

The Shepherd

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FROM THE FATHERS

"GOD DEMANDETH NOTHING from Christians except that they shall hearken unto the Divine Scriptures, and shall carry into effect the things that are said in them, and shall be obedient unto their directors and the Orthodox fathers."

From the Paradise of the Fathers

"IT IS DIFFICULT for one just beginning the monastic life to avoid boredom, for it is the first thing to attack him. Therefore above all one must guard against it by means of strict and absolute fulfilment of all the duties laid upon the novice. When your activities fall into a real order, boredom will find no place in your heart. Only those are afflicted with boredom whose affairs have no orderly arrangement. And so obedience is the best treatment for this dangerous affliction."

Venerable Seraphim of Sarov the Wonderworker, 1759-1833 A.D.

"KNOW FOR CERTAIN that the troubles which befall you come not of themselves but by God's permission; so take all possible care to bear them with patience and perseverance, offering praise and thanksgiving for them to God. Know that he who resists troubles and tries to escape the hard way, is acting against his own salvation and is striving in his blindness to frustrate the order and plan of salvation appointed by God for all His servants."

Blessed Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, 1807 - 1867 A.D.

CONSTANTINOPLE

CONSTANTINOPLE - The City (ei polis)- is not only the past but the present of all the Orthodox people. Monasticism was firmly established in Byzantium, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was approved, and all the major heresies that arose to threaten the church were dealt with by the Œcumenical Councils, called by the Byzantine Emperors, meeting in or near Constantinople. At the great monastery of the Studion in Constantinople, the Church service books were brought to their final form as we have them today. The sacred music of the Church was composed here, her iconography established, and the architectural forms of church building worked out in Constantinople remain the authentic models for Orthodox countries to this day. The Great Schism between East and West came to a head in Constantinople in 1054, and the appalling sack of the City by the mindless and avaricious rabble of Latin Crusaders in 1204 was a major cause of the eventual conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Since then, the Great Church in Captivity, as the historian Sir Steven Runciman calls it, has continued to exist and function under very great difficulties, with countless martyrdoms of both laity and Patriarchs. The Œcumenical Patriarch of the Great

Church of Constantinople remains the 'first among equals' of the Orthodox Patriarchs, although his flock in Constantinople has shrunk to a few thousand, with well over ninety per cent of his people outside Turkey.

For more than a thousand years after the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, the Roman Empire in the East - the Byzantine Empire, as historians have called it - the first Christian Empire in the world, preserved and built on its heritage of classical antiquity, gave the world its most amazing and glittering mosaics, introduced new architectural skills, and acquired fabulous wealth from its trade in silk, spices, ivory, wheat and furs, which excited the envy of hostile neighbours. The old Roman legal system was transformed into the basis of the one currently used by most European countries, and for centuries the Byzantine Empire, with Constantinople as its heart and centre, stood as the bastion of Christianity against pagan tribes, Persian and Arab invaders, and the massed forces of Islam, intent not only on territorial gain but on a holy war, a final settlement with Christians.

From a purely historic point of view, the City is a place of immense interest, and from a specifically Orthodox point of view, a holy place of pilgrimage. Overflowing gratitude for all the spiritual riches we have received is mixed with the pain of seeing to what a state its former glory has been reduced.

The City had a long and interesting pre-Constantinopolitan history. From the eleventh century B.C. Asia Minor had been settled by Greeks, and Anatolia - 'the East' - was to become the second cultural centre of the Greek world. Cyrus, King of Persia, conquered a large part of the land in the sixth century B.C., but in 334 B.C. Alexander the Great reconquered the whole of Asia Minor and a golden Hellenistic age began.

Almost a thousand years before Constantine the Great decided to move the capital of the Empire from Rome, a Greek colonizer named Byzas had asked the Delphic Oracle where he should build his new city, to be named Byzantium after its founder. The enigmatic answer was 'Opposite the blind'. Not until Byzas had reached the Bosphorus, did he understand. When earlier Greek colonists had built their city of Chalcedon, they must have been blind not to see the obvious superiority of the site on the opposite shore only about half a mile away - its beauty, natural defences and commercial advantages.

With the rise of the Roman Empire, Asia Minor came under Roman control, with the City of Byzantium a privileged commercial outpost of the Empire. The Apostle Paul would later travel along the roads of the Roman Empire and found the seven churches of Asia Minor. But the Empire was too large and unwieldy to hold together indefinitely, and was attacked both East and West by barbarian tribes, while the joint Emperors often conspired against each other from within.

Constantine, the son of St. Helena and Caesar Constantius, was proclaimed Emperor by his legions at York, following the death of his father. After defeating his fellow Emperors - both of whom were laying claim to his territories and continuing the persecution of Christians - and having made himself the sole ruler, he decided to move the capital from Rome to the centre of the Empire for its better defence, and chose Byzantium, the city of Byza.

The line to be followed by the new city walls was traced out personally by Constantine [and indicated to him by an Angel - ed.] with his spear enlarging the city to five times its original area. 'New Rome' as the city was to be called, was built, like Old Rome, on seven hills, or to be more accurate, on five hills in the time of Constantine, and when the city was later enlarged further, it included another two.

Many ancient works of pagan art were brought to the new capital from all over the Empire, and it became the greatest treasure-trove of classical art in the world, filled with master-works such as the huge bronze statue of Hercules by the court sculptor to Alexander the Great, Lysippus, also the famous bronze statue of the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus. Both these irreplaceable works of art were subsequently dragged away, broken up and melted down by the Latin crusaders, to be turned into coinage.

Imperial and public buildings were constructed on Roman models. In everything, the new capital was meant to outshine the old one in splendour. The vital difference was that Constantine was the first Christian Emperor, and his new capital, 'New Rome,' as he called it, or Constantinople, the City of Constantine as it came to be called unofficially, or later, simply 'The City', was the new Christian capital of the first Christian Empire.

Christian crosses were set up all over the city. Constantine had taken the decision to become a Christian after seeing a vision of the Cross immediately before his victorious battle with Maxentius at the Milvian bridge, causing him to order his troops to scratch the Cross on their shields and have the Chi-Rho sign put on the military standards.

Constantine confided his vision to his friend Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsaria who recorded it in his History of the Church. Like St. Paul's vision, it had taken place in full daylight when he was riding with his troops. The Cross had appeared in the sky and the words "In this sign conquer" took shape around it. Like St Paul, Constantine believed he had received a direct revelation from God and that henceforth his life must take a certain course. His famous Edict of Milan put an end to the persecution of Christians, who were to be allowed freedom of worship, which was also still accorded to pagans. The Emperor Theodosius the Great would later go much further, forbidding pagan sacrifices and making Christianity the state religion and a requirement for citizenship.

Constantine's programme of church building was formidable and included Agia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), Agia Irene (Holy Peace) and Agia Dynamis (Holy Power), also the church of the Twelve Apostles, where after twelve symbolic tombs, a thirteenth was placed - his own. Many Emperors would be buried there. In addition, he supplied his mother, the energetic St Helena, with lavish funds for excavating and church building in the Holy Land and Cyprus, both parts of the empire.

He abolished the practice of crucifixion, and instead encouraged the veneration of the Cross. His most famous and magnificent church was the church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem, (known in the West as the Holy Sepulchre) built over the sites of Golgotha and the tomb of Christ. It was consecrated on September 13th in 335, an event celebrated ever since on this date in the Church Calendar.

To put a stop to the dissension threatening the unity of the Empire, Constantine summoned the First Œcumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 to deal with the Arian heresy, personally paying all the expenses of the participants. He died a natural death - most unusual for an Emperor - in 337, receiving Holy Baptism shortly before his death. The secular world has given him the title 'Great', the Church knows him as 'Equal of the Apostles' and celebrates his feast-day on May 21st, together with that of his mother.

The 'dual-role' of the Byzantines is important. Byzantium was the heir to the old pagan Empire, yet also the first Christian Empire. The Byzantines never ceased to consider themselves Romans, (a name perpetuated by the Ottoman Turks, who called their conquered subjects the Rumi, that is, the Romans) yet they gave us the greatest Greek Christian hymns and poems. They quoted Homer and discussed Greek philosophers, and at the same time sent out missionaries who converted the Balkans and Russia to Christianity. And the heart and showpiece of Byzantium was Constantinople, where Roman city planning went hand in hand with the building of Christian churches, and Imperial troops marched through classical forums singing Greek hymns to 'Christ the Conqueror.'

For over eleven hundred years the City stood, from its founding by Constantine the Great in 330 until 1453, when the eighty-ninth and last Emperor, Constantine XI, died fighting on the city walls, and Constantinople fell to the Turks.

The older history is acknowledged - although many people do not realise it - in the Turkish name for Constantinople: Istanbul - which is a corruption of the Greek 'eis tin polin', 'I'm going to the City' - and in the crescent of the Turkish flag, the crescent moon being the emblem of pagan Byzantium (retained by Constantine as a diplomatic gesture to his pagan subjects), the sign of the moon goddess Artemis (Diana) the divine patroness of Byzas' city.

Contributed by Miriam Lambouras of Broadstairs, Kent

FROM THE SACRED CANONS

"RENEWING this sacred Canon too, we decree that monasteries that have once been consecrated and established with the consent and approval of a Bishop shall remain monasteries unto perpetuity, and the property that belongs to them shall be kept safe in the monastery, and that they can no longer become secular resorts, nor be let out by anyone whatever to any secular tenants whatever. Though this has been done up till now, we nevertheless decree that it shall not be continued in any way whatsoever. Those who attempt to do this hereafter shall be subject to the penances provided by the canons."

Canon 49 of the Holy and Œcumenical Sixth Council

CONCERNING PRAYER

Its Inner Qualities and Outer Effects

Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)

According to the Teaching of the Sacred Scriptures,
the Holy Fathers, and the Teachers and Writers of the Church

A Translation from a Booklet Published
by the Russian Skete of the Prophet Elias on Mount Athos.

Translation by Mrs Valentina B. Merritt of Brookwood, Surrey

Continuation from the last issue

4. Purity of Heart

*I entreated Thy countenance with my whole heart - Ps. 118:58
Therefore hath thy servant found it in his heart to pray this prayer unto Thee- 2 Kings 7:27
My prayer is pure - Job 16:17.*

WE SHOULD *watch over our heart with all vigilance* (Proverbs 4:23), not only to avoid ever losing the thought of God or sully the memory of His wonders by vain imaginations, but also in order to carry about the holy thought of God stamped upon our souls as an ineffaceable seal by continuous and pure recollection. In this way we shall excel in the love of God, which at the same time animates us to observe the Lord's commandments, and by this, in turn, love itself will be lastingly and indestructibly preserved - *Saint Basil the Great*.

We are by nature desirous of the beautiful.... What is more admirable than Divine Beauty? What desire of the soul is so poignant and so intolerably keen as that desire implanted by God in a soul purified from all vice and affirming with sincerity, *I languish with love* (Song of Songs 2:5) - *Ibid*.

By nature we possess love and a good disposition towards our benefactors, and are ready to undergo any hardship that we might make a return for what they have granted us. But what words can fully describe the gifts of God? So many are they in number that they even defy enumeration; so great and marvellous are they that even a single one of them would claim for the Giver all our gratitude - *Ibid*.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord (Ps. 129:1). What does out of the depths mean? Not simply from the lips, or off of the tongue, for words can pour forth without any thought; but from the depths of the heart, with great sincerity and fervour, from the very foundations of the soul. Such prayers have great power and force; they are not dispersed and are unshaken even when the devil makes vicious attacks. But the prayer that proceeds only from the lips and from the tongue cannot even reach God without the heart's participation. Those who pray thus make a sound with their mouths, but their heart is empty and their mind idle - *St John Chrysostom*.

From those who pray, God does not demand beauty of speech or a clever construction of words, but rather warm-heartedness and effort. If, with such a disposition, one pronounces those things that please Him before Him, then from Him he will receive everything - *Ibid*.

We must pray not only with our tongues, but with the heart; that is, prayer must proceed from the heart. For in prayer we must express our heart's desires to God, and for this to be so the mind must reflect and the our heart must possess that desire which the tongue and the words express. Otherwise there is no prayer at all, only empty words - *St Tikhon of Zadonsk*.

This is marvellous and worthy of wonder, something inaccessible to the proud and beyond speech for the lowly. That which is inaccessible to every mind enters into the heart, and abides therein. He Who is hidden from those who behold the Fire [*i.e. the angelic powers*] abides in the heart. The earth cannot bear his steps, but the pure heart bears Him within itself. The heavens are too confined for His span, and yet the heart is His habitation. All creation is unable to contain Him within its confines, but if the heart seeks Him, then even that little heart can contain Him. God chooses that little place within man as His dwelling place, and man is made a temple of God, in which God dwells and abides. The soul is His temple, and the heart a holy altar, on which the sacrifice of praise and doxology is offered; the priest, then, is the mind, which stands and offers the sacred rites there - *Venerable Ephraim the Syrian*.

Bodily labours without purity of mind are like a barren womb and dried-up breasts, because through them alone it is impossible to approach the vision of God. They tire the body, but are unable to root out the passions in the mind, and for this reason nothing is reaped - *Venerable Isaac the Syrian*.

If you are pure, you will have heaven within you; and within you will behold the Angels and their light, and with them and in them you will behold the Master of the Angels Himself - *Ibid*.

How did the ascetics, our fathers and teachers, inflame the spirit of prayer within themselves and confirm it? The thing that they most sought after was to make their heart burn for the one Lord unceasingly. God demands the heart, because therein are the streams of life. Where the heart is, there is understanding, attention and mind; there is the whole soul. When the heart is in God, then the whole soul is in God and it sets man in the unrelenting worship of Him in spirit and in truth - *Blessed Bishop Theophan the Recluse*.

One must needs pray, but not be stained with defilement. You say: But what if I fall into transgression? Get yourself clean! How? Weep, sob, give alms, be reconciled with those whom you have offended, purify the tongue that you sin no more against God, that you not hear the Lord say unto you, *even if you multiply your supplication, I will not hear you* - *Saint John Chrysostom*.

He who wants to appeal to God, and receive what he desires, must abandon sins and through faith in Christ the Son of God must reconcile himself with God. Fornication and every impurity, rapine, theft, enmity, anger, love of money, extortion, slander, swearing, cursing, drunkenness, lying, flattery, slyness and other sins like these close the doors to prayer, as long as a person remains in them. Let him who wishes to call upon the name of the Lord, abandon all this - *Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk*.

Those who wish to pray in truth should not only control their anger and lust, but they must distance themselves from every passionate thought - *Venerable Nilus of Sinai*.

A man who is bound cannot run, and a mind enslaved to any passion cannot behold the place of spiritual prayer; it is constantly caught and drawn hither and thither by passionate thoughts and has no steadiness - *Ibid*.

From constant guarding of the heart purity is born in it, purity in which the Lord is beheld, according to the assurance of Eternal Truth: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* (Matt. 5:8) - *Venerable Seraphim of Sarov*.

Your soul's vesture must shine with the whiteness of simplicity. Nothing there must be complex! Evil thoughts and feelings of vainglory, hypocrisy, pretence, man-pleasing, haughtiness, sensuality, these dark and stinking stains, which besprinkled the spiritual vesture of the Pharisees when praying, must not be found there - *Blessed Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov*.

... to be continued with "Fasting"

THE COMING MONTH

SEPTEMBER is the first month of the Church Year and so for the Orthodox this must be the real beginning of the Third Millennium! In the month we have two of the Great Feasts, the Birth of the Virgin and Holy Cross, and the festival of Saint Edward's Enshrinement (1984) on Saturday 3rd/16th. All these will be celebrated with Vigils, although on the Virgin's Nativity we will have the Liturgy at the Convent rather than here at Brookwood.

Of course we do not know the date of the All-holy Virgin's birth, but the feast is kept on 8th/21st September, the eighth day of the New Year. This reminds us that in the beginning God created all things in six days and rested on the seventh day. The eighth day begins the New Creation. Saint Andrew of Crete referred to this feast as "the beginning of festivals, which serves as the door to grace and truth." Just as the Saviour was contained within the Virgin's womb, so the feasts of the Saviour throughout the year are contained within the cycle of services which span the Virgin's earthly life, from her Nativity to her Dormition. Of course, historically as well, the Virgin's much longer life contained that of her Divine Son.

The date of the celebration of the Holy Cross on 14th/27th of the month was appointed because the feast is attached to that of the consecration of the Church of the Resurrection (the Holy Sepulchre) in Jerusalem. This is an event we can date exactly. It was first celebrated on 13th September, 335 A.D. On whatever day of the week the feast falls it is kept as a fast day in remembrance of our Saviour's Passion. This year, it falls in any case on a Wednesday.

In previous years, we have told readers about these feasts and so this month we will devote more space to the saints celebrated in September. We have:

The holy Martyr Vasilissa of Nicomedia (3rd/16th) celebrates on the same day as we keep the enshrinement of St Edward. She was a nine year old girl when she was brought before the governor of Nicomedia accused of being a Christian. Seeing her youth, the governor, who was named Alexander, tried to persuade her to renounce her faith by offering certain inducements and by his kind and sweet words. When Vasilissa was not tempted by this approach, he ordered that she be beaten, and then

burned on various parts of her body. When he saw Vasilissa still remained resolute, he commanded that she be put to death by being thrown into a burning furnace, but by God's dispensation she remained unharmed. Alexander then ordered that she be exposed to the wild beasts in the arena, but neither would they touch her. Seeing how a young girl was thus protected by Divine grace, Alexander's heart was enlightened, and he begged the forgiveness of the martyr, asking her prayers and declaring that he believed in her God. Vasilissa lived a few more years and died in peace. Alexander was instructed by the local Bishop and baptized and ended his earthly course in piety. St Vasilissa is an example of a number of saints, who are commemorated as martyrs even though they did not die for their faith. The sufferings that she endured and her witness before the persecutors won for her the crown of martyrdom although in this instance they did not actually kill her.

The Venerable Adamnan of Iona (6th/19th) is best known to us for his life of his renowned predecessor, St Columba of Iona. This work is still in print in an English translation and published by Penguin. St Adamnan died just over a hundred years after St Columba and so must have been one of the third or fourth generation of monks on Iona, and might well have known earlier fathers who remembered St Columba. As abbot of Iona, he visited Northumbria as an ambassador to its King Aldfrid, and thus came to know the monks of Wearmouth. He studied the differences of usages and calendar which had grown up between his native Celtic Church and the English Church, which was then following the Roman, and universal, usages. He had conversations with St Ceolfrid, and through these and his deep knowledge of the Scriptures and the traditions of the Church, he became convinced that the usages of his own Church were not sound. He tried by gentle persuasion to convince his monks at Iona of this and to have them reform their usages, but they were not to be persuaded, and being a gentle and tolerant man, Adamnan did not force them to comply. He visited communities in Ireland and there he found the Irish fathers more ready to bring their usages into line with the Church's general practice, and under his influence they adopted the Roman method of calculating the date of Easter. He returned to Iona but was still unable to persuade his monks to comply with the Roman usage, and he died within a year of his return in 704 A.D. Iona did later accept the reform which St Adamnan had urged upon it. Besides his life of St Columba, St Adamnan compiled a book on the holy places of Palestine. As far as we know he had never visited the Holy Land, but he gathered materials from a French bishop, Arculphus, who on his return from Jerusalem was driven by a storm at sea upon the shores of Britain.

Perhaps we should add a note for our readers, because in recent years there has been much mythologizing about the Celtic Church. It is sometimes thought that their paschalion was the same as the Orthodox one, and that this accounts for its discrepancy from the Roman one. This is not the case. The present difference between the Roman Catholic computation of Easter and our own occurs largely because of Rome's adoption, in the sixteenth century, of the Gregorian calendar. The usage which the Celts were using was something again and, although ancient, was eccentric. There are indications that the early churches in these islands, and in what have rather romantically come to be thought of as the Celtic lands of Europe's Atlantic sea board, owed a tremendous debt to the monastic and ascetical heritage of the churches of the East, but this has often been pressed too far. Truth to tell, we know very little about

the practices of the early Celtic churches - certainly they were not "Eastern Orthodox" in the modern sense of that phrase. Playing on these insubstantial and romantic ideas, there is now a small body claiming to be the "Celtic Orthodox Church" here but their claims, as set forth in their own literature, do not bear careful scrutiny.

The Venerable Cloud of Paris (7th/20th) was the grandson of the first Christian King of the Franks, Clovis, and his consort, St Clothilde. When Clovis died he left four sons, parting his domains among them. The second of these, Clodomir, was killed in battle with the Burgundians, and his three sons were left in the care of their saintly grandmother. In the dynastic quarrels of that period, the two eldest of these princes, aged ten and seven, were assassinated, but the third, Clodoald or Cloud, was taken to safety in Provence. There he grew up, and disdaining an earthly kingdom for the sake of the heavenly, he took up the monastic life. He lived for some years in obscurity as a hermit. Once he was approached by a beggar and, having nothing else to give him, gave him his monastic cowl. That evening when the beggar wore it as a protection against the weather, it was seen to shine with a radiance, and thus the hermitage and the sanctity of the saint were revealed. Later, St Cloud returned to Paris, where, no longer a threat to the dynastic ambitions of his uncles and cousins, he was granted a parcel of land to found a monastery. Eusebius, the bishop of Paris, ordained him to the priesthood, and there in his monastery he ended his earthly course in about 560 A.D. At the time of his death, he would not have been much above thirty-five years of age, but his virtue and purity had won for him the heavenly kingdom, whose riches he sought after having his earthly inheritance snatched from him.

Saint Cyprian of Moscow (16th/29th) was a Bulgarian by birth, and was born in 1330 A.D. As a young man he placed himself under obedience to the Venerable Theodosius, himself a disciple of the renowned hesychastic father, Saint Gregory the Sinaite. Wishing to progress further in the monastic life, he travelled to Constantinople and settled in the renowned and ancient monastery of Studion. His abilities were recognized by the Patriarch, St Philotheus. When the Patriarch was deposed in 1354, Cyprian went with him to the Holy Mountain Athos, where he was able to drink more deeply of the Palamite tradition. In 1364, Philotheus was restored to his cathedra, and he summoned Cyprian to join him in the Imperial City. At this period he was instrumental in restoring full communion between the Church of Serbia and the Œcumenical Throne, and then between his native Church of Bulgaria and Constantinople. At that time the Russian Church was still under the Œcumenical Patriarchate, and St Philotheus was desirous that it should remain united. However, the still pagan Prince of Lithuania, Olgerd, who held sway over parts of Western Russia was threatening to convert to Catholicism and force his Orthodox subjects to do so. To placate him and avoid a persecution of the faithful, in 1376 Philotheus consecrated Cyprian Metropolitan of Kiev, but, to ensure the subsequent unity of the Russian Church, also designated him successor of the aged St Alexis of Moscow. When St Alexis died two years later, Cyprian set out for Moscow, but was arrested being assumed to be a Lithuanian spy. He managed to return to Kiev, but political turmoil in Constantinople and in Russia prevented any resolution of the situation until in 1381, when on the initiative of Prince Dimitri Donskoy, he was recalled to Moscow. There the Prince publicly asked his forgiveness for his ill-treatment, and Saint Cyprian was installed as Metropolitan of the whole Russian Church. Shortly afterwards he was

deposed and replaced by one Pimen, and it was not until 1389 that he regained his see. Despite the political turmoil through which he lived, Saint Cyprian was able to achieve much. He laboured to correct liturgical abuses that had become prevalent in the Russian Church and corrected the service books. He translated from the original Greek a number of liturgical works, wrote a eulogy to St Peter of Moscow and glorified St Alexander Nevsky. He added to the Russian Synod icon of Orthodoxy the clauses relating to Saint Gregory Palamas' defence of Orthodoxy, and he arranged to aid to be sent to Constantinople when the people there were suffering on account of the siege of Bajazet. He died on 16th September, 1406, having dictated an address which he asked to be read at his funeral. His sacred relics were uncovered in 1472, and were enshrined in the Cathedral of the Dormition in the Moscow Kremlin.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

'I have just come back from Jerusalem and Greece where the Athens patriarch was saying that to be Orthodox was to be Greek, what are your views on this? Also in Jerusalem I was asked many times if I was Greek, not if Orthodox. The priests seemed to think that one could not be Orthodox if one was not Greek. Although both pilgrimages were incredible, I was greeted with suspicion because not Greek. What should be one's attitude towards this from an Orthodox standpoint? - N.B. Worthing, West Sussex.

WHAT YOU EXPERIENCED in Greece and in the Holy Land is rather sad. I suppose that there are two levels on which one can respond to it. The first of these, which is always a safe course, is to look to yourself, and to reflect whether anything about the way you behave or conduct yourself should cause others to doubt that you are Orthodox, and thereafter try to remedy it.

The second is to try and understand the point of view of the clergymen in question. (The one in Athens would not have been a Patriarch, unless it was one visiting there.) For a number of reasons, some with greater validity than others, many of the Orthodox of the Eastern European nations and the Levant do identify Orthodoxy with their own particular nation or culture in a way which is fundamentally wrong. Before we are too ready to blame them for this, if we look at ourselves we see that we tend to do exactly the same. For instance, we (collectively) tend immediately to think that all Arabs are Moslems, and yet many Arab countries have large indigenous Christian populations, they have ancient churches and bishoprics, Liturgies in their own languages, etc. I remember that when I first became Orthodox, most of my family and friends assumed that all Russians were Communists and this greatly worried them. It is simply a fact of life, that we tend to tar whole groups of peoples with the same brush, and presumably "the Greeks" do the same. I put "the Greeks" in inverted commas, because of course this does not refer to citizens of Greece as such, but the various Greek-speaking Orthodox people whom you met.

Secondly, of course, for centuries very few people in Western Europe have been Orthodox, and at various times through those centuries the Western countries have been enemies of the Orthodox or their oppressors. Sometimes they have engaged in overtly religious persecution of the Orthodox, and so it comes as a surprise

to the "Easterners" that Westerners are Orthodox. It surprised me, when I met a Polish man who was a Methodist, how much more this would have been surprising, had it been the case that the Poles had periodically persecuted the Methodists for centuries!

There is also a sadder aspect to what you experienced. Many Orthodox peoples from traditionally Orthodox cultures simply do not seem to realize the treasure that they have in Orthodoxy. They cannot conceive of anyone converting to Orthodoxy because they themselves do not see its true worth and beauty. It is something they take for granted. This is evident even among the peoples from Orthodox backgrounds living here in Britain. Their church allegiance is oftentimes little more than an appendage of their, or more likely their parents' or grandparents', ethnic identity. Their church observance is reduced to a few and sporadic "pious" customs. Living, as we do, alongside an Orthodox cemetery, we see this very clearly. People have memorial services for their dead, cook koliva, and adhere to various ethnic customs (sometimes they invent little pieties of their own!), but they do not regularly come to church or read the Scriptures, they do not come to confession or receive the Holy Mysteries, they do not observe the fasts and feasts of the Church, and so their Orthodox commitment sometimes seems to be little more than a kind of honouring the ancestors. Such people whether they be in England or in Greece simply cannot understand why a Westerner would want to be Orthodox, because they do not know what Orthodoxy is. One has to add to that, that despite an often extreme nationalism, many peoples from countries that were traditionally Orthodox seem to have a hankering to be Western themselves. In becoming Orthodox, you have rejected the very thing that they are aspiring to! They cannot understand you.

Lastly, one has to admit, that among Orthodox peoples, there is often a very strong and extreme nationalism. I distinguish nationalism from patriotism, because the latter is commendable and it rejoices in the patriotism of others, whereas nationalism excludes others and tends to despise or demean them rather than embracing them. I remember once giving a talk to a University Hellenic society, and one of the audience assured me that Orthodoxy was Greek. When I pointed out that this was not the case in any restrictive sense, he did not want to know. I mentioned that various cultures had contributed their genius to the Church's traditions over the centuries, that the Greeks had given their language and their philosophical understanding as vehicles to express Orthodoxy, but that the Romans had also contributed with their administrative talents and their concepts of order and law, that most of the prayers and hymns that we hear in Church have been composed by Jews (Old Testament) or other Semitic peoples - how many of the hymnographers are Syrians! Perhaps a Hellenic society was not the place to express such views, but I was not invited to speak there again!

Nonetheless I think that fundamentally what I failed to get across to my listeners then was true. In the West, teaching concerning the catholicity of the Church has concentrated almost solely on equating this with universality. The Orthodox often rightly point out that the Church is catholic, because she encompasses the fullness of the Faith, and because of the catholicity of the Christian way of life, which embraces many callings. We are right to stress these things, but often we also seem to forget that catholic does also mean universal, and the Church is for all peoples. This is why, I hope, we never counter the overweening nationalism of some of our fellow-religionists

with nationalism of our own. We should not combat a fault with another, nor fight a lie with another, but with the truth.

I hope these thoughts help you. Keep those people who failed to accept you with true Christian love in your prayers. Just to counteract the rather bitter experience that you had in Greece, I will tell you of one that I had. I visited there in 1974 and we met an Abbess who, learning that there were two converts to Orthodoxy in our company (I was one of them) could not restrain her tears, but simply wept and wept for the sheer joy that people from the West were coming to Holy Orthodoxy.

REPOSE OF ABBESS SERAPHIMA OF WILLESDEN

ABBESS SERAPHIMA, in the world Susanna Janho, fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday, 2nd/15th August, the day of the translation of the relics of the holy Protomartyr Stephen. Mother Seraphima, who was descended from an old Jerusalemite family, had taken up the monastic yoke in her youth, having been educated at the Bethany School founded by Abbess Mary (Robinson) of the Gethsemane Convent of St Mary Magdalene. For more than five decades she was the close associate of the late Abbess Elisabeth (Ampenoff) and was the Ruth to Mother Elisabeth's Naomi. She devoted her life to helping and supporting Mother Elisabeth, who shared the same birthday as her own mother, and when a Soviet inspired attempt was made on Mother Elisabeth's life, she defended her, risking her own life in doing so. After the sisters had settled in England and, with the blessing of St John of Shanghai, founded the Convent of the Annunciation, she devoted herself to the church education of the young, and is responsible for the spiritual formation of two generations of young people within the Russian Orthodox emigration. When, in 1995, Mother Elisabeth celebrated her Golden Jubilee as Abbess, Mother Seraphima was awarded the pectoral cross by the Synod of Bishops and this, the first mark of recognition for her lifelong remarkable service to the Church, was presented her by His Grace Archbishop Mark. After the death of Abbess Elisabeth in February 1999, Mother Seraphima was appointed Abbess by the Bishops, and was ordained to this ministry on the Saturday before Myrrhbearers' Sunday last year. Perhaps because she so determinedly dedicated all her energies to supporting Abbess Elisabeth and would allow nothing to interfere with that, it was only after the latter's death that Mother Seraphima's own health began to deteriorate. In the last few months of her life particularly she suffered painfully, but it was only within the last weeks of her life that cancer was diagnosed. Characteristically, she refused to be admitted to hospital in Holy Week, saying that she should be at the Divine services, and although suffering tremendously she remained "on duty" throughout Bright Week, insisting on being present to bid farewell to Archimandrite Flor after he had come from Jordanville to serve the Holy Week and Paschal services. Anticipating her death, her brother from Germany and her sisters from Palestine and Jordan visited Mother Seraphima in the Summer. She was admitted to hospital again in mid-July, when the true extent of her illness became known to the sisters and her loved ones. The Mysterion of Holy Unction was served at her hospital bed, and on nearly every day in the last fortnight of her life she received the Holy Mysteries. On the feast of St Mary Magdalene, Saturday 22nd July/4th August, the sisters of the Convent celebrated their foundation day, and at the end of the Divine Liturgy and the Thanksgiving Moleben served then, Mother Seraphima was brought home from hospital, as medical treatment was of no further

avail. She was put in Mother Elisabeth's room, as in her own small cell it would have been impossible to nurse her. She continued to receive visitors, to give her blessing to those who came, and to give them words of encouragement, comfort or instruction to within a day of her death. On the first day of the Dormition Fast, Monday 1st/14th August, before the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the Convent chapel, Mother Seraphima received the Holy Mysteries for the last time. After the Liturgy, she received those who came, now just to take her blessing and kiss her hand. Thereafter she was tried by a further night of suffering in this world, and gave up her soul at 5.30 on the Tuesday morning in the presence of the sisters and some of the closest parishioners. Almost immediately after her repose, the canon of the departure was read for her. On the third day, her relics having been placed in the chapel, a memorial service was chanted at her coffin. On the next day, Friday 5th/18th August, Archbishop Mark, who had arrived from Germany, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at 8 a.m. assisted by the three clergy who regularly serve at the Convent and by Father Vadim Zakrevsky and Father Thomas Hardy from the Russian Church of the Dormition in Gunnersbury. His Grace, Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, was among the many people who attended the Liturgy and funeral. He had known the sisters for many years, from the time before he became Orthodox, and had kindly visited Mother Seraphima on the previous Sunday. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, and before the funeral was chanted, Bishop Kallistos made a short but moving address at the coffin. Abuna Samir Gholam of the St George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral in London, was also present. Because of prior commitments, both Bishops had to leave before the faithful had finished giving the last kiss to the departed. Archbishop Mark had to fly back to Germany to celebrate the Vigil service for the Transfiguration at Baden-Baden, and Bishop Kallistos went on to Cambridge for the funeral on that same day of one of England's best known converts to Holy Orthodoxy, Constance Babington Smith. When all had bidden farewell and koliva had been blessed, the mortal remains of Abbess Seraphima were taken to Gunnersbury Cemetery, where they were laid to rest on the right hand side of those of Abbess Elisabeth, whom she has joined much sooner than we, with our limited earthly understanding, would have wished. On Wednesday 11th/24th August, St Laurence's day, the ninth day memorial service was chanted at the Convent; and on 24th September, the Divine Liturgy will be celebrated there on her fortieth day. We ask the faithful to remember the newly-reposed Abbess Seraphima in their prayers and have her commemorated at the Divine Liturgy - May her memory be eternal and her rest with the Saints. Pray also for the orphaned sisters of the Convent, who within less than eighteen months have lost two teachers and guides, two true mothers in Christ.

ŒCUMENICAL PATRIARCH TO SPEAK AT KHATMANDU CONFERENCE

HIS ALL-HOLINESS, the Œcumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos I of Constantinople has been invited to be the main speaker a Conference to be held in Khatmandu, Nepal, in November this year. The conference will be hosted by H.R.H. Prince Philip in his capacity of President of the World Wide Fund for Nature, and its theme will be Sacred Gifts for a Living Planet. Religious denominations and institutions have been asked to make "sacred gifts" which will be announced at the conference, and the Fathers of the Holy Mountain Athos have been invited to donate the

Mountain itself (its peak, slopes and base) to be maintained as a preserve of nature and a holy sanctuary of Orthodox spiritual life. Recognising that the Athonite Fathers, if not their Patriarch, might have reservations about attending the conference, the invitation for them to donate their Mountain as a "sacred gift" assures them that it will not be necessary for them to be represented at the conference. The request and the conference seem to have New Age connotations and one cannot think that the Athonite Fathers will be keen to re-dedicate their Mountain, which is the preserve of the All-holy Theotokos, to the "Living Planet" instead. Patriarch Bartholomeos' plan to address the Orthodox world from the summit of Athos in mid-July was abandoned, the reason cited was the deterioration in church-state relations in Greece.

MOSCOW SOBOR

AT THE TIME of preparing this issue, little substantial news has reached us concerning the Assembly [*Sobor*] of the Hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate which culminated in the consecration of the newly reconstructed Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. However, the hierarch's decision to glorify many of the New Martyrs, including the martyred Imperial Family, has received wide press coverage. Moscow has listed 860 of the many thousands of New Martyrs among those which she accepts. According to an opinion in ENI Bulletin 00-0280, one of the impediments to the glorification of others was their refusal to accept the spiritual authority of the Patriarchate's administration after Metropolitan Sergius' declaration of the Church's loyalty to the Soviet state in 1927. That infamous declaration is still causing hurt within the Russian Church and is a matter which evidently must needs be addressed, but one cannot help but rejoice in seeing even a partial acceptance by the Patriarchate of the witness of the New Martyrs. A generation ago, her hierarchs were publicly denying that there was any persecution of believers in Russia; now, they have shifted and in part recognized a portion of the company of the New Martyrs. God grant that in time they may recognize them all, and wholly repudiate the woeful role that their own church leaders played in collaborating with the Soviet powers.

FRIENDS OF MOUNT ATHOS RECEPTION AT HIGHGROVE

H.R.H. PRINCE CHARLES, the Prince of Wales, hosted a Reception for the Friends of Mount Athos at his country home, Highgrove, near Tetbury in Gloucestershire, on Wednesday, 2nd August. Guests were welcomed with a cup of tea and given a tour of the gardens, before returning to the courtyard by the Orchard Room, where they were met by the Prince. The Orthodox clergymen present as guests were led by Their Graces, Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia and Bishop Basil of Sergievo, and they included Archimandrite Maximos Lavriotes and Fr Athanasius Ledwich. From our own Brotherhood, Frs. Alexis and Niphon attended. At the end of the day, Prince Charles made a short speech, in which he spoke of his recent visit to Mount Athos and his hopes for the future of the Holy Mountain. He also spoke of the recent loss of the artist Derek Hill (who had died a few days previously), who had in effect been the founder of the friends of Mount Athos and had had a deep and longstanding love of the Mountain.

CHRISTIAN LEADERS DISAGREE WITH ARAFAT

THE HEADS of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Armenian Apostolic churches in Jerusalem have addressed a joint letter to President Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat, appealing against a proposal by Arafat which suggested that the Muslim and Christian quarters of the city be under Palestinian control, and the Jewish and Armenian quarters under Israeli rule. The church leaders objected to this proposed separation of the Armenian quarter from the other Christian sectors, and further demanded that all Christians in Jerusalem should have freedom of worship and unimpeded access to their holy places.

ATHONITE RELIC TAKEN TO RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

THE HEAD of the Great Martyr Saint Panteleimon was taken in June and July to the Ukraine and to Russia for the veneration of the faithful. The sacred relic is usually kept in the Monastery dedicated to the Saint on the Holy Mountain Athos, and during its stay in Kiev was kept at the ancient Caves Monastery. Within days of its arrival there some 80,000 people had venerated it. Later it was taken to St Petersburg, to the St Alexander Nevsky Lavra and lastly to Moscow, where it was taken to various monasteries and to the newly built Cathedral of Christ the Saviour.

ARCHBISHOP MARK'S VISIT

FOR THE FEAST of the Dormition, the dedication festival of the London Russian Orthodox Church on Harvard Road, Archbishop Mark visited England, arriving on Saturday 26th August. On the Sunday morning, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at St Edward's church in Brookwood, and for this, the first time that he has managed to serve here on a Sunday, our congregation was swelled by representatives from the missions in Congleton, Birkenhead and the Isle of Wight, as well as by members of the Greek Orthodox parish of St Nicolas in Cardiff. By far the largest single contingent of believers, however, were parishioners of St Sava's Serbian Orthodox Church in London, who were here for their now traditional "last Sunday in August at Brookwood." The Archbishop was assisted by Fr Alexis, Archpriest Milun Kostic of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Fr Peter Bauk, and Fr Paul Elliott from Birkenhead, with Hierodeacon Sabbas. During the reading of the Third Hour, Vincent Gibbons of the St Werburgh Mission in Congleton was tonsured Reader, and during the Sixth Hour he was raised to the Subdiaconate. During the communion of the clergy, the Paraklesis was chanted and at the end of the Divine Liturgy, the Archbishop preached first in English and then in Serbian. After breakfast in the Brotherhood house, the Archbishop returned to London to head the celebrations at the Harvard Road Church. Our congratulations and our prayers are with Subdeacon Vincent, his wife Denise and daughter Phoebe, and our particular thanks go to Subdeacon Prince Dmitri Galitzine for bringing the Archpastor to Brookwood and to him and Michael Knupffer for their help and leadership in the altar serving.

Fathers Milun and Paul also joined the Archbishop, Fathers Vadim Zakrevsky and Thomas Hardy at the celebrations at the new Russian Cathedral on Harvard Road for their festival on the Monday, where according to the custom the service of the Lesser Blessing of Waters was celebrated.

On the third day of his visit, the Archbishop served at the Convent of the Annunciation, assisted by Fr Alexis, Fr Vadim and Fr Hierodeacon Sabbas. He preached in Russian and English, and after breakfast with the sisters and parishioners, he took the opportunity to speak to the sisters in private to reassure them concerning the Convent's future and to console them in the loss of their spiritual guide, Abbess Seraphima.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

BAPTISM OF NICOLAS MERRITT: On Sunday, 24th July/6th August, Nicolas, the infant son of James and Valentina Merritt was baptized at Saint Edward's Church; his sponsors were Andrew Last and Mrs Ekaterina Harwood, and the celebrant Father Peter Baulk. May the Lord God grant the newly-illuminated and his sponsors His mercies throughout their lives and keep them steadfast in Holy Orthodoxy.

VISIT FROM CHERTSEY: Every year on Theophany, we visit the site of the seventh century monastery at Chertsey to bless the waters there, and in the past few years we have been joined at the ceremony by parishioners from St Peter's Shared Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed) Church and St Anne's Roman Catholic Church. Now they have paid us a visit. On the day of Nicolas' Baptism, a party of parishioners from the Chertsey churches visited Saint Edward's. They were in time to witness part of the Baptismal service and attended Sunday afternoon Vespers. Afterwards, Fr Niphon gave them a talk about the church, and then they came over the monastery house for tea and biscuits. On Sundays 13th and 20th August respectively, two groups from Farnborough History Society also visited the church.

CHURCHING: On Sunday, 7th/20th August, before the Divine Liturgy, Magdalena Antoniazzi had the prayers of churching read for her before approaching the Divine Mysteries. It is hoped that her infant daughter, Thekla, will be baptized on 3rd September.

ICON GIFTS: On his nameday this year, the feast of St Laurence, Laurence Bloom-Davis of Croscombe, Somerset, the "Brigadier," donated an antique Russian four-leaf folding icon, depicting the Great Feasts and festivals of the icons of the All-holy Theotokos, to Saint Edward's church. And on the day of the Archbishop's visit, Andreas Stratis presented our church with a hand-painted icon of St Pachomius the Great receiving the Angelic Schema from the Angel of the Lord. This beautiful icon was executed for us in Cyprus earlier this year.

PRACTICAL TIP

PEOPLE, quite naturally, often find standing in church tiring. Often they make the situation worse for themselves by not standing properly and so find even more strain. The best way to stand is with the feet a little way apart and with one's weight evenly distributed between them. This way, you will be better able to stand without tiring and without strain. If you stand thus, as it were "at ease," you will also find that you can better retain attention, than if you are continually shifting your weight from one foot to another. It goes without saying, that if you are elderly, infirm or sick, you can rest by sitting down. H.M. The Queen Mother, at her recent 100th birthday celebrations, gave us an example of dutiful standing, but it is reported of the Blessed

Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), the first First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, that he once remarked that it was better to sit down and think about God than to stand and think about your feet!