

## FROM THE FATHERS

“DAILY, too, before daybreak, we ought to make a point of going over the Creed, which is as it were the seal of our heart. Even when something frightens us we should have recourse to it in our soul. For when is the soldier in his tent or the warrior in battle without his military oath?”

SAINT AMBROSE OF MILAN, + 397 A.D.



# WHY ORTHODOXY IS THE TRUE FAITH

TODAY all of us are in such a situation that in no way is it possible to separate ourselves from the world. What is the true faith? We live in the world of religious pluralism. We face so many missionaries, each of whom offers his ideals, his life standards, his religious views that the previous or my generation would not envy you for this. We had it easier. The major choice we faced was the choice of religion and atheism.

Now your choice is wider, but by far more difficult. Finding the answer to the question, whether God exists or not is only the first step. If a person comes to believe there is a God, what happens afterwards?

There are many faiths, but which should one convert to? Should one become a Christian, or why not a Moslem or a Buddhist or a Krishnaite? I am not going to consider all of them. Today there are so many religions, you know it better than I. Why? Well, having made his way through the thickets and jungle of this multi-religious tree a person has become a Christian. He understood that Christianity is the best, the right religion.

But what kind of Christianity? It has so many faces. What should one be? An Orthodox, a Catholic, a Pentecostal, a Lutheran? Again it is beyond number. This is the situation that young people face today. Besides, as a rule representatives of the new and old religions of non-Orthodox denominations actively raise their voice, and have better chances to declare their views in mass-media, than we, the Orthodox.

Thus, the first thing one faces today is wide variety of faiths, religions, views. That is why I would like to walk quickly through this enfilade of rooms that opens today before the people who search for the truth and consider briefly, nonetheless taking into consideration the fundamental features, why one should be not only Christian, but an Orthodox.

*... Here we have omitted a long section considering other religions -ed.*

Good, we came to Christianity. Glory to the Lord, I finally found the true faith. Now I enter the next room, and again there are lots of people, and again I hear shouts: My Christian faith is the best of all. The Catholics invite: Have a look, we are 1 milliard 45 million in the world. The Protestants of various denominations say they are 350 million. The Orthodox are the fewest of all - only 170 million people. Somebody gives a prompt that truth is not in numbers, but in essence. Still the question is extremely serious: "Where is it, the true Christianity?"

There are also various ways to solve this question. At seminary we made studies of dogmatic systems, comparing Catholicism and Protestantism with Orthodoxy. This way is interesting and trustworthy, but still in my opinion it is not perfect, because for a person without profound education and knowledge it is not easy to get to the bottom of dogmatic disputes and clear up who is right and who is wrong. Moreover, quite often our opponents use strong psychological tricks that can be very confusing. For example, we discussed the problem of Pope's primacy with

the Catholics, and they say: “The Pope? Well, this primacy and infallibility of the Pope are so trifling, you know. It is the same as the Patriarch’s authority with you. The Pope’s infallibility and power are not actually different from the authority of statements and the power of the head of any Local Orthodox Church.” But, in fact, we have to deal with absolutely different dogmatic and canonical levels here. So the comparative dogmatic method is not that simple. Especially when we face people who not only know the field, but try to convince you at any price.

But there is a different way, which shows apparently, what Catholicism is and where it leads one to. This is also a method of comparative investigation, but investigation of the spiritual sphere of life, demonstrated in the life of saints. Here the whole deception (as it is called in the ascetic language) of the Catholic spirituality gets revealed, the deception fraught with very grave consequences for an ascetic who chooses this way. You know, sometimes I give public lectures, attended by different people. Frequently they ask me the question: “What is the difference between Catholicism and Orthodoxy? What is its fault? Is it not just a different way to Christ?” Many times I saw it is enough to give a few examples from the life of Catholic mystics for the inquirers to say: “Thank you, now it is clear. It’s enough.”

Indeed, any Local Orthodox Church or non-Orthodox church can be judged by her saints. Tell me who your saints are, and I will tell what your church is. Any Church recognizes as saints only those who realized in their life the Christian ideal, as this Church understands it. That is why canonization of any saint is not only testimony of the Church about this Christian, who according to her judgment is worthy of the glory and suggested by her as an example to follow. It is at the same time a testimony of the Church about herself. By the saints we can best of all judge about the true or imaginary sanctity of the Church.

I am going to give you a few examples to illustrate the idea of sanctity in the Catholic church.

One of the great Catholic saints is Francis of Assisi (13th century). His spiritual mentality is revealed through the following facts. Once Francis prayed for a long time (the subject of his prayer is very indicative)

“about two mercies:” “The first is ... that I can go through all the sufferings that You, O Sweetest Jesus, have gone through in Your excruciating passions. And the second mercy... is that I could feel the infinite love, with which You, Son of God, were burning.” As we see, Francis was concerned not about the feeling of being sinful, but he openly claimed for equality with Christ! During this prayer Francis “felt absolutely turned into Jesus,” Whom he saw at once as a six-winged Seraph, striking him with firing arrows at the points of cross wounds of Jesus Christ (hands, feet and the right side). After this vision painful bleeding wounds (stigmata) appeared - the traces of “Jesus’ passions” (M. V. Lodyzhensky. Invisible light. - Pg. 1915. - P.109).

The nature of such stigmata is well-known in psychiatry: permanent concentration of attention on the Christ’s passions excites nerves and the psyche of a person, and may cause such an effect after long exercise. There is no grace-giving in it, because in such “co-suffering” with Christ there is no true love, about which the Lord directly said: He who has my commandments, and keeps them, he is the one who loves me (Jn 14:21). That is why the substitution of the struggle with one’s old man with imaginary emotions of “co-suffering” is one of the gravest mistakes in the spiritual life, which leads many ascetics to self-conceit, pride - to manifest spiritual deceit accompanied by direct mental disorder (comp. Francis’s “sermons” to birds, wolf, turtle-doves, snakes, flowers, his awe of fire, stones, worms).

The goal of life set by Francis is also very indicative: “I laboured and want to labour further..., for it brings honour” (St. Francis of Assisi. - M., Pub. Frantsiskantsev, 1995. - P.145). Francis wishes to suffer for the others and atone for their sins (P.20). And at the end of his life he frankly said: “I do not know any transgression of mine that I have not atoned by confession and repentance” (M. V. Lodyzhensky. - p.129). All this testifies to his not seeing his sins, i.e. his total spiritual blindness.

For comparison I’ll describe to you a moment from life of St. Sisoës the Great (5th century). “Just before his death, surrounded by the brethren, when Sisoës looked as if he were talking with invisible ones, to the question “Father, tell us, whom are you talking with?” He said: “The angels have come to take me, but I pray to them that they let me stay

here for a short time for repentance.” Knowing that Sisoës was perfect in virtues, the brethren objected to him: “Father, you have no need of repentance,” and Sisoës answered like this: “Verily, I do not know, if I have even started on the course of my repentance” (Lodyzhensky. - p.133). This deep understanding, seeing one’s imperfection, is the main distinctive trait of all true saints.

And here are some extracts from “Revelations of Blessed Angela” (†1309) (Revelations of Blessed Angela. - M., 1918).

The Holy Spirit, she writes, says to her: “O, My daughter, My sweetest, I love you so much” (p.95). “I was with the Apostles and they saw Me with their bodily eyes, but did not feel Me like you feel Me” (p.96). Angela reveals also such things about herself: “In the darkness I see the Holy Trinity, and I feel I myself dwell within the Trinity in the darkness in the very middle of It” (c.117). Her feelings to Jesus Christ she expresses in the following words: “I could put my whole self inside of Jesus Christ” (p.176). Or: “I cried because of His sweetness, and sorrow for His departure and wanted to die” (p.101) - and in such moments she would start to beat herself so violently that nuns had to take her out of the church (p.83).

One of the greatest Russian religious philosophers of the 20th century [*This is undoubtedly a personal assessment of the author’s - ed.*], A. F. Losev gives a sharp, but true appraisal of Angela’s “revelations.” He wrote: “Being tempted and enticed by the flesh results in the Holy Spirit’s [*apparently*] appearing to blessed Angela and whispering such amorous words to her: “My daughter, you are My sweetest, My daughter, you are My dwelling, My daughter, you are my delight, love me, for I love you so much, much more than you love Me.” The “saint” is in sweet languor, born away with love languishing. And the beloved appears again and again and more and more burns her body, her heart, her blood. The Cross seems to her to be the bride-bed... What can be more in contrast to the Byzantine-Moscow austere and chaste ascetics, than these continuous statements: “My soul was accepted into the Divine light and enskied [???,]” - her passionate looking on the Lord’s Cross, on Christ’s wounds and individual members of His body, her intended calling forth of blood marks on her body, etc? To crown it all Christ embraces Angela

with His hand, nailed to the cross, and she says to Him being full of languor, torment and happiness: “Sometimes in this strong embrace my soul seems to enter the side of Christ. And it is impossible to relate the joy and illumination one feels there. They are so mighty that I could not stand on my feet, but was lying and my tongue grew numb... And I was lying and my tongue and members of the body grew numb (A. F. Losev. Essays on antique symbolism and mythology. - M., 1930. - V.1. - p.867-868).

St. Catherine of Sienna (+1380) is one more vivid example of Catholic sanctity. She was canonized by Pope Paul VI in the highest rank of saints - “Doctors of the Church” (Doctor Ecclesiae). I’ll quote a few extracts from Catholic book by Antonio Sikari “Portraits of Saints.” To my mind these extracts need no comment.

Catherine was about 20 years old. “She felt, a decisive turning point in her life was coming near, and she kept devout prayers to Her Lord Jesus repeating a beautiful, most tender formula that became habitual to her: “Unite in matrimony of faith with me!” (Antonio Sikari. Portraits of saints. V.II. - Milano, 1991. - p.11).

“Once Catherine had a vision: her divine bridegroom embraced her and drew her to Himself, then He took the heart from her chest to give her another one, which was more like his one” (p.12).

Once it was said, she died. “Later she said that her heart was lacerated by divine love and that she went through death having seen the gates of paradise”. But “return, My child, the Lord told me, you have to return... I shall lead you to princes and masters of the Church.” “And the humble young lady started to send her messages all over the world, long letters, which she dictated with an astonishing swiftness, at times three or four at a time and on different subjects, however without floundering and doing it ahead of secretaries. These letters end with a passionate formula: “The sweetest Jesus, Jesus the Love” and are often opened with the words: “I, Catherine, Jesus’ servant and slave of His slaves, am writing to you in His precious blood...” (12).

“The main thing arresting attention in Catherine’s letters is her insistent repetition of the words: “I want” (12). “According to some researches in ecstasy she addressed these resolute words ‘I want’ even to Christ” (13).

In her correspondence with Gregory XI, whom she tried to persuade to return from Avignon to Rome: “I say unto you in the name of Christ... I say unto you, Father, in Jesus Christ... Answer to the call of the Holy Spirit, addressed to you” (13). She addressed the King of France with the following words: “Fulfill God’s will and mine” (14).

“Revelations” of Teresa of Avila, canonized by the same Pope Paul VI as a Doctor of the Church (16th century), are no less indicative. Before death she cried out: “Oh, my God, my Spouse, at last I will see you!” This cry, an extremely strange one, did not sound by chance. It is a natural result of Teresa’s whole “spiritual” exercise, the essence of which is revealed for example in the following fact.

After numerous appearances, “Christ” says to Teresa: “From this day you will be My spouse... From now on I am not only your Creator, God, but also the Spouse” (D. S. Merezhkovsky. Spanish mystics. - Brussels, 1988. - P. 88). “O Lord, I want either to suffer with You, or die for You!” Teresa prays and collapses utterly exhausted with these caresses...”, D. Merezhkovsky writes. After this it is no surprise, when Teresa confesses: “The Beloved calls my soul with such a penetrating whistle that I cannot not hear it. This call so touches the soul that it breaks down with desire.” It is not by chance that renowned American psychologist William James, analyzing her mystical experience, wrote that “her understanding of religion was reduced to endless flirting between the worshipper and the deity” (James W. Variety of religious experience./Transl. from English. - M., 1910. - P.337).

One more illustration of the idea of sanctity in Catholicism is Teresa of Lisieux (Teresa the Little, or Teresa of the Child Jesus), who died at the age of 23, and in 1997, marking the 100th anniversary of her death, John Paul II by his “infallible” decision declared her to be yet another Doctor of the Ecumenical Church. Here are a few quotations from spiritual autobiography of Teresa, “The Story of A Soul,” expressively testifying her spiritual state (The Story of A Soul; Symbol, 1996, Paris).

“In an interview before taking the veil I revealed what I was going to do in the carmel: I have come to save souls, and first of all to pray for the priests” (to save not herself, but others!).

Speaking about her unworthiness she adds: “I invariably keep a bold hope to become a great saint... I thought I was born for glory and looked for the ways to achieve it. And then the Lord, our God... let me know that my glory would not be revealed to judgment of a mortal, and the essence of it is I will be a great saint!!!” (comp. Macarius the Great, whom people called “earthly god” for the real exaltedness of his life, who prayed: “O God, cleanse me, a sinner, for I have never done anything good in Thy sight”). Later Teresa wrote even more frankly: “In the heart of my Mother-Church I will be Love... through this I will become everything... and my dream will come true!!!”

Teresa’s doctrine about spiritual love is also extremely “remarkable”: “It was kissing of love. I felt beloved and said: ‘I love You and commit myself to You forever.’ There were no requests, no struggle, no sacrifices; long ago Jesus and small poor Teresa understood everything after a single glance... This day brought not only mutual glances, but fusion, when there were no more two of them, and Teresa disappeared like a water drop lost in the depth of the ocean.” I do not think any comment is necessary to answer this dreamy romance of a poor girl - a Doctor of the Catholic Church.

The mystical experience of one of the pillars of the Catholic mystics, the founder of the Jesuit Order, Ignatius Loyola (16th century) was also based on the methodical development of imagination.

His book “Spiritual Exercises,” which has enormous authority with the Catholics, calls a Christian to imagine and contemplate the Holy Trinity, Christ, the Mother of God, Angels, &c. All this fundamentally contradicts the foundations of the spiritual feats of the saints of the Œcumenical Church, for it leads the faithful to the total spiritual and mental disorder.

An authoritative collection of ascetic writings of the ancient Church, “The Philokalia,” strictly forbids this kind of “spiritual exercise.” Here are a few quotations from it:-

Saint Nilus of Sinai (5th century) warns: “Do not desire to see sensually the Angels or Virtues, or Christ, otherwise you’ll go mad, taking a wolf for the Shepherd and bowing to the demon-enemies” (St. Nilus of Sinai. 153 Chapters on Prayer. Ch.115; The Philokalia).

St. Simeon the New Theologian (11th century), reasoning about those who “imagine heavenly blessings, angel hosts and abodes of saints” in prayer, definitely says “this is a sign of *prelest*” (spiritual deceit). “Going this way even those who see light with their bodily eyes, smell fragrance with their nose, hear voices with their ears and the like, get seduced (St. Simeon the New Theologian. On three forms of prayer; The Philokalia).

St. Gregory the Sinaite (14th century) reminds us: “Never accept things when you see something sensual or spiritual, inside or outside, even if it has an image of Christ or an angel or a certain saint... The one who accepts it easily gets seduced... God does not resent one being attentive to himself, if, fearing to get led astray, one does not accept what He gives,... but rather He praises him as a wise one” (St. Gregory the Sinaite: Hesychast Instruction).

So the landowner, whom St. Ignatius Brianchaninov described in his work, was quite right, when he seeing a Catholic book, “On the Imitation of Christ” by Thomas a Kempis (15th century), snatched it out of her hands and said: “Stop playing a romance with God.” The above examples do not leave any doubts in the truth of these words. Unfortunately, the [Roman] Catholic church has lost the art of distinguishing the spiritual from the sensual, and sanctity from reveries, and thus also Christianity from paganism. That’s what I wanted to say about Catholicism.

To clarify Protestantism it is enough to have a look at its dogmatics. To see its essence I’ll limit myself to the main doctrine of Protestantism: “Man gets saved only by faith and not by deeds, that is why sin is not counted to the believer for sin.” Here is the main question where the Protestants got confused. They start to build the house of salvation from the 10th floor having forgotten (if they remembered it at all) the teaching of the ancient Church about what kind of faith saves man. Not the faith that 2000 years ago Christ came and did everything for us!

What is the difference in understanding the faith in the Orthodoxy and the Protestantism? Orthodoxy says that man is saved by faith, but sin is counted to the believer for sin. What sort of faith is it? - Not a mental one, but the state acquired through correct Christian life, thanks to which

one gets assured that only Christ can save him from bondage and ruling passions. How can one achieve this faith-state? Through striving to observe the Gospel commandments and sincere repentance. St Simeon the New Theologian says: “Through strict observance of Christ’s commandments man learns his infirmity,” that is one discovers his inability to extirpate passions without God’s help. For man alone it is impossible, but together with God everything is possible. Correct Christian life reveals to man: first, his passions, his illnesses; second, that God is near each of us; and finally, that at any instance He is ready to come to the rescue and save us from sin. But He does not save us without us, without our efforts and struggle. Acts of faith are necessary to make us able to accept Christ, for they show us that we cannot heal ourselves without God. Only when I am drowning, when there is nobody on the bank, do I realize I need a Saviour, and only when I feel I am drowning in the ruling passions, do I turn to Christ. And He comes and helps. This is where the living saving faith starts. Orthodoxy’s teaching is about the freedom and worthiness of man as God’s co-worker in his salvation, and not as a “pillar of salt” which, according to Luther, cannot do anything. This makes clear the meaning of all Gospel commandments, leading a Christian to salvation, not by faith alone, and this makes obvious the truth of the Orthodoxy.

This is how the Orthodoxy opens for a person, not just Christianity, not just religion, not just faith in God.

I have told you everything; there is nothing more to say. However you can ask questions, but only the ones I can answer!

*Question:* In the disputing with the Catholics using the comparative method we give various facts. However in the hagiography by St. Dmitry of Rostov we can find certain things which look like Catholic mysticism. And today pure apocrypha are published.

*Reply:* First, concerning the hagiography by St. Dmitry of Rostov. It is no secret that unfortunately St. Dmitry of Rostov used [Roman] Catholic hagiographic sources after the 11th century without sufficient critical verification. According to the study of Fr. Seraphim Rose these sources are very unreliable. The time when Dmitry of Rostov lived was the epoch of a very strong Catholic influence. You yourself know: the

Kiev-Mogilian Academy in the beginning of the 17th century, the Moscow Theological Academy till the end of the 17th century, and our whole theological thought and theological education developed under the very strong influence of the Catholic and Protestant theology. Even today non-Orthodox influence is quite noticeable, almost all the textbooks are old reprinted ones, and new ones are compiled on their basis. That is why our theological schools had and have a significant scholastic character. Such schools have to be organized in the monasteries; all students of theological schools have to go through the monastery, irrespective of what life they choose for the future - monastic or family life. So, you are right, in the hagiography by St. Dmitry of Rostov there are some unverified materials. Sometimes they confuse the reader. But if the Catholics show us something that you call apocrypha, our Church would easily reject them. But I doubt if the Catholics could reject Teresa the Great or the Little?

*The above is a shortened version, with the English slightly corrected, of a talk given on 13th September, 2000, by **A. I. Osipov, a professor of the Moscow Theological Academy**, and published on 18th March, 2004, on the **Pravoslavie.Ru website**, an online magazine about Orthodox Christianity. Even with our slight corrections, in places the English is obviously still slightly laboured and we hope our readers will bear with this. However, in our days people are largely indifferent to doctrinal arguments or even dismissive of them, but this piece (even with its flaws in translation) shows manifestly how differences in doctrine lead to differences in practice, and, as Professor Osipov clearly indicates in this talk, to serious and corrupting departures from the evangelical way of life.*



PRIDE is the beginning, the source, and the cause of every sin and vice. God hates pride more than any other sin. And He is opposed to the the proud but gives Grace to the humble.

BLESSED ELDER PHILOTHEOS ZERVAKOS, + 1980

# ON MONASTICISM

By the Ever-Memorable Archbishop Averky  
of Jordanville

## *Continuation*

ACCORDING to the church rules, nothing in one's former life can act as an impediment to entering upon the monastic life, because monasticism is the life of repentance, and the monastery is a place of healing, according to the holy fathers who laid down the rules of monasticism (Canon 43 of the Sixth Œcumenical Council). It follows then that everyone who desires to do so may enter a monastery and become a monk. Having entered the monastery, initially one is put to the test to ascertain how sincerely and seriously one is in dedicating oneself to the monastic life. In the event that the head of the monastery is persuaded of the sincerity of the person in joining the monastic brotherhood, he will bless him to wear the **cazock** [*inner rason*], with a **belt and skouphos** [*monastic cap or hat*]. The future monk, thus being under trial, bears the name of a **novice**, that is his most important duty is **the bearing of obedience** [*Very beautifully, in Russian the word for a novice is poslushnik, and that for obedience is poslushanie, so in English, to parallel this, one might call him / her an "obedient" - transl.*] - this means that he must fulfil every task given him by the head of the community, to the best of his ability and capability. In conscientiously fulfilling the obediences laid upon him, he must expend all his **patience and humility**, which are the bases of the monastic virtues, and serve as the foundation of the spiritual life. **"Obedience is higher than fasting and prayer,"** says a monastic proverb. This is because obedience, the basis of patience and humility, serves to eradicate the foremost foe of the human soul - **pride or self-love**, from which derive all the passions.

When, over a period of time, the novice demonstrates by his good conduct the sincerity of his desire for the monastic life, he may be tonsured as a rasophore. At this stage he does not make any explicit vows,

but he usually receives a new name and he is entitled to wear, in addition to the cassock and skouphos, the **rason and a kamilavka** [*the straight sided cylindrical hat*]. For the tonsure to this first preparatory stage of the monastic life there is a special church service called **“The Order of Clothing in the Rason and Kamilavka.”**

One thus tonsured as rasophore is first of all subjected to questioning and admonition by the abbot, then he confesses all his sins from his youth up to the monastery’s spiritual father, after which the abbot entrusts him to one of the elders in the monastery, one most experienced and expert with regard to the spiritual life, without whose advice and blessing he dare do nothing, and to whom he is bound in absolute obedience, so that he may more readily open to him his soul and confess the very most hidden thoughts.

The order of tonsure as a rasophore is conducted by the abbot at the end of the Hours. After the usual exclamation, “Blessed is our God...,” the initial prayers are read, then two psalms (26 and 50), the penitential troparia, and then the abbot reads two prayers over the candidate, in which he beseeches God to enable him **“to live worthily in the angelic estate,” “protect him from the snares of the devil,” “keep him pure in soul and body even unto death,” “grant him humility, love and meekness,”** and **“make him a upholder of all manner of ascetic abstinence.”** The Abbot takes the scissors and tonsures him in the form of a Cross, saying: **“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Let us say for him: Lord, have mercy.”**

The brethren chant, “Lord, have mercy,” three times. The abbot clothes him in the rason and kamilavka, saying nothing. At the conclusion he reads a prayer silently, in which he beseeches God to grant the newly-tonsured the particular strength from God and Grace to journey on the narrow way of life, upon which all the holy fathers have journeyed, and thus the order of the tonsure as a rasophore is brought to an end.

This is not complete monasticism, but only **the beginning of the holy schema**, according to the above-mentioned order of service. One tonsured in this way is called a **rasophore monk**, or sometimes a **rasophore novice**.

With the passing of a period of regular testing, usually three years, as is demanded by the rule (Canon 5 of the “First and Second Council”), or at the very least not less than six months, the candidate receives the complete monastic tonsure, including **the making of vows**. There are two degrees of the monastic calling; the lesser is the **Little Schema** or **Mantia**, and is called a **betrothal to the Great and Angelic Schema**; the higher one is the **Great Schema** itself, or the **Great and Angelic Schema**.

*... to be continued in the next issue.*



# THE CONSECRATION OF SAINT EDWARD'S CHURCH

WITH INTERNET ACCESS, news of the Consecration of Saint Edward's Church at Brookwood already seems to have gone out into all the world, but we think that we ought to include in this issue an in-house report on the blessing we received then.

His Grace, **Bishop Ambrose of Methoni**, who led the ceremonies, and **Fr Protodeacon Basil Yakimov** from Australia, were the first of our guests from abroad to arrive, both coming on the Thursday. The Bishop stayed for a day with his mother in London, so that he could celebrate the feast of the **Beheading of St John the Baptist** with the sisters at the **Convent of the Annunciation** on the Friday evening and Saturday morning. We met Fr Basil at Heathrow and brought him to Brookwood.

On Friday, **His Grace Bishop Johannes of Makarioupolis**, with the priest, **Fr Anders Åkerström**, and the Bishop's cell attendant, **Raphael**, arrived from Sweden. Matias and Liggy Fagerlund kindly met them at the airport and brought them to Brookwood. Bishop Johannes

had visited the Brotherhood many years ago when he was still a priest. When he entered the church, and saw the new roof and the renovation work that had been accomplished, he made what we can only assume is the traditional Orthodox exclamation for those in the hierarchal rank on such occasions; “Wow!” We were deeply moved by Bishop Johannes’ coming; he is now an elderly man on his eighties, and quite infirm having suffered two severe strokes in recent months, and yet he was insistent that he wanted to take part in the ceremonies and travelled all the way from Sweden to do so. He was rewarded for this exemplary act of pastoral love by seeing so many icons in our church by the hand of his daughter, Mother Justina, of the **Convent of Saint Elizabeth in Etna**. Although we expected the Bishop to rest after his journey, he attended the Vigil Service for the feast of St John with us.

On the Saturday morning, we did manage to persuade the Bishop to rest, and the rest of our guests and the Brotherhood clergy went up to London, where at the Convent Bishop Ambrose celebrated the Divine Liturgy, returning with us in the afternoon to prepare for the Consecration the next day. That afternoon, parishioner Thomas Garland, who is French speaking, picked up **Fr Protodeacon Germain Ivanoff-Trinadtzaty** of Lyons, from the airport and brought him to Brookwood, where he was able to renew his acquaintance with Bishop Ambrose after many years. The two Protodeacons with us, Fathers Basil and Germain, are clergymen of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under the omophorion of **His Eminence Metropolitan Agafangel**.

After the Saturday evening Vigil Service, Bishop Ambrose helped us prepare for the Consecration the next day, on which he was up early to supervise and direct things, such as the preparation of the wax-mastic. While these preparations were under way, and the proskomidi was being served, our first Romanians arrived. **His Grace Bishop Sofronie of Suceava, His Grace Bishop Dionisie of Galați**, and **Fr Archimandrite Chiprian**, who had stayed in London, so as to free up accommodation for other guests here. The Romanian hierarchs greeted us not with the quasi-military formality to which we had formerly become accustomed, but with blessings, bear-hugs and smiles.

As the proto-celebrant, Bishop Ambrose was vested in the middle of the church, and then the rites of consecration began, with the procession around the church with the sacred relics which were to be deposited under the new Holy Table. These were portions of three martyrs: **St Edward** our heavenly patron naturally, the holy **New Venerable Martyr Elizabeth the Grand Duchess of Russia**, and the **Venerable Martyrs of Prevlak in Serbia**. These last were slain in the fifteenth century by a fanatical Roman Catholic convert from Orthodoxy who managed to poison the whole monastic brotherhood on the feast of the Archangels.

During the consecration ceremonies themselves, Bishop Ambrose quietly guided us through and explained to us what needed to be done, so we did not have to pretend that we did this every day and “be impressive.” When time came for the top of the Holy Table to be affixed to its base, each of the four hierarchs there took a corner and hammered the trunnions in with rocks, securing it with wax-mastic. Then the Table was vested with the beautiful hangings which had been sewn by the sisters of the Convent of Saint Elizabeth at Etna. Finally the walls of the church were anointed with the Holy Chrism, using a bamboo pole grown in our own garden, and after the reading of the Third and Sixth Hours, the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy was celebrated.

During the Liturgy - we had advised him to come late - the **Deputy Mayor of Woking, Cllr Ken Howard** and his wife were met at the church by Anna Holden, and given the seats reserved for them. They also attended the buffet lunch afterwards.

Estimates of the number of people there vary wildly, as they usually do on such occasions. We are grateful to **Mr Erkin Guney** and the cemetery staff who voluntarily attempted to bring some order to the parking of cars and help people. One of their staff said that at one point there were 300 cars here. Whether this was true or not, in fact there seemed to be just slightly fewer people than we had on Pascha night. Certainly the queue to receive the Holy Mysteries at the Liturgy was long, and this itself took sometime.

Due to the length of the ceremonies, at the end, Bishop Ambrose kindly said he would spare us a sermon, and he simply extended his greet-

ings, congratulations and blessings to us. Afterwards, we had a Parish Breakfast in Lord Pirbright Hall in the neighbouring village.

After helping us to tidy up, Bishop Ambrose left for London as did the Romanian Bishops. Bishop Johannes stayed with us, and on the Monday, after the Divine Liturgy, we took him, the Swedish delegation, and Fathers Basil and Germain, to visit the Convent in London, where the sisters treated us to High Tea. There we parted, and Prince Dimitri Galitzine, who had also arrived there, took Fr Germain back to catch his plane, and the Fagerlunds took Bishop Johannes' party. Fr Basil from Australia stayed with us for another week.

On the instructions of Bishop Ambrose, we celebrated the Divine Liturgy on the newly consecrated Holy Table every day for a week, and of course the Thursday which fell in that week was the feast of Saint Edward, for which again we celebrated with a Vigil service, and after the Divine Liturgy had a Parish Breakfast in the hall of the Old Mortuary - there naturally being far fewer people there on that occasion. We had hoped Bishop Ambrose would be able to stay over for the feast, but in fact he was required to leave via Moscow for South Ossetia, and so the feast was celebrated more quietly. As a treat at the end of the week, we took Fr Chiprian (who had been hankering after this) and Fr Basil to visit Stonehenge, going on to Avebury and then Ramsbury, the site of a cathedra in Saxon England.

We cannot adequately express our thanks to Bishop Ambrose for the blessing he has granted our tiny community, and for the care and solicitude he showed us during the preparation and the ceremonies themselves, nor to the other Bishops, Johannes, Sofronie and Dionisie, who came from far-distant lands to support us on this occasion. Special thanks are also due to the visiting Protodeacons, Basil and Germain, for adding their particular diaconal solemnity to the celebration, and to all who contributed in so many ways.

In two ways the truly œcumenical nature of the Orthodox Church was manifest in this celebration. First and most obviously, by the fact that the clergy participating came from the Greek, Romanian and Russian Churches, and the congregation from an even broader spectrum of eth-

nic backgrounds. Indeed the services over the weekend were celebrated in English, Greek, Arabic, Romanian, Slavonic, French, and Australian. Secondly, the relics deposited under the Holy Table are those of Saints of England, Russia and Serbia, the rose oil (the gift of Michael and Margaret Woodrow) used to wash the Table was from Bulgaria, and the beeswax which was used to make the wax-mastic was a gift from Romania. It was as if each Orthodox culture contributed something to our celebration, a fact for which again we are thankful to our Saviour, Who came to save all the peoples of the earth.

**Fr Anders Åkerström** kindly made a **YouTube presentation** of the consecration ceremonies, and it can be accessed at:

< <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOXr6Fs2prI>>.



## **NEWS SECTION**

### ***REPOSE OF ARCHBISHOP CHRYSOSTOMOS***

HIS EMINENCE **Archbishop Chrysostomos II** of Athens, President of his Synod of Bishops of the True Orthodox Church of Greece, reposed in the Lord on 6th/19th September, at the age of 90. Immediately after the liberation of Greece from German occupation, he had been tonsured a monk by the then **Archimandrite Kallistos**, who later became **Metropolitan of Corinth**. Father Chrysostomos was ordained a priest-monk in 1947, and in 1971 consecrated as Bishop. In 1986 he assumed the presidency of his Synod of Bishops. On the day of the Archbishop's repose, our **Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna (SiR)**, posted a message by email, reporting the death "with sadness," and saying of his namesake: *May God grant him peace in the bosom of Abraham and may his memory be eternal.* On 5th October, n.s., a brief posting from the Synod announced that **His Eminence Metropolitan Kallinikos of Achaia** had been elected as Archbishop Chrysostomos' successor.

## ***CHAMBÉSY CENTRE CLOSING***

INTERFAX reported on 23rd September that: “Due to the economic crisis facing the country, the Greek government has taken the decision to stop funding the Patriarchal Center in Chambésy. Formally, the Center will continue to exist, but work has ceased, and the site itself is facing closure.” The Centre’s small staff has, in fact, already been significantly reduced. The Chambésy Centre had been the site of the development of the anticipated Pan-Orthodox Council. Patriarch Bartholomeos, has in recent years, frequently referred to this long-awaited Council, which he had hoped could be held as early as 2013. Clearly this development is a setback in those efforts.

## ***CATHOLIC - ORTHODOX COMMISSION***

**THE International Mixed Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church** concluded its six-day meeting in Vienna on Monday 27th September. According to *Zenit*: “In this 12th plenary session, the commission has been examining the same theme that drew them together in 2009: ‘The Role of the Bishop of Rome in the Communion of the Church in the First Millennium.’ ... A communiqué that was released at the end of the meeting noted that 23 Catholic members of the commission took part in the gathering, and representations from all the Orthodox Churches, except the Patriarchate of Bulgaria.... The Catholic co-president of the meeting was for the first time Archbishop Kurt Koch, the new president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. He was appointed to that role in July. The Orthodox co-president was Metropolitan Ioannis Zizioulas of Pergamum.... In a celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Metropolitan Michael of Austria underlined ‘the close collaboration between Orthodox and Catholics in Austria and in Vienna in particular, expressing the wish that the Lord’s prayer “that all may be one” (Jn 17:21) [*an un-patristic interpretation of this text - ed.*] be a reality in the search for the unity of his Church.” *Catholicculture.org* posted a further report suggesting the ecumenical

bandwagon had not rumbled on so smoothly as suggested by *Zenit*. They say: “The Catholic-Orthodox theological discussions, taking place in Vienna this week, hit a snag when the leader of the Russian Orthodox delegation lodged an emphatic dissent against the consensus that the early, undivided Church recognized the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. That position is a definite deal-breaker, because the theme for discussion at this session of the joint theological commission is the understanding of papal primacy during the first Christian millennium - that is, prior to the schism that split the Christian world into East and West. The head of the Russian delegation, Metropolitan Hilarion, argued that the primacy of the Bishop of Rome had never been recognized in the East. If that’s the case, the entire discussion is moot.” The site then continues to blame the Russian Church for having a wrong “model” of the Church, saying, “The history of the Russian Orthodox Church, established by a Slavic prince, suggests an entirely different model: a model for a Church that is not merely located in Russia, not merely the Russian manifestation of a universal Church, but specifically a Russian Church.” Sadly, recent statements from representatives of the Patriarchate suggest that there is a modicum of truth in this Roman Catholic observation.

## ***NICEAN CLUB ADDRESS***

HIS EMINENCE, **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk**, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations gave an address at the **Annual Nicean Club Dinner**, at **Lambeth Palace**, on 9th September, 2010. Giving a long overview of Orthodox-Anglican relations, the Metropolitan boldly stated: “The introduction of the female priesthood in the Church of England was followed by discussions on the female episcopate. In response to the positive decision made by the Church of England’s General Synod on this issue, the [MP’s] Department for External Church Relations published a new statement saying that this decision ‘has considerably complicated dialogue with the Anglicans for Orthodox Christians’ and ‘has taken Anglicanism farther away from the Orthodox Church and contributed to further division in Christendom as a whole.’ ... We are also extremely concerned and disappointed by other processes that are manifesting themselves in

churches of the Anglican Communion. Some Protestant and Anglican churches have repudiated basic Christian moral values by giving a public blessing to same-sex unions and ordaining homosexuals as priests and bishops. Many Protestant and Anglican communities refuse to preach Christian moral values in secular society and prefer to adjust to worldly standards. Our Church must sever its relations with those churches and communities that trample on the principles of Christian ethics and traditional morals. Here we uphold a firm stand based on Holy Scripture." This statement is to be warmly welcomed, although one wonders why matters of faith were also not considered. In his address the Metropolitan expresses the concern: "We have studied the preparatory documents for the decision on female episcopate and were struck by the conviction expressed in them that even if the female episcopate were introduced, ecumenical contacts with the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches would not come to an end. What made the authors of these documents so certain?" Perhaps His Eminence is being a little naive here. Assuredly, perhaps after a slight blip, ecumenical dialogue would continue, because it is determined not by fideal considerations, but by those of church, and oftentimes state, politics. Were it otherwise, such ecumenical dialogues would have ended decades ago.



## ***SIR-UK NEWS***

### ***BAPTISM AT BROOKWOOD***

GEORGE, the infant son of **James and Elena Stanbridge** of Great Canbourne, Cambridgeshire, was baptized at Saint Edward's Church on 19th September / 2nd October. **Simon Teague**, one of our altar servers, stood as his Godfather. George is named after the Great Martyr George the Trophybearer, and came to church the following day to receive the Holy Mysteries for the first time. May the Lord keep him in His sanctification, confirm him in the Orthodox Faith, and ever deliver him from the evil one.

## ***BAPTISM OF A CATECHUMEN***

KATHERINE KIRK, a former Episcopalian, became a catechumen at Saint Edward's Church on the feast of St Ambrose of Milan, 7th / 20th December, last year. She and her family recently returned to live in the States, and shortly thereafter she was diagnosed with a life-threatening cancer of the liver. Through the good offices of **Dimitri Gontcharow** and others, we were able to put her in contact with **His Grace, Bishop Joseph of Washington (ROCA)**, who visited her and prepared her for Holy Baptism. She was baptized and chrismated by the Bishop, receiving her first Communion, at the **Holy Ascension Orthodox Parish in Fairfax, Virginia**, on the feast of the Beheading of St John the Baptist, 29th August / 11th September, and her mother, **Anne van der Lee**, also a catechumen in our Brotherhood parish, was able to be present at the sacred celebration. May the Lord God grant unto His newly illumined handmaiden, Katherine, His many mercies, and through her illumination grant blessings to her husband and children.

## ***REPOSE OF A BENEFACTRESS***

CHRISTODOULLI CHRISTOFOROU, who often attended the Divine Services at the Convent near which she lived, reposed in the Lord on 1st / 14th September, after being ill since Holy Week this year. For many years she had provided our Brotherhood with prosphoras for the Liturgy and with meals ready prepared for us. Her funeral was chanted at the **Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Cross and St Michael at Golders Green**. Three priests served: **Archimandrite Christodoulos (Persopoulos)** of the Camberwell Cathedral, **Protopresbyter Andreas Garibaldinos** of Kentish Town, and **Father Spiridon Papagavriel** of the Golders Green Church. The chanters fortunately used Byzantine chant throughout. On the way to the church, the hearse stopped at the **Annunciation Convent** so that the sisters there could bid farewell to a beloved friend, and they chanted funeral hymns at the coffin. After the church service, Kyria Christodoulli was laid to rest in Hendon Cemetery. The mourners then returned to the Church Hall at Golders Green, where

a generous cold luncheon was provided for everyone. Fr Alexis and Fr Niphon attended the funeral to represent our Brotherhood, and to honour one who had shown us such kindness over so many years.

## ***TWO INTERMENTS AT SAINT EDWARD'S***

JOAN CLARKE, the mother of the Cemetery and Necropolis Railway historian, **John Clarke**, was laid to rest in the cemetery on Thursday, 9th September, as near as possible to “the end of the line,” an expression believed to derive from the railway line running into the cemetery at Brookwood, and where in time, we hope, her son will be buried with her.

And on 2nd October, **Gordon Grierson**, a convert to Holy Orthodoxy who was baptized in the Lebanon many years ago, before his marriage, was laid to rest in St Edward's Cemetery. The funeral was conducted at the **Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral of St George, Regent's Park**, by **Father Samir Gholam**, the pastor of the parish. After the interment, the mourners gathered in the hall of the Old Mortuary here for a Mercy Meal. May the newly departed find rest with the saints and *Memory Eternal*.

## ***IMPROVEMENTS AT BROOKWOOD***

THE WORK on the land drainage system and the renovation of the drive began on Monday 20th September, and is continuing as we go to press. It is being undertaken by a firm called **Centurian Services**, recommended by **Nick Kalnikov**, and should be completed within the next couple of weeks. When the works foreman asked for a copy of our contact details, the only thing we had to hand was a copy of “The Shepherd,” which we gave him. He returned the next day, saying he had read it though, found it very interesting and did we have anything else for him to read, so we gave him St Innocent of Moscow's “Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven.” Would that our Orthodox people were so keen to read and learn about their Faith!

After having innumerable difficulties with **Chubbs**, which, until we terminated our contract, they did not seem at all at pains to deal with, we have transferred our security surveillance to **Surrey Security Systems**, who provide the same service but whose customer care is superior.

## ***VISITORS***

**GUILDFORD Rambling Club** paid a brief visit to the church on 29th September. About 28 people were on their walk.

## ***BADGES & KEY FOBS***

**ERKIN GUNEY**, the cemetery owner, has produced badges and key fobs of **Saint Edward**, which were providentially available just in time for the consecration of the church. They are available at £3 each or 2 for £5. Please add 15% for p&p.

## ***OUR SPECIAL THANKS***

To all who prayed, worked and sent contributions to make the celebration of the consecration of our church a “success:” those who provided things necessary for the ceremonies, those who sewed and cleaned, and who prepared the food for the trapeza afterwards, and to those, who are often forgotten, who came afterwards and helped to clear up and help us to get back to “normal.” Special thanks to **Father Stephen and Presbyteria Joanna Fretwell** for accommodating Fr Germain during his stay in this country, and to those, mentioned in the piece on the consecration above, who helped in taxiing all our guests from abroad to and from airports. *God’s bountiful blessings be on all who contributed.*

Also thanks to **Elena Holden**, who, over a period of time, observing our deplorable habits, made new cassocks for members of the Brotherhood.