07/09/2021

25th Annual Diocesan Days gathering – Day One



With the blessings of His Grace Bishop Maxim of Western America the Saint George Serbian Church in San Diego served as host to the 25th Annual Diocesan Days Gathering which began on Friday, September 3, 2021. As clergy arrived from all directions of this vast Diocese they were warmly greeted by this year's most gracious host, V. Rev. Protopresbyter Stavrophor Bratislav Bratso Krsic.

Following the luncheon, His Grace met with the clergy. In his opening remarks he gave a pastoral reflection of the past year and this pandemic which, in many ways, we continue to deal with to this day. He invited each of the deans to say a few words. One of whom spoke of how many years ago when he first came to America he witnessed how, to his pleasant surprise, there were many Serbian people active in the life of the church. But he also noticed that their children were not as active and so he would often ponder: Who will replace that generation and what will happen to the future of our church here? Yet, he continued, just as we read in Scripture that those things which are impossible to men are possible to God we can witness to the fact that our Diocese is growing, despite the fact that that

generation is gone. Glory be to God, we have a new generation just as active in the life of the church. A great part of that progress, he concluded, can be accredited to Bishop Maxim who this year marks his fifteenth year in this diocese.

This led to an open discussion about the various experiences of the clergy from different parts of the diocese during these long months of the pandemic. Following a short break, His Grace introduced Luka Erceg and Nemanja Selezan who delivered a presentation about a new and much improved Clergy Life Insurance Plan which would greatly benefit our clergy. Afterward, in fielding questions from the clergy, Nemanja educated many of the clergy who, coming from Serbia, were not knowledgeable in the benefits that insurances such as these can offer and how our church and clergy, in particular, can take advantage of them.

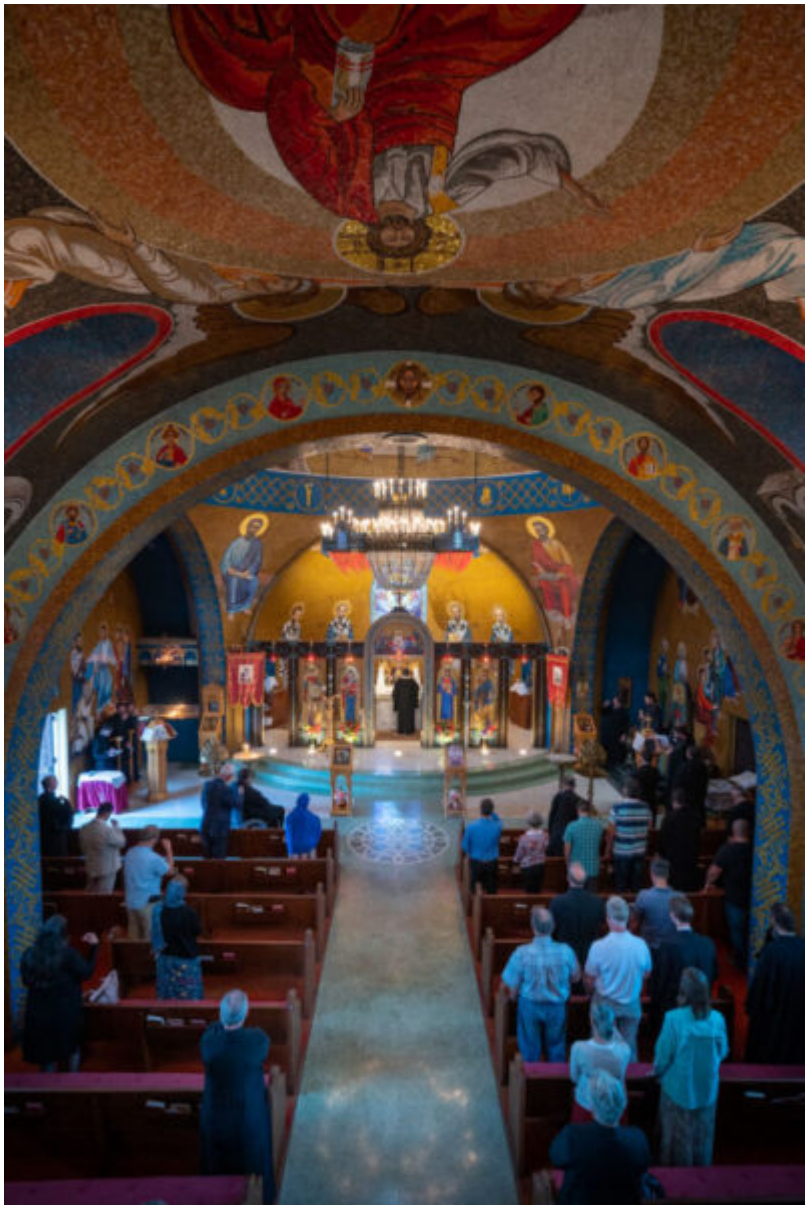
As the presentation continued the bishop and members of the Diocesan Council excused themselves for a meeting. This was followed by Vespers and dinner in the main hall. Fr. Bratso greeted the bishop, clergy and the guests and welcomed them to the St. George parish in San Diego during the dinner.

A Question and Answer session followed in which His Grace invited any questions about our faith. This segment, though fairly brief, ranged in topics from science, movies and social media. This last question in particular, about the temptations of social media, the bishop directed to Fr. Panayiotis, a trained psychotherapist. In his response Fr. Panayiotis noted how it was one of our contemporary elders who had said that we don’t fight the devil directly, rather we start building virtues and fill our hearts with those things and then gradually all the other things that we are bombarded with won’t have room to grow.

With these spiritual words the first day of the Diocesan Day Gathering came to a close and the clergy and delegates made their way to their hotels in preparation for tomorrow’s events, beginning with Matins and the Holy Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.









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