



Bishop Irinej, Serbian delegation visit St. Vladimir's Seminary

On Wednesday, March 29, 2017, a delegation of the [Serbian Orthodox Church](#), led by His Grace, Bishop Irinej of Eastern America, met with Archpriest Dr. Chad Hatfield, President of [Saint Vladimir's Seminary](#) [SVOTS]. They discussed potential areas of academic cooperation between Saint Vladimir's and the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of Belgrade, including faculty and student exchanges and a collaborative international conference. Bishop Irinej is an alumnus (M.Div. '82) of Saint Vladimir's Seminary and member-designate to its Board of Trustees.

Representing the school of advanced theological studies in Belgrade was Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Dr. Vladimir Vukadinovic, full Professor of Liturgics and Ecclesiastical Art History. Father Vladimir had been in the US, serving as guest lecturer for the Diocese of Eastern America during its Fraternal Seminar and Clergy Confessions gathering in Cleveland, OH, March 23–25. Also among the delegation were Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Dr. Zivojin Jakovljevic, Episcopal Deputy of the Diocese of Eastern America, Dean of Saint Sava Cathedral in New York City, Assistant Professor in Church Slavonic at Saint Sava School of Theology, Libertyville, IL, and lecturer in Linguistics at Cleveland State University; Protopresbyter Vladislav Radujkovic, parish priest at Saint Sava Cathedral; and Deacon Dr. Jovan Anicic, Director of Religious Education of the Diocese of Eastern America and Assistant Professor of Dogmatics and Church Chant at Saint Sava School of Theology.

During their time on campus, the delegation also toured the Father Georges Florovsky Library, the largest repository of Eastern Christian literature in the US besides the Library of Congress; Three Hierarchs Chapel; and the SVS Bookstore. Additionally, Bishop Irinej and Father Vladimir met with Deacon Gregory Hatrak, Director of Marketing and Operations Manager of [SVS Press and Bookstore](#), to discuss another cooperative venture: the translation and publication of theological works.

Another highlight of the visit was a meeting between Father Vladimir and the seminarians of Serbian background at Saint Vladimir's: Dn. Larry Soper and Stefan Djoric of the Eastern American Diocese, Joseph Wessler of the Western American Diocese, and Stefan Mastilovic of the Australian and New Zealand Metropolitanate. The students and Father Vladimir used the unique opportunity to discuss contemporary issues concerning Orthodox Christian theological education.

“Earthly Life Ceases”

By Fr. Steven Kostoff

I came across the phrase “earthly life ceases” at the beginning of an explanation of Holy Week written by the late Father Thomas Hopko. What could he mean by saying that “earthly life ceases?” It is certainly not meant to be taken “literally” because, if so, Father Thomas would not be much of a thinker or theologian! The phrase “earthly life ceases” is not about death and dying. It is, rather, about how we conduct our lives during the week we designate in the Church as “holy and great.” This becomes clear when we look at the entire sentence from Father Thomas: “Earthly life ceases for the faithful as they “go up to Jerusalem with the Lord” [Matins of Holy Monday]. During the approaching Holy Week, we will continue to arise each morning to a new day, carry out our commitments and responsibilities, and find rest from our labors in the peace of sleep—as well as “eat and drink” to keep alive! But we do these quotidian things in this “week of weeks” with an intense focus on the Paschal mystery of Christ’s redemptive death and life-giving Resurrection. Our sense of reality shifts as we realize—hopefully through the experience of participation—that what is taking place in church through liturgical worship is Reality at its most full and complete. Other concerns, important as they are, are laid aside or postponed to the extent that this is possible. I believe that this is what Father Thomas was trying to convey when he wrote that “earthly life ceases” during Holy Week. Only then could we, as the faithful, and in a good spirit, go up to Jerusalem with the Lord. As we also sing at Matins on Holy Monday, “As the Lord was going to His voluntary passion, He said to the Apostles on the way, ‘Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up, as it is written of Him.’ Come, therefore, let us also go with Him, purified in mind. Let us be crucified with Him and die through Him to the pleasures of this life. Then we shall live with Him and hear Him say: ‘I go no more to the earthly Jerusalem to suffer, but to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God, I shall raise you up to the Jerusalem on high in the Kingdom of Heaven.’”

What might all of this mean on the practical level? How will this effect our lives during Holy Week? How important will it be for each one of us to “go up to Jerusalem with the Lord?” As a pastoral response, I would say that during Holy Week there are three basic places that Orthodox Christians know and find themselves: the home, work/school, and the church. Exceptions may abound with other unavoidable commitments, but I believe that this basic trinity of places could be a helpful starting point from which we ground ourselves and gain perspective, and around which we plan as we assess the possibilities and priorities of Holy Week in our lives. Certainly, this is not the time to seek entertainment or those other distractions that may appear attractive. And it is certainly not the time for a “vacation”—even if the children happen to be out of school.

Con't Page 8

Fr Steven Con't

If, during Great Lent, we have managed to already put some of this into practice, then the approaching Holy Week is the time of an even greater effort in this direction. Our “free time” in the evenings could be redeemed by making it “church time.” If we are unable to attend any of the services, I would suggest that we transform our homes to some extent by seeking some level of stillness or relative silence. And if, over the years, you have purchased your own copies of the Holy Week service books, you could read those in the quite atmosphere of your homes when unable to be in church. Challenging, no doubt, but certainly not impossible, for “with God all things are possible” [Matthew 19:26].

As an Orthodox Christian no one can say, “Holy Week caught me unawares”—not with a preceding 40 days of Great Lent! Well aware in advance of the date of Pascha, hopefully some preparatory scheduling has already been accomplished. So, the above is written in the spirit of pastoral care and guidance. I am not trying to “tell” anyone what to do. As I like to formulate it, I am a pastor, not a policeman! But we are all in this great mystery together. And the source of this “mystery hidden for ages by God who created all things” [Ephesians 3:9] is the limitless love of God: “But God shows His love for us in that while we were sinners Christ died for us” [Romans 5:8]. And this mystery of an active—even “crucified”—love on the part of God draws us into that communion of love as the redeemed and transformed People of God, being “built... upon the rock” [Matthew 7:24] of our belief in the redemptive Death and life-giving Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Metropolitan Tikhon presides at opening Rite of Preparation of Holy Chrism

On Great and Holy Monday—April 10, 2017—His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon presided at the opening Rite of Preparation of Holy Chrism at [Saint Tikhon's Monastery](#). His Eminence, Archbishop Michael of New York and New Jersey, also was in attendance, as was His Beatitude, retired Metropolitan Herman.

Opening prayers and the blessing of the ingredients used in [confecting the Chrism](#) took place before the celebration of the Hours and the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. The Chrism will be cooked and stirred continuously through the first three days of Holy Week, during which time the Holy Gospels will be read continuously by priests, except during the celebration of the divine services. The Chrism will be consecrated in conjunction with the celebration of the Vespers Liturgy on the morning of Great and Holy Thursday.

The Consecration of Chrism is a rite reserved for the Primate of Autocephalous Orthodox Churches. The last time Holy Chrism was consecrated in the Orthodox Church in America was in 2012.

Holy Chrism—distinct from Holy Unction and other blessed oils used in Orthodox Christian rites—contains a number of ingredients, including olive oil, white table wine, benzoin, aromatic incenses extracted in oil, rose oil, basil, balsam, Venetian turpentine, galangal, oils of bergamot, clove, marjoram, thyme and sandalwood, extracts of ginger root, and nutmeg. The final selection, however, is based on the availability of fragrant oils.

After the Holy Chrism is consecrated, it is then distributed to all parishes and missions for use in the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, specifically the sacrament of Chrismation.

A video can be viewed on the OCA [web site](#) and [Facebook page](#).



Ingredients for the Chrism are assembled.



Priests pour ingredients into container in which they will be heated and stirred for three days.



Metropolitan Tikhon initiates the stirring process

Holy Week at St. Tikhon's Monastery: Confecting Chrism

Father Alexander Schmemmann often underlined in his teaching that Christianity is the end of religion. The [2018 All-American Council](#) of the Orthodox Church in America will have as its theme "For the Life of the World," the title of Father Alexander's best-known book, published in 1963. Father Alexander writes therein, "Religion is needed where there is a wall of separation between God and man. But Christ Who is both God and man has broken down the wall between man and God. *He has inaugurated a new life, not a new religion.* It was this freedom of the early church from 'religion' in the usual, traditional sense of this word that led the pagans to accuse Christians of *atheism*."

What then are we to make of the intricate ritual involved in the [confection of Chrism that will take place during Holy Week](#) at Saint Tikhon's Monastery?

The Rite of Consecration of Holy Chrism will begin on Holy Monday morning, April 10, as His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon sanctifies water to bless the ingredients used in making Holy Chrism. Chrism, unlike the oil of Holy Unction and other blessed oils used in Orthodox rites, contains a number of exotic ingredients, including olive oil, white wine, styrax, benzoin, aromatic incenses extracted in oil, rose oil, basil, balsam, Venetian turpentine, galangal, oils of bergamot, clove, marjoram, thyme and sandalwood, and extracts of ginger root, calamus root, nutmeg, and orris root. (Historically there has been some variability in this mixture based on the availability of ingredients.) Bishops, priests and deacons will gather in two-hour shifts throughout the day and night from Holy Monday to Holy Thursday to mix these ingredients together in a stainless-steel pot as they are boiled and stirred continuously while the Gospels are read.

This sounds like the very religion that Father Schmemmann says ended with Christ. But Father Alexander also devoted much of his life to understanding the theology that emerges from the intricate liturgical rites of the Orthodox Church. It was his contention that our liturgy at its best is not religion at all, but life in Christ. And so, rather than focus on the details of confecting chrism it is essential to consider its purpose.

When the new Chrism is ready, it will be poured into bottles for use throughout the 700 parishes of the Orthodox Church in America, from Canada, to the United States, to Mexico. Every time a child is baptized or a convert is chrismated, Chrism prepared in this way will be used for the anointing as the words are pronounced, "the Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit." Preparing Chrism is also a unique privilege of autocephalous Churches, which connects us to the wider world and history of the Orthodox Churches.

Every batch of new Chrism has drops from earlier chrism. In the Archives of the OCA we still have a lead container that held Chrism brought from Russia in 1900. The Russian Church originally received Chrism from *its* Mother Church, Constantinople. Thus, every anointing with Chrism is powerful testimony to unity in the Church. But it is also testimony to our conviction that the anointing with Holy Chrism is anointing with the Holy Spirit.

In the early years of the Church's existence there was no rite of Chrismation after Baptism since the Holy Spirit was conferred directly through the laying on of hands by apostles and then bishops as their successors. This is seen for example in the Acts of the Apostles: "Now when the Apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit" [Acts 8:14-17].

Eventually Chrismation replaced the laying on of hands at Baptism as the Church turned increasingly to the Old Testament for its liturgical patterns. Bishops continued to confer the Holy Spirit, but now it was through the Holy Chrism which their hands had prepared.

The origins of preparing Chrism go back to the Old Testament. Exodus 30 gives detailed instructions for the confecting of "holy anointing oil": "Moreover, the Lord said to Moses, 'Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, two hundred and fifty, and of aromatic cane two hundred and fifty, and of cassia five hundred, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin; and you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; a holy anointing oil it shall be'" [Exodus 30:22-25]. This anointing oil, like Holy Chrism, was to be unlike any other oil. It was solely and specifically for anointing priests, kings, prophets and the holy vessels of the temple. Misuse of the oil for any other purpose brought a heavy penalty: "And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. And you shall say to the people of Israel, 'This shall be my holy anointing oil throughout your generations. It shall not be poured upon the bodies of ordinary men, and you shall make no other like it in composition; it is holy, and it shall be holy to you. Whoever compounds any like it or whoever puts any of it on an outsider shall be cut off from his people'" [Exodus 30:30-33].

Christians re-interpret this and everything in the Old Testament through our faith in Christ, Who fulfills the ancient promises and prophecies. And so the unique anointing oil of the Old Testament **Con't Page 10**

St Tikhon Monastery Con't

is now understood in terms of God pouring out His Holy Spirit. As the Prophet Joel says—quoted by the Apostle Peter on the first day of Pentecost—“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit” [Joel 2:28-30; Acts 2: 17-18].

In the New Testament, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is for all, not just for a chosen few. This is underlined in the prophecy of Isaiah, which Jesus cited when he first began his public ministry at his hometown synagogue in Nazareth: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” [Luke 4:18-19; see Isaiah 61:1-7]. The Isaiah passage continues to speak of the new anointing of the Spirit that will make all the Lord’s followers His priests, giving them “the oil of gladness instead of mourning.... You shall be called the priests of the Lord, men shall speak of you as the ministers of our God....”

The main prayer for the consecration of the Holy Chrism, to be said by Metropolitan Tikhon on Holy Thursday, emphasizes that the anointing once reserved for priests, kings, prophets and holy vessels is now made available to all through Christ. Indeed, this is the ultimate purpose of His life, death and resurrection: to enable everyone to be His “familiar,” members of His house, “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation sealed by this Thy most pure mystery.”

As you begin Holy Week, please pray for His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and all those who will be involved in the preparation of the Holy Chrism. And if you have the opportunity, go to Saint Tikhon’s Monastery to join in the prayers and listen to the Gospel readings during this special occasion.

Metropolitan’s Prayer for the Consecration of Holy Chrism on Holy Thursday

Every good and perfect gift comes from Thee, the Lord of mercy and Father of Lights. As Thou gavest to Moses Thy faithful minister, to Thy servant Samuel, and to Thy holy Apostles, so also, despite our unworthiness, give to us the grace to serve this great and life-creating Mystery. Send down Thine all-holy Spirit on this myrrh. Make it the anointment of kings, the spiritual nourishment, the preserver of life, the sanctification of souls and bodies. Make it the oil of gladness which was prefigured in the Law and shone forth in the New Testament; by which kings and high-

priests, and prophets were anointed, as well as those who have been reborn in the Baptism of new life through the Apostles and Bishops and Presbyters who have succeeded them to this day. Yea, O Master, Almighty God: through the descent of Thy Holy and adored Spirit, show it to be the garment of incorruption and the seal that makes perfect. May those who receive Thy holy Baptism (which represents their naming after Thee, Thine only-begotten Son, and Thy Holy Spirit) become Thy familiars, members of Thy house, citizens and servants sanctified in soul and body, turned away from all evil and every sin, delivered by the veil of the raiment of Thy most pure glory. Through this holy sign may they be known to Thy holy angels and archangels and all the heavenly host, and may they strike fear in every evil and impure demon. May they be a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation sealed by this Thy most pure Mystery. May they bear Thy Christ in their hearts as dwelling places for Thee, the God and Father in the Holy Spirit. For holy art Thou, O our God, Who restest in the Saints, and to Thee do we send up glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Holy Synod awards Order of St. Romanos to noted liturgical musician CONGRATULATIONS JOHN SUTKO

During their [Spring Session](#) March 28-31, 2017, the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops awarded the Order of Saint Romanos to John Sutko in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the field of liturgical music in the Orthodox Church in America. It is expected that Mr. Sutko, who had served for six decades as choir director at [Saints Peter and Saint Paul Church](#), Burr Ridge, IL, will receive the award in May.

Established by the Holy Synod of Bishops in 2014, the Order is awarded to influential arrangers, composers, teachers and conductors. Past recipients include Archpriest Sergei Glagolev, Archpriest Igor Soroka, Prof. Dr. David Drillock, Walter Shymansky, Archimandrite Roman [Braga], Dr. Vladimir Morosan and Aleksei V. Shipovalnikov.

Mr. Sutko began singing in the Saint Peter and Saint Paul Choir at the age of 14. He also was a member of the Lindblom High School A Capella Choir, for which he had been selected student conductor during his senior year. He pursued undergraduate studies at Wilson Junior College, where he majored in business and minored in music. Two particular individuals inspired him to further develop his musical talent. The late Archpriest Nicholas Semkoff invited him to direct the second Sunday morning Liturgy at Saint Peter and Saint Paul Church, at that time located on Chicago’s South Side, which

Con't Page 11