



## SNF CULTURAL EVENTS

### *The Basic Principle* by Laza Kostic Presented at Duquesne University

by Milos Rastovic

PITTSBURGH, PA - An English edition of the book *The Basic Principle* by Laza Kostic was presented for the first time to an American audience at Duquesne University on October 18, 2017. This is the first in a series of events dedicated to the life and work of Laza Kostic (1841 – 1910) on the North American Continent. One of Serbia's most distinguished poets of romanticism, Kostic was also a philosopher, translator, critic and writer.

The "Karlo Bijelicki" City Library of Sombor in Serbia published Kostic's philosophy book *The Basic Principle* in the Serbian (2015) and English (2016) languages. The English translation was made by Dr. Predrag Cicovacki, Professor of Philosophy and Peace Studies at College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA and Heidi Nada Grek.

In a room of curious attendants, Dr. Cicovacki delivered a lecture about the life and work of Laza Kostic including his

philosophy book *The Basic Principle*. The lecture was a collaborative effort between Duquesne University and the Serb National Federation. Dr. James Swindal, Professor of Philosophy and Dean of McNulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts at Duquesne University, John Martich, President of the Serb National Federation, and Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the Serb National Federation, introduced themselves, their organizations, and the book to an audience of students, academics, and community members interested in Serbia, philosophy, and the work of Laza Kostic.

Dr. Swindal and President Martich stressed the importance of cooperation between the two institutions in order to show the accomplishments of Laza Kostic and the numerous other treasures of Serbian culture and tradition which should be more accessible to American audiences in order to help current and future generations overcome remnants of negative narratives and show that Serbians care about and have made

great contributions to the world. Last year, as a result of their cooperation, Duquesne University and the Serb National Federation presented the book *Christian Heritage of Kosovo and Metohije* at Duquesne University. This book was published by the Sebastian Press, Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America.

I draw attention to the importance of English publication of Kostic's book: "The first edition of this book was published in 1884 in Serbian language. After more than one century, thanks to Dr. Cicovacki this philosophy book was published for the first time in English. With this book, Serbian philosophical tradition becomes more accessible to the American and Western audience in general. What is common to Laza Kostic, Dr. Cicovacki, and

continued on page 12



## SNF GEAR *available*

PITTSBURGH, PA - "Many people have asked about the Serb National Federation apparel they see the SNF Board and office staff wearing," said Home Office manager Cheryl Leydig. "We don't sell it directly, but it can be ordered on Lands End." The link is:

<http://business.landsend.com/store/serbnationalfed>

At the site, you can set up your personal account and add the SNF logo to your order. The logo can be applied to almost every item sold by Lands End. Simply choose your item, size and color then click apply logo.

It's fun to wear SNF, and SNF gear makes a great gift, too!

# SNF CULTURAL EVENTS

continued from page 1

myself is that we all three are from Sombor, Serbia, a town which possesses a cozy and bohemian atmosphere for prolific writers, poets, philosophers, and artists."

Dr. Cicovacki discussed Kostic's rebellious nature in the social environment in Serbia at the end of nineteenth and early twentieth century. Kostic's profligate philosophical and artistic spirit elevates poetry to the top of the Serbian and European artistic traditions. His most famous poem "Santa Maria della Salute," recounts his tragic love for Lenka Dundjerski, who was much younger than Kostic, and permanently sealed his fate as a romantic poet as she became his inspiration for the poem. Woven throughout "Santa Maria della Salute" is his inexhaustible love and suffering for Lenka. According to Dr. Cicovacki, the book *The Basic Principle* was hidden "in the dungeons of the archives and by not translating it into any foreign language the world does not laugh at it. . . . We have been afraid of a scandal while in fact there is so much to be proud of" such as Serbian epic poetry, of which the world barely knows.

Kostic was one of the most educated writers in his time. He spoke eight foreign languages with a good knowledge of European philosophical tradition. In this book, Kostic is mocking philosophy traditions but, at the same time, he offers his own philosophical view (Weltanschauung). Considering traditional philosophical questions of Ancient Greece and throughout the history of Western philosophy, Kostic found the source of the world and all its things in one basic principle – that is "intercrossing." While Heraclitus' philosophy is based on the unity of opposing powers, Kostic's opposing powers encounter and resolve in the "intercrossing." Harmony and symmetry are two manifestations of the basic principle of "intercrossing." Harmony and symmetry create a beauty, which he found in the Ancient

Greek tragedy and the Serbian medieval epics.

The lecture of Dr. Cicovacki emphasizes the main impulse of Kostic's philosophy and life, and Serbian people in general, and that is the line of the heart. While the Western philosophical tradition neglected the line of the heart and was more obsessed with the mind, Kostic distinguished the power of emotions and soul.

On behalf of the Serb National Federation, John Martich bestowed Dr. Cicovacki with the book Serb National Federation – First 100 Years because of his contribution to Serbian culture in the United States. Dr. Jeffrey McCurry, Director of the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center at Duquesne University, received the gift book *The Basic Principle* by Laza Kostic for the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center Collection.

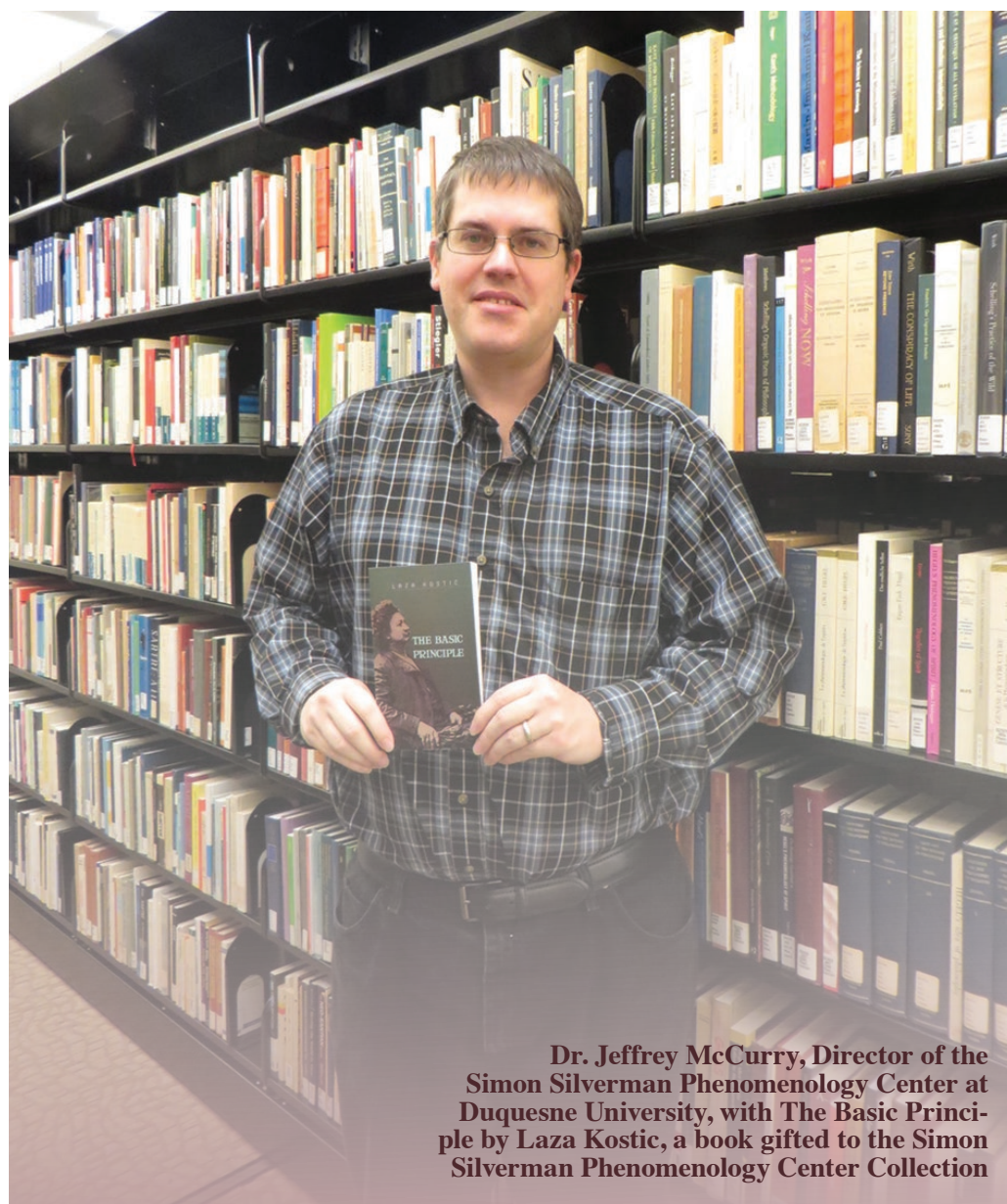
After the lecture, Dr. Cicovacki visited the SNF Home Office where he was introduced to the history and mission of the Serb National Federation. He signed the SNF Guest Book with the following words:

*"I brought a bit of Serbian history here, as well as a piece of the great Serbian heart.*

*Let us preserve our beautiful culture, let us appreciate our tragic history, let us educate the new generation in the spirit of sacrifice, honor and integrity.*

*Let our beloved country live and flourish."*

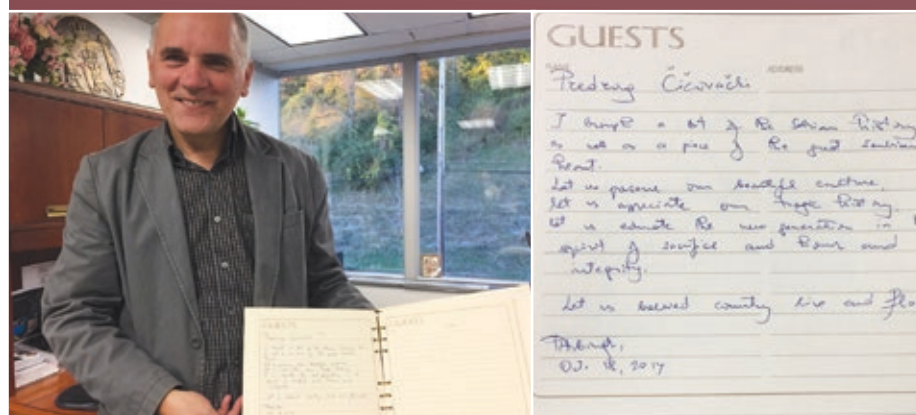
The event was sponsored by Duquesne University and the Serb National Federation, the oldest (1901) Serbian Fraternal organization in North America. Next year, the SNF is planning to screen the movie "Santa Maria della Salute" by Zdravko Sotra about the life and work of Laza Kostic at the Serbian Movie Festival at University of Pittsburgh.



Dr. Jeffrey McCurry, Director of the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center at Duquesne University, with *The Basic Principle* by Laza Kostic, a book gifted to the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center Collection

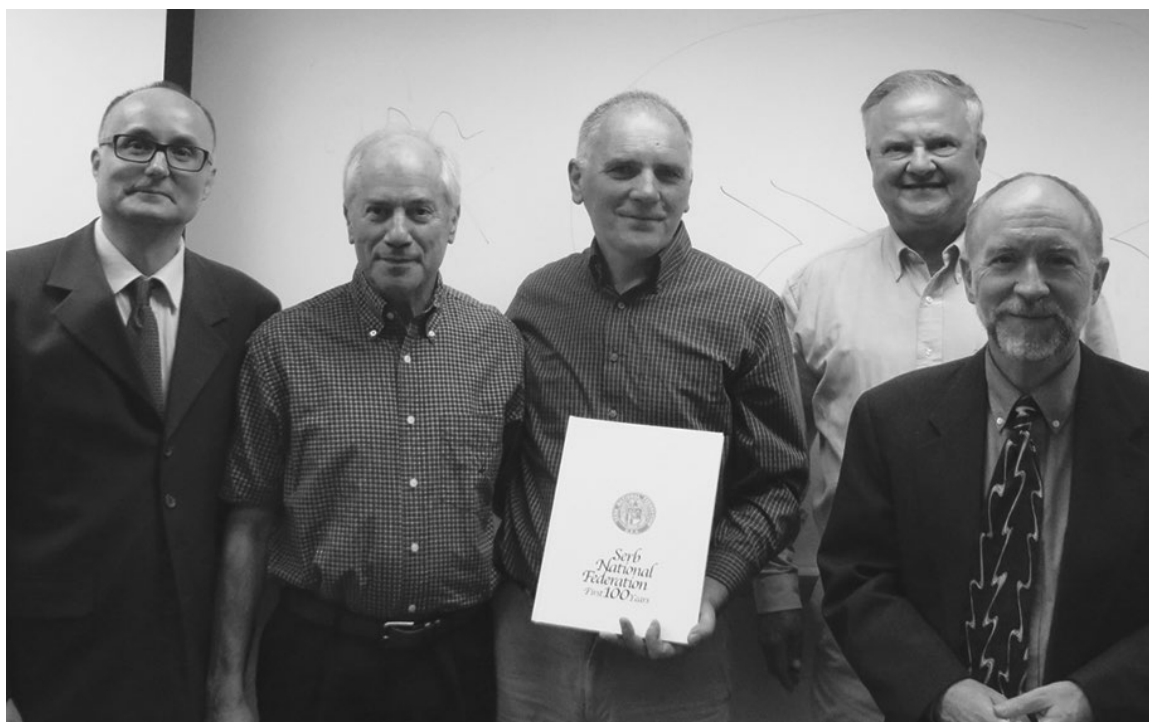


SNF President John Martich

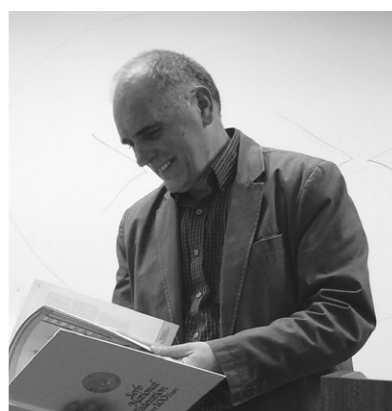


Dr. Predrag Cicovacki signed the SNF Guest Book at the SNF Home Office





From left are Milos Rastovic, SNF Cultural Outreach Coordinator, Dr. Ronald Polansky, Professor and Chair of Department of Philosophy at Duquesne University, Dr. Predrag Cicovacki, Professor of Philosophy at College of the Holy Cross, with the book *Serb National Federation – First 100 Years*, SNF Pres. John Martich and Dr. James Swindal, Professor of Philosophy and Dean of McNulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts at Duquesne University



Dr. Predrag Cicovacki during the lecture about Laza Kostic at Duquesne University



SNF Pres. John Martich bestowed Dr. Predrag Cicovacki with the book *Serb National Federation – First 100 Years*



From left, Dr. Predrag Cicovacki with SNF Staff Home Office, Cheryl D. Leydig, Office Manager, Natalie A. Wuchenich, Fraternal Benefits and Events Coordinator, and Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator, at Duquesne University

## SLAVA AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH

BELGRADE – On November 23rd, the Cathedral Church in Serbia's capital celebrated its Patron Saint Day with a magnificent Patriarchal Liturgy. His Holiness Patriarch Irinej was concelebrated by many priests of the Archbishopric of Belgrade-Karlovac.

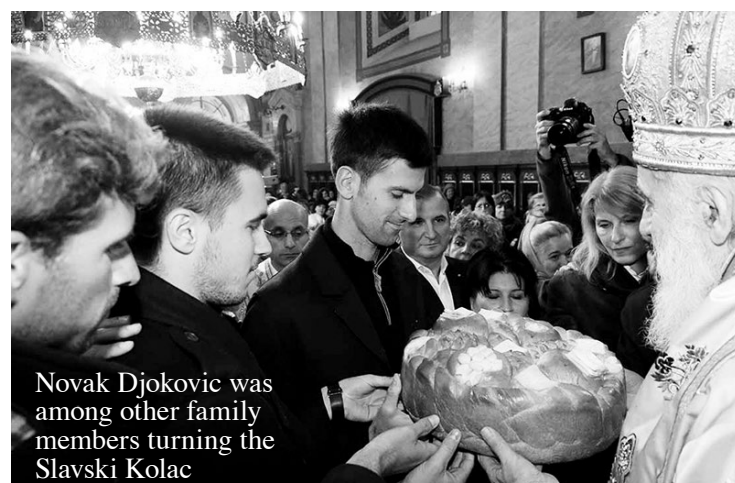
The First Belgrade Choral Ensemble, who have been chanting at liturgies for a century and a half, sang responses. During the solemn Slava rite, the Patriarch blessed and cut the Slavski Kolac with members of the Djokovic family, including tennis champion Novak Djokovic, who were hosts of the Patron Saint day of the Cathedral this year.



His Holiness Patriarch Irinej, left, with fellow clerics from the Archbishopric during the Patriarchal Liturgy marking the Slava of the Cathedral Church



Members of the Djokovic family



Novak Djokovic was among other family members turning the Slavski Kolac