

International Crusade for Holy Relics USA



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THE GUARDIAN

Volume 2 Issue 2

Feast of Corpus Christi:

O Salutaris Hostia



(Eucharistic miracle of Lanciano, Italy)

Relic Classification:

What we have attempted to do is consider what has become obvious to the multi-denominational array of relic guardians. The current standards for relic classification are noticeably different between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. We have found that this is

difficult, confusing, and sometimes personally troubling to have to pigeonhole a relic into the existing three relic classes.

To the existing and widely accepted first class, second class, and third class, the ICHRusa has added three additional categories (*for members use only*) to each class. This is for our own personal edification, to use when discussing relics amongst ICHRusa members. The proposed ICHRusa **ISD** relic classification will be:

First Class - The bodies of saintly persons or any of their integrant parts, such as limbs, ashes, and bones.

1st Order: Distinguished relics - the body: *the head; the arm; the forearm; the heart; the tongue; the hand; the leg; that part of the body in which a Martyr suffered, provided that it is entire and not small.*

2nd Order: Altar stone, Antimension, relic of ap-

proved Eucharistic miracle [flesh – blood of DNJC], relic required for placement in a consecrated fixed [permanent] altar according to the new norms, bone (ex ossibus) larger than 2 1/2 inches.

3rd Order: Relics con-fected in thecae by the Catholic Church or mounted in wax by Orthodox churches. This also applies to un-mounted authenticated small 1st class relics.

Second Class - *Objects that have come in physical contact with living Saints and are thereby sanctified (for instance, the instruments wherewith a martyr has been tortured, the chains by which he was bound, the clothes he wore, objects he used).*

1st Order: Relics of the Cross, relics of the true Cross is to be understood as applying to any authentic relic of the Pas-sion.

2nd Order: Complete personal item, letter and/

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Special points of interest:

- Official ICHRusa membership ring is now available. (see page 3 for image)
- Please visit the members forum at: www.ICHRusa.com and register for sign in privileges.

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or writing of Saint.

3rd Order: Relics con-
fected by Religious
Communities, small
pieces of garments at-
tached to prayer cards
while individual pro-
gressed through the
process, i.e.; Servant of
God and Venerable.

Third Class - *Bits of
cloth touched to an ac-
tual 1st or 2nd class
relic.*

1st Order: large piece of
original coffin [21/2
inches], burial linen, gar-
ment that adorned the
incorrupt body of a
Saint, Veil of Our Lady
of Loreto, Effigy
touched to the Veil of
Veronica, replica's of the
Nails that crucified
D N J C . **D O C U -
MENTED**

2nd Order: Prayer cards,
hand made cloth ovals,
and mementoes con-
fected by Religious Or-
ders and/or Communi-
ties. **SEALED but UN-
DOCUMENTED**

3rd Order: Item from the
birthplace, site of Mar-
tyrdom, place of natural
death, burial [grave] site,
or significant Biblical
location. Cloth or item
touched to a major reli-
quary within a recog-
nized shrine or tomb.
Manufactured medals
from private companies
in Rome, distributed as
souvenirs.

Antimension re- turned to Chicago Diocese

On January 19, 2001,
an Antimension (or Anti-
mens) consecrated in
1988 was returned to the
St. Nicholas Eparchy
(Diocese) of Chicago for
Ukrainians through the
collective efforts of four
ICHR members and Fa-
ther Richard L. Kirouac
of Chicago.

An antimens or Greek
Corporal is the Byzan-
tine Rite equivalent of an
altar stone in the Roman
Rite. They are made of
cloth and generally
measure approximately
20 inches by 16 inches,
although there is some
slight variation in size.
(There is information
and a good picture on
page 55 of *Relics, the
Forgotten Sacramental*
by Chevalier Thomas
Seraphin, and also at [http://
www.ichrusa.com/saintsalive/
altar2.htm](http://www.ichrusa.com/saintsalive/altar2.htm))

An antimens is deco-
rated with a central im-
age of the body of the
Dead Christ being re-
moved from the cross.
Around the outside
boarders are the words of
the troparion (collect) of
St. Joseph of Arimathea,
"The noble Joseph took
Your most pure body
down from the tree,
wrapped it with a clean
shroud and, with aro-
matic spices placed it in
a new tomb." The word-
ing above the central im-

age varies but it gener-
ally relates the following
message: "This is a true
Altar upon which may be
offered the Pure and
Holy Sacrifice of Jesus
Christ". The wording be-
low the central image is
an authentication of the
bishop issuing it along
with the date and his sig-
nature.

The antimens in que-
sion and the subject of
this article came to my
attention the evening of
December 3, 2000, when
I was looking at the relic
section of Ebay. A dealer
in the Chicago area was
offering the antimens for
auction. One bid had al-
ready been placed. The
dealer stated that the an-
timens seemed to be
"about ten years old".

Being a member of
the Ukrainian Catholic
Church in Grand Rapids,
Michigan, this particular
auction struck a very un-
comfortable nerve. I im-
mediately emailed the
dealer and asked what
his reserve was, and to
remove the antimens
from auction. The next
morning I received an
answer from the dealer
stating that it was
"contrary to Ebay policy
to remove articles and
this was a "no reserve"
item.

Disappointed by this
response, I decided to
email a member of the
St. Nicholas Eparchy in
Chicago, Rev. Richard
L. Kirouac, Director of

the Catechetical Office for
the diocese. I had met Fa-
ther Richard on a few oc-
casions, and he was the
priest listed on the Dio-
cese's web site that I knew
the best. It should be
noted here that in 1988, it
was Father Richard who
brought an antimens to my
parish church as a gift
from the Bishop com-
memorating the 1000th an-
niversary of Christianity
in Ukraine (988-1988).

In 1988, the Most Re-
verend Innocent Lotocky,
OSBM, bishop of Chi-
cago, (now bishop emerit-
us,) consecrated a number
of new antimensia for the
parishes and institutions of
the Diocese. All of these
antimensia each contained
a singular relic of St. Jos-
aphat, a martyr for the
unity of the Church.

In my initial email to
Father Richard, I sent him
the link to the auction site
and a brief synopsis of the
dealer's initial response to
me. Later in the day, I re-
ceived Father's reply ex-
pressing his alarm at the
antimens being sold at
auction, and he asked for
help in trying to have it
restored to the Church.

Father Richard emailed
the dealer and asked that
the antimens be removed
from the auction. He ex-
plained to the dealer that
an antimens was the most
important liturgical article
in the Byzantine tradition,
and asked what considera-
tion would be necessary in

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order for the antimens to be returned to the Diocese.

The dealer did not reply for a number of days. During this time Father Richard told me a little about the subject of the antimens, from which I extract this quote:

"An antimens is in a quite different category than a relic. While a properly made antimens contains one or more relics (preferably of a martyr or martyrs), it is important to remember that the antimens does not derive its holiness from the relics it contains. The holiness of an antimens derives from the *epiclesis* (invocation of the Holy Spirit) prayed over it by a bishop at its sanctification. The anointing of an antimens with Holy Myron, [chrism] the oil of the Holy Spirit containing the presence of the Holy Spirit in a unique and particular way, perfects and "seals" the epiclesis.

"A sanctified/consecrated antimens is a *true altar*. As such it is the *ultimate symbol* of our Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the Christian assembly. This distinction places the liturgical value of the antimens leagues above any relic or collection of relics. Get all

the relics of all the Holy Ones together and, in their sum, they would not equal the importance of a single antimens.

"Beyond this, the antimens has a juridical component in that it represents the delegation a bishop gives to a presbyter and/or community to celebrate the Eucharist *in his name and by his authority*. This is an important concept which is largely lost on many clerics and most of the laity, East and West. No Eucharist can be validly celebrated except under the authority of a bishop as successor of the apostles. The presbyters [priests] act only in the bishop's name; they cannot validly offer the Eucharist on their own authority. The antimens is the visible sign of the bishop's moral presence at each Eucharist celebrated within his jurisdiction when he is not physically present.

After a period of about four days, the dealer still had not replied to Father Richard's email. At this point I emailed Dr. Wayne Vedeckis for advice who in turn forwarded my email to Father Bill Kuchinsky. Chevalier Tom Serafin was also kept informed of the developments as they occurred. Father

Bill obtained information from Ebay concerning the dealer in question and forwarded it to us. It appears that the dealer, who also resided in the Chicago area, has a history of selling relics in the past.

The dealer finally contacted Father Richard by email and said "he did not realize what it [the antimens] was", and that he could return it to the Diocese for \$100. Father Richard located a donor who reimbursed the Catechetical Office the ransom amount of \$100. The dealer acknowledged receipt of the money on December 12, and promised to send the antimens to the Catechetical Office the following day.

On December 20, the antimens had not arrived in the mail. It seemed unusual for a parcel traveling such a short distance to take such a long time. Father Richard had to leave Chicago to attend to personal business

on the East Coast, and anticipated being gone for three weeks. We blamed the delay as being due to high holiday volume at the Postal Service. Father Richard asked one of the teaching Sisters at the St. Nicholas Cathedral school to monitor the mail for a package that might contain an antimens during his absence. The delay in receiving the antimens persisted for nearly a month.

On January 3, 2001 at Father's request, the dealer placed a lost package inquiry with the Post Office. Apparently, there was a great deal of trouble with mail in and around the Chicago area at this time, not necessarily due to the Christmas rush; many pieces of mail were delayed. The teaching sister who was monitoring the mail reported to Father Richard that some things were unusually slow in coming through the mail especially from close distances.

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Finally about January 15, a box containing the antimens arrived at the Chancery in Chicago. Father Richard arrived home on January 19, 2001. He then opened the box and verified that the antimens was indeed one consecrated by Bishop Lotocky in 1988, and that it was intact and in good condition. It does not appear that it was altered in any way, and that it still contains the relic of St. Josaphat.

On January 20, Father offered the Divine Liturgy in thanksgiving for the safe return of the antimens. (He did not use the returned anitmens, it will necessary for it to be re-consecrated due to the fact that it strayed into unauthorized hands, and may not have been used for honorable purposes.) On January 22, it was returned to Bishop Lotocky, the hierarch who issued it.

By letter, dated February 16, Bishop Innocent Lotocky wrote the following:

"Please accept my sincere gratitude for your intervention that permitted the return of the antimension which I consecrated in 1988 to commemorate the Millennium of Christianity in Ukraine. I am truly thankful... Your actions were instrumental in preventing further profanation and sacri-

lege toward the anti-mension."

It is still unknown how the antimens came into the hands of the antique dealer. The special Millennium antimensia were recalled by Bishop Michael Wiwchar CSsR, the current Bishop of the St. Nicholas Diocese, after the retirement of Bishop Lotocky and replaced with new ones. It is common for a new bishop to issue his own antimens consecrated by him to the Clergy under his jurisdiction, but in the event that he does not, it is still canonical to use a former bishop's antimens with special permission.

Special thanks and recognition are also due to Father Bill Kuchinsky, Wayne Vedeckis, and Chevalier Tom Serafin for their help in this rescue mission! It is a great pleasure and satisfaction in knowing that the antimens is now back where it belongs!

IT'S ALL GOOD?

There is a quite over-used and ill fitting phrase circulating these days which I get the feeling is the predominant view of the Administration of the Ebay Auction on the Internet. That phrase is , "It's all good"! Well , I am here to say that it is NOT "all good". That

attitude is the pervasive one of the Atheistic Rational Humanists who dominate Society today. The idea is to reduce everyone and everything to the lowest common denominator and thus create a society in which " anything goes". It certainly seems as though this is the credo of the Ebay Administration.

The trade in Holy Relics has proven to be so lucrative on Ebay that there now is a special Relics subgroup to Christian Collectibles. Just a small added feature to help the collector locate his favorite area of interest.

This has created a venue for those who somehow obtain Holy Relics and want to sell them for obvious profit considering the price the items are fetching. The vendors have used every loophole afforded them by the Ebay Rules to get their products online. It is obvious that these vendors know what they have in that they give very detailed descriptions, but somehow are unclear when it comes to saying "exactly" what the relic is of. This excuses them from the prohibitions in the Ebay Rules and allows them to vend their wares undisturbed.

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ICHRusa

Intercession Petition

Write petition below

YOUR SEALED PETITION WILL BE TOUCHED TO THE

Please provide self addressed stamped envelope for return mailing

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The Ebay Rules prohibit the sale of body parts, skulls and other bones unless it is from medical or scientific use). It also has a very f o r c e f u l prohibition on Amerindian relics whether they be clothing, weapons or burial remains. But they wink at the sale of the Bones of the Saints.

I s t h e r e a double standard at work here? Are Christians and their beliefs and feelings less than those of Amerindians? Or is there just a better organized opposition to such sales by Amerindians than by other groups? I wonder if Amerindians used a native word for skull, if then Ebay could sell Sioux Skulls on the internet. It seems that since the Holy Relic is referred to as "ex ossibus", it is unclear that it is bone! What nonsense! It is just hypocritical to take that under s t a n d i n g .

It is terribly frustrating to know that there are page after page of auctions going on right now for the Holy Relics of our Saints, and that "collectors" are among those who are buying them. Granted there are some of us who have tried to rescue some Holy Relics, but it only further encourages the vendors to pursue their trade. I have

watched as some of these auctions have gone upward into many hundreds of dollars, and been in total dismay as I sat helpless. I have written letters to the Ebay Administrators complaining, explaining, pleading for them to stop this trade, all to no avail. I have come to the conclusion that they really just do not care what we think or believe or feel about the Holy Relics they view as collectible curiosities. We do not present a powerful enough lobby to get them to change their policies, and...they are making money!

I have heard our modern society termed post-Christian, and as I continue to see outrageous activities like relic selling condoned and even defended, I am afraid that we, as a society, have lost all decorum, respect and even our humanity. When it is "all good", then if what I believe is holy and worthy of respect is not seen in that way by you, it would be perfectly fine for you to make fun of my belief and hold it up to ridicule. After all, it's all good, anything one cares to do, or say or even sell. It really does not matter, it's all good...it's all the same...it's all nothing! If it is nothing then one should not get upset about it. This is nihilism

at its best, and clearly the antithesis to Christian Belief. So I must continue to declare that "It is NOT all good", that there is a moral and spiritual law in this life and universe and that according to that Law the marketplace sale of Holy Relics is reprehensible and totally outrageous. I must continue no matter the pain of rejection to remind those like the Ebay Administration of this fact, and I must pray to God through His Holy Saints whose Holy Relics are being desecrated to bring an end to this ...and so must y o u !

His Grace +KYRILL
Bishop of Taormina
Member ICHRUSA

A Word About "Monastery Icons" by Fr. Anthony Nelson

Updated September 15, 2000 The "Light of Christ Monastery" and the Convent of the Virgin Mary in Borrego Springs, CA., formerly the "Gnostic Orthodox" in Geneva, Nebraska (Holy Protection Gnostic Orthodox Monastery and the St. John of Kronstadt Gnostic Orthodox Convent) are "monastic communities" of self-styled monks and nuns. They

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Relics of St. Anthony of Padua (above: jawbone, below: tongue)
Feast Day June 13th (Roman Calendar)



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began in Oklahoma City in the 70's, when their current "Patriarch"-Abbot Bishop George Burke- showed up in town (newly run away in the dead of night from the Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Monastery in Boston, where he had attached himself) calling himself "Swami" something-or-other (I can't begin to spell it).

He had been raised Church of God-Anderson, near Bloomington, Illinois, gravitated to Chicago and loosely affiliated himself with Roman Catholicism. After a while he began attending the Levitt Street OCA Cathedral, and later the Synod Cathedral, where he got himself baptized by Bishop Seraphim. He then migrated to California, where he joined with Yogananda, and worked P.R. for him. Then he went to Boston to Holy Transfiguration Monastery "to learn Orthodox monasticism"-according to him. In Oklahoma City he started a Hindu community that grew to about nine monks and three nuns.

One day, in the late 70's, he announced to the brethren that they had "outgrown" the spiritual possibilities of Hinduism, and were going to become Christian. They then constituted the m-

selves as the "Holy Protection Old Catholic Benedictine Monastery of the Primitive Observance." The Swami got himself consecrated a bishop by the self-styled "Old Catholic" bishop at St. Hilarion's Center in Austin, Texas (although he-the former "Swami"-stated categorically that it was unnecessary, because he had been a Roman Catholic bishop during the Middle Ages in a previous life!).

Many may remember this group as having been featured on various prime-time news shows (P.M. Magazine and Real People) in the late 70's/early 80's as constituting the volunteer Fire Department in the little town of Forest Park, Oklahoma, and also as raising ostriches on the grounds of their property. I remember seeing them on television one night while I was living at St. Tikhon's Seminary in Pennsylvania in about 1980, and wondering just what kind of "order" or "religion" they were. Little did I dream that I would come into intimate contact with them only a year or two later when I was assigned to Oklahoma City by the Antiochian Archdiocese.

In about 1981 "Bishop George" decided that they had outgrown Old Catholicism, and they became "Holy

Protection Orthodox Monastery." They dressed as Orthodox monks and did the services impeccably well, as George had learned in Boston. Then, in 1985 or so, they remodeled their chapel again and became "Coptic"-serving their own version of the Liturgy of St. James and dressing in a form of Coptic monastic garb. They even succeeded in having Indian and Egyptian Coptic Christian clergy concelebrate with them, falsely claiming various kinds of non-Chalcedonian "Apostolic Succession" - claims which those Coptic Christians accepted without investigation.

I walked in on them one day and found them doing a curious service modeled after Hindu worship, in which they were offering fruit and flowers to the icons of Christ and the Theotokos in their chapel. The prayers were an interesting (although sacrilegious and blasphemous) blend of the Trisagion prayers and Hindu worship. During all of this, they maintained a second, secret chapel on the premises. Here they practiced magical evocation and demonolatry. I received into Orthodoxy several lay persons who were a part of their "secret Order"-coming from various Protestant

backgrounds. These particular individuals finally began to wonder if they were really "Orthodox" and "Christian" when, on a trip to Texas with the monks, they saw the monks and nuns bow down before the idol in the Hare Krishna temple in Dallas, and Abbot Bishop George refused to bless the food served in the Krishna restaurant because "it was already blessed, having been offered to the idol."

These former members of their cult and one former monk brought to me all of their secret rituals, vestments, history, and associated blasphemous and really frightening materials. It took me well over a year of working with these individuals to get them over their fear of the psychic and spiritual retaliation with which the Abbot had threatened them if they ever revealed the group's secrets. I still have these materials, and they would be laughable in their sophomoric secret-society silliness if they were not so seriously believed and practiced. The group left Oklahoma under difficult circumstances in regard to legal problems concerning the estate of a novice (son of a powerful state politician) who died in India. All novices were required to make a pilgrimage to India to interview with, and receive the

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blessing of, one "Mother Anandamoy"- a Hindu holy woman-who must approve them for membership in the Community .

One of their former monks who had left the group and took a job in Oklahoma City (and personally continued their occult practices privately) once made the statement: "Orthodox Priests are like camels. They carry a cargo of immeasurable worth, with no comprehension of its value." *The Daily Oklahoman*, the largest circulation newspaper in the state, once carried a color picture on the front page of one of its secondary sections depicting one of their "priests." He was shown sitting at a table during a regional "Psychic Fair" doing a Tarot Card reading.

On another occasion, after I had learned their secrets and forbade my parishioners to have anything to do with them, Abbot George announced during one of his sermons that he, in a previous life, had been one of the Christian Martyrs who suffered under Diocletian, and I (Fr. Anthony) was the Roman who led him to his martyrdom. He also claims that, during a pilgrimage to visit Mother Anandamoy in India, he was killed in a car acci-

dent in New Delhi, but because his "work" here was incomplete, was immediately reincarnated in his body and survived.

"Patriarch George" of the "Gnostic Orthodox Church" admitted in an interview in the *Omaha World Herald* that his "Patriarchate" covered only 5 or 6 acres. By the way, why they chose Nebraska is a mystery: Abbot Bishop George announced, following a visit to Hawaii for an international peace conference in approximately 1985, that the Goddess of one of the volcanoes appeared to him and promised to give him the island if he would relocate his community there. Apparently that offer was not good enough because, after first relocating in Nebraska, today they are the "Light of Christ Monastery" in California. They claim to be the exclusive remnant of a spurious so-called "Western Orthodox Church" descended from, the Syrian Jacobite (Monophysite) Church of the East.

They have one "iconographer" there who paints all their pictures (please, not icons). All are "blessed" with one of their occult rituals before being shipped, and they support themselves to the tune of several hundred thousand

dollars per year selling the demonic things. Many Roman Catholic bookstores sell them but, happily, most Orthodox sellers of religious items have discovered who and what they are and no longer do business with them. Please don't buy their pictures- - they are spiritually very dangerous .

NEXT ISSUE WILL BE
IN SEPTEMBER!
