

Clergy Conference*

On the weekend of May 25 and 26, 2003 (Old Style), the American Exarchate of our Church held its annual clergy conference, after a one-year lapse, at the St. John the Baptist Church in Cedar Rapids, IA. The conference began on Saturday morning with opening prayers and hymns, chanted by the parish choir, followed by a brief introduction by Archimandrite Akakios, Abbot of the St. Gregory Palamas monastery. Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna then spoke on the nature, significance, and breadth of the traditionalist Orthodox movement. (*See below.*)

After His Eminence's presentation, a special guest lecturer, Dr. Ernest Latham (*below, at left*), spoke to the gathered clergy and guests. A colleague and personal friend of Archbishop Chrysostomos, a former Fulbright Schol-



ar in Romania, immediate predecessor to the Archbishop as Executive Director of the U.S. Fulbright Commission in that country, and former Cultural Attaché at the American Embassy in Bucharest, Professor Latham, though an Anglican, has a deep interest in the Orthodox Church. Like the Archbishop, he is convinced that the twenty-first century is “the century of Orthodoxy.” He noted, in his remarks, that as Orthodoxy overcomes a long history of persecution under the yoke of hostile political forces and some of the ethnocentric and xenophobic deficits which have heretofore tended to obfuscate its pro-

found witness, it will emerge as a “particularly vibrant spiritual and moral force” in the contemporary world.

A seasoned diplomat and presently an instructor in the Foreign Service Institute at the U.S. Department of State, Dr. Latham is an expert in Cold War Eastern Europe, a scholar and writer of some note, and a veteran of foreign service assignments in the Middle East, Cyprus, Greece, and the Balkans. He thus brings to his conviction about the importance of Orthodoxy in the twenty-first century the weight of considerable experience and scholarly research. He is not only an expert in Romanian studies, in particular, but has a wide knowledge of the history and rôle of the Orthodox Church in Romania. This fact, too, lends special weight to his predictions about the importance of our Faith in the coming years—predictions which the conference attendees heeded with special attention and interest.

On Sunday, Archbishop Chrysostomos and Bishop Auxentios concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with the gathered clergy (*below*). The beautiful and moving service was chanted in Greek, English, and Slavonic. Protopresbyter



Benedict Markley, from the parish of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco in Medina, OH, and Father Demetrios Sarlakes, from the parish of the Ascension in Winnipeg, Manitoba, were unfortunately unable to attend. A buffet banquet, held in the afternoon after the Divine Liturgy at the Collins Plaza Hotel (*see below*), brought the successful conference to an end.



* Source: *Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XX, No. 3 (2003), pp. 31-33.