

The Shepherd

An Orthodox Christian Pastoral Magazine

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FROM THE FATHERS

"WITH ALL HASTE, let us put an end to this state of affairs [discord in the Church], and let us fall down before the Lord and beseech Him with tears that He would mercifully be reconciled to us, and restore our former seemly and holy practice of brotherly love. For such is the gate of righteousness, which is set open for the attainment of life, as it is written, *"Open unto me the gates of righteousness; I will enter therein and give thanks unto the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter in thereat"* (Ps. 117:19-20). Although, therefore, many gates have been opened, yet this gate of righteousness is that gate in Christ by which blessed are all they that have entered in and have directed their way in holiness and righteousness, doing all things without disorder. Let a man be faithful; let him be powerful in the utterance of knowledge; let him be wise in the judging of words; let him be pure in all his deeds; yet the more he seems to be superior to others in these respects, the more humble-minded he ought to be, and to seek the common good of all."

Holy Hieromartyr Clement of Rome, + c. 100 A.D.

"IT IS NO LIGHT TASK to teach all people in truth, and to foster unity, forgiveness, sincerity, and uprightness in all things."

From the Rule of St Carthage, seventh or early ninth century

"ALL THE CHRISTIANS who are literate are required to read the Holy Scripture. St John Chrysostom even wrote that it is not possible for someone to be saved unless he continuously enjoys the spiritual reading of Holy Scripture. Elsewhere St Chrysostom criticized the lay Christians for neglecting to read Sacred Scriptures. He overturned the objection often put forth by the laity who say that they are not monks but have families -wives, children, and homes - to be concerned about. He urged the laity to read the Scriptures even more than the monks, precisely because they are in the world and in the midst of greater temptations and they need the fortification of the Scriptures to struggle against evil each day. St John Climacus also encouraged us to read Sacred Scripture. It does not only enlighten and put our mind together, it contains the very words of the Holy Spirit that guide anyone who passes through. St Ephraim noted that the words of Holy Scripture are like a trumpet in time of war that arouses the brave strugglers against the enemy. The Scriptures arouse our desire to struggle for virtue and to be courageous against the passions. For this reason, dear brother, keep a certain spiritual sobriety and seek to read the Holy Scriptures so that they may teach you how to flee from the snares of the enemy and attain eternal life."

Venerable Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, 1749-1809 A.D.

HOMILY ON THE DAY OF THE CHIEFS OF THE APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL 29TH JUNE/12TH JULY

By Archpriest Leonid Kolchev

AFTER HIS RESURRECTION, in re-establishing on the right ways the Apostle Peter who had denied Him, Jesus Christ said to him: *"When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldst not"* (John 21:18). Without doubt with these words Jesus Christ foretold the martyric death of a disciple whom He loved, and actually this is confirmed by the words of the evangelist which follow: *"This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God"* (v.19). Furthermore the Greek text of these words gives one cause to think that Christ stretched out His hands in the form of the cross as He foretold to him death on a cross. In actuality the Apostle Peter was crucified head-down.

From the most ancient history of the Christian Church we know that all the other disciples of Christ ended their lives as martyrs. Only one, Saint John the Theologian, died a natural death, although even he did not escape sufferings.

The Apostles knew that afflictions awaited them (John 16:33), but this in no way confounded them in boldly and zealously spreading the light of Christ's teaching. On the contrary, with joy they bore injurious beating (Acts 5:40-41, Col. 1:24, etc). Evidently the example of their Divine Teacher always stood clearly before their eyes (John 13:15). *"If they have persecuted Me,"* He said, *"they will also persecute you"* (John 15:20), and this is quite understandable, because *"the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him"* (John 13:16). Therefore they firmly proclaimed that *through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God* (Acts 14:22). To them it would have seemed beyond comprehension that they should live in any other way than had their Teacher, Who had *not where to lay His head* (Luke 9:58). *"If one died for all, then were all dead. But Christ died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again"* (2 Cor. 5:14-15). This filled their hearts with the assurance that *when our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have of God a building in the heavens, not made with hands, eternal* (2 Cor. 5:1), to which they strove *irrepressibly; having a desire to depart*, says the holy Apostle Paul, *and to be with Christ* (Phil. 1:23). His desire was fulfilled before natural death overtook him: *"Already they offer me in sacrifice,"* he wrote not long before his end, - *"and the time of my departure is at hand"* (2 Tim. 4:6). In the year 67, on 29th June he was beheaded with the sword.

In this way the Apostles lived physically on earth, but spiritually they were in heaven. They were not disturbed by the bloody end which faced them, but on the contrary they rejoiced and counted it a blessing to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why the Apostle Paul even says with boldness: *Be ye imitators of me, as I am of Christ* (1 Cor. 4:16).

Of course, this does not mean that all are to be martyrs, for it was only to the Apostles that Jesus Christ foretold a martyric end, and even so He did so not to

predestinate such a death. In any event what is important for us is that the holy Apostles' love of their Divine Teacher extended to selflessness: *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* (John 15:13), and they actually did lay down their lives for they remembered Christ's precept, *"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.... If a man love Me, he will keep My words"* (John 14:21,23). In such love there is no fear (see 1 John 3:17), for as the holy Apostle Paul cries out: *"Who shall separate us from the love of God; shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"* (Rom. 8:35). No one and nothing (see Romans 8:38-39).

O friends and brethren, may the example of Christ's holy disciples be instructive for us. Let not the afflictions and distress of this sinful and adulterous world make us fearful, for the Lord never sends trials which are greater than we can bear (1 Cor. 10:18). And all the blood poured out from the time of the Apostles to that of the numberless martyrs of our days will serve as the very best cement to bind all believing Christians into the one body, the Church of Christ, against which the gates of Hades shall not prevail (Matt. 16:18).

O holy, glorious and all-famed Chiefs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, whose memory we now prayerfully keep, we call upon you assiduously: help us to abide in peace and concord that the love of Christ might be inflamed. Pray to God for us! Amen.

Translated from a collection of sermons published in Copenhagen, 1938.

From "Monastic Wisdom" The Letters of Elder Joseph the Hesychast

DON'T BELIEVE everything you hear. The truth is a precious thing and is not found in everyone's word. Each person speaks according to his own manner of living. Based on his way of life, fathom how true his words are. Understand what I am saying.

THE HOUSE OF GOD THE CHURCH SERVICES

In 1912, under this title a book for school-children was published by the Priest N. R. Antonov in St Petersburg. Nowadays, such is our ignorance of the Divine Services of our Church, that all of us are as school-children, and so we offer the present translation of Fr Antonov's work. We are not attempting an unabridged version of the work, but have deliberately omitted parts which will not be helpful to contemporary readers in the West. In places we have bolstered the text a little with explanatory notes, bearing in mind that our readers, while sharing the same Orthodox Faith as Fr Antonov's pre-revolutionary school children, will not share their background, understanding or outlook. Our purpose has not been to provide a full and accurate translation of the work, but to impart its teaching to the people of our own generation for their edification.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

§ 1. Understanding Orthodox Divine Services. A range of church services, celebrated by the clergy, are to be understood by the term Orthodox Divine Services. During these services, those who are praying express their feelings of faith, hope and love towards

the Lord, and in this way they enter with Him into an invisible, spiritual communion, receiving help from God so that they might live piously upon earth, and through the Mysteries, the saving grace, to be deemed worthy of the Heavenly Kingdom. If those praying do not have these feelings, then through the holy Church they implore for them, that they may be established in their hearts.

§ 2. The Character of Orthodox Divine Services. As we know from Old Testament history, not all peoples have preserved true faith in God. On the contrary, after the Fall and the erection of the Tower of Babel, the majority of people forgot the true faith. So it came about that not all peoples maintain the original, God-ordained concept in their worship. For instance, many were the peoples who forget the idea that God is the supreme, omniscient, spiritual Being; and instead of God they paid reverence to visible things: the sun, fire, animals and so on. The worship of these peoples became a conglomeration of outward ceremonies and rites, devoid of love and of heartfelt faith in the Invisible God. There were people who thought that God was evil, a vengeful being, and their worship encouraged them to torture themselves - recall the story of the prophet Elias! Some brought animals to sacrifice and some people even sacrificed children - recall the sacrifice before the idol Moloch. Upon Christian worship there lies the seal of the spirit of Christian faith. The Lord Jesus Christ taught that God is a heavenly and merciful Father (Luke 6:36), that He is a Spirit (John 4:24), that one can serve Him with lively and sincere prayer and with deeds that abound in love (Matt. 4:21; 15:8-9). True Christian, Orthodox worship is distinguished by its being heartfelt, exalted and sincere, corresponding to the grace which redeems the faithful and to consciousness of God's reconciliation with man, upon whom He has shown mercy. Consequently, the invisible essence of the mystagogy and spirituality is distinguished from its outer (observable) side. Its prayers and hymns are very moving. They call those who are praying to virtue, to sincere faith in the Lord, and to love one for another. The Liturgy, the most important Orthodox service, begins with the words: "In peace, let us pray to the Lord, "and with like words, "In peace, let us depart," it ends. In these words, as in every component of our Liturgy, our Orthodox Faith reverberates. In Orthodox churches, those who pray can give alms of as much as they can afford for the benefit of the poor, so that they can also show their love for their neighbour and kind-heartedness.

§ 3. The Divine Institution of Orthodox Divine Service. Manifesting the fact that the faith of the Orthodox Church has, in purity and changelessness, preserved the revelation and the grace, given by God to people from the time of the creation of our forefathers, Adam and Eve, the sources of Orthodox Divine service are lost in sacred history of ages past, but they are related to the original Divine service established by God. When He had made our forebears, Adam and Eve, the Lord "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made, and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Genesis 2:2-3), and thus laid the foundation for considering the seventh day sacred. By His grace-filled manifestations the Lord confirmed in the first people holy and prayerful feelings. So when Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise after the Fall, the Lord instructed them to offer sacrifices. By means of sacrifices, by faith the Old Testament peoples anticipated the redeeming sacrifice which our Lord Jesus Christ was to offer on Golgotha for men's salvation. And independently of God, both the first people, Adam and Eve, and the generations that succeeded them, were involuntarily

inspired by joy and thankfulness towards God. Observing the marks of the almightiness, the wisdom and the goodness of God everywhere in nature, and experiencing God's benefactions within themselves, the first people (and indeed people with sensitive hearts even today) involuntarily express their feelings of joy, delight and gratitude with words, bodily movements and thus with outward rites. As the number of people who truly believed in God in the Old Testament grew, to whom the Divine revelation was revealed, so Old Testament Divine services developed, manifested in prayers and rites. After the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, in accordance with God's command the holy Prophet Moses build the Jewish Tabernacle, consecrated persons for the celebration of the Divine services, inaugurated sacred feasts and established dates for the offering of sacrifices. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ, Who had come to fulfil the Law of Moses (Matt. 5:17), laid the foundation of Christian Divine service, instituting the Mystery of Holy Communion, which is at the heart of our Divine service. The Apostles, when enlightening various pagan peoples with the light of Christ, taught them Divine service. In doing this the Holy Apostles put the Divine service of the Saviour, which they had established, in the utmost order.

After the Apostles, new additions were made in the order and conduct of the Divine service; many prayers were composed and whole services and many rites inaugurated.

§ 4. The Number of Church Services in Orthodox Worship. The Church services, which comprise Orthodox worship, are very numerous. They may be served in the morning and in the evening, in the house of God or at home, for many Christians gathered together or at the request of some individual. As the holy Church desires to invoke God's blessing on every event and on every step in the life of man, the church services envelop the Christian's whole life, from birth to death. Whether a man is born, whether he dies, whether he takes upon residence in a new home, or starts family life, whether he sets out on a long journey, or begins some profitable occupation, whether he is experiencing joy or sorrow, in all of these instances the holy Church can find a response, can offer counsel, comfort and the blessing of prayer. Thus one can regard all the Divine service of the Orthodox Church as actions of hers, like those of a mother, caring for the sanctification of her faithful children. From the number of church services, we shall first of all look at the Liturgy, Holy Baptism, Matrimony, Vespers, the Vigil, the Panichida (Memorial Service), Molebens (Intercessory Services) and others.

...to be continued.

A Prayer of Saint Isaac the Syrian

I BEG and beseech Thee, O Lord, grant to all those who have gone astray a true knowledge of Thee, so that each and every one may come to know Thy glory.

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF FATHER GEORGE CHEREMETIEFF

Thoughts on a Journey

The Law of God and the law of man.

THE LAW of man is powerful because of the executioner, without whom it cannot function. The law of God is powerful because of love and through voluntary obedience.

When material things are buried by the spiritual, then the law of man becomes identified with the law of God and there is no need of an executioner. But in order for this to happen, in all peoples material concerns must be conquered. I think that this will be achieved only after the second coming of Christ, when the reapers will separate the good from the bad.

The most intriguing question, and it touches our pridefulness, is: Do I belong to the good or to the evil?

To know exactly, I must mortify my pride. But my egotistical "I," written with a capital letter [*in Russian the word for I, ya, is not usually written with a capital - ed.*], which stands between Christ and me, upsets my doing this.

My will must be brought into line with the will of Christ. Only thus, when it is sincere, can my petition to the Lord, "Thy will be done," be fulfilled.

One does not bring one's will to nought through belittling oneself and with chagrin, but one must direct it along Christ's courses, freely, in accordance with one's great love for, and thankfulness to, Christ.

Not force, but love.

Holy Russia.

REFLECTING on the contemporary painful situation in Russia, and hearing our country condemned by foreigners, and sometimes by those close to us and, in bad times, even by our own people, I would like to take a closer look at the significance of what is happening. To do that, I am going to look into the depth of the history of our homeland and try to understand Russian man's spiritual level.

I see only one thing: In Ancient Russia life was church-centred. No, it was not holy, but without a doubt it was churchly. Everything good originated in and concluded with Christ; and all that was evil was patiently expiated in the name of Christ for the salvation of the soul.

Russian man is often not firm and even wild, and then he has a fall and does wrong. But such evil is not his ideal. His ideal is God's righteousness, after which he seeks. Not finding it on earth, he sees an echo of it in the Orthodox Church, the most spiritual and most unworldly of all the "churches."

In speaking thus, I do not judge the other Christian churches, for whose union with the Orthodox we pray, but I only want to say that every people has its aspirations

for which imperceptibly they also find an echo in their own churches, even though these have fallen away from the main stem, Christianity.

Among the Protestants, we see a sincere intention to grasp with their minds and to explain the Unexplainable. There is indeed such an intention and it is compelling, but it is absolutely impossible to fulfil, and is beyond the comprehension of the Russian soul.

The Catholics have a holy intention, full of incredible energy, spiritually to uplift to Heaven those who stand low. For this, their church adopts various definite forms and forcefully inculcates holy words among a sinful mass of peoples, although with very little explanation. *{Fr George is, of course, speaking of the situation, that existed in the early and mid-twentieth century - ed.}*

We have a different situation: Orthodoxy says little to the Russian man intellectually. The Church does not condescend to the crowd of people, and does not adopt definite forms *[Perhaps Fr George is referring to the legalism of the Roman Catholics]*. Everything is spiritual. And that is what the Russian man loves in his Church. Because within him, despite his having a perverse mind and very often a sinful body, there are many spiritual sensitivities.

In this life everything is hypocrisy and sin. But in the Church there is eternal truth, sanctity, mystery. A candle burning before an icon with its spiritual mystery says more to the Russian heart than theological tracts. It is not without reason that there is a story about an old peasant man who left the church weeping with compunction. When asked why he was weeping, he replied: "Father Ivan spoke so wonderfully, that he turned my soul all topsy-turvy!" When they asked him what he had said, he said seriously: "You must ask Father Deacon about it. He is a learned man. How can I understand? - but ah!, he was speaking so well!" And this is not just a joke, but an actual, colourful example of how this unlettered, old man was dealing with what his mind could not even try to understand. F. M. Dostoevsky writes: "You should judge the Russian people not according to the vile things they often do, but according to the great and holy things for which, even in its abomination, it sighs." And he goes on: "The Russian faith, Russian Orthodoxy is everything that the Russian people regards as its holiness; therein is its ideal, all the truth and real life."

How, then, can a Russian now calmly regard the profanation and destruction of the churches, the persecution of the Faith and all the scandalous things that are done in them?

Science in its various forms is flourishing in European civilization. Science and knowledge are beautiful things. But true science and a full, deep understanding are never anti-religious; they are from God because they explain to the human soul the incomprehensible secrets of nature. And the deeper we go into science, the more faithful we are to its aims, or rather to its bases, we see God, God's holy truth. But, as the English writer, Pope, said, "Drink to the end, or don't touch wine at all." Another writer wrote: "The woes of man are from half-education."

There are minds which are broad, and yet not deep and rather short-sighted, even though they are well-read. Such ones are more dangerous than those with insufficient education. They have brought upon Europe many anti-religious

temptations. And we see how, in the previous centuries, the current of life in Europe draws further and further away from its own ancient and more Christian mould. And in this regard, the greater credit belongs to the secretive hypocrisy of the Masons. In recent times, the seeds sown by the Freemasons have sprung up. God is forgotten. All attention is drawn to hard currency and technology, but the principles of morality are regarded by the majority as nonsense and a sign of a lack of sophistication (the latter is an intellectual's most dire condemnation, and this is especially so with a Russian).

As a consequence of this we have more and more cruel wars. And finally, a global crisis, the result of pharisaism and egotism spread everywhere and in everything. And everywhere fear reigns, the fear of the anticipated global atomic destruction. And there is no peace anymore. Within people there is none of God's truth any more. Twice the Prophet Esaias repeated, "There is no peace to the wicked" (48:22; 57:21). *[The Slavonic has "no rejoicing"] And truly there is no rejoicing for the people of our times.*

To be continued in the next issue...

THE COMING MONTH

IN JUNE there are two principal feasts, the Birth of St John the Baptist (24th June/7th July) and the martyrdom of the holy Chiefs of the Apostles Peter and Paul (29th June/12th July). This latter feast should be particularly honoured by Orthodox Christians in this country, because Sts Peter and Paul are the patrons saints of our capital city, London. The Cathedral of the city is, of course, dedicated to St Paul, a dedication which stretches back well into times when the Orthodox Faith was proclaimed in this land; and the Abbey at Westminster, another foundation which predates the schism of the Roman Catholics from Orthodoxy, is dedicated to St Peter. Both of these festivals are usually celebrated among the Orthodox with a Vigil Service, although they do not rank among the Twelve Great Feasts.

St John's Birth comes just at the point in the year when the days begin to get shorter, reminding us of his own words regarding the Saviour of the world: *"He must increase, but I must decrease"* (John 3:30). Reminding us of this prophetic word, the days after the Birth of the Baptist decrease, and after the Birth of Christ they increase. The feast is kept for two days according to current practice, being combined on the second day with the commemoration of the Martyr St Febronia of Nisibis. This year, this second day of the festival falls on a Sunday and so the services appointed for the Resurrection are also chanted then. The feast of the Apostles is also kept for two days, the second day being a commemoration of the Twelve Apostles.

Among the Saints celebrated in June we have:

The Venerable Martyrs Archelaea, Thekla and Susanna (6th/19th) lived in a small community of consecrated virgins, the precursors of nuns, in the environs of Rome. When the persecution of Diocletian was raised against the Christians, adopting male attire they left the Imperial City and settled near Nola, so as to be more hidden. However, even in hiding their Christian compassion compelled them to continue acts of mercy to those in need and they were granted the gift of healing. This ministry brought many to Christ, but it also betrayed the sisters to the authorities. They were

arrested and cruelly tortured. As the leader Archelaea was subjected to particularly cruel torments. Finally they were beheaded with the sword and gained crowns of martyrdom. Their sacred relics were later taken to Salerno.

New Martyr the Priest Alexander (8th/21st): When numbers of the hierarchs and clergy in Russia protested against the impious alignment of the official Church with the Soviet State by Metropolitan Sergius, who had usurped the primacy of the Russian Church, the Metropolitan retaliated by issuing a decree in which all those who disagreed with his policy were automatically proclaimed "counterrevolutionaries." As such they were arrested by the GPU agents and sentenced to incarceration in concentration camps. One such clergyman was the Priest Alexander, about whom we have only the briefest, but the most moving, memorial, a few sentences recorded by N Urusova and quoted in "Russia's Catacomb Saints." These lines read: "A certain anti-Sergianist priest, Father Alexander, every day would come to work early [*this was in the camps -ed.*], at dawn, and on a tree stump, kneeling would serve the Divine Liturgy. Several people saw how a beam of light descended from heaven and entered his chalice, transfiguring him and those around him."

The Martyr Pelagius (26th June/9th July): We so readily think of the heretic Pelagius when we hear the name Pelagius, that we often forget that there are several Saints which bear this name also. This martyr lived in Spain in the early tenth century. His kinsman was a Bishop, named Hermogius, who had been taken captive by the Moors and held to ransom. To expedite his release, the Bishop arranged to have Pelagius, then just a young boy of ten years, handed over to the Moors as surety, while he was freed to raise the ransom money. Either the Bishop, having obtained his own freedom, was not greatly exercised to raise the sum required, or his flock were not eager to pay the ransom for their Archpastor, but the matter dragged on for three years. Seeing that Pelagius was growing into a handsome lad, the Moorish ruler purposed to have him as an attendant and tried to persuade him to become a Muslim. When Pelagius resolutely refused, he was threatened with torture and death, but stoutly confessed: "I am a Christian and believe in Christ. I will never deny Him!" He was suspended in irons by his wrists, but although he suffered agonizing pain, he would not deny his Saviour. Finally he was cut down and his arms and legs amputated, and bleeding he was left to die. His torso and severed limbs were then cast into a river, but some parts of his sacred relics were recovered by the Christians and taken to Leon.

On the same day we celebrate, Saint Dionysius of Suzdal. He had become a monk in the Kiev Caves Monastery, and then lived for a period as a hermit in a cave near Nizhnii Novgorod. Disciples gathered, and the a second "Caves Monastery" was founded there on the banks of the Volga. Saint Dionysius was a contemporary of the great Saint Sergius of Radonezh and they counselled each other; he also became renowned even outside his own monastery for his strenuous defence of Orthodoxy against the heresy of the Strigolniki. (In many ways these heretics were an early Russian version of what the West would call Protestants.) St Dionysius was well versed in the Scriptures and was able with both love and meekness to counter the false teachings of these deluded ones. In 1374, he was consecrated as Bishop of Suzdal by the Metropolitan, St Alexis of Moscow, and was later raised to the rank of Archbishop. Subsequently he was elected Metropolitan of the Russian Church and made a journey to Constantinople to obtain the blessing of the Patriarch, for at that time the Russian

Church was not yet independent of the (Ecumenical Patriarchate. On his return to Russia, he was apprehended in Kiev, which was then part of a greatly enlarged Lithuania, and was imprisoned there. He was never to see Russia again. The Lithuanians kept him a prisoner until his death, and so he was also unable to take up his obedience as primate of the Russian Church. However, he used his prison cell as a monastic cell, and ended his earthly course in 1385. His relics were placed in the caves of St Antony at Kiev.

From the Sacred Canons

IT IS PERMISSIBLE for a Christian to choose the ascetic mode of life and, abandoning the turbulent whirl of ordinary life, to enter a Monastery, and to take the tonsure in accordance with the monastic habit, even though he should have been found guilty of any offense whatsoever. For our Saviour and God said: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (Jn 6:37). As therefore monastic life represents to us a state of repentance as though engraved upon a pillar, we join in sympathizing with anyone that genuinely adopts it, and no manner of means shall prevent him from accomplishing his aim."

Canon 43 of the 102 of the Holy and (Ecumenical Fifth and Sixth Council

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

"I was instructed by my priest that in taking Holy Communion, I should not bite into It or chew It. Someone explained that this is as if you were adding more pain to the Lord. Is this correct? - M.W., Newburgh, N.Y.

It seems from how you write, that it was not your priest who gave you the explanation of his advice, but some third party. If you want an explanation of some counsel you have been given, it is always best to go back to the person who gave you the advice in the first place. They will know why they gave you that advice, and what moved them to do so. Anyone else, except perhaps a God-bearing elder, will be simply guessing.

So, first, I would advise you to go back to your priest with this question. Not only will you then get to the root of the matter, but you will also help cement the spiritual bond that you have with him. Discussing his advise with others rather than approaching him is likely only to weaken that bond, and that in time leaves you an orphan and makes it harder for him to help you. After all, then everything he says to you is up for discussion. It is not received for edification but for debate.

In fact, the "explanation" that you were given by the third party seems extremely odd, although I have heard that, when they cared about such things, overly pious Roman Catholics used to entertain such ideas. I would think that a much more likely explanation of the priest's instruction would be that he wanted to guard against tiny portions of the Holy Mysteries being trapped between your teeth or in cavities and thus in danger of being spat out later in the day. But, as I said, go back to him and ask him to explain his own words. In these days it will probably give him some encouragement that someone has reflected on his words and takes them to heart.

PAPAL VISIT TO GREECE

THE SECULAR PRESS carried several reports about the visit of Pope John Paul II to Greece, a visit which was marked by vocal protests from many of the Orthodox faithful. These protests were to an extent marred by expressions of fanaticism, and, as always seems to be the case, the Orthodox spokesmen did not always put the best case for their objections to the papal visit, leaving one with an impression of mindless hostility rather than reasoned objection. However, rather than simply exchanging niceties, His Beatitude, Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens did take the opportunity to remind the Pope of the many hurts which the Orthodox have endured at the hands of the Roman Catholics, ending with the persecution unto death of approximately three-quarters of a million Orthodox Serbs by the Ustashi (Catholic fascists) in the Second World War. For his part, the Pope made an apology for the wrongs his co-religionists have committed against us. Although your present writer has reservations about the vogue for apologizing for crimes committed in ages past, one must welcome the Pope's admission of these wrongs and his kindly gesture. However, now Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Peristerion, a hierarch of the Church of Greece and a member of its special commission on Orthodox participation in the WCC, has stated that the Greek Church was "deeply dissatisfied" with the papal visit, pointing out that the papal apology was something less than a true Christian's asking for forgiveness. He also complained that the Pope's answers to certain questions were evasive and that his silences on various subjects could only "be explained with reference to Vatican state policy." This, the Metropolitan said, shows that "the Vatican reacts as a state first and a church second." He stated that the Pope's failure to answer various questions had offended the Greek people, and he added "we cannot develop a theological dialogue until the Roman Catholic Church changes its attitude to Orthodoxy, and until it stops proselytizing at Orthodox expense." One can sympathize with the Metropolitan's distress, but cannot help reflecting that the "Ecumenical Orthodox, "such as he, are rather like the moderate Euro-sceptics in the political sphere. They are distressed by certain manifestations of the movement they half endorse and half reject, they raise objections, they procrastinate, but they are on unsure ground because they rarely if ever address the fundamental question: for the politicians, whether we should or should not be in Europe at all; and for the churchmen, whether or not there can be any "Union of Churches." Perhaps if this fundamental question could be addressed, we could swiftly put an end to the cycle of unendingly complementing each other and offending each other and achieving nothing.

The Fathers of the Holy Mount Athos addressed a letter to Archbishop Christodoulos on 2nd May, expressing their disagreement and indignation at his issuing a joint statement with the Pope, pointing out that both the fact of his co-signing with a heterodox was unthinkable and that the content of the joint statement was theologically unsound.

ORTHODOXY AND GLOBALIZATION INCOMPATIBLE

A "SCIENTIFIC-PRACTICAL" CONFERENCE was held at the Department of Sociology of the St Petersburg State University and the St Petersburg Ecclesiastical Academy in May. The conference entitled "Spiritual and Social Problems of

Globalization" declared the complete incompatibility of the doctrine of globalization and the Orthodox Christian world-view. Noting that globalization concerned not simply economic integration and technological progress, the conference saw the phenomenon rather as a means of employing information and financial technology as an instrument for achieving world leadership. The conference went so far as to state that it regarded Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church as becoming "the main impediment on the path of aspirations for world domination."

RIFTS WITHIN ROCA APPEAR

AS PERHAPS was to be expected, the Epistle addressed to the faithful by the Russian Church Abroad's Assembly of Hierarchs last October met with a very mixed response. Some welcomed it, others were much more cautious, and yet others deeply distressed by what they perceived to be a betrayal of ROCA's basic position. A number of "Appeals" and "Open Letters" have been addressed to the Hierarchs and widely circulated. Alarmed by the discord, the Synod of Bishops issued a Statement on 26th January/8th February this year professing their inner unity and unshakable stand in the truth of the Church, and affirming that they stood by the decisions and statements adopted by the earlier Council of Bishops.* In the event, this short statement did not calm the situation. In the Western European Diocese, the situation was compounded by the refusal of a large number of the clergy to accept the appointment of Bishop Ambrose (formerly of Vevey) as the ruling hierarch of the eparchy. Bishop Barnabas of Cannes, a vicar Bishop of the diocese, claimed that he had not agreed to or signed the Assembly's Letter. Two hierarchs in Russia withdrew their endorsement of the Epistle. Four priests, a hieromonk and a monk from the Kursk region addressed a particularly strong appeal to the President of the Synod of Bishops, Metropolitan Vitaly; and some clergy from the Canadian Diocese issued a statement asking for clarification of the matter. At the same time, not all responses were negative. The Clergy of the Diocese of San Francisco and Western America published a well argued defence of the Hierarchs' approach. Perhaps because the momentum of protest is always greater than that of defence, except for the Synod's February Statement and an earlier letter from Archbishop Lavr, the Metropolitan's deputy, as yet we have not seen an in-depth response from the hierarchs themselves to the various "appeals," ostensibly addressed to them. Because of their continued refusal to commemorate Bishop Ambrose and their failure to attend a meeting of the Synod and discuss matters, Bishop Barnabas and nine other clergymen of the Western European Diocese have, however, been suspended from their priestly ministry, and clergymen elsewhere in the world have faced disciplinary action for the irregular ways in which they voiced their concerns..

Metropolitan Cyprian, the President of the Holy Synod of the Church in Resistance in Greece, a sister Church of ROCA, also addressed a very moderate letter to the ROCA Hierarchs in January this year, in which he expresses some disquiet over the October Epistle and its implications, and in which the Hierarchs he leads express the hope that the ROCA Hierarchs will continue their anti-ecumenical tradition.

[* Note: The Assembly or Council of Bishops, often called by the Russian word "Sobor," is a gathering of all the Bishops of a local Church; the Synod of Bishops is a smaller committee entrusted with the day-to-day running of the Church, and answerable to the full Assembly - ed.]

CHARTA ŒCUMENICA

The EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL ENCOUNTER, a four day gathering held in Strasbourg in April was organised by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and European (Catholic) Bishops' Conference (CCEE). It culminated in a prayer service in which, on Sunday 22nd April, at St Thomas's Lutheran Church, the Orthodox Metropolitan Jeremias, the president of CEC and head of the Greek Orthodox Church in France (Œcumenical Patriarchate), and Cardinal Miloslav Vlk of Prague, the president of CCEE signed the "Charta Œcumenica," a set of guidelines to promote co-operation among the "churches" of Europe. The prayer service, during which, in violation of the Church's confessional conscience, the Metropolitan offered prayers, was presided over by Rut Rohrandt, a female Lutheran pastor from Germany, and by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray. Besides its avowedly ecumenical purpose, the document also strays into the area of syncretism with proposals to dialogue with "our Jewish sisters and brothers" (*sic*), and to work together with Muslims on matters of common concern. It also leaves open for itself to embark on endeavours in the political, social and environmental fields: "the concerns and visions of churches vis-à-vis European institutions," "the position and equal rights of women," support of "church environmental organisations," combating both "anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism." The Russian Orthodox Church (MP) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark rightly expressed reservations about the Charta.

BULGARIAN "TRIALOGUE"

LONDON JEWISH NEWS (4th May) carried a photograph and a short paragraph on an Interfaith "Triologue" group formed in Bulgaria to foster dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims. Sir Sigmund Sternburg, the president of the Reformed Synagogues of Great Britain, features prominently in the picture with religious leaders from the various Bulgarian faith communities, including an Orthodox Bishop. The group is to become the 34th constituent member of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

CANADIAN BISHOP ADDRESSES FLOCK

HIS GRACE BISHOP MICHAEL, a vicar bishop of the Canadian Diocese of ROCA, has addressed a letter to all the faithful of the diocese, responding to the "Statement" of 8th May purporting to come from the "clergy of the Canadian Diocese" (see "Rifts" above). The Bishop begins by pointing out that the irregularity of the manner in which the Statement was published and the fact that it appears to be a campaign petition and the result of some deliberate "agitation." He also notices that it was even given to children and teenagers to sign! Next, he carefully shows some of the inconsistencies in the document, and finally, after remarking that the signatories have violated the basis of all Church order, replacing it with a "party structure," he reproduces at length some extracts from the October 2000 Sobor's Epistle to reassure his people that they have been misled in reading that Epistle as ROCA's departing from her "traditional legacy," "being drawn into the Moscow Patriarchate" or veering towards ecumenism. He ends by calling of the signatories of the Statement to "recognize the non-ecclesiastical nature of their action," and upon the priests among them "to gain a more correct understanding of their obligations not only before their flock but also before their hierarchy."

ANGLICAN BISHOP TALKS SENSE

BISHOP JAMES JONES of Liverpool is reported as saying that the Kingdom of God is "grinding to a halt under the multiplicity of consultations and meetings." He complained that whenever some difficulty arose someone would suggest a consultation. "Nobody ever audits the amount of time and paper, or person hours, that will be spent on this. We have really got to exercise some leadership and say: 'Do we really need as many meetings? Do we really need as much consultation?'" Captain Philip Johanson, chief secretary of the Church Army, joined the Bishop in complaining about being bogged down in bureaucracy, saying "How far removed we are from the early church recorded in the Acts of the Apostles!" Of course, these churchmen were addressing problems which have appeared in their own communion, but we Orthodox cannot be too complacent. The same tendency is growing in our ranks.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

OVER the weekend of 12th/13th May, as dean of the English-language parishes Fr Alexis visited the Mission of Sts Felix and Edmund at Felixstowe, where he enjoyed the hospitality of Father Andrew Phillips and his matushka, Sabine, and saw their new church accommodation for the first time since they moved from the smaller chapel. Fr Andrew served the Vigil service on the Saturday evening and the two priests concelebrated at the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday morning. After a buffet style lunch in the church hall, Fr Alexis spent about an hour answering questions and views from the mission's parishioners.

Because Archbishop Mark's proposed visit will fall at almost exactly the same time as we hope to send this issue out, we shall have to report on it in our July issue. His visit has necessitated some reorganization of the service schedule. The St Boniface Mission at Ryde on the Isle of Wight will now have their June Liturgy on Saturday, 16th June at ten o'clock. And the "decanal visitation" of the Mission in Congleton will be over the weekend of 23rd and 24th June.

PRACTICAL TIP

WHEN RECEIVING the Holy Mysteries, it is the custom in the Russian Church, but not in all Orthodox Churches, to kiss the foot of the chalice after reception. One does this as if kissing the side of Christ, from which the redeeming Blood has flowed. One should not otherwise touch the chalice, lest one cause it to be spilt, and it is not right at this point to kiss the priest's hand as he holds the chalice. In churches where this custom is kept, simply kiss the foot of the chalice lightly before making way for the next communicant.