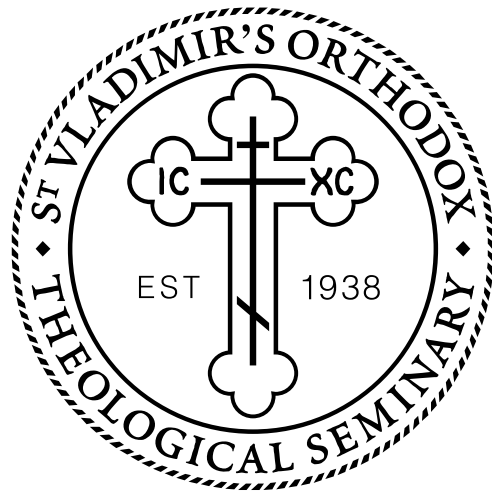


SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2015

Orthodox Education Day



EAST MEETS EAST

A Celebration of the
Oriental Orthodox Churches and
an Exploration of the Dialogue

ST. VLADIMIR'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

575 Scarsdale Road, Yonkers, NY 10707

914.961.8313 • www.svots.edu

SCHEDULE FOR ORTHODOX EDUCATION DAY

- 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM **MALANKARA ORTHODOX MATINS**
Three Hierarchs Chapel
- 11:00 AM – 4:45 PM **FOOD & DESSERT BOOTHS OPEN**
- 11:00 AM – 4:45 PM **ORTHODOX BOOKSTORE AND MARKETPLACE SALES**
John G. Rangos Family Building
- 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM **KEYNOTE ADDRESS: “OUR COMMON FATHER: SAINT CYRIL”**
The Very Rev. Dr. John A. McGuckin
Metropolitan Philip Auditorium
- 1:00 PM – 1:45 PM **COPTIC ORTHODOX RAISING OF INCENSE**
Three Hierarchs Chapel
- 2:00 PM – 2:45 PM **CONCERT: “OUR COMMON SAINTS: HYMNS OF ROME, ALEXANDRIA, CONSTANTINOPLE, AND SEBASTE”**
Hierodeacon Fr. Herman (Majkrzak),
Lecturer in Liturgical Music and Director of Chapel Music
Metropolitan Philip Auditorium
- 3:00 PM – 3:45 PM **WORKSHOP: COPTIC ICONOGRAPHY, PAST AND PRESENT**
A Journey Through the Sacred Art of the Orthodox Church of Coptic Egypt
Evelyn Avery Rophael, Coptic Iconographer
Bashir Auditorium
- 3:00 PM – 3:45 PM **WORKSHOP: OUR PRAYERS IN COMMON**
Mary Farag Gall
Metropolitan Philip Auditorium
- 3:00 PM – 3:45 PM **BOOK STUDY: *WAY OF THE ASCETICS* BY TITO COLLIANDER**
The Rev. Deacon Shiryl Mathai and Vera Hubiak, Moderators
St. Innocent Classroom, Meyendorff Hall
- 4:00 PM – 4:45 PM **WORKSHOP: THE RECENT HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO FAMILIES OF ORTHODOX CHURCHES**
The Rev. Deacon Antonios (Shenoudian)
Metropolitan Philip Auditorium
- 4:00 PM – 4:45 PM **WORKSHOP: THE VISUAL LANGUAGE OF EASTERN ORTHODOX ICONS**
The Rev. Deacon Evan Freeman, Lecturer in Liturgical Art
Bashir Auditorium
- 4:00 PM – 4:45 PM **WORKSHOP: MISSION IN CHRIST’S WAY**
The Missionary Efforts of Archbishop Anastasios and the Experience of Working with Him
The Rev. Deacon Stephanos Ritsi, OCMC Missionary
St. Innocent Classroom, Meyendorff Hall
- 5:00 PM **EASTERN ORTHODOX GREAT VESPERS**
Three Hierarchs Chapel



October 3, 2015
No. 10/002

To Archpriest John Behr, Dean, Archpriest Chad Hatfield, Chancellor, and the Faculty, Students, Board of Trustees, Benefactors, and Friends of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary

Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

I offer my blessing and sincere congratulations on the occasion of the forty-fifth annual Orthodox Education Day hosted by Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. This yearly event is eagerly looked forward to as an opportunity to join together in worship, to participate in classes and workshops, and to meet and share with other Orthodox Christians.

This year's theme, "East Meets East" is a timely and important one as world events have turned our attention to the state of Christianity in the Middle East. It behooves us to educate ourselves about our brothers and sisters of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, so that we may live the directive of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians to, "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" Ephesians 4:3.

The purpose and goal of the seminary, as the purpose of Education Day itself, is to equip the church with the tools needed to proclaim the Gospel to contemporary society. This forty-fifth Education Day once again serves the purpose of equipping all the faithful who will participate in this day with knowledge and an experience that will help us all to expand the mission of Christ in our world. Participating in the events of the day is a blessing, and with every blessing given, much is asked, so I encourage each of you to not only absorb the lessons, but more importantly to take home these lessons learned and share them with those in your communities.

It is my prayer that this year's Orthodox Education Day will provide everyone with the opportunity for prayer, fellowship and learning and will inspire all who attend to more fully participate in the mission entrusted to us, the mission of proclaiming Christ and His Gospel to all the nations.

Assuring you of my blessing and best wishes for another successful Orthodox Education Day, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

†TIKHON
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

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The Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

2158 ROUTE 106 • MUTTONTOWN • NEW YORK 11791



**By the Grace of God,
Zachariah Mar Nicholovos,
Diocesan Metropolitan**

OL No. 27/2015

September 23, 2015

Dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ!

I offer my prayerful greetings to the vibrant spiritual community of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. This institution has been a wonderful garden of learning, which has produced much beautiful fruit for the Holy Orthodox Church. Whether it be Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, or lay leaders, St. Vladimir's has never failed in offering precious gifts in the form of pastors and teachers of our faith.

There is no question that the painful divide between our ancient Orthodox Church still remains. However, from the very beginning St. Vladimir's Seminary ensured they remained as an pan Orthodox institution dedicated to the theological education to both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Church clergy and laity. The presence of His Eminence, Mathews Mar Coorilos, Metropolitan (later His Holiness Catholicos Mathews II) at the dedication of St. Vladimir's Seminary campus in Crestwood is evident of this vision and mission.

Most especially for the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, St. Vladimir's Seminary has helped to raise wonderful pastors, and lay leaders well equipped to cater to the spiritual needs of our faithful in the North American context.

As St. Vladimir's Seminary celebrates Orthodox Education Day, and celebrate the relationship between the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox churches, and explore the history of their dialogue, we pray our common home of theological education, and pastoral formation found at this sacred institution will help build up the path to restoration in communion.

The Malankara Church, especially the Church in North America, looks forward with great hope and anticipation in building a stronger relationship in our common vision for unity, and bring forth wonderful vessels and icons of our ancient faith.

Yours in our Lord,

Zachariah Nicholovos, Metropolitan

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

BY CHRISTINE CHAILLOT

Excerpted from *Towards Unity: the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches*

THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA

The Copts trace their descent from the Pharaonic Egyptians; the word “Copt” means “Egyptian.” The historian Eusebius (4th c.) records the tradition that the Church in Egypt was founded by St. Mark the Evangelist. In the first centuries, Alexandria ranked with Antioch, Jerusalem and Rome as one of the main Christian centers. The Church of Egypt suffered greatly from the different Roman persecutions, especially under Diocletian in 284: this date marks the beginning of the Coptic Church Calendar in memory of its numerous martyrs. The Copts came under Persian domination in 616 and Arab invasion in 642; periods of tolerance and persecution followed.

Egypt is the motherland of monasticism. The desert hermits, beginning with St. Anthony, attracted many foreign Christians to visit Egypt in the fourth and later centuries. St. Pachomius established cenobitic or community monastic rules which were subsequently taken up by St. Basil. In Egypt today there remain about 13 working monasteries for the 600 monks and seven monasteries for the 250 nuns. In recent years, ancient monasteries have been restored and monasticism has been revived with the arrival of educated monks and nuns.

The ancient catechetical school of Alexandria was famous because of the great Church Fathers who taught there, such as St. Clement. The greatest theologians of Alexandria are St. Athanasius and St. Cyril. The former saved the whole Church from the Arian heresy, the latter from Nestorianism.

From the middle of the 19th century, under Patriarchs Cyril IV (1854-61) and Cyril V (1874- 1927), the Coptic Church began to undergo phases of new development: primary, secondary and technical schools for boys and girls were opened; publishing activity was begun; and benevolent societies were founded. The Church, and particularly monasticism, took on a new lease of life under Patriarch Cyril VI (1959-71) who was an ascetic, a man of deep prayer and a well-known miracle-worker.

Today the Coptic Church is the largest in the Middle East, counting around seven million members. Coptic churches have been founded around the world since the 1960s as a result of Coptic emigration. The first church was organized in Toronto (Canada) in 1964. By 1993 there were 50 parishes in the United States, 10 in Canada, 16 in Australia, and 23 in Western Europe.

The first missionary activity of the Coptic Church in Africa led to the early Christianization of much of Libya, and Nubia (Sudan). There is important missionary work in other parts of Africa, notably in Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa.

THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST

It is in Antioch that the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians (Acts 11:19-26). In the early Christian period, Antioch was the capital of ancient Syria, an important crossroads in the Middle East at that time. The Holy See of Antioch was founded by the Apostle Peter, who is considered to be the first Head of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch.

Around Edessa (today Urfa in Turkey) where the Syriac-speaking community formed a kingdom, Christianity was spread by Adda'i, one of the 72 disciples mentioned in Luke chapter 10 and by Mari.

The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch then developed in the region of Tur Abdin in modern Turkey, around Mar Matta Monastery and Tikrit in present-day Iraq. The first monasteries were founded from the 4th century near Antioch and Aleppo, in Tur Abdin and in Mesopotamia. Today, less than 400 Syrian Christian families remain in Tur Abdin.

The Church is also known as “West Syrian” (i.e., West of the Tigris) in order to distinguish it from the “East Syrian” Church of Persia, also called the Assyrian Church of the East (or the so-called “Nestorian”) which was the largest Church East of the Tigris. Mar Severius (d.538) was the last Syrian Orthodox Patriarch who presided in Antioch. After him, the Syrian Patriarchate was transferred from Antioch to the region of Aleppo, and then to different places, among them Deir Al Zafaran, near Mardin, in Turkey, and Homs in 1933, and finally to Damascus, the capital of Syria, in 1959. Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem Barsaum (1933-57) and Patriarch Jacob III (1957-80) have been among the two most influential spiritual leaders and historians of this Church in the 20th century.

One of the best-known Church Fathers is St. Ignatius of Antioch, famous for the letters he wrote and for his martyrdom in Rome. The most important theologian of the School of Edessa was St. Ephrem (d.373); some Syrian Orthodox theologians are Jacob of Sarugh (d.521), Philoxenos of Mabbug (d.523), Severius of Antioch (d.538), and Jacob of Edessa (d.708). Jacob Baradaeus (d.578) greatly reorganized and strengthened the life of his Church.

The Syrian Orthodox Church went through a period of “renaissance” in the 12th and 13th centuries. The most prominent figures at that time were Michael the Great (d.1199), Dionysius Bar Salibi (d.1171) and Bar Hebraeus (1264-86). The last also compiled the Church Canons (Hudoye) which are still in use today. During that time the Church had around 100 bishoprics in Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia and Cyprus. As the Syrian Maronites had previously done in the 7th century, some Syrian members united with the Catholic Church of Rome at the end of the 18th century and established a separate “Uniate” Patriarchate of the Syrian Catholics.

The Syrian Orthodox faithful have suffered persecutions throughout the centuries. Over 100,000 Syrian Orthodox are estimated to have been killed in 1915 under the Ottoman authorities, at the time of the Armenian genocide. Consequently, many people fled to Mosul (Iraq), Al Jasirah, Aleppo, Damascus and other cities in Syria, as well as to Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. There were other migrations after the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, mainly to the Middle East, North and South America, and in the 1960s to Europe.

Today this Church with its Syriac roots counts its faithful in the Middle East, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and Turkey and other parts of the world. Many Syrian Orthodox are found in South America and also in Australia.

THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The Catholicosate of Holy Etchmiadzin, or the place where “the Only-Begotten Son has descended,” is the historical and spiritual centre of the Armenian Church and the Mother See, having primacy of honor over the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia (now in Lebanon) and over the Armenian Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople.

According to Armenian tradition, the Apostles St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew came to Armenia, a bridge territory between Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and preached the Gospel. Around 301-14, King Tiridates III was converted by St. Gregory the Illuminator and Christianity was then proclaimed as the state religion. This made Armenia the first Christian nation.

Representatives of the Armenian Church were not present in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon, as the Armenians were protecting their Christian territory from the invading Zoroastrian Persians.

Catholicos Gregory II (d.1105) tried to bring about reconciliation with the Byzantine Church. The famous Catholicos and poet, Nerses the Gracious (1101-1173), addressed a Profession of Faith of the Armenian Church to Emperor Manuel I Comnenus in 1165 when the possibility of union between the Byzantine and the Armenian Churches was being discussed. The same Profession was presented by the Catholicos Nerses V in 1848 when he visited the Russian Tsar Nicolas I, who found it in keeping with Orthodoxy. Attempts were made to unite the Russian and Armenian Churches in the 19th century.

Persian rule in Armenia (428-654) was followed by Arab domination (654-885), then by the Bagratid kingdom (885-1045). King Shapur of Persia ordered the first great migration of Armenians during the second half of the 4th century. In the early 17th c. the Persian Shah Abbas I transferred many Armenians to his territory where they built the town of New Julfa in Isfahan (Iran).

From the 11th century, many Armenians went to Cilicia and later transferred the Catholicosate to the capital Sis (1292), after having formed an independent kingdom, which was destroyed in 1375 by the Mamelukes of Egypt. From their arrival around 1095-97 the Crusaders became allies of the Armenians of Cilicia. After 1238, Armenia was under Mongol domination. In 1441 a Catholicosate came into existence again in Etchmiadzin; consequently there were two Catholicosates in the Armenian Church. From the 16th century onwards, Cilicia was part of the Ottoman Empire. Many Armenians took refuge in Syria and in Lebanon after the early 20th century genocide. The Catholicosate of Cilicia was reorganized in Lebanon in 1930.

There are two Armenian Patriarchates, one in Jerusalem and one in Istanbul. When Sultan Mohamed II seized Constantinople,

Armenian merchants were encouraged to settle there. An Armenian Patriarchate was being organized in the city from the end of the 15th century, which was subsequently recognized as the only legal representative of all the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

From ancient times there has been an Armenian diaspora, provoked by successive occupations of the region. Armenian communities were established in the Middle East, in the Balkans and Poland, and later in many parts of the world. More than one million Armenians were massacred in the genocide in Ottoman Turkey culminating in 1915. The Catholicos Megerditch Kherimian (or better known as Hayrik) (d. 1907) was an important defender of the Armenian cause at that time. Today, the 2.5 million Armenians in the diaspora are mostly under the jurisdiction of the Mother Church of Etchmiadzin. However, the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Lebanon also has dioceses in Cyprus, Syria, Iran, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, the USA and in Canada. New churches, schools, social and cultural centres have been established throughout the diaspora, where Armenian communities are very active in their support of Armenia, still suffering the consequences of the 1988 earthquake and war with Azerbaijan.

The Armenian cultural legacy is well-known for its architecture and illuminated manuscripts. The Armenian liturgy was inspired by that of St. Basil of Caesarea and also shows some similarity with the Syriac tradition.

THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX TEWAHEDO CHURCH

The Acts of the Apostles (8:26-40) relates the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch of Queen Candace by Philip on his way back from Jerusalem. The Ethiopian Church in Africa was formally established when Frumentius, the first bishop of Axum, a Syrian by origin, was ordained by St. Athanasius in Alexandria around 330. He is known as Abba Salama, meaning Father of Peace and Kassate Berhan or Revealer of Light.

Christianity became the official religion in the country around 332. The Church was strengthened by the arrival of the Nine Saints (c. 480) from the Eastern Mediterranean area, who translated books, including the Bible and other doctrinal and ascetic works, into the ancient national language Gheez. They also preached the Gospel and founded monastic communities. In the 6th century, the Ethiopian St. Yared is said to have composed Ethiopian Church music in three modes and the degwa or hymnal is attributed to him.

In 356, a letter was written by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine in which he addresses Ezana, the first Christian King of Ethiopia, as "his precious brother." In the 6th century the Byzantine Emperor Justin communicated with the Ethiopian King Kaleb who organized an expedition to Yemen where Christians had been massacred.

Celebrated figures in Ethiopian Church history include the monks Za-Mikael Aragawi, one of the Nine Saints, who founded the famous monastery of Debre Damo; Gabra Manfas Quddus, the 12th century hermit; Iyasus-Mo'a (d.1292) who opened a Christian school at Lake Hayq and his pupil Takla-Haymanot, who established the most important monastery of Debre Libanos.

Regular contacts with the Byzantine world virtually ceased with the rapid Muslim advances from the 7th century onwards. During the reign of King Lalibela at the end of the 12th century, extraordinary churches were hewn in the rock in Northern Ethiopia. The Solomonian dynasty came into power after the Zagwe kings in 1270. The learned King Zara Yaqob (1434-1468) reformed the Church and reorganized the kingdom. In the 16th century, the Somali Muslim troops, led by "Gragne" (the left-handed), pillaged the country.

The Ethiopian Emperor Lebna Dengel (1508-40) requested help from the Portuguese who came to overthrow the Muslim armies. They were accompanied by Jesuit missionaries who began to preach to the population. In response to them, King Galawdewos or Claudius (1540-59) composed a Confession of Faith.

Ethiopia emerged from isolation under the progressive Emperor Theodoros II. Emperors Yohannes IV (1872-89) and Menelek II (1889-1913) were in contact with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Symphony between the Church and the Monarchy continued until the last Emperor, Haile Selassie, or "Might of the Trinity" (1930-74), who gathered all the Oriental Orthodox Churches together for an historic meeting in Addis Ababa in 1965.

On 28 June 1959 Ahuna Basilios was ordained the first Patriarch of Ethiopia by Pope Cyril VI, the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria. Before this, the Church in Ethiopia was directly within the jurisdiction of the Coptic Orthodox Church. In 1929, the first five Ethiopian bishops had been consecrated as a first step towards self-government (autocephaly).

In the 19th century, Abuna Salama I (d. 1867), propagated the "Tewahedo" doctrine, which remains the official teaching of the Church. Tewahedo, which means united, confesses the unity of the human and divine in the Person of Christ, without confusion and without separation.

The Ethiopians of the diaspora have parishes mainly in the USA and Great Britain, but also in Germany, Sweden, Sudan, South Africa and even in the West Indies, where some of the local people have converted to Orthodoxy. An Ethiopian community has existed in the Holy Land since the Byzantine era.

THE MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH OF INDIA

In India, the history of the Malankara Oriental Orthodox Church of the Syriac tradition is complex. This ancient Church traces its foundation to the Apostle Thomas whose place of martyrdom is still venerated near Madras.

Communities were established in South India since the early Christian period. Cosmas, who travelled to India in the 6th c., writes in his *Christian Topography* that the ancient Church of India was connected with the Church in Persia, which used the Syriac rite and liturgical language. Around 823, two bishops are recorded as going from Persia to India with some migrating families.

In the 16th century, with the arrival of Portuguese colonizers and Jesuit missionaries, the community was forced to accept the papal authority of Rome. But one part rejected it with the Coonan Cross Oath (1653) and appealed to other Oriental Churches. Consequently, Bishop Mar Gregorios of the West Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch came to Malabar in 1665 and consecrated a bishop, establishing a link between the two Churches. In the 1876 Mulanthuruthy Synod, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Peter III tried to assert his authority over the Indian Church and its temporal wealth, but was resisted. As a result, the Indian Church divided later on into two groups, one supporting the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, the other the Bishop of India. In 1912, an autonomous Catholicosate was created in India. After long litigation between the two parties, the Supreme Court of India declared the legitimacy of the Indian Catholicosate in 1958. The Syrian Patriarch of Antioch Ignatius Yacob III and Catholicos Basilius Geevarghese II subsequently recognized each other, thus bringing peace to the Church communities. In 1964, the Syrian Patriarch was invited to India and, together with the Indian synod, installed Catholicos Augen.

In the 1970s, the Church was again divided by new disputes between the Syrian Patriarch and the Indian Church. Today, hope for full unity of the Orthodox Church of India is desired by many faithful on both sides.

The Church also has a widespread diaspora which includes parishes in Malaysia, Singapore, the Gulf countries, the USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, Austria, and the United Kingdom.

This introduction has been excerpted from *Towards Unity: the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Church*, written by Christine Chaillot and Alexander Belopopsky (Geneva: Inter-Orthodox Dialogue, 1998).

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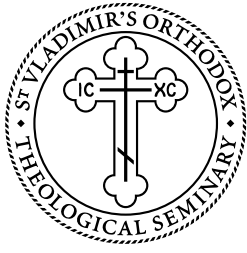
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