

# *The Orthodox American*

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Hello!

With this little document, we begin a new adventure in the life of our jurisdiction. Initiated as a new vehicle for communication with the membership and with our friends, it borrows an old and familiar OCCA name from earlier years.

What is *The Orthodox American*? It is a journal published quarterly that reflects our journey in Orthodoxy—an Orthodoxy of the Americas and of our time, to be sure, an Orthodoxy of the twenty-first century birthed in the ancient life of the oriental church.

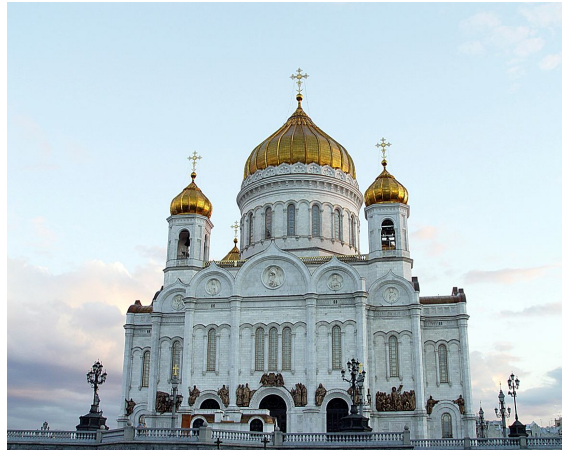
Not only is this our own publication, it is designed to be shared, not shelved. Give copies to those who pray with us regularly or occasionally, to those who are our partners in ministry, and to our friends and benefactors.

OCCA has many ways its members communicate with each other. Our online presence is vital and active. Our bishops and vicars keep in touch with those in their charge. We have a timely directory. This is one more tool for our reflection and growth.

**Bishop Peter**

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Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Moscow

## **An Orthodox Winter**

### **Russian Orthodox elect Patriarch**

February 1 saw the installation of His Holiness, Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, the presiding hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. Celebrated at the beautiful, newly rebuilt Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow (the old cathedral was dynamited by the Communists), attendees included most of the bishops of Russia and several from abroad, as well as priests, nuns, political leaders and other notable Russians, and guests. The information below was posted on the website of the Moscow Patriarchate.

After the divine Liturgy, Patriarch Exarch of All Belarus Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk and Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna placed the mantle on the Patriarch.

Metropolitan Vladimir of St. Petersburg and Ladoga handed the patriarchal cowl to the Russian Orthodox Church and said, “Your Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia! Today, by the will of the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church you are given this ‘helmet – the hope of salvation’ (1 Thess 5:8). May the angels on it stand before the Throne of the Almighty with the prayer for your successful ministry. May the Cross of Christ that crowns the cowl remind you of the sacrificial exploit of the Patriarchal office in the name of love of God. Place this cowl on your head in the firm hope for our Chief Shepherd Who died and was risen for us. May God's almighty hand strengthen you in your ministry.’ The cowl was placed on the head of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine handed His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia the patriarchal staff that belonged to St. Peter, Metropolitan of Moscow. This ancient staff was brought to the Cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour from the Armory where it is kept. His Beatitude Vladimir said, “Your Holiness! On behalf of the Local Council, which elected you, I solemnly hand you the staff of the Primates of Moscow on this joyous day when our Church got

### **The words of Patriarch Kirill**

His Holiness addressed the worshippers gathered at the Cathedral with his primatial homily and noted in particular that “there is no room for anything personal and private in the life of the Patriarch. He and his whole life belong to God and the Church, and his heart bleeds for the people of God, in particular for those who have fallen away from the church unity and for those who have not yet found faith. The patriarchal ministry is a special spiritual feat. It is impossible to perform it alone or with support of a limited circle of like-minded persons. All bishops and the whole Church with the variety of gifts of its members are involved in the accomplishment of this feat through communion in prayer. Therefore, being aware of my unworthiness, I ascend to the Patriarchal throne with trepidation and humbly entrust myself to the intercession of my holy predecessors, metropolitans and patriarchs of Kiev and Moscow, before God’s altar.”

the sixteenth Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. This staff belonged to Metropolitan Peter of Kiev and Moscow, the miracle-worker, who transferred the primatial see to Moscow. We hope that you will continue the ministry of the holy Primate of Moscow who worked tirelessly to build and order the Church of Christ, who consolidated the unity of Holy Russia, which by God's Providence has begun its life in the holy baptismal font of Kiev. We promise to help Your Holiness in this sacred cause.

“The staff is a sign of a journey. It helps those who come to fulfill their mission. The Primate of the Church is called to imitate Christ, Whom ‘God sent into the world so that we might live through him’ (1 Jn 4:9). The handing of this staff to you is an expression of the willingness of the whole Church to follow you, to work under you so that the glory of God spreads all over the entire earth.

“The plenitude of our Church thus witnesses the great honour of being the Primate and also of a particular confidence, as millions of people are looking at you with joy and hope. May this staff be the one of God's inheritance (cf. Jer 10:16) and the ‘staff of favour’ (Zech 11:7) for our Church.”

*Other narratives and pictures of the installation are available at the website of the Moscow Patriarchate.*

### **Bishop Jonah elected OCA Metropolitan**

In the USA, The Orthodox Church in America (OCA), elected its new Metropolitan, His Beatitude Jonah, on November 12, 2008.

Metropolitan Jonah's rise was all but meteoric. He was living in a monastery in California when elected the Bishop of Fort Worth and auxiliary bishop for the Diocese of the South. Within days of his installation, he attended the All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America. It is said that his speech to the assembly on the state of the church was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and on November 12 he was elected Metropolitan.

The installation and enthronement ceremonies were held in Washington, DC, on December 27 and 28.

## **Western Church Headlines**

### **Roman Catholic Bishop Appointed to New York City**

Pope Benedict named Tim Dolan, Archbishop of Milwaukee, to the archbishopric of New York—Stateside Catholicism's most prominent post.

Dolan, who turned 59 earlier this month, was promoted to Milwaukee in June 2002, less than a year after his ordination as a bishop. Best known for his contagious, energetic enthusiasm, love for priesthood, and media savvy, Dolan will be installed on Easter Wednesday, April 15, 2009.

## **Jurisdictional News**

### **Diocese of the Great Plains Bishop Edmund Kubiak**

About half of the clergy in Bishop Ed's diocese are in the Southern States. After consultations involving the Metropolitan and Bishop Ed, Fr Francis Fonenot was appointed a Vicar for the Diocese of the Great Plains, and will exercise pastoral care for the priests in the south.

### **Pastoral Theology Institute Bishop David (Kotajarvi)**

Greetings to all in the name of the Holy Trinity. As of this date the response to the call for instructors and the creation of a church “library” has been limited. I again call upon all of you to volunteer your knowledge and time to

assist those in need of training. I also humbly request that your library holdings be made available to those who cannot afford to purchase them. Please share what you have. It can make a significant difference.

For those of you that are desiring additional training, please take a look at the institute information you have received and let me know if there is a course you would like to take.

The institute is to serve all of us, not just newcomers. In that regard, I am hoping to be able to schedule our first "Orthodoxy" class with +Skip as the instructor in the summer.

I plead for your support and involvement in this endeavor. Please call or email and we can talk personally how you can be involved!

**The Western Great Lakes Diocese**  
Bishop David (Kotajarvi)

By the time this goes to print I will have made the journey to visit the clergy in Chicago. The winter in the region has been brutal and safe travel has been limited. We have been gathering around the keyboard and emailing one another with some frequency, but gathering together is far better. Fr. Mike Bonnet has graciously shared his service bulletin with me on a weekly basis and I am grateful for his efforts. It is meticulous and quite artful.

Fr. Doug Smith from Madison continues to be very busy with hospice training and will be in the Green Bay area as well as in Indiana. It is planned that I dine with him and that he connect with +Skip and the Auburn group when he is near them.

Personally, I will be participating in police chaplain training in late March. I look forward to rubbing elbows with the many pastors, priests, and rabbis that will be attending. I wonder how they will respond to me, a forty-year police veteran, and now, bishop. I believe that to be a rare combination.

In early February I had the privilege of laying a dear old friend to rest. I officiated along with her pastor, Roger Clapp, of the Methodist faith. He was very gracious and his church was magnificent. I have been assured that I can use the church in the future, if needed. There certainly was no hint of "territory" with this fine servant of God.

I am certain that more news from the region will be forthcoming from the other clergy in the future. God's peace and love to all.

**Diocese of the Pacific Coast**  
Bishop Jim Gleeson

The Diocese of the Pacific Coast is making strides to expand and to standardize formation and mark steps along the route to ordination. The official installation of Bishop Jim (Gleeson) on Sunday, May 24, 2009, will mark the formal start of this process. Included in the installation weekend will be an assembly of all the diocesan clergy. Fr Ralph Curtis is organizing it.

**Diocese of Albuquerque**  
Bishop Czeslaw Stachewicz

Bishop Chet sends us word that he keeps busy with the New Mexico Veterans Integration Centers (NMVIC), where he is chaplain and serves on the Board of Directors and an Advisory Board. The Center provides supportive services for homeless veterans or those at risk of becoming homeless. It provides a range of assistance to help them integrate into the community.

**Transitions**

Father Joshua Winter has returned to ministry in this jurisdiction. Into your directory, please add this: 1855 Franciscan Dr., #D, Winston-Salem, NC 27127. His home phone is 336-784-9086. Welcome home, Joshua!

St Basil and the Fathers remind us that one can only be a priest in community. One cannot be an isolate priest or deacon. For departing members, there are two routes. In Orthodoxy, an individual may surrender their ordination or be deposed by a bishop. We have several members who recently chose to leave our jurisdiction and return to lay membership in another faith community. We note their transition here.

Matthias David Moore and Joshua Long have chosen to give up their ordinations. David is a communicant in the Episcopal Church, while Josh has resigned and is praying in the Roman Church. Seminarian Doyle Wilhelm was removed as a seminarian and is no longer living at the Skete at Crosswood Centre. Michel Bonnet has resigned from OCCA and has been returned to the lay order.

Some others have left us for another church home, and retain their status as ordained. Father Paul Concannon and Mother Anne Weyand were released to other jurisdictions.

For monastics, there is no release. The vows were made to God, and whether or not one is living a monastic life, that person is still vowed.

In a future issue, we will discuss the complex issue of a return to an OCCA ministry.

### **Healing**

The Metropolitan Archbishop Paul was prayed over and anointed at a Service on Saturday, February 21, in Magdalene Chapel, Auburn, Indiana. He suffers from newly diagnosed heart problems. His doctors have ordered him to reduce the stress in his life and get more rest. He is following his doctors' orders.

Fr Martin Baskin surgery has had surgeries during this past season. At last word he was doing well in his recovery. Bishop Edmund keeps an eye on him, and they stay in touch!

Bishop Doug (Wright) reports that an increase in some situational stressors in his parish has exacerbated his health concerns.

### **Liturgics: Preparing for Lent and Pascha**

#### Farewell to the Alleluia?

Not in Orthodoxy. The Western Church sets aside the Alleluia during Lent. In Orthodoxy, the acclamation is used all year round. I suppose that most Western folk realize that even in the West, Sunday is never considered a Lenten day—how could it be as it is the day of Resurrection!

#### Holy Oil

It isn't too early to think about the new supply of oil. It is traditionally olive oil with fragrances added. Frequently a rose scent is chosen, and scent is available from many commercial providers both ecclesial and secular. Monasteries of both the west and east have wonderful chrism mixes as well. A word to bishops and sacristans: it may wise to consecrate some unscented oil as well, if you have clergy ministering to cancer patients; the scent often triggers reactions.

The Holy Rood Guild sells *Laudate Chrism Essence*, a blend of aromatic oils. The directions call for it to be mixed with 3 gallons of olive oil. If several clergy pooled resources, they would have an ample supply of oil. Item #7111: \$75; [www.holyroodguild.com](http://www.holyroodguild.com).

#### Palms & pussy willows

Palms of all sizes and shapes are available from your neighborhood religious supplier. Individual palm strips usually come in 13" and 20" lengths and packaged for 100 people. For decorative purposes, also available are fan, date, sago, and Mediterranean Palms. If simplicity is your style, think about African palm crosses made from dried branches of dwarf palms. They are about 6½" long and available in bags of 50 for about \$18. For those of you who live where palms must be ordered from a distance, you might consider the Russian custom of blessing pussy willows

instead. A great Russian custom, don't you think, one that is easily adopted in American Orthodoxy. Another plan to consider for the procession is forsythia branches.

Speaking of palms, most of us read the story of the burning palms and the fire department. For those with less of an adventurous spirit, next year check with your local church supplier for palm ashes.

Did you hear this one?

It was Palm Sunday, and because of a sore throat, five year old Billy Stayed home from Church with a sitter. When his family returned Home they were carrying several Palm Branches. Billy asked what They were for? His parents replied "People held them over Jesus' Head as He walked by." "Wouldn't you know it," Billy fumed, "The One Sunday I don't go to Church, HE showed up!"

### Paschal Candles

Easter candles for blessing at the Great Vigil come in a sometimes dizzying array of styles. The traditional plain candle, with a simple cross and date, sent with four "nails" of wax and incense, is available for less than \$35 for a 1½"x 34" candle and \$647 for a 4"x 60" candle. Candles are measured three ways: by width (1 ½, 1 ¾, 2, 2 ½, and so on); by length (28, 34, 37, 39, 44, 48, 52, 60); and by decoration (the traditional one, usually described as plain, or any number of elaborate colored wax decorations applied to the candle). Most, possibly all, are 51% beeswax.

While the elaborate candles are quite beautiful, the plain candle suits nearly every worship location, from cathedral to chapel or house church, and the 34" or 37" length is just fine.

Order your Paschal Candle from your favorite religious supplier. Don't wait to the last minute.

### Other candles

Congregational candles are available in a variety of lengths, usually 9", 11", 14", and even 18". Most are not wax, and packaged 100 or 50 to a box. You can get 51% beeswax candles as well. Again, see your church supplier.

The Eastern Churches have a preference for 100% unbleached beeswax candles. Yes, they are more expensive, and they are usually sold by the pound. Wax candles smell just wonderful, too!

Altar candles are sometimes offered for Lent in purple and with wax decoration applied to them. This is a relatively new practice, but apparently they are popular. The design can match that of your Paschal candle. But they are expensive, ranging from about \$50 to \$100 for a pair.

You can save money by holding on to the stumps of burned candles. Many suppliers will accept stubs and give you a credit toward your next purchase.

## **Financial Issues and Your Ministry**

By Mother Barb Martzall

Being a deacon or priest with the church requires some financial responsibilities. These are easy if you give it some thought. Basically, it comes down to a checking account for the ministry and also some basic record keeping. In the process you will be providing tax documentation capabilities to those who donate money or goods toward your ministry.



First, decide on the name of your ministry. Then apply to the federal government for an Employer Identification Number (EIN). This can be done online or by filling out a Form SS-4 and mailing or faxing it. The reason to get the EIN is for banking purposes. Once you have the EIN, then you set up a ministry checking account. Don't just go to the bank closest to home—do some research for the best deal, and remember that you will need money to deposit when you open the account.

Remember that whatever donations you receive must be in the name of your ministry, never in your name. And, of course, the money will be deposited into the ministry's checking account. If not, you must declare the income as wages on your personal income taxes.

The next step is to set up some record-keeping. This is easy, too. You need two forms to easily function. One is for tracking donations made by each individual and the other is the income/expense form. These forms are for tracking for a tax year. I can easily provide you with samples of each when you are setting up your records. Consider doing this task on computer, to make it easy to print out monthly reports or provide a tax donation form for the donor's own tax reporting. This work is simple and does not take that much time from week to week. One note: be sure to check your state's requirement of how much money your ministry can have in an account before you have to declare income taxes to the state. It is usually somewhere around \$20,000.

One thing to think about is that every four years the clergy gather for Synod. Why not have your ministry pick up the bill? That is easy enough. You calculate roughly how much it is going to cost you for travel, food, and housing. Then personally donate on a regular basis to your ministry over the next four years. When Synod time comes, the church pays for you. You are saving the money over time and get a bonus you did not realize—a tax donation at the end of each year!

When you need new vestments, cost out the vestments and put that money into the ministry. The church pays for them, and you get the tax donation at the end of the year.

All of the needs of the ministry should be paid from your new ministry checking account. If you ask a donor to give some money so the church can hold an event, like a dinner or conference, put the money in the ministry checking account and pay the bill from the ministry account. Your donor gets a tax donation deduction at the end of the year.

Remember that the federal government has a limit on how much can be donated by one person at a time. It is up to you to keep up with that information, so there is never any question concerning donations made or received.

For in-kind donations, such as furniture or office equipment, you will give the donor a letter stating what they gave and what it was worth. It must be on your ministry's letterhead and be signed by you. The donor uses your letter as documentation on their tax reporting.

Financial record-keeping is easy in the long run. One simple form to complete and send the federal government, and a checking account—and no, you do not have to have any employees—and you are able to legally accept donations for your ministry.

You now have an overview of a way to handle financial responsibilities for your ministry. Feel free to contact me for samples of the forms I have been using. While it takes a bit of time to set things up initially, in the long run it is a blessing to have done it.

## Books

*Children of the Promise: An Introduction to Western Rite Orthodoxy*, by Fr. Michael Keisler

*Lenten Triodion*, translated by Mother Mary and Bishop Kallistos (Ware)

*Prayers from the East: Traditions of Eastern Christianity*, edited by Richard Marsh

*About Christ and the Church*, by Fr. Alexander Men

**Recommended by Mother Lynn Walker**

*Children of the Promise: An Introduction to Western Rite Orthodoxy*, by Fr. Michael Keisler, focuses on the expression of the Western Rite within the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, the book is filled with historical and liturgical details that you may find helpful, particularly when you are invited to explain the mission and vision of OCCA to others. Order from [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com).

For those who enjoy learning about the Eastern Churches' Lenten practices and theology, you may want to find a copy of the *Lenten Triodion*, translated by Mother Mary and Bishop Kallistos Ware. The texts are specific to the East, but the extensive and detailed introduction is a good one, and for those of us who enjoy learning from Bishop Kallistos, it is a very worthwhile read.

*Prayers from the East: Traditions of Eastern Christianity*, ed. Richard Marsh. You'll find that the experience of God expressed in these prayers is the same that you find in Western collections, but the way it is expressed is different: it

strikes me as more personal and intimate, more urgent, passionate, and familiar. As we strive to draw closer to Orthodox theology, perhaps one of the most effective routes is through the ancient prayers of the Church.

*About Christ and the Church*, by Fr. Alexander Men. It is common to think that the Byzantine or Eastern theological mind set is so foreign to Americans as to be virtually incomprehensible. This collection of transcriptions of relatively informal and extemporaneous conversations Fr Men conducted with members of his parish in the 1980s. What is new is the passion and modernity with which he addresses the eternal issues of faith. This book is available through Oakwood Publishers.

*The Future of Love: The Power Of The Soul In Intimate Relationships*, by Daphne Rose Kingma (Main Street Books, Doubleday, 1998).

**Reviewed by Mother Francesca M.C. Fortunato**

Daphne Rose Kingma is best known for the book *Weddings From The Heart*, a popular treatise on writing personalized wedding ceremonies, which is frequently used by freelance marriage officiants, as well as by couples who want to do their own ceremony writing. It's a very useful resource, written from an interfaith perspective, with many examples of ceremonies expressing various religious and social ideas on marriage (including some that are fairly unconventional). Still, people who know Kingma as a "wedding writer" might be surprised by *The Future of Love: The Power Of The Soul In Intimate Relationships*. While not explicitly anti-marriage, Kingma does present strong arguments for re-thinking the role of marriage in our lives and society, and especially the idea that married life is something toward which "everyone" should aspire. She also takes issue with the idea that a marriage that doesn't last for life is "failed" (as opposed to, simply, finished) and that any romantic or sexual relationship which doesn't lead to marriage (or a "marriage clone," Kingma's phrase for sexual-domestic partnerships without legal marriage) is also a failure. From a strongly spiritual (but not religion-specific) perspective, she discusses the history of marriage and the ways that its functions have changed, particularly during the twentieth century.

It is common knowledge that marriage-for-love is a fairly recent development in human history, but Kingma elaborates on the ways that married life once served as a partnership of survival, for people struggling to live under perilous circumstances: "Your great-grandparents didn't ask themselves whether they were going to live in romantic bliss, sexual ecstasy or spiritual enlightenment in their intimate relationships. They took a fancy to one another, followed it up with marriage, and then proceeded to the prairie, the Black Forest, the back

forty, the barn or the battlefield, to do whatever needed to be done."

Kingma questions what she calls "the social myths of relationship based on the marriage model." These myths, she tells us, specify that our relationships should be: daily and domestic (living under the same roof seven days a week) exclusive and forever (lasting "until death parts" the couple). She laments, "If our relationships aren't daily, aren't lived in a shared household, aren't the embodiment of perfection with one single person, or don't last forever, all we can do is feel as if we've failed." She points out that a thousand years ago, when people said "until death do us part," they were most likely making a commitment of ten or fifteen years, not fifty or sixty. According to Kingma, "The real problem with the myth is that it denies and defies reality. It's not that, in a given lifetime, you won't have a person who will love you until the end. But it most likely will take more than one relationship and perhaps even several marriages (as we live longer and longer) to get you to the one person who will be on the scene when you breathe your last breath."

"All we can do is feel as if we've failed." From both a personal and pastoral perspective, this is a painful truth, for me, and a large part of the reason I've chosen to review Kingma's book (hoping that many of my colleagues in the church will be inspired to read it). Most pastors, these days, struggle with the issue of preaching on the Gospel passages that deal with Jesus' teachings on divorce. They know that, if they don't do something to ameliorate the harshness of those teachings, by today's standards, they will be making the vast majority of their parishioners feel like failures. As purveyors of hope and good news, it presents pastors (and all Christians, in our roles as ministers of the gospel) with a dilemma. Some stress the historical (and feminist) perspective: the idea that Jesus was defending helpless women (since only Jewish men could initiate divorce proceedings) against being cast out on the streets to beg or sell their bodies. That's a step in the right (com-passionate) direction. But maybe, just maybe, we can get beyond that, and consider the idea that church teaching on divorce, marriage and sexuality can and should change, in response to changing conditions and the needs of the people we serve?



Kingma points out that, in addition to being impossible for most people to fulfill, the “marriage model” denigrates the importance (and spiritual quality) of other intimate relationships in our lives. If your spouse or domestic partner is your “significant other,” what does that make all the other people you love and care about? Insignificant?

Not only are marriages damaged by the expectation that one person should be “all in all” to another forever, this notion negates the importance of loving, emotionally intimate relationships between friends and family members. Kingma cites some interesting examples of people whose most important intimate relationships are neither sexual nor domestic (friends as each other’s primary helper and confidante) as well as marriages/domestic partnerships that are blessed and spiritually important, without meeting all of the “marriage model” criteria (one marriage for life, exclusive and under one roof).

Kingma challenges her readers to make an effort toward mindful, prayerful self-examination, when it comes to the intimate relationships in our lives, as well as increased open-mindedness and compassion toward those whose experience differs from our own. I believe this is a challenge for our times and an imperative for all of us, as people of faith and servants of God. The God who has numbered the hairs of our heads has made each of us beautiful and good. God made humans because God wanted humans, and being humans in a changing world does not make us failures. May all our lives and loves be blessed with generosity of spirit, compassion, hope and holy joy.

*The Lost History of Christianity: the Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died*, by Philip Jenkins (HarperOne, a division of HarperCollins, 2008).

*Parallel Empires: The Vatican and the United States—Two Centuries of Alliance and Conflict*, by Massimo Franco (Doubleday, 2008).

**Reviewed by Bishop Peter (Bob Zahrt)**

Imagine that your dad showed you a family tree—the kind you see in books about kings and queens—but it only illustrated your ancestors on your father’s side, and then, only the males. You would be puzzled and probably not a little angry that your mother, grandmother, and the other women in your history were ignored altogether. When you look closer, you notice that the tree is actually even more barren. It has no siblings, cousins, aunts or uncles.

That is how most of us learned church history. The narrative of the Church in the west, that is, Europe. We know that Peter and Paul found their way to Rome, where they ministered and formed Church before they were martyred. And we all learned about the growth of the European Church, its expansion and the Reformation. The growth of the Church in the east and Africa is less known. Yes, we all know about the Patriarch of Constantinople and most of us have heard of the Apostle Thomas and the Church of South India.

This *Lost History of Christianity* reports the movement of Christians not only west into Europe, but also into Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The author included an illustration of a flower with three large petals: the center of the bloom is Jerusalem. One petal is Europe, with the names of western church centers. A second is Asia, also labeled. And the third is Africa.

The illustration is typical of those of the Middle Ages and Early Modern period. The mapmakers knew geography, but this kind of map was symbolic. Jerusalem was the center. It is startling to see that Edessa in Syria is not at the far eastern fringe of Europe but at the far west of Asia.

The Churches of the East and South have fascinating histories. Wherever the Christians went, they lived with other historic, major religious families. The Eastern Christian cross which rests on a lotus is one sign of the synthesis that Christians achieved in living in a multi-cultural world.

Today, most large Christian communities live in states that are Christian. Struggling communities exist (and thrive as small communities) in states which are predominantly Muslim or Hindu or whatever. Churches of the East and South did not just die from religious conflict. Other, natural disasters and political changes led to their decrease. We keep in mind that remembering and knowing our history is part of its renewal, or if you will, its resurrection.

This is a book useful for all our membership: for those whose interests in the Eastern Church are primary, as well as and perhaps most importantly for those of us who are rooted firmly in western traditions.

For history, politics, or religion junkies, *Parallel Empires* is a good read. The Holy See first tried to establish diplomatic relations with the United States in the 1780s. This history relates the on-again, off-again efforts, with the failures and successes, from then to 2008.

Each party in the dance showed interest or feigned reluctance when it suited their own agendas. But throughout the years, the USA and the Vatican have been able to work together effectively in the political world.

The author, Massimo Franco, is a political analyst for *Corriere della Sera*, a leading Italian daily, was a visiting scholar at the University of California at Berkeley, and the author of other titles.

## ***Afterword***

**Metropolitan Archbishop E. Paul Brian Carsten**

Christ is with us!

If my rummaging through the archives has taught me correctly, then *The Orthodox American* is the third reincarnation of such a publication in the last fifty years. Your bishops felt we needed such a medium, something not immediately connected to the internet, something that could be an ongoing source of information that did not depend on the occasional writings of this office. Oh, how I agree.

In the closing hours of last fall's Holy Synod gathering in Indianapolis, we discussed if having the General Synod in 2010 may or may not be a wise thing depending on the economy and the general tenor of things at that time. We will be discerning this matter in an ongoing fashion. Your ideas are welcome. Talk with your bishop and share you ideas.

On another note, I want to thank everyone who has been praying and pulling for me these past three months. I have learned a certain kind of humility that comes from the knowledge that a 3+ pound tiny infant can wrestle a grown man to the ground with a measure of ease. My aortic artery is a gift from that premature little fellow. And with the passage (and occasional ravages) of time, it is not doing too well. Since the upper chambers of my heart were beating at more than 300 beats per minute (for as long as nine hours by my count), I guess I have a strong heart. The cardiologist is confident that the situation can be handled somewhere this side of surgery, as long as I keep up my present regimen and minimize stress. The former I embrace; the latter is harder to do.

***+ E. Paul Brian***

*The Orthodox American* is a quarterly publication of the Orthodox-Catholic Church of America. Your submissions are welcome. The deadline is May 21, 2009 for the next issue.