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INTRODUCTION

Dear readers of Pokrov Magazine,

Welcome to the second issue of Pokrov Magazine, the official digital periodical of our Diocese. With the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Longin, we desire to reach everyone from our diocesan family. This magazine, created through diligent work with the Youth Department, is zealous to explore the depth of theology and our community, to promote good things and express Orthodox Christian Thoughts.

While reading these pages you will find interesting articles and facts from across our Diocese. We warmly invite you to contribute your own perspectives on Orthodox life and encourage parishes to promote upcoming events, so please share your thoughts about this. Pokrov continues the legacy of The Diocesan Observer; even though the format itself is new and digital, but its mission remains the same.

Thank you for reading and supporting our magazine.

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WORD FROM METROPOLITAN LONGIN

The Holy Orthodox Church celebrates this feast with great joy, ten days after Ascension and 50 days after Easter, when according to Jesus' promise, the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles. He enlightened and armed them with the power from above, in order to successfully preach the Word of God. And indeed they courageously, with God's help, spread the Good News to "the far corners of the world." From Pentecost the Holy Church began to live a full life, and that is why this day is regarded as the Birthday of the Church.

What happens as a result of the Holy Spirit's descent? We read that a great change came upon the people who had received the Holy Spirit. Before they were afraid, now they were fearless. They defended the Lord with all their might. St. Peter, for example, had been weak and undependable. Three times he had denied the Lord. He shook with fear when a servant accused him of being a follower of Christ. But now, filled with the Holy Spirit, he stood up and fearlessly preached



of Christ to those who had crucified Him. The Holy Spirit breathes where He wants, but especially abides in the Church. Christ is the head of our Church. The Spirit is the soul of the Church. "And by the Holy Spirit, we, the faithful live, move and exist" as the Holy Scriptures tell us.

Hardly can we let today's holy day pass without realizing that the Holy Spirit still comes. Today on Pentecost, Christ still sends Him to us! He dwells with us now! And where is He? What is His address? St. Paul tells us: "Know you not that you are the temples of the Holy Spirit?" Yes, it's true, the Holy Spirit lives in the souls of pious, believing Christians. "Come and dwell in us," we sing in the Church's beautiful prayer to the Holy Spirit. We ask Him to come and take up His abode in us. And He will come, if we open the door and let Him into our hearts.

During the three prayers of Pentecost Vespers, we kneel on bended knees. We pray that the Holy Spirit "comes and abides in us, and cleanses us from every impurity". Let us call the Holy Spirit to renew us. Let us hope for the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which are according to St. Paul, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, virtue, kindness, faith, meekness, temperance..." (Gal. 5,23) May the Holy Spirit who spoke by the prophets and came to the disciples help us to be saved and inherit the heavenly kingdom.

Metropolitan

Bear ye one another's burdens

BISHOP SERAFIM BALTIC

In the days of the early Church, as the Church was growing, as increasing numbers of formerly godless people were joining the ranks of Christians, the Church faced a number of challenges. This was nothing surprising. Any man walking out of darkness and into the light will face many challenges until he fully opens his spiritual eyes and "walks in the light" (1 John 1:7). We read in the Acts of the Apostles about certain people causing confusion among the newly baptized in Antioch inasmuch as they went to the city after the Apostles and were telling the people to observe the law of Moses. This prompted the calling of the Apostolic Council which made a decision that those who had not observed the law of Moses until then [were previously pagans and not Jews] were not going to have it imposed upon them after baptism either. Yet the same challenge appeared in other places where the Church grew.

In his letter to the Galatians, Saint Paul asks them with the pain of a loving father, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth" (Galatians 3:1). He had heard that some of them had turned to the works of the law after already having received the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Why a person would try to settle for lesser after receiving the greater, or why one would want to earn a gift after already having received it freely from the loving Father could be an opening for a good discussion. In this case, Saint Paul instructs them with many earnest words to keep walking in the light, according to the Spirit, and among other things to love one another, or rather to "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). All of us who have been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ have also been called to walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, Saint Paul lists both the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal.



5:22,23).

"Works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like" (Gal. 5:19-21). Surely, nobody is going to come after us, two thousand years after the law of Moses had been overcome, and try to persuade us to observe it. But if we pay attention we will notice that many will try to persuade us to walk according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit. Why would they do so? Saint Paul in explaining why someone would insist on turning them back to the law, offers the answer to the Galatians. "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh" (6:12,13).



Who desires to make a "fair shew in the flesh"? Those who prefer the works of the flesh to the fruit of the Spirit. To them, any virtue from the list of the fruits of the Spirit can be scandalous, while at the same time any one or more of the works of the flesh could they find attractive. Who is it that does not wish to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ? Easy answer would be: those who don't believe in Christ. A much harder answer would be: even some of the brethren too weak in the faith. Why would such people desire to glory in our flesh, and have we given them an occasion to do so? Why would someone try to get me on their team, or why would I try to get someone on my team, is that team is not the team of the Lord? Pondering this question will produce some good content for our confession before the Holy Week and the Resurrection.

If we come to the realization that we have succumbed to those who wish to turn us from the Spirit to the flesh, let us take courage in these words, "I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be" (Gal. 5:10). Disregarding those who trouble us, let us focus on that confidence which Saint Paul had in the Galatians and let us recognize our own calling and remember our own dignity. As he called Galatians to turn back to the Spirit from the law of Moses, he could just as well be calling us to turn from strife to peace, from wrath to gentleness, from envy to love. And he has every confidence that we are up to the

challenge. Once we respond to that challenge we can again begin to taste the sweetness of the freedom from sin. Then Saint Paul can encourage us to remain in that freedom. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). Having freed ourselves of the works of the flesh, we might perceive the greater spiritual truths of life as we make our way to the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord and better understand them both. We might even become spiritual, and be of help to our neighbor, help carry him to the same destination we are headed for.

A much greater and better way of living will it be if we were to not tempt each other, to not draw each other from light to darkness, from Spirit to flesh, but to call each other and carry each other in the right direction. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1,2).

May the Lord grant us all the strength and love needed to fulfill His law.



Mardary, by the Grace of God Bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese in America and Canada, to his dear clergy and people of his God-given diocese, on the day of the bright Resurrection of Christ, from the depth of his soul exclaims:

Christ is Risen!

Our people say that man learns as long as he lives. There is no greater teacher than personal experience. It is the most convincing teacher in life. How can you believe the cries of a hungry man if you yourself have never been hungry? How can you understand the cries and sighs of the sick if you have never been sick yourself? And here I, your bishop, send this epistle to you, my spiritual flock, scattered all over the great America, in my new and rich experience, gained in suffering, pain, and ceaseless sighing over the last two years, wanting to tell you everything that is in my heart, as if in confession, to tell you about that which has filled my being with a faith even stronger than the one which was planted in my heart from my childhood. Confessing before you, I want just one thing, and that is to strengthen you in your faith in God, Who was, is, and will be, regardless of whether people believe in Him or not. This is my confession.

On a sunny day about two years ago, I was decorating the park around the monastery church in Libertyville with about ten workers. Suddenly, out of my chest a stream of blood started flowing. For three days, the doctors could not stop the bleeding. They took me to the hospital. Two doctors diagnosed that my days in this world have been numbered. In order to verify that claim, my closest co-workers called two well-known specialists for tuberculosis, one of whom was an old professor of medicine at the Chicago University. Those two specialists said to the priests who were gathered around me to say goodbye, that tonight, during the night, or at the latest tomorrow in the morning, I should die. The priests believed it. Who wouldn't? They were hearing this from those who were the experts in the field. And they had to believe it even more because I had already given instructions for my burial at the monastery, and because the temperature and the heartbeat of my sick body were at such levels, from which, according to the science of medicine, a man cannot return back to life. I was in a death-bed delirium and

The life and works of St. Mardary of Libertyville and All-America, Diocese of New Gracanica and Midwestern America, 2019.

21ST ARCHPASTORAL EPISTLE OF BISHOP MARDARY ON PASCHA 1935

I did not recognize the people around me. And then suddenly, around midnight, I quietly said to those priests who were standing around me: "One of you, go to the Monastery, serve Liturgy, bring the Holy Gifts and give me Communion." During the night, from time to time, I regained consciousness. In those moments my lips whispered a warm prayer to the Lord Christ. This was not an ordinary prayer. This was rather a direct conversation of a son with his Father. I felt the graceful presence of Christ, and I prayed like this: Lord Christ and my God, I don't care if I die. I am not sorry to leave this world. I am ready to close my tired eyes and stand before Your righteous judgment seat, trusting that Your fatherly love and mercy will forgive me if in my earthly life I did not act according to Your commandments, if I was not zealous enough in the great and responsible episcopal mission, which You through Your Church entrusted me with. You will forgive me, I know, because Your fatherly love is beyond measure. You will also forgive me because, from my childhood, from the sixteenth

year of my life, I dedicated my life to serving You, Your altar, and Your people. I am not afraid of death. Personally, I am even looking forward to it, because in Your eternal Kingdom, things will be incomparably easier for me than they have been in this sinful world. For me, the transition from this life is not a transition into an unknown, desolate space with no substance or sense, but a transition into Your eternal Kingdom, which You promised to all those who believe in You. But I beg of You, Heavenly Father and Lord Christ, pour out upon me, Your faithful servant, Your rich mercy, and leave me in this world a few more years, so that I can complete my service to my people and Church, in which You have mercifully elevated me to the greatest apostolic dignity. I would like to preach Your Holy Gospel with even more fervor, to even more warmly relate to my people that salvation is possible only through You and in You. Leave me on earth a little more so that I may decorate the monastery of Your great saint Sava a little better. Extend the days and years of my life, if nothing else, then that I may

help my old parent and his numerous family, whom a handful of people of no conscience, of irresponsible people from the street, cloaked with a cover of modern morals, try to bring down to the level of a pauper, destroying the community of his home. I pray to You, O Lord my God, fulfill my prayer. Hear me in my weakness, in this night and this hour of death. You can do anything. You brought back the dead from the grave to life with one word. With the touch of the fingers, You gave eyesight back to the blind. I pray to You, tonight, when I expect my departure from this world, touch my weak body with Your miraculous right hand and return life to me, which is now on its way to being extinguished. O Lord, let me get up from my death-bed and return to my dear people, and preach to them how You worked a miracle on me and gave me back my life. But not my will be done, rather Your will be done, O Lord. With those words I concluded my warmest prayer, bathed in warm tears, which freely fell on my pillow, and I closed my tired eyes. I fell asleep, and I saw a strange vision.

People call it a dream. I saw myself walking, broken from the illness, hunched over, through the monastery gate toward my prepared tomb. Suddenly, above the monastery church, I saw a perfect bright circle descending toward the earth. An invisible force pulled me closer and closer to the bright circle. When I approached and came very close, I recognized in that bright circle the Holy Communion of Christ, and out of that circle I heard the words: "Look at the multitudes of people on both sides of the monastery river. They are waiting for you. Go to them."

Soon it dawned. They woke me up. Through the open doors of my room, a fully vested priest with a chalice in his hand entered. There could have been no Confession, because I could not speak. With tears of joy, I received the Body and the Blood of Christ for the last time, and with firm faith in eternal life beyond the grave, with faith which had never before been so illumined by the graceful presence of the kindest and most merciful, all-forgiving, heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, I partook of His Holy and most pure Body and Blood.

And what happened at that very moment, my dear brethren? That very moment my eyes opened wide. My reason, which had been darkened by the proximity of death, was suddenly

illumined. The doctor who came to the hospital that morning, convinced that he would find me dead, entered through the door, allowed the priest who commended me to exit, nervously approached my bed, took my hand, measured my pulse, and suddenly, his face was radiant with joy. He repeated a couple of times that my heart was in excellent condition and that my pulse was normal. When he was convinced that my temperature was also normal, while it was announcing my death the night before, this doctor, a Jew, exclaimed: "The bishop will live! This is a true miracle from God!" Since then, two years have passed, my dear brethren, and I, by the Grace of God, have advanced in my health, so that today, the doctors and all people who have known me over the past eighteen years here in America tell me that I have never in my life looked better than right now.

My conscience keeps telling me: "Why are you quiet? Why don't you tell the people about the miracle that God worked in you?" For two years I hesitated and hid the mystery of my healing, but I will not keep silent anymore. I will feel better when I relate this mystery to my people. And this is what I am doing. The faithful will believe this and

I PRAY TO YOU, O LORD MY GOD,
FULFILL MY PRAYER. HEAR ME IN MY
WEAKNESS, IN THIS NIGHT AND THIS
HOUR OF DEATH.



they will be established in their faith even more, while the unbelievers will doubt. I am doing my duty toward God and His miraculous power... The content of my Paschal epistle for this year is unusual, my dearly beloved ones, but so is the event which I am relating to you. May God grant it that many derive a spiritual benefit from this confession of mine. It testifies that God to this day works miracles and fulfills the prayers of those who believe in Him.

Therefore, my dear brethren, pray to God all the days of your lives and God will give you help in need as He approached me. And as for me, I will dedicate my extended lifetime on earth even more, from now on, to the service of God and my dear people, declaring even more convincingly that our salvation is in the Lord. And if we die, we will resurrect in Him. In the name of the resurrected Lord Christ, I exclaim to all of you the joyful and victorious greeting:

Christ is Risen!

Your warm intercessor in the Lord, Bishop of America and Canada,
Mardary



CHRISTIAN CHARITY AS AN EXPRESSION OF SERVICE TO GOD

FR TOMISLAV
SAVIC

Charity is a Christian virtue whose theological foundations are deeply rooted in the Bible. It represents one of the best expressions of our philanthropy toward other people. In the early Church, the concept of charity was not only understood as acts of mercy but was also deeply rooted in theological principles and biblical teachings, which served as a call to the faithful to take care of those in need.

The entire teaching of Christ and his preaching of the Gospel, the good news about the coming of the kingdom of God, was aimed at the poor, sick, oppressed, and marginalized members of society. Christ's words were a consolation for the disenfranchised, and His miracles by which He healed the sick and resurrected the dead expressed of His divine mercy towards the human race. Christ was not only a teacher who preached about the coming of the kingdom of God in which all justice will be satisfied, but through the works he did, such as healing the lame, blind, lepers, paying attention to the rejected members of society, resurrecting the dead, feeding the hungry, through all Christ influenced those works so that all those people who lived near him felt that the kingdom of God had already arrived.

Harold W. Attridge in his Article "Early Christians and the Care of the Poor" points out that the message of the Gospel of Christ is directed towards marginalized members of society. He said: "The earliest Christian gospel involves a definite option for the poor. Jesus' proclamation of the coming Reign of God (Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15), a change in administration marking a decided shift in the way the world is run, offered a message of hope to widows, orphans, the blind, and lame, those who also received special treatment in the Torah and prophets of ancient Israel."

Christ's Messianic role as the Savior of all people, especially the poor, widows, and

orphans, can be found in the Sermon on the Mount in Luke's Gospel 4:18 where Christ quotes the prophet Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Quoting the prophet Isaiah, Christ indicates that he is the fulfillment of this Old Testament prophecy, because his preaching and the miracles he performed were good news for the sick, the poor, widows, orphans and all other socially endangered people.

Christ's teaching and proclamation of the good news to the world had a great influence on the early church and was an inspiration and a call to acts of charity for the early Christians. The Gospel message about love, compassion and helping others has changed the way many people think and their view of the poor. One of the key parts of Christ's teaching that talks about love for neighbors are the words of Christ when he says: John 13:34-35: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

These words of Christ were the foundation for the actions of the early Christians and a call to acts of mercy and love for other people. The early Christians strongly believed that helping the poor, the sick, widows, and orphans was not only the fulfillment of God's commandments, but also a confirmation of their love for God and their neighbors. Gary A. Anderson in his book "Charity - The Place of the Poor in the Biblical Tradition" presents a powerful thought related to the early

Christians and their understanding of acts of charity. Namely, he emphasizes: "The promise that scripture provides that one could meet God in the face of the poor. Charity was to put it briefly a sacramental act. That is an act that established a contact point between believer and God."

This thought presented by Gary A. Anderson tells us that works of mercy for early Christians had a sacramental character and were understood as a service to God. In the continuation of his book, Gary Anderson notes that in the Early Church, charity and the Holy Eucharist were closely connected, because both acts celebrate the acts of mercy. Even in the 4th century, St. John Chrysostom spoke about the connection between charity and the Holy Eucharist. He said: "You honor this altar indeed, because it receives Christ's body (Eucharist). But the poor man, who is himself the body of Christ, you treat with scorn... You can see this altar lying around everywhere, both in streets and in marketplaces, and you can sacrifice upon it every hour; for on this too is sacrifice performed." Imitating Christ and the way of life that he set an example for his followers was a very important characteristic of the life of the early Christians that they nurtured in their lives. The incarnation of the Son of God, which, according to the apostle Paul, was an expression of God's perfect love and his humiliation, and especially his suffering on the cross for the sake of all people and for the salvation of all, was the greatest inspiration for early Christians and their attitude towards the poor, sick, widows and orphans.

Acts of the Apostles 6:1-6 mention that the Church community from the very beginning nurtured the practice of giving alms to the needy. In this part of the Acts of the Apostles, we see that from the very beginning the Church



community in Jerusalem was very organized and that it appointed people who were responsible for distributing aid to the elderly, sick, poor, widows and orphans so that the apostles would not have to do this, because their main duty was to preach the Gospel. Christians in the Jerusalem community pooled their property and shared everything they had with other members of the church. This way of distributing resources provided security to all members of the church and strengthened the bond and interdependence among the members of the community.

The message of the Gospel calls us to be responsible towards others and to recognize the image of God in everyone. The early Christians understood very well that their acts of mercy and care for others are not only acts of charity, but acts in which we can meet Christ himself. In connection with this, charity and care for the marginalized and those in need becomes a spiritual act that connects the believer with God and with each other. Our faith is not only a matter of our personal salvation, but also an active participation in the work of justice, charity and love for other people in this world. Only if we practice this way of life can we call ourselves true followers of Christ.

Written by:
Rev. Tomislav Savic,



Homily on Serbian Radio Hour of Chicago On the Paschal Eve of 1949



Dear brothers and sisters, Orthodox children, I was invited to speak to you today on this last day of Great Lent. Orthodox saints of ancient times had prescribed this seven-week fast to serve as a preparation for the great joyous celebration of Pascha. People prepare in particular ways for any joyful holiday such as for their Serbian slava, or for a wedding, for a birthday or for a baptism, or for the celebration of some special family event or state holiday by buying new clothes, decorating the house, cleaning and washing everything, and preparing gifts. And the more joyful the anticipated celebration, the greater the preparations. The more we work and sweat in preparation, the more joyful that day becomes. The more we work or sacrifice for that day, the more precious and brighter this day becomes for us. Pascha is the universal and greatest Christian feast day. Naturally, the longest preparation is also required to welcome it. That is why the fast before Pascha, -Great Lent-, is the longest and strictest of all the other fasts throughout the year.

Today is Holy Saturday the last day of Great Lent. I invite each and everyone of you to take inventory of yourself, that is, to reflect on how you have prepared yourself during the past seven weeks. Whoever has fasted and received holy communion has prepared well. Whoever prayed to God regularly, in church and at home, has also prepared himself well. Whoever had a quarrel with his neighbor and made peace with him, also has prepared himself well. Whoever has read the Holy Scripture and other books about the salvation of the soul, and has strengthened himself in faith and honesty, he too has prepared himself well. Whoever not ashamed of the Serbian name in these time of suffering and humiliation of our people, he

too has prepared himself well. Whoever sowed harmony among Serbian brothers and helped all Serbian national institutions, and always stood by God and the people, he too has prepared himself well. The mother who taught her children the basics of the Orthodox faith, prayer and good conduct, and she too has prepared herself well. Whoever visited the graves of his relatives and friends, remembered his own death, and was in fear for his soul at the future Terrible Judgment of God, - he too prepared himself well. Whoever mourned on Great Friday the sufferings of Christ on the cross, he too prepared himself well. All of these, as ones ready and prepared, will welcome tomorrow's bright feast with great joy. But how will you welcome tomorrow's feast day, you who have not prepared at all? If you have not received communion during this fast, receive communion tomorrow. If you have not prayed to God, neither went to church, or done any good deed, immediately make a vow to God that you will do so in the future. And do not be afraid. God is merciful; He will forgive you and it will be as if those sins had never happened, and He will help you on the path of salvation. Number in your mind all your sins that you have hidden from people. They are known by God, and contritely pray to God for forgiveness. Remember how Christ on the cross forgave the repentant thief in the last five minutes and led him into Paradise. And how before that, despised by all, Christ forgave the weeping sinful woman, and said to her: Do not be afraid, daughter. To you who are at enmity with a brother, I advise you: make peace. To you who are estranged from your brothers and live isolated like a snail in its shell, I advise you: go into the company of your brothers, freely go to church, to gatherings, to brotherly meetings, and your life will be fuller and more joyful. Listen to me, come to church tomorrow morning and receive communion.

And you will immediately feel how your life has changed for the better. Just approach the holy altar and receive Holy Communion. Unite with God, and you will easily unite with people. Reconcile yourself with God, and you will easily be reconciled with people. Christ said: when one sinner repents, the angels rejoice in heaven. Therefore, bring joy to Christ and the angels. And you yourself will feel joy. Tomorrow, the Serbian people scattered like chaff throughout the world, repentant and communed, will rejoice in Christ's Resurrection while in suffering and poverty. Are you to be separated from them, you who are in free and rich America, at whom they look unto a stars in a dark night? And so, brothers and sisters, children of St. Sava, I wish all of you that are prepared or unprepared, that tomorrow you rise joyful and cheerful because of Christ's Resurrection from the tomb, which signifies the victory of life over death, and the victory of justice over injustice, and truth over lies, and God over Satan.

Bring joy to your priests, who care for your souls. They are waiting for you in church tomorrow. Appear in the churches before the face of God, as God's children, all transformed, all forgiven. Tonight, however, I congratulate you on the eve of the Holy Resurrection of Christ. I will not yet greet you with the tomorrow's usual triumphal greeting, the greeting of life, happiness, and glory.

That will not be done until tomorrow, because God is waiting even this night for the unprepared to prepare themselves. And at dawn, when the angel of the Lord showed the myrrh-bearing women the empty tomb of Christ and said to them: Why do you seek the living among the dead? At that moment all of us Christians on earth will join in the thunderous singing and shouting of the heavenly choirs of angels and the righteous in the glory and honor of our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And at this moment: I wish you a good night, and God willing, will see you tomorrow in church.

Saint Nikolai Velimirovich

Translated by Protodeacon Jovan Anicic



The Light of Christ Illumines all

Popadija Xenia Franck, M.Div.

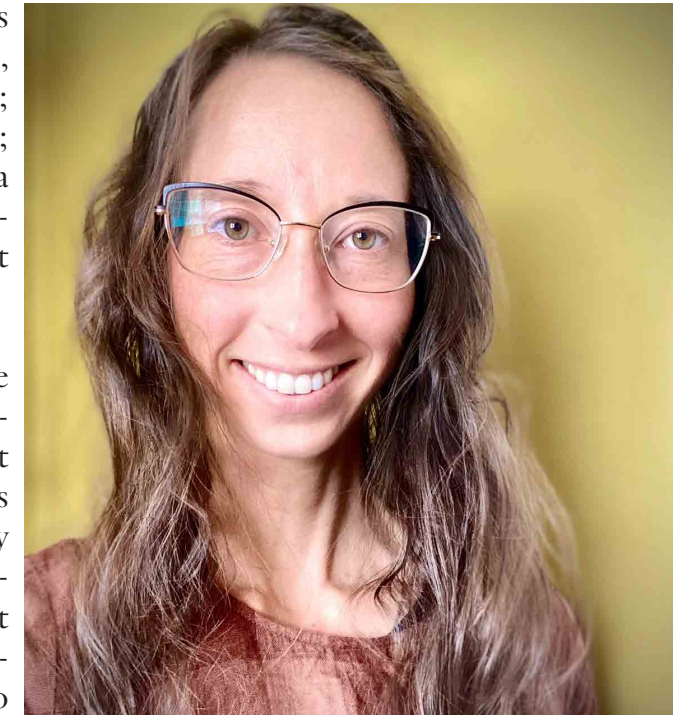
It is said that if you stay up to watch the sunrise on Pascha morning after the vigil, the sun dances as it crosses the horizon. This is an example of how many people experience a transformation of creation in the light of the Resurrection. Budding trees speak of rising from the dead. Singing birds hymn the glory of God. All of the natural world seems to rejoice in the triumph of the Son of God over death, and to stand in awe, patiently awaiting the final restoration of all things. I would like to suggest that it is not the created world which has changed, rather we have changed. We are the ones who have been transformed. Our eyes have been opened and enlightened by watching the life-saving suffering, death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the most common Paschal hymns begins, “Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus.” St. Symeon the New Theologian asks, rhetorically, why does the church sing this hymn? Are we pretending, or speaking an untruth, by claiming to have seen the Resurrection of Christ? Would our spiritual tradition – which is so very opposed to imagination, fantasy, and false-realities – sing an untruth? He answers his own question by saying that the holy Church does not speak untruth: truly, each and every faithful Orthodox believer who partakes of the services of Holy Week and Pascha, each and every year, actually sees the Resurrection of Christ. As we sing in the Paschal Canon, “Let us purify our senses and we shall behold Christ, shining in the unapproachable light of the Resurrection.” (Ode 1, Troparion 1)

Having seen the Resurrection of Christ, our eyes are transformed and illumined. In the Paschal light our eyes are more inclined to see that God is all around us; and that all of creation is partaking in the life of God. The fragrance of wildflowers breathes the fragrance of the Holy Spirit. The sun shines on us with the light of Christ. The trees stand in exul-

tant praise and every blade of grass grows by the power of God. In the joy of Pascha, every person is somehow more dear to us; every sorrow is shown to be temporary; and even our worldly delights are seen as a mere foretaste and prefiguring of the eternal delights that await those whom Christ has saved from death.

If all of these transformations, all of these Paschal revelations, are visible to us because our eyes are illumined – and not because the world has changed – it means that we are actually seeing the true reality which exists at all times. This vision is always available to us; but our eyes are not always ready to see it. For now, the darkness of sin has been lifted from our eyes so that we see the world clearly, without our own distortions and misinterpretations. Reality is the life of God’s creation, the experience of the work of God’s hands.



In the light of the Resurrection we understand that our God is not only all-powerful, good and loving, but also that He is intensely involved in the life and salvation of creation. He is present. He is acting. He is guiding all things to “the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God ... unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). The world is living and breathing in God. We ourselves are living and breathing in God. As death is a corruption of God’s creation; so is our limited view of the world, as if it were something separate from God, a distortion of reality. What we encounter with eyes enlightened by the Resurrection is a revelation of the truth – the world living by and in God, every creature breathing in the Holy Spirit and exhaling praise to God.

This true, living reality is available to us, not only at Pascha, but every moment of our lives. It is found and lived by a life in God. It is a life that is not based purely on the experience of our physical senses, but instead on what is eternal and spiritual. As the holy Apostle Paul told the Corinthians, “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18). Let us, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, strive to hold on to this illumined vision as long as we can. Let us make the effort to root ourselves firmly in the eternal reality, so that we will not easily be moved by what is temporal. When we feel this Paschal illumination slipping away as we return to our daily lives, as our old habits get the best of us (and as we possibly get weighed down by too much lamb and cheese), let us remember to turn our eyes to Christ and again behold His light, as the exclamation of the Presanctified Liturgy proclaims to us: “The light of Christ illumines all.” May our physical eyes be illumined by His light. May our spiritual eyes be illumined by His light. May our hearts and minds be illumined by His light. So that we may live all of our life in the light of the Resurrection, both in this world and in the one to come. Amen.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SAINT BASIL OF OSTROG SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH CHISHOLM, MN 55719

Saint Vasilije (Basil) of Ostrog Serbian Orthodox Church in Chisholm, MN dates back to the early 1900's. Record exists that the first Serbians immigrated here between 1900 and 1910, and possible even earlier. The church was incorporated in 1909 and consecrated in 1910 prior to their being a Serbian Orthodox Diocese in the United States. With much gratitude to the Russian Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood, the Serbian immigrants now had a spiritual center and a house of worship. Many of the first Serbian immigrants were illiterate, but each and every one of them were of very profound faith. They believed in God as the supreme Lawgiver of the universe. They believed in Christ and Christian principles, the Bible, spiritual values, and focusing on Christ as God and inspiration to the human race.

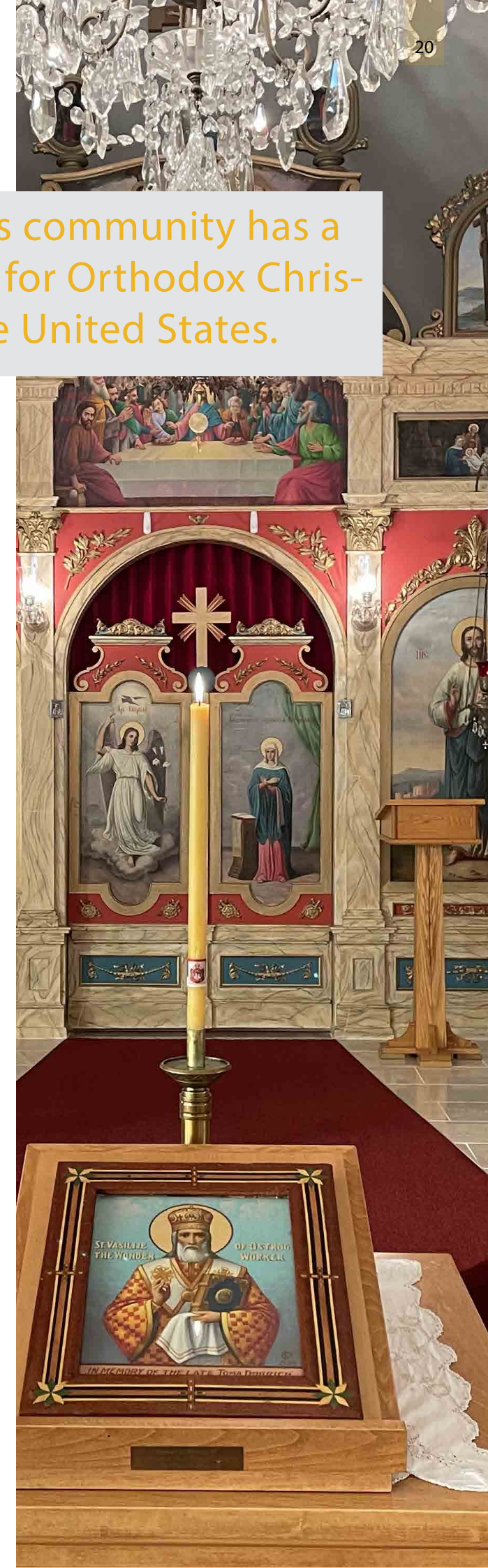
Despite all of the obstacles newcomers faced here such as language barriers, severe climate, economic insecurity, lack of transportation facilities, and conveniences, they, being conscious of their spiritual needs and desirous of perpetuating their religious faith, nationality, customs, traditions and language, organized and denied themselves necessities in order to finance the building of the house of worship in which they could gather and worship God. By doing this, they founded Saint Vasilije of Ostrog Serbian Orthodox Church, which has been serving God and His people for the past 115 years.

His Eminence stated: "This community has a unique and special history for Orthodox Christians in this part of the United States."

Serbian immigrants came to the Iron Range during this time for work in the logging industry as well as the iron ore mines. Underground mining and Logging during this period of time is how Serbian men provided for their families, while their wives took care of their homes, raised their children, and played an integral role in working for their church. With over 400 families in the parish, the church soon purchased property where the reception hall was built. To this day, it is the largest banquet hall in Northern Minnesota's Iron Range.

In the 1960's the congregation grew too large to fit into the original structure. On the same piece of property as the church hall, His Grace Bishop Firmilian gave Fr Dragislav Kaseric the blessing to plan for the construction of a new church building and parish home complex. The new church building was completed and consecrated in 1972.

In building the new church, the construction was based around keeping all of the original interior items from the original building. Using large flatbed trucks, the stained-glass windows, iconostasis, and original tomb of Christ were brought to the new church building. The Altar Table and Oblation Table, chandeliers and all Holy Items are also from the original building from the original consecration.



His Eminence Metropolitan Christopher, of Blessed Repose, said the following at his last Hierarchical Liturgy in Chisholm. His Eminence stated: "This community has a unique and special history for Orthodox Christians in this part of the United States. He went on to state that we owe a great debt of gratitude to the founders of this community, and of this beautiful church!" The St Vasilije of Ostrog Church has a deep history that goes back over a century. More importantly, it has its own special meaning to each individual person who has grown up in the community, or visited the community over the past 115 years.

Fr Radomir Plavsic, former parish priest, had the blessing of sharing the discovery of Sts. Teofan Beatovich, Matej Stiyachich, and Bogolyub Gakovich. Although they lived and worked in America they met a martyr's end having returned to Yugoslavia during the Second World War. All three were glorified as martyrs by the Orthodox Church in 2004. May they pray for the Range and all of America. Prior to Fr Radomir, no one, including myself, knew of the existence of these three saints. They were simply priests who served the parish at some point during its existence. Fr. Radomir brought this discovery to life, and truly gave the community more to be appreciative of as they gather each Sunday to pray to God.

As one venerates the icons and prays before the iconostasis, bear in mind that three saints prayed in front of that very iconostasis screen as parish priests, and that Sts Mardarije of Libertyville and Nikolai of Zhica served Holy Hierarchal Liturgies in the Holy Altar. This is something I think of everytime I pray and venerate the icons, pray before the iconostasis, and enter the Altar. St Nikolai Velimirovic would often visit the garden of Sophie Lastovich, and would spend countless hours with our Serbian people at their homes, Much like the radiant Love that His Eminence Metropolitan Longin currently shares for this community on his visits to the parish.

The parishioners of Chisholm owe a great debt of gratitude to the former clergy and visiting clergy who helped to support the spiritual needs of the parishioners over the years. I specifically would like to thank Fr. Radomir Plavsic and Fr Milos Zivkovic who each played a very important role in guiding the church through its most difficult period of time in its existence. It is the love and dedication they both had for the church and for the Serbian people that inspires those who are there today carrying on the customs and traditions of those who came before them. May we also remember V. Rev. Fr Dragislav Kaseric and V. Rev. Fr Bogdan Zjalic who, to this day, remain the parish's longest serving priests. May their Memories be Eternal! Vjecnaja Pamjat!



I am honored to have served on the Executive Board for the past 14 years, 12 of which as the Executive Board President. I also am honored to serve in the parish of my ancestor, Rade Dicklich, who was crucial in making the purchase of property and consecration of the church possible in 1910. Rade gave everything he had for Christ, his family, and his church. I am honored that my grandfather followed in his footsteps, and I had the honor of then following in his as well.

May Christ our true God, through the prayers of Saint Basil of Ostrog continue to bless this community, and guide and protect our Holy Serbian Orthodox Church! Amen!

By: Jordan Kochevar





50 YEARS OF THE TEMPLE
AND 120 YEARS OF THE HOLY
RESURRECTION SERBIAN
ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL IN
CHICAGO

EXPLORE OUR
DIOCESE

HOLY RESSURECTION SERBIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL - CHICAGO, IL

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REVIEW OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF NEW GRACANICA
MIDWESTERN AMERICA

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L O N G I N

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