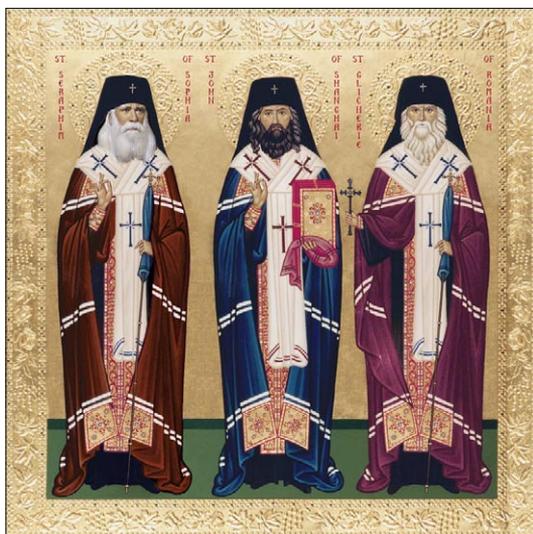


Exarchate Clergy Conference



From April 2-4 (Old Style)/15-17 (New Style), 2005, with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian and under the special protection of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, St. Glycerie of Romania, and St. Seraphim of Sofia, the American Exarchate of our Church convened a clergy conference at the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Etna, California, the headquarters of the Exarchate. Twenty-three clerics of varying ranks from our small parishes, missions, and monastic communities, which are scattered across the U.S. and Canada, took part in the activities:

- our Church's two Hierarchs in America,
His Eminence, Archbishop Chrysostomos and
His Grace, Bishop Auxentios;
- ten married clergymen,
Protopresbyter Father Gabriel Lee,
Protopresbyter Father Raphael Abraham,
Protopresbyter Father David Cownie,
Father Dr. Gregory Telepneff,
Father Dr. Joseph Miller,
Father Jerome Zubricky,
Father George Mavromatis,
Father Dr. Michael Nedelsky,
Father John Abraham, and

- Deacon Father George Chee;
- four monastic clergymen,
Archimandrite Father Akakios,
Hieromonk Father Gregory,
Hieromonk Father Patapios, and
Hierodeacon Father Nectarios;
 - and seven members of the lower clergy:
Subdeacon Schemamonk Andrew,



Brotherhood of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery

Subdeacon Monk Chrysanthos
Subdeacon Vasily Wylie,
Subdeacon Chrestos Spontylides,
Reader Jameel Abraham,
Reader Joseph Ferroni,
Reader John Granger, and
Reader Christopher Liles.

The brotherhood of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery (*see previous page*) hosted the guests and also participated in the activities. And Dr. John Caminis, a spiritual son of Metropolitan Cyprian, a longtime supporter of the monastery, and a physician and medical researcher at Novartis Pharmaceuticals in New Jersey, was a special guest of honor at the conference. Two Priests (Protopresbyter Benedict Markley and Father Demetrios Sarlakes) and two Readers (Readers John Franklin and Christopher Wood) were unable to attend the gathering, owing to ill health or work demands. (*See, below, the conference participants; from left to right, Dr. Caminis, Deacons, Priests and Bishops, Subdeacons and Readers.*) The first day of the conference, Friday, April 2, began with the Presanctified Liturgy, which is celebrated daily at the monastery during Lent, followed by a morning of reading and an afternoon of informal discussions between the clergy. Compline with the Salutations (*Charetismoi*) to the *Theotokos* and *Orthros* (Matins) were chanted in the evening.



On Saturday, April 3, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostomos was served by the Abbot of the monastery, Archimandrite Akakios, and Hierodeacon Nectarios. In the late morning, His Eminence, Arch-



bishop Chrysostomos delivered a two-hour lecture (*see photograph, above*) entitled, “A Model for Spiritual Epistemology,” a discussion of human spirituality and transformation drawn from the theological thinking of St. Gregory Palamas and St. Maximos the Confessor. It was met with particular enthusiasm. In a brief intermission during the lecture, Metropolitan Cyprian greeted the conference participants by telephone, expressing his “great pleasure with this conference” and conveying his “blessing to all the gathered clergy.” After the lecture, the participants visited the nearby Convent of St. Eliza-



both the Grand Duchess of Russia, where they were received in the convent Chapel by the Abbess, Mother Elizabeth, and the Sisterhood. (*See, on previous page, the Sisterhood and Father George Mavromatis, the married Priest who serves it.*) The convent choir chanted several beautiful Church hymns in English and Greek and then served the gathered clergy a beautiful Lenten lunch in the convent refectory.

Following Vespers and Compline, a service of supplication was chanted for the health of Protopresbyter Benedict Markley, whose serious health problems have greatly incapacitated him, making travel and his attendance at the conference impossible, and for his Presbytera, who underwent treatment for a chronic ailment on the very day that the conference convened.

Later the same evening, a formal discussion session was held with Archbishop Chrysostomos, Bishop Auxentios, and Archimandrite Father Akakios, touching on a number of burning issues for contemporary Orthodox resisters: the nature and dangers of a trend towards so-called *resistance from within* the ailing and innovative “official” Orthodox jurisdictions; the true meaning and scope of ecumenism within the context of observance (*orthopraxis*, or orthopraxy) and Orthodoxy (correct belief); the nexus between love, obedience, and dedication in the hierarchical structure of the Orthodox Church; the deviation from spiritual health posed by contemporary challenges to the hierarchical structure of the Orthodox Church; the



importance of Confession in the spiritual life, with special focus on Metropolitan Cyprian's extremely useful volume, *Do You Have a Ticket?* (available from the C.T.O.S. website at www.sisqtel.net/~sgpm/ctos); bioethics and the Orthodox response to recent scientific advances in medicine and human reproduction; and various matters of pastoral and liturgical concern to the conference participants.

On Sunday, April 4, the Feast of St. Mary of Egypt, all of the gathered clergy concelebrated *Orthros* and a moving Hierarchical Liturgy, in which responses were chanted in English, Greek, Romanian, and Slavonic (*see previous page*). After lunch in the monastery refectory, the participants celebrated Vespers and Compline in the late afternoon, concluding the three days of memorable fellowship and markedly beneficial discussions and exchanges of ideas and thoughts.

