

FROM THE FATHERS

“BY THESE SIGNS then, carnal pride is shown... He is utterly lacking in patience, and without charity; impudent in offering insults to others; faint hearted in bearing them himself; troublesome in the matter of obedience, except where his own wishes and likings correspond with his duty; unforgiving in receiving admonition; weak in giving up his own wishes; very stubborn about yielding to those of others; always trying to compass his own ends, and never ready to give them up for others; and thus the result is that though he is incapable of giving sound advice, yet in everything he prefers his own opinion to that of others.”

VEN. JOHN CASSIAN THE ROMAN, + C. 432 A.D.

“THE CONSUMMATION of vainglory is the beginning of pride; the middle is the humiliation of our neighbour, the shameless parade of our labours, self-praise in the heart, hatred of exposure; and the end is denial of God’s help, the extolling of one’s exertions, fiendish character.”

VEN. JOHN OF THE LADDER, + 603 A.D.

“HE WHO CRITICIZES his neighbour naturally despises and feels scorn for him. He who feels scorn has acquired pride. Through despising one’s neighbour, and having a high opinion of oneself (and these two states are inseparable), hatred of one’s neighbour makes its appearance. From hatred and resentment and remembrance of wrongs, hardness of heart develops. On account of the hardening of the heart, carnal sensations and a carnal mind and outlook

begin to predominate in a person, whence arises sensual passion which kills faith in God and hope in Him. Then a tendency to love of money and human glory appears, which leads to complete forgetfulness of God and apostasy from Him.”

SAINT IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF THE CAUCASUS, + 1867 A.D.



FAITHFULNESS TO CHRIST WILL SAVE US FROM THE MARK OF THE BEAST

FROM AN EXTEMPORANEOUS SERMON BY
BISHOP PHOTII OF TRIADITZA

First Hierarch, Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria
Former Assistant Professor, University of Sofia

BURDENED with cares, immersed in the daily course of monotonous routines, exhausted from the rapid pace of the passing years, we rarely contemplate the Judgment Day of God, which we will all, without exception, face. Even the realization of our impending deaths and appearance before God for His judgment is vague and weak, struggling to find deep expression in our hearts. Living by the rhythm of this frenetic, transient world, we seldom understand that every passing moment shapes our eternal state. At the same time, many Christians are anxiously pre-occupied, even to the point of unhealthy feverishness, with these questions: “When will this take place? When will Christ’s words be realized? When will God’s awesome and fearsome Day of Judgment come about? When is the Lord’s Second Coming?” Sadly, these concerns and questions seldom come forth from hearts standing in awe before Christ. So it is that we unfortunately become schizophrenic; we are of two minds. We live our lives according to the beat of the present world, constantly under the sway of its logic, and this even when contemplating things spiritual. We remain half-Christian and half-heathen in our hearts, involved in the world, yet eagerly inquiring and desiring to know when God’s words regarding the end of the world will come to fruition.

Our Lord Jesus Christ responded to this particular question, when it was posed to Him by His Apostles: “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (St. Matthew 24:3). The Lord left the Apostles and us with but a hint and a single sign of His glorious Second Coming: the Cross. All human beings on earth will observe the Cross in the heavens—shining even brighter than the sun—at the Lord Jesus Christ’s Second Coming in all His Divine Glory, together with a countless multitude of bright Angels, so as to carry out His Judgment. Alarmed, we still ask ourselves: “When is its arrival, when will this happen?”

All of us are aware that the Saviour’s Second Coming will also be preceded by that of the Antichrist. Much is said, in this regard, about the Mark of the Beast (Antichrist), and there are countless theories concerning the secret meaning of the number “666.” But few are they who approach these issues with humility, profundity of thought and, indeed, spiritually! One who understands that the mark of the beast is, alas, inscribed on our hearts will not worry and be disquieted, waiting anxiously for its appearance, for example, in some new change in the official documents and passports that a government may issue. Instead, he will concentrate all of his attention on identifying this mark in the heart, where it is evilly inscribed.

Few Orthodox faithful, I suspect, realize that their feverish concerns and questions—“What will the mark look like? Will it not likely be the latest thing in technology, some sort of electronic microchip?”—have their provenance in Protestant texts and Protestant fundamentalistic theology. This kind of speculation cannot be found at the core of the Orthodox Church, and particularly in the theological consensus of the Holy Fathers. Indeed, the truth is that we do not know what form the Mark of the Beast will take. Will it perhaps be a technical process— or perhaps one of the rituals of the false religions of the future world? Perhaps a rite that will blasphemously imitate the Christian rite of Chrismation? We simply do not know. That of which we should be aware is one thing: no outward action and no outward safeguard can guarantee and ensure that we will remain faithful to our Lord. The effectiveness of this mark will

be thwarted only by our conscience and by our will. It will be powerless to the extent that we are willing to live in a constant state of spiritual effort of conscience and indefatigable struggle against sin, continuously exercising our willpower in standing up for and maintaining our uninterrupted fidelity to Christ—even after falling over and over, or by betraying Him through our feelings, thoughts, words, and deeds.

No amount of protestation, no organizations and earthly resources directed against passports and the symbol “666”—which is purported, for example, to appear on Russian passports—will save us from the proliferation of this Mark of the Beast. Our sole aim should be the preservation of our fidelity to the Patristic spirit and to Orthodoxy’s Tradition. As I said, not one of the Holy Fathers ever provided a detailed assessment or some rash interpretation of the meaning of the symbol “666.” It is only that disturbed part of humanity, those who have distanced themselves in their hearts from Christ, that has succumbed to hysteria and made such determinations. To some, it is an avocation, while to others it is a burning issue, while to yet others it is a manifestation of their spiritual illness.

The most difficult thing for a person to achieve is the maintenance of spiritual stability. And the Evil One is fully aware of this. That is why he employs innumerable methods in his attempt to separate us from Christ, carefully attacking our inner fidelity to Christ, which fidelity we defile on a daily basis. If we are not able to serve our neighbour quietly and lovingly, if we are incapable of feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, quenching the thirst of those without drink, and comforting the imprisoned, then we are in no condition to serve Christ. If we lack love for our neighbor, we simply do not have Christ in us. It is on such concerns that we must focus our attention. Fidelity is a genuine, profound faithfulness to Orthodox Tradition, in all of its fullness, in word, spirit, life, and actions; in other words, fidelity to, and love for, Christ by fulfilling His commandments and acquiring the Holy Gospel’s appointed virtues in loving our fellow man. One should not have doubt or fear about the Antichrist, for those things that will remain firm on Christ’s Judgment Day are humility, truth, repentance and love. They will save us.

O Lord, rid us of everything that separates us from Thee! Amen.

*Reprinted from "Orthodox Tradition" (Vol. 27, No. 1, 2011),
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Etna, California*

*IN THE WEEKS leading up to Great Lent, and during the fast itself, the services of the Church often bring to our spiritual attention the last things and the events which will precede the end of this world. Unfortunately this often leads the unstable to speculate about these things, to see signs of the end in matters of little consequence, to become fearful and superstitious. In the last few months, by way of example, two clergymen (not of our jurisdiction) have visited us with differing theories as to who is the Antichrist - and they were able to refer us to websites, which "proved" the veracity of their outlandish notions. Others are worried about bar codes, microchips, perceived conspiracies, signs, symbols and the like. The short sermon above by **His Grace Bishop Photii** is a timely is a timely antidote to such trivialization of such an important matter, and, particularly in its closing words, shows us how, in a sober, healthy and Orthodox way, we should approach the coming of the end times.*



Friends of Woking Community Hospital

Annual Spring Market

**Saturday, 21st May between 9.30 am & 11.30 am.
Woking Community Hospital, Heathside Road, Woking.**

The Admission and Car Park are *free*.

There will be a Plant Sale in the Car Park, and inside the Hospital there will be more stalls with a variety of goods on sale, including cakes, books, a Grand Raffle & Tombola.

HELP US HELP PATIENTS & STAFF AT THE WOKING COMMUNITY HOSPITAL SUPPORT THIS VALUABLE WOKING ASSET & BECOME A "FRIEND" FOR £5. pa

ON MONASTICISM

By the Ever-Memorable Archbishop Averky
of Jordanville

Continuation

WHAT is the significance of the vow of non-possessiveness?

The Lord said: **“That a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.... It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven”** (Matt. 19:23-24). And to the youth who sought eternal life, and had not neglected to fulfil even one of the commandments, He gave this advice with regard to achieving spiritual perfection, **“If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor.”** Based on these precepts, monastics not only renounce great riches which they might have had, but also every possession in general, so that nothing might serve as an occasion for hindering their spiritual perfection, nor might be an obstacle to their entry into the Heavenly Kingdom. The purpose of this vow is to liberate the soul from every care and concern which might tie it to earthly good things.

Saint Gregory the Theologian says: “The monk has only one thing to concern him: that he himself be not taken captive. For he has only his own body and a smock to cover it. Let others, who have accumulated much money, take the necessary measures to safeguard it. **My property is all bound up in God;** no one can steal that deposit. As concerns the rest, let them take everything from me; my situation is the most secure, for that which I have power over will remain with me for eternity. The Lord is my portion. Besides the Lord, I desire to possess nothing; when I serve the altar, then I have food and clothing, with these shall I be satisfied, and I shall make my way as one poor following the poor Cross, so that more freely and less hindered I might aspire to the heights, as the Apostle says, to the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”

Giving the vow of non-possessiveness and renouncing all possessions, the monastics thus most perfectly imitate the example of the Holy Apostles, who discarded everything, who abandoned everything, and followed Christ; thus they most perfectly follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who, while living on earth, manifested Himself as an example of **the most perfect poverty**. He was born in a wretched manner; He lived having nowhere to lay His head, and He died on the Cross.

... to be continued in the next issue.



AN APPEAL

from the Lesna Icon Convent

GLORY AND THANKS unto the Lord, with the help of our many generous friends, pilgrims and benefactors, we have managed to put up a completely new roof (574 sq. m.) on our main and largest building. The workers began last June and finished recently. This building houses our chapel dedicated to St. John of Kronstadt and St. Ambrose of Optina, where most of the monastic offices are celebrated, and where the miracle working Lesna Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God is kept. Under the same roof are our refectory, kitchen, prosphora bakery, sacristy, and most of the monastic cells. We had to pay the very last bill, for the sum of €3,746.75, by 20th February. Please help us complete this important and God-pleasing project as soon as possible! Every euro, dollar, pound, ruble, dinar or hryvna will help!

Donations can be sent by post to:

Monastere Lesna, 1, rue du Moulin
27150 Chauvincourt-Provemont, France

or by bank transfer:

IBAN: FR89 3000 2050 3300 0005 0063 X46 BIC: CRLYFRPP

Account name: ASS. CULTUELLE ORTHODOXE RUSSE

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May the All Merciful Lord bless you richly for your generosity!

Book Review

Themes in Orthodox Patristic Psychology: Humility, Obedience, Repentance and Love.

Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna and others.
Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, Etna. Ca. 2010.
364 pp. \$22.95

Obtainable from: <http://www.ctosonline.org/>
<http://www.easternchristiansupply.biz/>

ORTHODOX PSYCHOLOGY is a therapy which enables a man to realise and to recover his true nature, predicated on a correct understanding of the relationship between the invisible mind and the visible body. In the words of Archbishop Chrysostomos, “True psychology is the control of the mind’s sensitivity to the environment by the mind’s harmonious cooperation with the spirit” (p.29). This perception stands in sharp relief against the main thrust of contemporary western psychology which focuses on helping individuals to accept what they are (in their current state), thus preventing people from progressing to realise their full potential as sons of God. Modern psychology as practised outside an Orthodox Christian milieu generally has lost touch with its origins, preferring to deal almost exclusively with physiology and bodily behaviour, and generally ignoring psyche (ψυχή), the soul. Archbishop Chrysostomos writes about this. “Modern psychology...rarely posits a nexus between the mind and the spirit and most sedulously eschews the world of phenomenology, of the spirit” (p.28). This difficulty is created because generally western practitioners of psychology refuse to admit a necessary connection between human psychology and the Divine. Thus modern practitioners of psychology ignore the roots of psychology which can be deduced from the very meaning of the word. This departure is not simply a linguistic curiosity. Rather, it signifies the potential failure of modern psychology. By ignoring the existence of the soul (and the

spirit of which the soul is an integral element) the secular psychologist struggles to achieve effective analysis and treatment of disharmony being experienced by an individual. At best, the non-Orthodox psychologist will separate – disastrously – the spiritual from the mental; usually such a practitioner will not even admit the existence of the spiritual. In disregarding the integrated nature of body, mind and spirit, the non-Orthodox psychologist almost certainly arrives in an analytical cul-de-sac whereby human beings are seen merely as victims of circumstance or as helpless recipients of psychological conditioning. The Fathers of the Church, basing their analysis on Holy Scripture, are more radical and more liberating. Archbishop Chrysostom states this most clearly: “The indwelling Divinity, ‘the image of God’ within the human nature, provides an individual with a vision of the Divine, while the virtues act to form that vision and transform it into action” (p.131). The decision to act or not to act on that perception is a matter of “individual will and not *merely* a result of external factors impinging on him or of a decision-making process of mere cognitive provenance” (p.131). We are not merely the sum of our social circumstances, nor of psychological conditioning. Rather, because each of us possesses within himself “the indwelling Divinity” we each possess the means by which we can discover and achieve our higher nature. The decision of each person to enter or not to enter this struggle for harmony of mind, body and soul neither results from, nor is driven by, being the passive recipient of external psychological conditioning.

From the Orthodox Christian perspective a human being can only achieve his or her full potential if he or she achieves an harmonious integration of the spirit and the body. Because mankind is in a fallen state, typically an individual suffers from a grievous lack of harmony. The vocation of the Church is to make available freely to every Christian the therapeutic means by which that God-given harmony can be restored. “The Orthodox Fathers understand psychology, in short, for what it truly is: ψυχολογία, the study of the soul” (p.29).

The *corpus* of works devoted to the subject of Patristic Psychology in the English language is remarkably small – perhaps no more than 20 volumes – and it is the author of *Themes in Orthodox Patristic Psychology*, Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna, who has written many of

these works. In fact, the present volume is a compilation of four books that had been published separately between 1983 and 1990 under the separate titles of *Humility, Obedience, Repentance and Love*. In the introduction to the present volume, Hieromonk Patapios notes the difficulty of speaking about each of the Christian virtues separately, given their essential unity. “Nonetheless, His Eminence has succeeded in treating the four basic Christian virtues of humility, obedience, repentance and love individually and with inexorable care. This is a testament to the fidelity with which he adheres to the classical Patristic scheme of presenting the virtues in an orderly sequence....that is so clearly discernible in *The Ladder* of Saint John Klimakos... and in *The Evergetinos*” (p.14).

Archbishop Chrysostom is well placed to expound on Patristic Psychology, given that he holds undergraduate degrees in history and psychology from the University of California (B.A.) and the California State University (B.A., Honours) and graduate degrees in Orthodox Studies, Byzantine history, and psychology from the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies (Lic. Theol.), the University of California (M.A.), and Princeton University (M.A., Ph.D.), where, as a Preceptor in the department of psychology, he taught psychology and advised in statistics, while completing his doctorate. He held a professorial post, prior to becoming a monk, at the University of California and, after entering the monastic life, was a professor at Ashland University, a visiting lecturer at the Ashland Theological Seminary, and a visiting professor at the Theological Institute of the University of Uppsala. In commending the earlier volume on *Repentance*, Dr Constantine Cavarnos noted that “[Arch]bishop Chrysostomos is one of the most significant Orthodox scholars to appear in America in recent years. This view was shared by the famous Russian Orthodox theologian Father Georges Florovsky, who characterized the [Arch]bishop’s writings as ‘important contributions to the body of Orthodox literature.’”

As in the original volumes, in this edition the Archbishop’s writing is supplemented by contributions from a number of different authors. There is an interesting essay on Dostoevsky’s insights on humility, written by Mother Theadelphi, superior of a convent of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North America. Another essay, written by Archpriest

Vladimir Derugin, is entitled “Obedience and the Orthodox Christian in the Secular Realm” and another essay, “Obedience in Monastic Practice” is by Bishop Ambrose of Methoni. All four virtues are illustrated extensively with quotations from *The Evergetinos*, the standard Orthodox collection of the lives, sayings and aphorisms of the desert Fathers, “those early practitioners of the art and science of Christianity” (p. 275).

This outstanding study is illuminated with an evident deep spirituality, combined with extensive insights into science, psychology, Byzantine history and Orthodox Patristic studies. Collecting the four predecessor books into this one, beautifully presented and printed volume (incorporating a larger-than-usual typeface) ensures that these works will reach a wider audience and help to comprehend more clearly a “path to transformation that is distinctly psychological in its scope, beginning with man’s ascent to true selfhood by the cleansing and purification of the *nous*, or spiritual faculty” (p. 277).

Nicolas Mabin

Biographical Note:

Nicolas Mabin, who has a degree in theology, lives in London, where he is a member of the Cathedral parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia [*i.e.* *ROCA-MPJ*], and a member their Parish Council.



“WE MUST NOT AVOID COMMUNION because we deem ourselves to be sinful. We must approach it more often for the healing of the soul and the purification of the spirit, but with such humility and faith that considering ourselves unworthy we would deire even more the medicine of our wounds. ... It is much better if, in humility of heart, knowing that we are never worthy of the Holy Mysteries we would receive Them every Sunday for the healing of our maladies, rather than, blinded by pride, think that after one year we become worthy of them!”

VEN JOHN CASSIAN THE ROMAN, C. 432 A.D.

THE COMING MONTH

MARCH, this year, falls completely within **Great Lent**, and so the whole cycle of the services is very largely determined by the commemorations in the Lenten Triodion. In addition to the Soul Sabbaths on most Saturdays, and the various Sunday commemorations (which most of our readers will be aware through their church calendars and previous issues of this magazine), the Presanctified Liturgies, and the five readings of the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete, among the Greek Orthodox faithful there is a very beautiful custom, which we have always kept at Brookwood: that of having the **Praises of the Mother of God at Compline of Friday evenings**.

Traditionally the ladies of a parish come and decorate the icon of the Theotokos with flowers for the service, and within Little Compline a canon is chanted to her. In most churches on each of the first four Fridays, a quarter of the **Akathist Hymn** is chanted before the icon, and then on the fifth Friday, the eve of the Saturday of the Laudation of the Mother of God, the whole Akathist Hymn is chanted during the Mattins service. In some churches, on each Friday they chant the whole Akathist Hymn.

The Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God is, of course, one of the most beautiful songs of praise to the Theotokos, hymning her rôle in the Incarnation of God the Word and in our salvation. It is chanted appropriately in Lent, both when we celebrate the **Feast of the Incarnation, the Annunciation** (25th March / 7th April), and when we, weak ones, particularly need the strong aid of the Mother of God in our lenten struggles. We hasten to the intercessions of the All-Pure One to help us in our feeble efforts to purify ourselves of our sins and passions.

It happens that the very first Liturgy celebrated here at Brookwood, even before we gained full possession of the church, was celebrated by **His Grace Bishop Constantine** on the Saturday of the Laudation of the Mother of God in 1982.

Among the Saints we celebrate in March, we have:-

The **Venerable Paul the Simple of Egypt** (7th / 20th March) was a farmer and married to a beautiful wife, but one day he returned home to find her in the very act of sin with another man. Without becoming enraged, he simply told them he was leaving and going to become a monk. He went to the cell of St Antony the Great and asked to be received under his obedience. The Great Antony, noticing that he was already sixty years of age, told him the life would be too strenuous for him, and that instead he should go to the village and live humbly there. St Paul insisted that he wished to become a monk, and so St Antony suggested he go to a coenobitic monastery, where the brethren would be able to bear with him, and the life would be less strenuous. He then closed his door against him. St Antony did not emerge for three days, but when on the fourth he came out, Paul was still there, having had no shelter and having eaten nothing for the three days. St Antony again told him to leave, but he replied: "I cannot die anywhere but here!" Seeing his resolve, St Antony received him, but gave him the hardest work to do, and then complained about the way he did it. At the end of the day, St Antony ate particularly sparingly, saying, "I am a monk, and this is sufficient." But Paul did exactly the same and did not ask for more, saying, "It is sufficient for me too, because I wish to become a monk." At night St Antony extended his prayers, but St Paul continued with him and did not complain. Finally St Antony was worn down, and told him, "If you can live like this every day, you can become a monk." Paul assured him that he would, and St Antony told him, "Behold, you are a monk!" After some time, St Antony provided a nearby cell for his dogged disciple, telling him that he must now be alone to be tested by the demons. St Paul strove so valiantly that he was granted power over the evil spirits, and once when a possessed man was brought for healing to St Antony, he directed him to his disciple, saying "This is Paul's business. I have not received power to cast out such as these." St Paul commanded the demon, "Abba Antony says, depart!" But the man was not healed, and the demon mocked him. Thereupon, in the middle of the day, when the sun was scorching, Paul left his cell and stood upon a rock, declaring that he would not move from that place until Christ delivered the possessed man from his demon. Crying out, "I am driven out by Paul's simplicity!" the demon departed. Saint Paul reposed in the Lord in deep old age, around the year 340.

The **Holy New Martyr Myron of Crete** (20th March / 2nd April) had from his earliest youth loved the virtue of purity, and he earned his livelihood as a tailor. He avoided all unnecessary conversations and remained very much a man by himself. His Muslim neighbours regarded this as disdain, and in turn they began to hate him. One day they persuaded a young boy to declare that Myron had abused him, and they hauled Myron before the judge, accusing him of this infamous act. The saint professed his innocence, and even declared he did not know such acts could be committed. The crowd became threatening, believing that he had committed this outrage. The judge, perhaps discerning that the accusations were false, gave him the choice of accepting Islam or a death sentence. The Saint immediately replied that he would not accept their religion and was prepared to die for Christ. He was covered with blows by the enraged crowd and taken off to a prison cell. Brought out for a second interrogation, he remained steadfast. They then tried to persuade him with bribery and promises to become a Muslim; he refused. Finally he was sentenced to die. Meeting some Christians on the way to his death, he asked their forgiveness and prayers. His own father followed him to the place of execution, and the martyr asked his blessing and told him not to be saddened by his death, as he was dying for Christ's sake. He was hanged in the year 1793, and, as his body was still hanging on the gallows that night, it was bathed in a heavenly light.



POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

“SOMETIME ago you put round some comments by Archbishop Chrysostomos about clergy wearing their traditional clerical habit all the time, having long hair and beards, etc. I have problems with that. First of all in our Church, no one has suggested this; and secondly I have to work and so it is practically impossible. However, it seems right and is an ideal that I would like aim for, but how?” - name withheld to protect our correspondent.

IF I REMEMBER correctly, in his article the Archbishop conceded that there were occasions when, because of work commitments, a priest could not be expected to wear long hair, and that perhaps he would have to trim his beard. I would suspect that such cases are rarer today than they were a generation or two ago. After all, we now live in a multicultural society, we are told, and it does bring some benefits! Dress codes in the secular world are fairly relaxed these days.

It is odd that you should send this question now. Just recently a Greek lady who had come to a Liturgy at our Convent, seeing me getting into the car in my cassock to drive off, remarked, "In our church, the priests do not wear their robes on the street now." It was obviously something which disturbed her, and something that she thought not right.

That wearing the traditional garb of the clergy is not now enjoined in the more "liberal" jurisdictions (in fact not only in those: a priest from the Moscow Patriarchate* recently visited us - he had long hair and a beard, but came in jeans and an anorak, even when visiting a church! - he put his rason on when he arrived), is just one more indication of their slowly sliding away from the traditions of our Fathers. Compared with joint prayer services with non-Orthodox, "sacramental hospitality" and the like, this is perhaps a minor deviation from our Tradition, but even a small thread pulled from a tapestry harms and defaces the whole, and, as the Greek lady's comment mentioned above indicates, it is something which is noticed and causes hurt to the consciences of the faithful.

What can you do if you are unable to keep the highest standards because of having to support yourself and your family by secular work? Well, I suppose the answer is to do the very best that you possibly can. I remember, when I was living in the States, there was a priest who also worked as an engineer. It was naturally impossible for him to wear his rason and skoufya doing this work, but he always kept them in his car, and before he drove home, he without fail put them on, so that he arrived home, to his family, as a priest. Except in the work-place he was never seen without his clerical garb, thus always bearing witness to his calling and the Faith. His example might be one you could try and follow to the best of your ability in the circumstances in which you find yourself, which of course I do not know in detail.

Fortunately, as far as I am aware, the Church hierarchies in this country have not as yet tried to dissuade their clergymen from wearing their rasons, as has happened in the States, and so at least you will not be under censure from your hierarchs.

** Footnote, not in the original letter to our correspondent:* While it is not a liberal jurisdiction, it would undoubtedly be wrong to characterize the Moscow Patriarchate as a “traditionalist” Church. A more appropriate designation would be “conservative.” In liturgical practices it is conservative, but in its ecumenical enthusiasm it is far from traditionalist. Often too, what appears to be outwardly traditional is apparently based on some notion of Russianness, rather than being vitalized by the pure streams of Orthodox Tradition.



NEWS SECTION

PATRIARCH OF GEORGIA VISITS LONDON

THE CATHOLICOS OF GEORGIA, **Patriarch Ilia II** visited London in mid-February to consecrate a new Cathedral for the Georgian Orthodox Christians living here. He has established a Diocese of Great Britain and Ireland with Bishop Zenon as its first hierarch. The Catholicos, assisted by several bishops of the Georgian Orthodox Church and **His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira** (Ec. Patr.), consecrated the **Cathedral of the Nativity of our Lord** at Rookwood Road, London, N16, on Sunday, 6th February. Later in the day, the Georgian Orthodox community held a reception at the Dorchester Hotel in London for the Catholicos, to which a number of ecumenical guests were invited. Archbishop Gregorios and **Metropolitan Kallistos** were guests, and the Archbishop of Canterbury was represented by the **Right Rev'd. Geoffrey Rowell**. On 14th February, the **Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams**, also held a festive dinner in honour of His Holiness.

The dinner took place at the Lambeth Palace with the participation of the **Nikean Club**. **Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh** and **Father Stephen Platt**, Head of the Department of Inter-Christian Relations of the Diocese of Sourozh, took part in the event. During his stay in Britain, the Catholicos-Patriarch was also received by **Her Majesty The Queen**.

INTER-ORTHODOX PREPARATORY COMMISSION

ACCORDING to the official website of the **Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate**, on 26th February, “the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission for the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church completed its work at the Orthodox Centre of the Patriarchate of Constantinople near Geneva. Representatives of the fourteen Autocephalous Orthodox Churches took part in the meeting chaired by Metropolitan John of Pergamon, Patriarchate of Constantinople. The delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, led by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations (DECR), included archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany and Great Britain (Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia)... The Commission, which task was (*sic*) to elaborate questions for the agenda of the Pan-Orthodox Council, continued to consider the issue of signing the Tomos of autocephaly. As a long discussion has not led to the unanimous decision, the necessity of further studying of the issue of autocephaly was recognized. The Commission discussed the issue of diptychs, considered canonical and ecclesiological aspects, described the current practice of the Orthodox Churches and the criteria of including the Churches into diptychs and the order of the Primate’s names in them and also noted the necessity of compiling the uniform diptychs of the Orthodox Church. Also considered was a wish of the Polish and Albanian Orthodox Churches to reach uniformity in regard of the place of their Primate in diptychs of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches. The Commission suggested to take these requests into account and to consider proper changes in diptychs. The request of the Georgian Orthodox Church concerning its sixth place in the diptychs of all Orthodox Churches was presented at the meeting.

Consent has not been reached either on this issue, or on the differences in holy diptychs of some Churches due to the lack of Pan-Orthodox agreement on the number of the recognized autocephalous Churches.”

It appears from this press release that the commission was largely concerned with “pecking order,” rather than any deeper matters. From the statement it is not clear whether the **Tomos of Autocephaly** referred to is that of the **Orthodox Church in America**, which the Moscow Patriarchate granted in 1970, and which is not accepted by several other Churches, and appears at present to be under some kind of review, or whether it is meant to refer to the granting of autocephaly in general. It is perhaps worthy of note that the **Russian Church Abroad** (now ROCA-MP) was represented by a senior hierarch, whereas formerly, before their submission to the Moscow Patriarchate, they studiously avoided full participation in such gatherings. Without a doubt this is one further indication of their change of direction since the much-fêted “rapprochement” of 2007.

More importantly, one also notes that **before** the proposed “Holy and Great Council” those considered to be Orthodox will already be strictly defined, and others will be excluded; this was not the practice of the Seven Holy and Œcumenical Councils of the Church. This fact alone indicates that the wished-for “Holy and Great Council,” which has already been “in preparation” for decades, will not proclaim the Faith “once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). One brings to mind the excellent article by **Saint Justin Popovic of Chelije in Serbia**, “*On Summoning of the ‘Great Council’ of the Orthodox Church,*” written in 1977. Therein he ends with a plea to the hierarchs of the **Serbian Orthodox Church**: “*let our Serbian Church abstain from participating in the preparation for an ‘Œcumenical Council,’ indeed from participating in the council itself. For should this council, God forbid, actually come to pass, only one kind of result can be expected from it: schisms, heresies and the loss of many souls. Considering the question from the point of view of the apostolic and patristic and historical experience of the Church, such a council, instead of healing, will but open up new wounds in the body of the Church and inflict upon her new problems and new misfortunes.*” Saint Justin, who fell asleep in the Lord on the Great Feast of the Annunciation, 1979, was synodically glorified by the Church of Serbia last year.

“EXPERIENCING BYZANTIUM”

THE **44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies** will be held at the **City Centre Campus of Newcastle University** between 8th and 10th April. Their information leaflet tells us: “Our vision for ‘Experiencing Byzantium’ is to facilitate a dialogue that will encourage engagement with the affective and emotive aspects of life in Byzantium. From the reception of imperial *ekphrases* in Hagia Sophia to the sounds and smells of the back streets of Constantinople, the sensory perception of the Byzantine world. What was it like for a person to experience not only the monuments and places of Byzantium, but also Byzantine ideas? How are we to appreciate an experience of Byzantine landscapes, stories or of self? This symposium will not be weighted in favour of any particular discipline, rather we hope that historians, art historians, archaeologists and palaeographers will meet and together help us to approach an understanding of the (*sic*) Byzantium through a series of papers and sessions that complement each other by crossing traditional interdisciplinary boundaries.” The above does not mention the Church, but “Experiencing Faith” is one of the five themes mentioned later in the leaflet. More information may be found on <www.byzantium.ac.uk>

CONFLICTING STORIES FROM RUSSIA

AN INTERFAX posting of 25th February informed us that **Vladimir Legoyda**, the head of the **Synodal Information Department of the Moscow Patriarchate**, had stated: “The Russian Church has never in its history been so independent of the state as it is now. It treasures this independence. However, it also treasures the dialogue that it has with the modern state. No doubt, this dialogue cannot be called easy, but it can be called constructive.” He admitted that “the Patriarch regularly meets with top Russian officials,” yet the Church still maintained her independence. On 3rd March, the same agency reported that His Holiness **Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow and All Russia** had greeted the former Soviet leader, **Mikhail Gorbachev**, on the latter’s 80th birthday,

saying: “The end of the 20th century has seen a number of changes in this country. The cooperation between the government authorities and the Russian Orthodox Church was substantially facilitated by your decisions.” The report continues: “According to Patriarch, such cooperation encouraged ‘people to come back to the spiritual and moral sources of their national life.’” And even more fantastically: “In the meantime, the government adopted the much sought-after law to guarantee the freedom of religion.” A recent correspondent in Russia wrote to us: “I advise you not to believe anything which comes through our mass media. Everything is a lie - even when they say ‘the truth’” In Jeremiah 6:14, we read **“Peace, peace, when there is no peace.”** Now we have “Truth, truth, when there is no truth.” The prophesy continues with a warning: “Were they not ashamed when they committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down.” And then some good counsel for those who would be saved: “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:15-16).

REPOSE OF SCHEMA-MONK CONSTANTINE

ARCHPRIEST JOSEPH FRAWLEY informed us by an email that on 3rd March (n.s.) **Schema-monk Constantine, of Saint Antony’s Monastery in Florence, Arizona**, reposed. Fr Constantine is undoubtedly better known in the Orthodox world as **Dr Constantine Cavarnos**. He wrote and published nearly 100 books, including volumes on philosophy, theology, and a very popular series of Modern Orthodox Saints. Born in 1918 in Boston, Massachusetts, for the greater part of his life he lived as if he were a monk in the world. He graduated from Harvard University, where he also received a Doctorate in Philosophy. He taught at several colleges in America, and contributed articles and reviews to various publications through the years. In 1956, he founded the **Institute of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies** in order to promote interest in Orthodox spirituality, philosophy, and modern Greek culture. As Fr Joseph writes, “he lectured in schools, seminaries, and parishes in this country [U.S.A.] and abroad, where his clear, lucid presentations were

always well received.” He was also an advisor to the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies. When near the end of his life he lost his sight, he joined the Brotherhood of St Antony’s Monastery, and received the monastic tonsure there. May this faithful servant of Christ, who laboured so unremittingly throughout his long life for the enlightenment of the Orthodox people, find rest with the saints and *Memory Eternal!*



SiR-UK NEWS

THREE BAPTISMS AT BROOKWOOD

IN THE PAST MONTH, we have been blessed to have two infant and one adult Baptism at Saint Edward’s Church:

James Stanbridge, of Great Canbourne in Cambridgeshire, was baptized on Saturday, 23rd January / 5th February, the feast of the Holy Hieromartyr Clement of Ancyra and the Martyr Agathangelus. When he had taken his vows as a catechumen he was named for the Holy Great Martyr James the Persian, and at the font **Benjamin Waterhouse**, of the **St Boniface Mission in the Isle of Wight**, stood as his sponsor. On the next day, he partook of the Holy Mysteries for the first time at the Divine Liturgy here.

Ecaterina, the infant daughter of **Adrian and Alexandra Alexa** of Wembley, was baptized in our church, on Sunday, 24th February / 6th February, the feast of St Xenia the Roman. She is named for the Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria, and her sponsors, who had travelled to England from Romania especially for the occasion, were **Razvon and Camelia Dimitriu**.

Iulia, the infant daughter of **Costel and Nonica Azoitei** of Hounslow, Middlesex, was baptized on Saturday, 6th / 19th February, the feast of St Buculus of Smyrna and St Photius the Great. Iulia is named for the Holy Martyr Julia of Carthage, and in this instance the celebrant of the

Mystery was **His Grace, Bishop Sofronie of Suceava**, who had come to England for the ceremony before going on to Belgium and attend to pastoral needs there on the day after. The sponsor was **Alexandru Albu**.

May our Saviour bless these three new plantings in His Vineyard, and prosper them to grow strong in Orthodoxy. *Many Years* to the newly-illuminated James, Ecaterina and Iulia and their sponsors!

AND A WEDDING!

ON THE EIGHTH DAY after his Baptism, after the removal of his chrim robe, **James Stanbridge** was married to his civil law wife, **Elena**, in church, after receiving the Holy Mysteries at the Divine Liturgy that morning. May God grant that, now that their family life is founded on Christian principles, they be established in the Faith, in harmony, truth and love. *Many Years* to the newly crowned James and Elena.

VISITS

AT THE REQUEST of the Sisters of the **Lesna Icon Convent, at Provemont in Normandy, France**, Fr Alexis visited them, going out on 24th February and returning the next day. He was met at Dieppe by **Fr Evfimii** and **Mother Evfrosinia**, and brought back to the ferry by a pilgrim staying at the Convent. The story was that **Mother Pelagia**, who is English, the mother of our Elizabeth Castle, and now 94, was frail and failing, and needed a visit. At Brookwood we have always commemorated Mother Pelagia as the **first foundress and benefactress of our Brotherhood and Mission**, because of the tremendous contribution she has made over the years to our support at every stage of our development, and the undoubted succour of her prayers. In the event she was in good spirits and full of life. **Mother Macrina, the Abbess of Lesna**, and her sisters loaded us with gifts, including massive supplies of local cheeses (undoubtedly for Fr Niphon). Fr Alexis understandably suspected a plot! - had Fr Niphon engineered this visit to boost his supplies and arranged for the sisters to call him over, as if for an emergency when Mother Pelagia was fine? We shall never know. However, the opportunity to wor-

ship with the sisters and the other pilgrims there in their beautiful Winter Chapel, with their compunctionate chanting of the Sisters, and in an atmosphere of such quiet and reverence, was compensation enough for making the journey, and a blessing indeed.

ON TUESDAY, 1st March, members of the Brotherhood went to Bungay to bless the new Town House of **John and Valentina Meade** and enjoyed their hospitality, fortuitously in “Pancake Week.” On the way home we made a detour to visit Burgh Castle, the Roman Fort which was later used by **Saint Fursey** as the place of his ascetic struggles.

TWO HIERARCHAL LITURGIES DUE IN LENT

WE EXPECT to have two Hierarchal Liturgies on Sundays in Great Lent at Brookwood. **His Grace, Bishop Sofronie of Suceava**, will be coming on the **Sunday of the Holy Cross**, 14th / 27th March to tend to the pastoral needs of the Romanian Traditionalist flock, and **His Grace Bishop Ambrose of Methoni**, our own Bishop, will be coming to celebrate their dedication festival with the sisters of the **Convent of the Annunciation**, and then will stay over to celebrate the Divine Liturgy at Brookwood on the **Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt**, 28th March / 10th April. For the first of these we will keep to our normal Sunday schedule: Vespers on Saturday evening, and Mattins Sunday morning leading into the Liturgy. And for the second, we will instead have a Vigil Service of the Saturday evening, with the Hours and Divine Liturgy on the Sunday morning (see calendar insert).

VISITORS

ON 28th JANUARY, we were visited by **Father Martin Stanchev** of Sofia, Bulgaria, who is attached to the **Old Calendarist Synod of Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens**. He was brought by one of the faithful of their church. On the same day, **Fr Ilarion El Antony**, a Coptic priestmonk from **St Antony’s Monastery in Egypt**, visited us. He is now in the process of establishing a Coptic parish in Guildford. Both clergymen were shown the church, and provided with hospitality by the Brotherhood.

ON THE GREAT FEAST of the **Meeting of the Lord in the Temple**, 2nd / 15th February, a group of about forty members of the **Women's Institute from the evening group at Burbridge, near Godalming**, visited the Church. They were led by **Joan Wales**, and the visit had been arranged by **John Clarke**.

VOLUNTEER

OUR THANKS to **James Harrin of Swindon**, who came and stayed with us for a couple of days at the end of Cheesefare Week, and helped us with the work in church, spring-cleaning and lumberjacking.

PRACTICAL TIP

AT THIS TIME of year, the Church services and Scriptural readings turn our attention to the last things, and in particular to our own approaching deaths. Their emphasis is, naturally, on the spiritual preparation for this eventuality. However, we should also make preparation for the practical matters. Make sure that you make a will. Stipulate that you require to be laid to rest according to the practices of the Holy Orthodox Church, that you should not be cremated or embalmed, that organs should not be removed from your body, and if at all avoidable there should be no post mortem - so that your body, which is a temple of the Holy Spirit, should not be subjected to unnecessary interference or desecration. Recently we have heard of two distressing cases abroad, where the funeral arrangements were not in accordance with what the deceased would have desired, so make such arrangements as you can before your death: reserve a grave space, inform those who will be responsible for the arrangements which church you would like the funeral to be chanted in, which clergymen should officiate, &c. Perhaps more importantly, ask those around you to arrange for your priest to visit, hear your confession and if possible impart to you the Holy Mysteries before you die, or at least say the appointed prayers for you. And very important: make sure that the various people who will be concerned with your funeral arrangements, the clergy, the solicitor, your executors, the undertakers, and your next of kin, **all have each other's contact details**. Recently here we had a slight hitch with a funeral, because although we all knew of each others' existence, we did not have contact details, and this delayed the completion of arrangements. We no longer live in village communities, where everyone knows everyone else's business, so take special pains to ensure all these people can be put in touch with each other as soon as possible.