. When he was finally going up to Maxime's home, rain clouds rolled in



and the sun was setting. The iron ladder was “very dicey,” Chapple said.

“I put so much time into getting permission that I said it was too late to be scared,” he said.

While with Maxime at the top, Chapple said he was worried he would run out of light for the climb down and that it would start raining, but as he looked out at the clouds at eye level and the distance between he and the ground, he appreciated the quiet of the elevated home.

“You could feel one with the weather,” he said.

Maxime said he needs the silence of the top of the pillar.

“It is up here in the silence that you can feel God's presence,” he told Chapple in Russian.

Stylites, or pillar saints, began after Simeon Stylites the elder in Syria first moved atop a pillar in 423 to cut himself off from worldly temptations. Stylites were most common in eastern Europe during the latter part of the fifth century, but the practice has since been abandoned. Katskhi pillar had sat idly since the 15th century when the Islamic Ottomans invaded Georgia. No one had even been to the top for centuries until an alpinist climbed it and found the remains of a chapel and the skeleton of a Stylite in 1944.

Maxime told Chapple he “drank, sold drugs, everything” as a young man. After serving time in prison, he decided he needed a change.

“I used to drink with friends in the hills around here and look up at this place, where the land met the sky,”

Maxime told Chapple. “We knew the monks had lived up there before, and I had great respect for them.”

Maxime took monastic vows in 1993 and climbed the

tower to start a new life. For the first two years, he slept in a fridge to protect himself from the elements. He now has a bed inside a cottage where he sleeps.

“It's more about the isolation than suffering,” Chapple said.

Followers send supplies up to Maxime with a winch, and the monk comes down once or twice a week for night prayers with the men staying at the monastery.

His climbs have slowed, and once Maxime is no longer able to move up and down the ladder, he will stay at the top until he dies.

A crypt holding the bones of a Stylite who lived and died at the Katskhi pillar lies under the chapel.

When Chapple asked Maxime if his bones would be stored in the same crypt, Chapple said the monk stretched out his arms in his charismatic way and said, “Of course!”

– Lauren Russell, CNN

Witnesses to Church Unity

Posted on October 1, 2013 by Nelson

<http://saintjamesprayforme.wordpress.com>

The Auxiliary Bishop of Lviv Archeparchy, Bishop Venedykt recently said:

God expects each of us to witness and invoke unity. We, Greek Catholics, are the living and real model of the unity of the Church, which has been tested for centuries. Therefore, we have to feel responsible for the cause of unity and to be a model of it.

His Grace gave a talk at the Ukrainian Catholic University in which he calls the UGCC to be a witness of unity. I have long thought of Greek Catholics (and all Eastern & Oriental Catholics) as martyrs for Church unity. Primarily, one of our Churches goal is to witness to the unity of the Christian East and West. I am glad that Bishop Venedykt spoke on this important matter of Greek Catholics being witnesses to the unity of the Church.

He says of the Great Schism:

Because we belong both to the Christian East and West, the schism goes through our whole being. Unfortunately, for the thousand years of the schism, we must state that the Roman Catholic Church has learned to cope without the Orthodox Church, just like the Orthodox Church has done so without the Roman Catholic Church. Each of them lives its life without needing the other. But we Greek Catholics need both the Christian East and West; the desire to find ways to unity has disappeared from our Church.

**LET US MAKE UNITY A PRIORITY THROUGH
OUR PRAYERS, WORKS, AND PRESENCE.**