

CURRICULUM VITAE

Dr. Sister Vassa (Barbara) Larin

Host, Coffee with Sister Vassa Online Catechetical Programs

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CIVIL/RELIGIOUS STATUS:

Born December 11, 1970, in Nyack, New York

U.S. citizen

Unmarried, no dependents

Entered Russian Orthodox convent in September, 1989

Tonsured (rassophor nun), March 9, 1998

Member of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia

(ROCOR), directly under the jurisdiction of the First Hierarch

ONLINE PLATFORMS AND PROGRAMS:

- From Aug. 2013 – YouTube channel (youtube.com/c/VassaLarin/featured) with 15.4K subscribers and 1,373,651 views. Hundreds of videos on Orthodox Christian theology, liturgy and prayer, Scripture, lives of the saints, and current church-political and spiritual issues. One of the most popular videos, “Praying the Hours as a Layperson,” has 38K views (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHLrz2csQ2Q&t=2s>).
- From Jan. 2016 – Patreon page (patreon.com/sistervassa) with 459 paid subscribers and over 1,290 audio-podcasts to date, on Orthodox Christian theology, Scripture, prayer, and church-tradition.
- Two Facebook pages: “Vassa Larin” with 5,000 friends and 4,289 followers, and “Coffee with Sister Vassa” with 17,200+ followers.
- Email Newsletter (sent out regularly via Mailchimp) with ca. 2,500 subscribers. The Newsletter includes an inspirational reflection on a Scripture-passage and several promotions of the latest Coffee with Sister Vassa videos, audio-podcasts, and/or new merchandise (coffee-mugs, books, calendars, etc., available at our online Gift Shop).
- Website, coffeewithsistervassa.com, which has an overview of Coffee with Sister Vassa online content (List of Podcasts, Videos, Online Courses) and a Gift Shop.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

Jan. 2009 – Jan. 2016 – Assistant Professor at the Catholic Theological Faculty, Institute for Liturgical Studies, University of Vienna, Austria

Jan 2012 – 2017 – Editorial Consultant of *Worship*, a peer-reviewed, international ecumenical journal for the study of liturgy and liturgical renewal.

From Jan. 2012 – member of the North American Academy of Liturgy (NAAL)

Winter Semester 2010-2011 – Acting Head of the Institute for Liturgical Studies at the Catholic Theological Faculty, University of Vienna (representing Prof. H.-J. Feulner during his sabbatical)

Sept. 2007 – Dec. 2008 Graduate Assistant of Prof. Robert F. Taft, SJ, at the Pontifical

Oriental Institute (PIO) in Rome, Italy
 From July 2006 – founding member of the international Society for Oriental Liturgy (SOL)

EDUCATION:

1. High school, university/graduate studies:

Ph. D. in Orthodox Theology *summa cum laude*, in the Institute of Orthodox Theology of the Catholic Theological Faculty of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich
 Dec. 18, 2008

Advanced Studies in French Language and French Literature at the Institut Catholique, Paris
 Summer 2007

Intense Italian Course in Rome, Italy Summer 2006

“Diplom-Theologin” (Practical Theology) Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich
 Feb. 10, 2006

Studies in Orthodox Theology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich
 from Oct. 2003

Study of Palestinian Arabic at Bethlehem University, Bethlehem (Israel) Sept. 2001- May 2003

Study of “Humanities” in Bryn Mawr College (full scholarship) 1987-1989

Nyack High School, Nyack, New York *with High Honors* (graduated two years ahead of her peers, having skipped the 5th and 9th grades) 1984-1987

2. Languages:

- **Modern:** Russian, English, German, Italian, French; some speaking knowledge of Palestinian Arabic and Romanian
- **Ancient:** Old Slavonic (Glagolitic and Cyrillic), Greek, Latin

CHURCH APPOINTMENTS AND DUTIES

- October 2014 – appointed by the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate to two Commissions of the Intercouncil Presence of the Russian Orthodox Church; the Commission on Liturgy & Church Art, and the Commission on Canon Law.
- March 2010 – appointed by the Moscow Patriarchate to the Church Commission, “The Ascetical Teaching of the Orthodox Church,” for composing a new official Catechism of the Russian Orthodox Church: Sr. Vassa authored the sections on Repentance, Fear of God, Remembrance of Death, and Contrition
- 2006-2007 – composed the catechetical program of the diocesan schools in Bavaria (Lehrpläne für Russisch-Orthodoxe Religionslehre), ratified by the Bavarian Ministry of Culture in December 2007. In April 2009 this program was accepted by the pan-Orthodox Commission of Orthodox Churches in Germany (KOKiD) as the official program of all Orthodox catechetical schools in Germany
- 2003-2007 – prepared educational materials and taught at the diocesan A. S. Puškin School in Munich, covering Church History, Patrology, New Testament, Old Slavonic (Grades 8-12)
- 2000-2004 – assigned the task of creating a databank concerning the history of the ROCOR’s relations with the Moscow Patriarchate. Since 2001 has represented the ROCOR as a speaker on this topic at numerous conferences in Moscow, New York, and Munich
- 1997, 2000-2003 – organized educational seminars on Russian Orthodox liturgy and church singing in diocesan center in Cologne, Germany, to educate choir directors for parishes of the

diocese

- 1998-1999 – composed and taught courses in Church History, Patrology and Russian Orthodox liturgy to novices at the Convent of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (Israel)

AREAS OF RESEARCH AND SPECIALIZATION

In her undergraduate and graduate studies, Dr. Larin researched the history of the liturgy in the Byzantine and Russian Orthodox traditions. This included an in-depth acquaintance with Byzantine and Muscovite Church History, requiring analyses of patristic and canonical texts, as well as liturgical manuscripts. She has studied Greek and Old-Slavonic liturgical manuscripts in the archives of Moscow (GIM, RGB, and RGADA), St. Petersburg (BAN and RNB), Rome (Vatican and PIO), and Grottaferrata.

In her online ministry, which Sister Vassa has been doing full-time since 2016, she has focused on topics of the Church Calendar (the Lives of the Saints, church feasts and fasts); a detailed video-course on Divine Liturgy (47 of these videos are available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVoc3Yfz1pk&t=14s>); daily reflections on Scripture; and daily prayer. She is currently working on a book about the Liturgy of Time.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Dr. Larin's teaching experience online, to an audience from various faith-backgrounds, as well as her teaching experiences in Catholic theological faculties in Rome and Vienna (including Roman Catholic Sacramental Theology, the sources and history of the Roman Rite) have enabled her to better her knowledge of the Western traditions, lending her work ecumenical breadth.

- From Jan. 2009 – 2016 she taught seminars and required courses at the Catholic Institute for Liturgical Studies at the University of Vienna. Courses taught:

-*Introduction to Liturgical Studies*

-*Celebrating the Sacraments I*

-*Feasting and Fasting in the Liturgical Life of the Christian East*

-*The Liturgical Rites of East and West*

-*Great Books of Liturgical Studies* (Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome)

- assisted Prof. H.-J. Feulner in directing the work of his doctoral students (individual consultation of students at Sprechstunde – weekly one-on-one reviews of the students' progress; preparation and direction of the doctoral *privatissimum*; correction and editing of dissertations and theses in German and English)

- Jan. and May 2011 - taught two seminars at the adult evening courses of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vienna

- 2007-2008 – assisted in conducting two seminars on “The Great Books of Liturgical Studies” as the Graduate Assistant of Prof. Robert F. Taft, SJ, at the Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome; also assisted in directing the work of doctoral students at the same institute.

- 2003-2007 – preparation and teaching of Patrology, Church History, the New Testament, and Old Slavonic to young adults (Grades 8-12) at the diocesan A. S. Puškin School in Munich, Germany

- 1998-9 – preparation and teaching of courses in Church History, Patrology, and Liturgy to novices in the Russian Orthodox Ascension convent on the Mt. of Olives, Jerusalem

OVERVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS (SEE BIBLIOGRAPHY BELOW)

50+ publications, written in English, German, or Russian. These include a book in the prestigious

Orientalia Christiana Analecta series (vol. 286); an encyclopedia article in the *Pravoslavnaja Enciklopedija*; contributions to scholarly periodicals in Europe and the United States; as well as more popular, pastorally-oriented journals published in Moscow, New York, Boston and Munich. The subjects of the publications range from the history and theology of Liturgy to various issues of Church History and patristic thought (the principle of *oikonomia*, the origins of monasticism, the concept of *ritual purity* and its implications for women in the Orthodox Church, the concept of Tradition in the Orthodox Church).

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Abbreviations:

ECJ = *Eastern Churches Journal*

PSTBI = Pravoslavnyj Svjato-Tixonovskij Bogoslovskij Institut (St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Institute)

PSTBU = Pravoslavnyj Svjato-Tixonovskij Bogoslovskij Universitet (St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological University)

ROCOR = The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia

VGE = *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparxii* (The Herald of the German Diocese)

1. "Das Typikon und wie man es benutzt," *Der Bote* 4 (2000) 34-35.
2. "Православные праздники и праздничное богослужение" [Orthodox Feasts and Festal Liturgy], VGE 5-6 (2000) 34-35.
3. "Праздник Сретения и история его" [The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord and its History], *ibid.* 35-36.
4. "Первые годы РПЦЗ (1920-1921 гг.) в исследовании историка прот. Владислава Ципина" [The First Years of the ROCOR (1920-1921) according to the Study of the Historian Rev. Vladislav Cipin], VGE 2 (2002) 23-24.
5. "Как следует класть поклоны в храме?" [How are prostrations to be made in church?] VGE 3 (2002) 21-23.
6. Reprint of no. 4 in *Pravoslavnaja Rus'* 12 (2003) 11-12.
7. Electronic publication of no. 4: <http://nika.name/cgi-bin/sto+/>.
8. "Церковный принцип икономии и РПЦЗ при митрополите Анастасии" [The Ecclesiastical Principle of Oikonomia and the ROCOR under Metr. Anastassy], in Prot. Vladimir Vorobiev (ed.), *Ežegodnaja Bogoslovskaja Konferencija PSTBI. Materialy* (Moscow 2003) 226-235.
9. Electronic publication of no. 8 on the official website of the ROCOR's Diocese of Berlin and Germany: www.rocor.de.

10. “The Ecclesiastical Principle of Oikonomia and the ROCOR under Metr. Anastassy,” (English translation of no. 8), electronically published on the ROCOR’s official website: www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/synod.
11. “Русскость Русской Зарубежной Церкви в период 1920-1945 гг. в аспекте церковной икономии” [The Russianness of the Russian Church Abroad in the Years 1920-1945 from the Perspective of Ecclesial Oikonomia] in Prot. Vladimir Vorobiev (ed.), *Ežegodnaja Bogoslovskaja Konferencija PSTBU. Materialy* (Moscow 2004) 305-312.
12. Unauthorized abbreviated version of no. 11 in *Blagodatnyj Ogon’* 12 (2004) 20-30.
13. Unauthorized abbreviated version of no. 11 in *Moskva* (March 2004) 227-238.
14. “От Всероссийского церковного собора к Всероссийскому Собору, или: Что такое «Православное Епископство Церкви Российской»?” [From an All-Russian Church Council to an All-Russian Council, or: What is “The Orthodox Bishopric of the Russian Church”?] *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* 13 (2004) 12-14.
15. Electronic publication of no. 14 on the ROCOR’s official website: http://www.synod.com/synod/documents/art_srvassa.html.
16. “Слава Богу, Свою Церковь не оставляющему. Самосознание РПЦЗ на Третьем Всезарубежном Соборе 1974 г.” [Glory be to God, Who did not Abandon His Church: The Self-Perception of the ROCOR at the Third All-Diaspora Council of 1974], in: *XVI Ежегодная богословская конференция ПСТГУ: Материалы*. Moscow 2006, vol. 2, 203–207.
17. “Glory be to God, Who did not Abandon His Church: The Self-Perception of the ROCOR at the Third All-Diaspora Council of 1974,” an English translation of no. 16, electronically published on the ROCOR’s official website: www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/synod.
18. “Как мы могли остаться русскими” [How We Remained Russian], *Му* 4 (2005) 10-11.
19. “Двупсалмие” [The Two-Psalm Rite] in *Pravoslavnaia Enciklopedija*, Moscow 2006, vol. 14, 269-70.
20. “The Commemoration of Civil Authorities in the Byzantine Rite as a Reflection of the Church’s Conception of the State,” electronically published in both English and Russian on the official website of the Theological Commission of the Moscow Patriarchate: www.bogoslov.ru.
21. “Russisch-Orthodoxe Religionslehre,” with no indication of author, published on the website of the Bavarian Ministry of Culture: www.isb-gym8-lehrplan.de/.
22. “The Dikerion and Trikerion of the Byzantine Pontifical Rite: Origins and Significance,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 74 (2008) 417-430.
23. “What is Ritual Impurity and Why?” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 52: 3-4 (2008) 275-92.

24. Unauthorized electronic publication of no. 23: http://www.pravmir.com/article_660.html.
25. Unauthorized electronic publication of no.23:
<http://www.descentoftheholyspirit.org/articles/article9.html>.
26. “The Origins and History of the Royal Office at the Beginning of Matins,” *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 3/5 (2008) 199-218.
27. “Feasting and Fasting According to the Byzantine Typikon,” *Worship* 83 (2009), 133-148.
28. Interview online, “Orthodoxy is Not a Religion of Fear,” on the website *Historical Studies of the Russian Church Abroad*, posted May 4, 2009: <http://rocorstudies.org/?part=articles&aid=10764>.
29. Interview online, “Orthodoxy: Affirmation, not Negation,” on the website *Historical Studies of the Russian Church Abroad*, posted September 4, 2009: <http://rocorstudies.org/?part=articles&aid=11025>.
30. “Fr. Alexander Schmemmann and Monasticism,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 53:2-3 (2009) 301-318.
31. Russian translation of No. 29 on the theological website of the Moscow Patriarchate, posted October 5, 2009: <http://www.bogoslov.ru/text/477792.html>.
32. “A Peculiarity in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in Russia: Commemoration of Civil Authorities,” *Studia Liturgica* 39 (2009) 15-22.
33. Russian translation of No. 28 on the theological website of the Moscow Patriarchate, posted October 28, 2009: <http://www.bogoslov.ru/text/492311.html>.
34. “Поминование гражданских властей в богослужении византийского обряда как выражение церковного понимания государства,” in *V Международная Конференция Русской Православной Церкви: Православное учение о церковных таинствах, Москва 13-16 ноября 2007 г.*, vol. III, Moscow 2009, 441-454.
35. “Toward the Origins of Singing *It is Worthy* (Axion Estin) at the Entrance of a Bishop into Church in the Byzantine Rite,” in D. Galadza – N. Glibetic – G. Radle (eds.), *TOXOTHC. Studies for Stefano Parenti* (Analekta Kryptoferres 9), Grottaferrata 2010, 267-275.
36. Interview online, “Богословие научно, если им заниматься компетентно” (Theology is Scientific, When Studied Competently), on the website of the St. Tatiana’s church of Moscow State University, *Tatianin Den’*, posted June 23, 2010: <http://www.taday.ru/text/482371.html>. Also posted on the official website of the Moscow Patriarchate: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1186677.html>; in English translation and in Russian on the official website of the Russian Church Abroad: http://www.synod.com/synod/engdocuments/enart_srvassatheology.html.
37. “Поминование гражданских властей в богослужении византийского обряда как выражение церковного понимания государства,” (No. 34) in *ΚΑΛΟΦΩΝΙΑ. Wissenschaftlicher*

Sammelband aus der Geschichte der kirchlichen Monodie und Hymnographie. Heft 5, Lviv 2010, 9-19.

38. «Ритуальная нечистота: что это и зачем?», Russian translation of «What is Ritual Purity and Why?» (No. 23) on the Russian website, *Pravoslavie i mir (Orthodoxy and the World)*, posted September 15, 2010: <http://www.pravmir.ru/o-ritualnoj-nechistote-cto-eto-i-zachem/>.
39. With Robert F. Taft, “Questions on the Eastern Churches: A New Author, a New Beginning, and Updated ‘QBox’ Rules,” *ECJ* 15/1 (2008) 141-143.
40. “Questions on the Eastern Churches 22: Two Questions on Ruthenian Liturgical Usage: Why Is There No Conferral of Cuffs at Diaconal Ordinations? And Who Bows to Whom During the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete?” *ECJ* 15/1 (2008) 144-146.
41. *The Hierarchal Divine Liturgy in Arsenij Suxanov’s Proskinitarij: Text, Translation, and Analysis of the Entrance Rites* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 286), Rome 2010.
42. “The Hierarchal Liturgy in Late Byzantium and After: Toward a Liturgical Ecclesiology,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 55:1 (2011) 5-26.
43. “Die Entstehungsgeschichte des königlichen Anfangs des byzantinischen Orthros,” in Hans-Jürgen Feulner (Hg.), *Liturgies in East and West: Ecumenical Relevance of Early Liturgical Development – Scholarly International Symposium Vindobonense, Vienna, November 17-20, 2007* (Vienna 2009).
44. “Das Priester- und Opferverständnis in der Orthodoxen Kirche”, *Orthodoxes Forum* 24 (2011), 181-186.
45. “The Canonical Rules of the Orthodox Church: Theory and Practice,” *Logos* 52 (2011) Nos. 3-4, 313-330.
46. “Roman Catholic Students at Russian Orthodox Liturgy: The Communion of the Churches *From the Bottom Up*,” *Worship* 86 (2012), 311-322.
47. “The Opening Formula of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy, ‘Blessed is the Kingdom,’ among Other Liturgical Beginnings,” *Studia Liturgica* 43 (2013), 229-255.
48. “Active Participation of the Faithful in Byzantine Liturgy,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 57:1 (2013), 67-88.
49. “Liturgical Crisis in Russian Orthodoxy Today,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 61:1-2 (2016), 225-246.
50. Interview, “Social Media and the Unifying Truths of Our Tradition,” *The Wheel* 9/10 (2017), 34-41.
51. “Monastic *Martyria* or Witness in the Internet Age,” *The Wheel* 21/22 (2020), 46-50.

52. "The Communion Spoon as Icon," *The Wheel* 23 (2020), 27-34.
53. "Florovsky's 'Predicament of the Christian Historian' and the Orthodox Church's Predicament with History Today," in John Chryssavgis and Brandon Gallaher (eds.), *The Living Christ. The Theological Legacy of Georges Florovsky*, (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 270-278.
- 54.