



**June 21, 2009**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Saints of North America**  
**(Apostles' Fast)**

**RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE ONE:**

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure Body; You did rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life: Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your Kingdom! Glory to Your dispensation, O You who loves mankind.

**TROPARION TO THE SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA – TONE EIGHT:**

As the bountiful harvest of Your sowing of salvation, the lands of North America offer to You, O Lord, all the saints who have shone in them. By their prayers keep the Church and our land in abiding peace through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One!

**RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE ONE:**

As God, You did arise from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Yourself. Human nature praises You as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to You: You are the giver of resurrection to all, O Christ!

**KONTAKION TO THE SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA – TONE THREE:**

Today the choir of Saints who were pleasing to God in the lands of North America now stands before us in the Church and invisibly prays to God for us. With them the angels glorify Him, and all the Saints of the Church of Christ keep festival with them; and together they all pray for us to the Pre-eternal God.



## EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

### **The Prokeimenon—Psalm 33: 22 in the First Tone:**

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on Thee.

### **Romans 2: 10-16**

Brethren, there will be glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

### **The Alleluia Verses – Psalm 18: 47, 50**

God gives vengeance to me, and subdues people under me. He magnifies the salvation of the king, and deals mercifully with His Christ, with David and his seed forever.

### **Epistle Commentary**

**Conscience bearing witness** refers to the presence of God's law in our conscience, condemning anything we do contrary to true human nature. **God will judge...by Jesus Christ:** on the day of judgment we are not judged directly by God the Father, whom we cannot see, but by the incarnate Son whom we do see, Christ Jesus (Acts 17:31; John 3:16-21, 35, 36; 5: 22, 26, 27). Christ will judge on the basis of the light He Himself has given to each of us (John 1:9) and our response to it. **The secrets of men** are the "thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

## GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

### **Matthew 4: 18-23**

At that time Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

### **Gospel Commentary**

As His disciples, **Jesus** says "**Follow Me**" to men who have not been trained in any sacred school, most of whom are unlearned and illiterate, considered by the various religious groups within Judaism as peasants. At Pentecost these men will be revealed to be the wisest of all by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

### **Reflection from *The Prologue* for June 8/21 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic**

Fear in suffering and fear of not suffering—this is one and the same fear, and it signifies the fear of a spiritual man as to whether God has distanced Himself from him. When St. Catherine suffered many difficult tortures, the Lord appeared to her and she asked Him: “Where wast Thou until now, O Lord, to comfort me in so many sufferings?” The Lord answered her: “I was here in thy heart.” But as great a fear can come upon a spiritual man when sufferings do not come his way for a long time. A monk once entered a church in Alexandria and saw a woman kneeling before the icon of the Savior, shedding tears and crying out to the Lord: “Thou hast abandoned me, O Lord. O Merciful One, have mercy on me!” Following the prayer the monk asked her: “Who has wronged you that you so bitterly complain to God?” The woman replied: “Up to now no one has wronged me—that is why I am weeping—because God has abandoned me and for three years has not visited me with any sufferings. During this time, neither have I been sick, nor my son, nor have any of my household livestock perished.”

### **June 8/21: The Holy Great-martyr Theodore Stratelates**

This saint is commemorated on February 8/21, and on that date his life is recounted. However, June 8/21 commemorates the translation of his relics from Heraklion to Euchaita. Before his martyrdom, St. Theodore left the following instructions in his will to Varus, his servant: “Bury my body in Euchaita on the estate of my ancestors.” St. Anastasius of Sinai wrote about a miracle of the icon of St. Theodore: In the town of Karsat, near Damascus, there was a church dedicated to St. Theodore Stratelates. When the Saracens conquered Damascus, a group of Saracens took up residence in this church with their wives and children. There was a fresco of the image of St. Theodore on the wall. One of the Saracens shot an arrow and struck the image of the saint in the face. At once blood flowed from the image. Soon after that, the entire group of Saracens perished in the church. St. Anastasius said that he personally was in that church and saw the image of the saint on the wall and traces of congealed blood.

### **From St. Theophan the Recluse**

When grace does not dwell in man, demons curl like serpents in the depths of his heart, completely preventing the soul from desiring good; but when grace enters the soul, then these demons are blown about like dark clouds from one part of the heart to another, transforming themselves into sinful passions or distractions, in order to eclipse the remembrance of God and draw the mind away from discourse with grace.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **TIME IS RUNNING OUT to be part of the *Western American Diocese 2009 Annual***

Submit an ad or greeting form to the Diocesan office by June 15<sup>th</sup> for inclusion in the beautiful, full-color publication from our own Sebastian Press that will be available

during the Diocesan Days weekend, September 4-6, 2009, at the St. Sava Mission in Jackson, CA.

**Mark your calendars for Diocesan Days, September 4-6, 2009**

Follow this link for information on the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Days:

[http://www.westsrbdio.org/Diocesan\\_Days/Diocesan\\_Days\\_2009/xhtml/index.html](http://www.westsrbdio.org/Diocesan_Days/Diocesan_Days_2009/xhtml/index.html)

**Diocesan Summer Camp**

Our Diocesan Summer Camp held each year at the St. Sava Mission in Jackson, CA, will begin on Sunday, July 12, 2009. *Camp forms will not be mailed out this year.* Instead, they will be made available on the Camp website: [www.campstsava.org](http://www.campstsava.org). Other important camp information can also be found by following the above link.

**Historical Decision Concerning the Serbian Orthodox Church  
in North & South America**

The Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, during its regular session on 21 May 2009, based on a recommendation of the Episcopal Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, relative to the restructuring of the existing Dioceses in North and South America, rendered the following decision confirming the Constitution of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, according to which the Dioceses of our Church on that territory will be restructured:

1. THE METROPOLITANATE OF LIBERTYVILLE-CHICAGO, with its see at the Monastery of St. Sava in Libertyville (encompassing the Monastery of St. Sava in Libertyville and the Cathedral Church of the Holy Resurrection with its three parishes), whose Metropolitan shall be the President of the Episcopal and Central Church Councils and the Clergy-Laity Assembly, and therefore the ex officio representative of the Serbian Orthodox Church on that territory.
2. THE DIOCESE OF NEW GRACANICA-MIDWESTERN AMERICA, with its see at the Monastery of New Gracanica (encompassing all the Church-School Congregations, Parishes and Monasteries in Chicago - save the Holy Resurrection Cathedral - and the other Midwestern American States of the previous Metropolitanate of Midwestern American, as well as all of the Church-School Congregations, Parishes and Monasteries of the previous Diocese for America and Canada of the New Gracanica Metropolitanate on the territory of the previous Metropolitanate of Midwestern America).
3. THE DIOCESE OF EASTERN AMERICA, with its see in Pittsburgh/Mars (encompassing all of the Church-School Congregations, Parishes and Monasteries of the current Eastern American Diocese and the Church-School Congregations, Parishes and Monasteries of the previous Diocese for America and Canada of the New Gracanica Metropolitanate on the territory of Eastern America).
4. THE DIOCESE OF WESTERN AMERICA, with its see in Los Angeles/Alhambra (encompassing all of the Church-School Congregations, Parishes and Monasteries of the current Western American Diocese and the Church-School Congregations, and Parishes of the previous Diocese for America and Canada of the New Gracanica Metropolitanate on the territory of Western America).
5. THE DIOCESE OF CANADA, with its see in Toronto/Milton (encompassing all of

the Church-School Congregations, Parishes and Monasteries of the current Canadian Diocese and the Church-School Congregations and Parishes of the previous Diocese for America and Canada of the New Gracanica Metropolitanate on the territory of Canada). With this decision on the said redistribution, Article 8 of the Constitution of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, and by it the previous titles "Metropolitanate of Midwestern America" and the "Diocese for America and Canada of the New Gracanica Metropolitanate" cease to exist, and the new borders for these Dioceses of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America are rendered effective.

*Bishop Irinej of Backa, Spokesman of the Holy Assembly of Bishops*