

# ***The Shepherd***

## ***An Orthodox Christian Pastoral Magazine***

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### FROM THE FATHERS

"IT IS AN IMPORTANT POINT, and contributes much to the edification of the Church, that the rulers of it should be apt to teach. If this be wanting, many things in the Church go to ruin. Therefore in addition to the qualifications of hospitality, moderation and a blameless life, he enumerates this also, saying, 'Apt to teach' (I Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24). For why else indeed is he called a teacher? Some say that he may teach philosophy by the example of his life, so that all else is superfluous, and there is no need of verbal instruction for proficiency. But why then does Paul say 'especially [worthy of honour are] they who labour in the word and doctrine'? (I Tim. 5:17). For when doctrines are concerned, what life will answer the purpose? And of what word is he speaking? Not of pompous language, nor of discourse set off with external decorations, but that which possesses the mighty power of the Spirit and abounds with wisdom and understanding. It needs not set phrases but thoughts to give it utterance, not skill in composition but power of mind."

*Saint John Chrysostom, + 407 A.D.*

"THE GUILLE of the devil, dearly beloved, against those who strive in this contest for the rewards of heaven, especially lies in wait to undo the faith of those whose virtue he cannot overthrow. For whoever is led away from the path of the true faith, and changed to another, his whole journey is an apostasy; and the further he travels from the Catholic light, the nearer he comes to the darkness of death."

*Saint Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, + 461 A.D.*

"HOW MANY THERE ARE even now who execrate the Jews for not hearing the words of God; yet, what they, whom they reprove, were in regard to believing, that they themselves are in regard to the works of Grace! They listen to the teachings of God, they see His miracles, but they refuse to change their evil ways. Behold, he calls us, and we refuse to return to Him! Behold, he waits for us, and we ignore His patience! While there is yet time, brethren, let each one of you forsake his way of evil, and let him stand in great fear of the patience of God, lest later he may be unable to escape His wrath, Whose mildness he now despises."

*Saint Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, + 604 A.D.*

# WHAT IS ORTHODOXY?

By the Ever-Memorable Archbishop Averky  
of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery  
1906-1976

ON THE FIRST SUNDAY of the Great Fast, our Church celebrates the triumph of Orthodoxy, the victory of true Christian teachings over all perversions and distortions thereof, all heresies and false teachings. On the second Sunday of the Great Fast, it is as through this triumph of Orthodoxy is repeated and deepened in connection with the celebration of the memory of one of the greatest pillars of Orthodoxy, the hierarch Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, who, by his grace-bearing eloquence and the example of his highly ascetic private life, put to shame the teachers of falsehood who dared reject the very essence of Orthodoxy, the struggle of prayer and fasting, which enlightens the human mind with the light of Grace and makes it a communicant of the Divine glory.

Alas! How few people there are in our times, even among the educated, and at times even among contemporary "theologians" and those in the ranks of the clergy, who understand correctly what Orthodoxy is and wherein its essence lies. They approach this question in an utterly external, formal manner, and resolve it too primitively, even naively, overlooking its depths completely and not at all seeing the fullness of its spiritual contents.

The superficial opinion of the majority notwithstanding, Orthodoxy is not merely another of the many "Christian confessions" now in existence, or, as it is expressed here in America, "denominations." Orthodoxy is the true, undistorted, unperverted by any human sophistry or invention, genuine teaching of Christ in all its purity and fullness, the teaching of faith and the piety which is life according to the Faith.

Orthodoxy is not only the sum total of dogmas accepted as true in a purely formal manner. It is not only theory, but practice; it is not only right Faith, but a life which agrees in everything with this Faith. The true Orthodox Christian is not only he who thinks in an Orthodox manner, but he who feels according to Orthodoxy and lives Orthodoxy, who strives to embody the true Orthodox teaching of Christ in his life.

"The words that I speak unto you are spirit and life," thus the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to His disciples of His divine teaching (John 6:63). Consequently, the teaching of Christ is not only abstract theory merely, cut off from life, but spirit and life. Therefore, only he who thinks Orthodoxy, feels Orthodoxy and lives Orthodoxy can be considered Orthodox in actuality.

At the same time one must realize and remember that Orthodoxy is not only and always that which is officially called "Orthodox," for in our false and evil times the appearance everywhere of pseudo-Orthodoxy which raises its head and is established in the world is an extremely grievous but, regrettably, an already unquestionable fact. This false Orthodoxy strives fiercely to substitute itself for true Orthodoxy, as in his time Antichrist will strive to supplant and replace Christ with himself.

Orthodoxy is not merely some type of purely earthly organisation, which is headed by Patriarchs, Bishops and priests, who hold the ministry in the Church which is officially called "Orthodox." Orthodoxy is the mystical "Body of Christ," the Head of which is Christ Himself (see Eph. 1:22-23 and Col. 1:18, 24 et seq.), and its composition includes not only the priests but all who truly believe in Christ, who have entered in a lawful way through Holy Baptism into the Church He founded, those living upon the earth and those who have died in the Faith and piety.

The Orthodox Church is not any kind of "monopoly" or "business" of the clergy, as the ignorant and those alien to the spirit of the Church think. It is not the patrimony of this or that hierarch or priest. It is the close-knit spiritual union of all who truly believe in Christ, who strive in a holy manner to keep the commandments of Christ, with the sole aim of inheriting that eternal blessedness which Christ the Saviour has prepared for us, and if they sin out of weakness, they sincerely repent and strive "to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8).

The Church, it is true, may not be removed completely from the world, for people enter her who are still living on earth, and therefore the "earthly" element in her composition and the external organization are unavoidable, yet the less of this "earthly" element there is, the better it will be for her eternal goals. In any case, this "earthly" element should not obscure or suppress the purely spiritual element, the matter of the salvation of the soul unto eternal life, for the sake of which the Church was both founded and exists.

The first and fundamental criterion, which we may use as a guide to distinguish the True Church of Christ from a false Church (of which there are now so many!), is the fact that she has preserved the Truth intact, undistorted by human sophistries, for according to the Word of God, "the Church is the pillar and ground of truth" (I Tim. 3:15), and therefore in her there can be no falsehood. Any which in its name officially proclaims or confirms any falsehood is already not the Church. Not only the higher servants of the Church, but the ranks of the believing laymen must shun every falsehood, remembering the admonition of the Apostle: "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour" (Eph. 4:25), or "Lie not to one another" (Col. 3:9). Christians must always remember that according to the words of Christ the Saviour, lying is from the devil, who "is a liar, and the father of lies" (John 8:44). And so, where there is falsehood there the True Orthodox Church of Christ is not! There is instead a false church which the holy visionary [*the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian* - ed.] vividly and clearly depicted in his Apocalypse as "a great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (Rev. 17:1-2).

Even in the Old Testament, from the prophets of God we see that unfaithfulness to the True God was frequently represented by the image of adultery (see, for example, Ezek. 16:8-58, or 23:2-49). And it is terrifying for us not only to say, but even to think, that in our insane days we would have to observe not a few attempts to turn the very Church of Christ into a "brothel," - and this, not only in the above figurative sense, but also in the literal sense of this word, when it is so easy to justify oneself, fornication and every impurity are not even considered sins! We saw an example of this in the so-called "Living Churchmen" and "Renovationists" in our unfortunate homeland after the Revolution, and now in the person of all the

contemporary "modernists" who strive to lighten the easy yoke of Christ (Matt. 11:30) for themselves and betray the entire ascetic structure of our Holy Church, legalising every transgression and moral impurity. To speak here about Orthodoxy, of course, is in no way proper despite the fact that the dogmas of the Faith remain untouched and unharmed!

On the other hand. True Orthodoxy is alien to every dead formalism. In it there is no blind adherence to the "letter of the law," for it is "spirit and life." Where, from an external and purely formal point of view, everything seems quite correct and strictly legal, this does not mean that it is so in reality. In Orthodoxy there can be no place for Jesuitical casuistry; the favourite dictum of worldly jurists cannot be applied: "One may not trample upon the law; one must circumvent them."

Orthodoxy is the one and only Truth, the pure Truth, without any admixture or the least shadow of falsehood, lie, evil or fraud.

The most essential thing in Orthodoxy is the struggle of prayer and fasting, which the Church particularly extols during the second week of the Great Fast as the double-edged "wondrous sword" by which we strike the enemies of our salvation, the dark demonic powers. It is through this struggle that our soul is illumined with grace-bearing Divine light, as teaches St Gregory Palamas, who is triumphantly honoured by the Holy Church on the second Sunday of the Great Fast. Glorifying his sacred memory, the Church calls this wondrous hierarch "the preacher of Grace," "the beacon of the Light," "the preacher of the Divine Light," "an immovable pillar of the Church."

Christ the Saviour Himself stressed the great significance of the struggle of prayer and fasting when His disciples found themselves unable to cast out demons from an unfortunate boy who was possessed. He told them clearly, "This kind (of demon) goeth not out save by prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17:21). Interpreting this passage in the Gospel narrative, our great patristic theologian-ascetic, the hierarch Theophan the Recluse, asks, "May we think that where there is no prayer and fasting, there is a demon already?" And he replies, "We may. Demons, when entering into a person do not always betray their entry, but hide themselves, secretly teaching their hosts every evil and to turn aside from every good. The person may be convinced that he is doing everything himself, while he is only carrying out the will of the enemy. Only take up prayer and fasting, and the enemy will immediately leave and will wait elsewhere for an opportunity to return; and he really will return if prayer and fasting are soon abandoned" (Thoughts for Each day of the Year, pp. 245-246).

From this a direct conclusion may be reached: where fasting and prayer are disregarded, neglected or completely set aside, there is no trace of Orthodoxy, - there is the domain of demons, who treat man as their own pathetic toy.

Behold, therefore, where all contemporary "modernism" leads, which demands "reform" in our Orthodox Church! All these liberal free thinkers and their lackeys, who strive to belittle the significance of prayer and fasting, however much they shout and proclaim their alleged faithfulness to the dogmatic teaching of our Orthodox Church, cannot be considered really Orthodox, and have shown themselves to be apostates from Orthodoxy.

We will always remember that by itself totally formal Orthodoxy has no goal if it does not have "spirit and life" - and the "spirit and life" of Orthodoxy are first and foremost in the struggle of prayer and fasting; moreover, the genuine fasting of which the Church teaches is understood in this instance to be abstinence in every aspect, and not merely declining to taste non-lenten foods.

Without spiritual struggle there is altogether no true Christianity, that is to say, Orthodoxy. See what Christ, the First Ascetic, Himself clearly says: "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34). The true Christian, the Orthodox Christian, is only he who strives to emulate Christ in the bearing of the cross and is prepared to crucify himself in the Name of Christ. The holy Apostles clearly taught this. Thus the Apostle Peter writes: "If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps" (I Peter 2:20-21). In precisely the same way, the holy Apostle Paul says repeatedly in his epistles that all true Christians must be ascetics, and the ascetic labour of the Christian consists of crucifying himself for the sake of Christ: "They that are Christians have crucified the flesh together with the passions and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). A favourite expression of St Paul is that we must be crucified with Christ that we might rise with Him. He puts forth this thought in a variety of his sayings in many of his epistles.

You see, therefore, that one who loves to spend time enjoying himself and does not think of self-denial and self-sacrifice, but continually wallows in every possible fleshly pleasure and delight, is completely un-Orthodox, un-Christian. Concerning this, the great ascetic of Christian antiquity, the Venerable Isaac the Syrian, taught well: "The way of God is a daily cross. No one ascends to heaven living coolly (i.e. comfortably, carefree, pleased with himself, without struggle). And of the cool path, we know where it ends" (Works, p. 158). This is that "wide and broad way" which, in the words of the Lord Himself, "leadeth to destruction" (Matt. 7:13).

This, then, is what Orthodoxy, or True Christianity, is!

*THIS YEAR, on Holy and Great Friday, 31st March/13th April, we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the repose of Archbishop Averky. In the foreword to the last book that he wrote, the Archbishop included words with which, as they so perfectly sum up Archbishop Averky's life's witness, the Priestmonk Ignatii ended a tribute to him. Those words are worth including here:*

*"ALL THE SWIFTLY increasing spiritual devastation in all aspects of life could not fail to prompt us to an especially forceful and fiery preaching of the Word of God, devoid of concern for oneself and any useless philosophising, with the sole purpose of showing what a truly catastrophic situation we and the contemporary world have lived to see, and where we should seek salvation. "It would go hard with me indeed if I did not preach the Gospel" (I Cor. 9:16) - in this way, we pastors, and especially archpastors, are taught by the Word of God. And finally as a result of all the emotional stress I endured over all that is taking place nowadays, I was beset (at least, that is what the doctors say) by several serious illnesses, which almost took me away from this temporal earthly life, because I could not come to terms with everything happening around me and approach it indifferently. And thus far I have not been able to fully*

*regain my strength. But, I thank the All-Holy God for not denying me the strength and ability to preach by the spoken and written word that precept of faith and piety which all true pastors of Christ's Church are called to preach constantly; in which is contained the principal duty of their service, the more so in these terrible times of rampant apostasy, when many are afraid to raise their voices and prefer to be silent. But "through silence God is betrayed" (St Gregory the Theologian) and therefore, one is alarmed for these silent, frightened pastors, who prefer to be hirelings rather than pastors. But, the Apostle Paul taught pastors through his faithful disciple Timothy: "Preach the word; dwelling upon it constantly, welcome or unwelcome, bring home the wrongdoing, comfort the waverer, rebuke the sinner with all the patience of a teacher" (2 Tim. 4:2). It is not for me to judge how I fulfilled this. I will be judged as we all will be, by the impartial God. But, I can say one thing: I did everything honestly, according to my conscience and without regard to persons."*

*To the Ever-memorable Archbishop Averky: Eternal Memory!*

## 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 Bias on Mount Athos.*

Translation by Mrs Valentina B. Merritt of Brookwood, Surrey

*Continuation from the last issue*

### Veneration of Icons

*We worship Thine immaculate icon, O Good One,  
asking the forgiveness of our failings...  
(Troparion of the Sunday of Orthodoxy)*

YOU LOOK upon the icon of the Saviour and you see that He is looking upon you with the most luminous eyes, - His gaze is an image of the fact that He is actually looking upon you with those eyes of His which are clearer than the sun, and that He sees your every thought, He hears the longings and sighings of your heart. An image [*icon*] is just an image, but through its lines and symbols it represents that which cannot be depicted or explained but only apprehended through faith. Then believe that the Saviour is always regarding you and sees you all, with all your thoughts, all your circumstances, your afflictions, sighings, as if they were in the palm of His hand - *St John of Cronstadt.*

EACH ONE of the brethren is obliged daily to venerate the wonder-working icon or the sacred relics, which are found in the monastery. This veneration must be done with three reverent prostrations, accompanied by that heartfelt prayer that the saints help him to complete his monastic journey to the glory of God and unto the salvation of his soul - *Ibid.*

## The Burning of the Lamps

*Let your lights be burning (see Luke 12:35).*

YOU LIGHT a candle before a holy image, and you consider this some service before God. But what does your service of lighting a candle before an icon mean, and how can it be pleasing to God and His saints? It must be a visible sign of the spirit burning within you, of your pious effort - *St Philaret of Moscow*.

THE BURNING CANDLES on the Holy Table represent the Uncreated Light of the Trinity (for the Lord dwells in Light unapproachable) and the fire of the Divinity which consumes our iniquities and sins; the candles in front of the icons of the Saviour signify that He is *the true Light, that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world* (John 1:9), and is furthermore the Fire that consumes or quickens our souls and bodies; the candles before the icons of the Mother of God signify that she is the Mother of the Light unapproachable, as well as her flaming love for God and her love for the race of man; the candles before the icons of the Saints symbolize the Saints' love for God, for Whose sake they sacrificed everything that man considers precious in life, even unto life itself, as did the holy Apostles, the martyrs and the rest; they represent that they are lamps for us which burn and shine through their lives, their virtues, and that they are ardent intercessors for us before God, praying for us day and night; the burning candles also represent our burning ardour for them and our heartfelt sacrifice, which out of our reverence and gratitude we offer them for their mediation for us before God - *Righteous John of Cronstadt*.

## The Censing

*The smoke of incense, which came up with the prayers of the saints (Rev. 8:4).*

THE CENSING of the icons expresses the idea that through His becoming man Christ made fragrant the earth, which had been made to stink because of the sins of man, and that the saints are before God as it were a fragrant ointment, and furthermore it represents the supplication whereby they (the saints) fill us with the ointment of a spiritual fragrance and cast out from us the foetid passions - *Saint John of Cronstadt*

THE CENSING of the Holy Table, the holy icons and those present is extremely significant and instructive! The incense, which smokes and is dispersed throughout the church, represents the life-creating grace of the Holy Spirit, which overshadows at Its advent all those who are sincerely praying and which eternally abides in the saints, who were made saints Thereby, and It abides in them; the burning censer represents the heart, in which there must burn faith, hope and love towards God, towards His saints, and towards each other; it represents that we must pray warmly, must glorify and thank God, the Mother of God and the saints the friends of God; the censing of the Holy Table, the Holy Gifts - the Divine Body and Blood, - the holy icons, symbolizes our living faith and our reverence towards God and the dread and life-creating Mysteries, and to the Mother of God and the God-pleasers, our living, holy bond of prayer with the heavenly Church, our faith in the intercessory and protective role of the saints in our communal and in our private prayers; it represents that they are ever living and to be found with us; the censing of the people represents the benevolence desire of our Mother, of the Church towards her children, that they might escape the stench of sin

and be filled with the fragrance of the grace of the Holy Spirit, with every virtue, with all the fruits of the Spirit; the censuring of those who are ministering and of the people also represents the honour that should be accorded them as members of the Church and members of Christ - *Ibid.*

... to be continued with "*The Church and Communal Divine Service*:"

## THE COMING MONTH

THE WHOLE of March this year falls within Great Lent and Passion Week, with Holy and Great Friday (Good Friday) falling on the last day of the Church calendar month, 31st March/13th April. In the article by the Ever-memorable Archbishop Averky, which we have reprinted above, mention is made of the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday of the fast, and of the commemoration of Saint Gregory Palamas on the second. Both these Sundays actually fall within February, but the Archbishop also draws extensively in his teaching on Matthew 17:21. The Gospel narrative concerning the demonized boy, from which this teaching is taken, is repeated in St Mark's Gospel, 9:17-31, and this section is used as the principal Gospel lection on the fourth Sunday of the fast, when we commemorate Saint John of the Ladder.

Most of our readers will be aware that each of the Sundays in the fast has a special significance, from which we can draw understanding of the purpose of the fast and its intent. The first of those Sundays to fall in March this year is that of the Worship of the Cross (5th/18th), during which the Holy Cross is brought out from the sanctuary and set in the middle of the church for the veneration of the faithful. This reminds us where our lenten journey is leading, to Golgotha, to the Cross. Falling in mid-lent it also reminds by what power we can reach that goal - not by our own effort, strength, virtue or ability, but by the power of the Lord's Cross. The next two Sundays are dedicated to two great ascetics, the teacher of the monastics and therefore of all Christians struggling for salvation, the Venerable John of the Ladder (12th/25th), and the great repentant sinner, St Mary of Egypt (19th March/1st April). The first by his writings teaches how to conduct the inner warfare against our sins and passions, and the second by her life gives us a wonderful example of resolution and steadfastness in repentance.

Such is the spiritual beauty of St Mary of Egypt's life that is the only one of all the lives of the Saints to be appointed to be read in church in its entirety. This is done on the Wednesday evening before St Mary's Sunday, so that even before we come to the Sunday celebration, we have the life of the saint before our eyes. On that Wednesday evening, there is a special service, Saint Andrew's Standing. It is in fact the Mattins of the Thursday, somewhat anticipated, but within it we not only read St Mary's life, we also read the entire Great Canon of Repentance of St Andrew of Crete - hence the name of the service. It is one of the longest of the lenten services, but it strengthens us to complete the course of the fast, and lest we should become weighed down with the realization of our sinfulnesses expressed in the canon, we are uplifted by the assurance of God's forgiveness even to such a sinner as was St Mary of Egypt.

A second important commemoration is made in that same fifth week of the fast. On the Saturday we have the day of the Laudation of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Again Mattins is chanted earlier than usual, on the Friday evening instead of the Saturday morning, and within it, in four separate sections, the Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God is chanted. This year, this Saturday coincides with the day of the Martyrdom of our Brotherhood's heavenly intercessor, St Edward the Martyr. This is particularly appropriate, because it was on the Saturday of the Laudation in 1982, when we had only just moved onto the property a couple of weeks previously, that the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in our church, by the late Bishop Constantine. This year we have two further especial blessings: first, it is the thousandth anniversary of the glorification of St Edward by the Old English Church in 1001 A.D - (this event is also being specially marked in Shaftesbury) -, and secondly this year His Grace Archbishop Mark plans to be with us on the feast day to celebrate the Divine Liturgy at Brookwood.

On the following Saturday we have another coincidence of two celebrations. According to the calendar of fixed feasts, it is the day of the Great Feast of the Annunciation (25th March/7th April), and according to the paschal cycle, it is the day before Palm Sunday, Lazarus Saturday, the day on which, as a fore feast of the Saviour's own resurrection eight days later, He raised his friend Lazarus, who had been four days dead, from the tomb. This coincidence of festivals is also particularly touching for our small Orthodox community here in England, because the Annunciation is the dedication festival of the Convent in Willesden, and Lazarus Saturday/Palm Sunday is a festival particularly beloved of the Christians in the Holy Land, from whence our nuns fled as refugees, eventually to settle in London.

Before His Passion, our Saviour came to Bethany to raise up Lazarus, and on the very next day we enter Holy or Passion Week with the celebration of Palm Sunday, the Lord's Entry into Jerusalem. After the festival, we have three days of reverent attention. Each day at Mattins, we chant the beautiful troparion, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," and so often these are called Bridegroom Services. He comes as the Bridegroom of the Church, in His love for her to lay down His life. On those three days, the Four Gospels from Matthew 1:1 to John 13:32 are read in church during the Hours, and on each day the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served, that the faithful may be sustained by the reception of the Holy Mysteries.

On the Thursday, we commemorate the Mystical Supper and the inauguration of the Eucharist, and the Liturgy of St Basil the Great is celebrated. We also remember on this day, the betrayal of the Saviour by Judas, and his betrayal is contrasted with the devotion shown Him by the repentant harlot who poured the oil of spikenard upon Him. Two ways open up before us: her way and that of Judas. In the evening, we have Mattins for Good Friday, which is broken by the reading of Twelve Gospels concerning the Passion. This service is celebrated before the Cross which is placed in the centre of the church, so that we stand around the Saviour's Cross.

On the Friday, the last day of the month this year, we read the Hours before the Cross, and at Vespers, served at four in the afternoon, we have the bringing out of the Winding-Sheet of the Saviour, representing His entombment at the end of the day. In the evening, we end the day and the month, with Mattins for the Saturday. During this service, lamentations interspersed with the verses of Psalm 118 are chanted before the Winding-Sheet, which at the end of the service is taken in procession around the outside of the church. This represents the descent of the

Crucified One into Hades, where He released those bound from ages past and granted them resurrection. Already mankind, in the person of the Good Thief, has entered again into Paradise, and so already in this service one hears the sound of the victory of Christ over death, Hades and the devil, which we shall celebrate so joyously on the night of Pascha.

## IMPORTANT NEW BOOK PUBLISHED

### The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism By Archimandrite Dr Justin Popovic

Translated from the Serbian by Benjamin Emmanuel Stanley  
Checked and corrected by Mother Maria

Published by Lazarica Press, Birmingham 2000  
ISBN 0 948298 17 0; softback, 190 pages, £15

THIS WORK, first published in Serbian in 1974, was written by one of the outstanding fathers within the Serbian Orthodox Church of the twentieth century, a man who is widely revered as a saint and who entered into rest in the Lord on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1979. The book is divided into two almost equal parts, the first dealing with the Orthodox Church's teaching concerning herself, and the second Father Justin's criticism of ecumenism in its various forms. Without the first part, what Fr Justin says about ecumenism would be without foundation. It is immediately clear that Father Justin is no ecumenist in the modern, and largely Western, understanding of that word. He does not mince his words, but speaks clearly and forthrightly. However, nor is this work yet another shallow and easy polemic. Fr Justin's purpose is not simply to prove others wrong and Orthodoxy right. Like the Apostles, he is a fisher of men; he writes because he seeks the salvation of his readers. His thoughts are not always easy to comprehend or comfortable, but any attempt to read this work, now presented for the first time in English, will be well rewarded. Those of us who have been ecumenists will see the paucity of that belief-system; and those who have been anti-ecumenical will see how true anti-ecumenism has nothing to do with party-spirit, with jurisdictional jousting and with fevered fanaticism - rather properly it springs, as it does in the case of Father Justin, from a well founded faithfulness to Orthodoxy, and from a pure and loving heart that desires not the damnation but the salvation of others, and loves them enough not to gull them with sentimentalities and pleasantries.

Doubtless it is not without God's Providence that this book has, through being published in English, been brought to the attention of a wider reading public at this precise time. Recently the Serbian Orthodox Church has been widely and severely criticized, and not without some foundation, for its involvement in the Ecumenical Movement, and this is an issue that it will have to confront. Much of this involvement is deplorable and cannot be excused [see *first news section item below* - ed.]. Yet, I believe, two things have to be said. First, this ecumenical involvement was foisted on the Serbian Church as a political expediency during the Communist enslavement of their country. Serbia is one of the last countries in the former Soviet bloc to free herself entirely, if indeed she already has, from her Communist past. As she has approached political liberty, she has found herself characterised as a pariah state by

the rulers of the New World Order (Brave New World indeed). Her peoples, her institutions, her aspirations have all been demonised by the willing lackeys of this New World Order, the media. Naturally, if not strictly correctly, her churchmen have felt that they needed friends elsewhere. Now was not the time to lose friends. Purists will shout that this is compromise and wrong! But purists usually shout at other people's cutting corners and are silent about those areas where they cut them themselves. Purists, moreover, would have not found themselves at rest with the Church of the nineteenth or eighteenth centuries, indeed not of any earlier century, for always in a variety of ways, they would have found others besmirching their view of what the Church should be. The commandment of love compels us to bear with a weak member. Secondly, ecumenical involvement, although deplorable, does not seem to have deeply infected the life of the Serbian Church. (One of the best rejoinders to an ecumenist I have ever heard was from a Serbian layman.) The fact that is books has been translated and published within the Serbian Orthodox Church in this country, by one of its most active parishes, is a witness to the "regard" that our Serbian Orthodox brothers in the Faith have for the wrong headed ecumenism promoted in the West.

Broadly and deeply, conscientious members of the Serbian Orthodox Church are one with their great spiritual luminary, Blessed Father Justin Popovic, when he states: "Without repentance and entry into the true Church of Christ, it is unnatural and nonsensical to speak of some sort of unification of the 'Churches', about the dialogue of love, about intercommunion. The most important thing is, above all, to become part of the theanthropic Body of Christ's Church and, thereby, become a partaker in the soul of the Church, in the Holy Spirit, and an heir to all the immortal, divine treasures that the Theanthropos [*Godman, i.e. Christ*] gives." This, rather than ecumenical double-talk, is the message of true evangelical love. These are the words of a great preacher of that love, Fr Justin.

S.F.A

## POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

*'AND ONE more question, if you don't mind much. I know that some Orthodox jurisdictions that celebrate in English use the archaic language, others the vernacular. Which style of English, in your estimation, best suits the Church of Christ? How do you feel about it as native speakers of English?'*  
- S.C., Krasnoyarsk, Russia.

... REGARDING the type of English used: We use the archaic form, with Thou and Thee. We believe that it is better in several respects. First we are following the example of other Orthodox peoples, who do not use everyday language in their worship, but one which is readily understandable to the people, but, as it were, slightly apart from daily life. This is important, because the aim of our worship is to take us apart from daily life and raise us to another world. Furthermore in English we have a certain advantage, because the archaic forms which, to a greater or lesser extent, try to imitate King James Version English, are readily understandable to modern English speakers, whereas Church Greek and Church Slavonic seem harder for the modern speakers of Greek and Russian to understand. Secondly, the archaic form has a certain resonance, which makes it stay in the mind and, one hopes, the heart longer. In telling

folk stories in English, we always begin with the phrase, "Once upon a time," - a phrase otherwise unused in modern English. It could be rendered, "there used to be" or some such modern phrase, but none of them stays with you or seizes your attention so successfully. I think that "Church English," in a less dramatic but nonetheless perceptible way, has the same quality. I know that it has been argued that Church English is simply an attempt to copy Tudor usage, and that the Tudor period has no particular relevance to Orthodoxy in England now, although for Anglicans it represents their founding era. This is true. But it is only part of the truth. Historically, Tudor English, actually early Stuart, has no particular relevance to Orthodox Christians using English today, but its use does bring two advantages. First, that form of English has been the language of prayer in this country for centuries, and was so throughout a period when the Christians living here, although non-Orthodox, were a lot closer to Orthodoxy than are their spiritual descendants today, when its use has been largely abandoned. Secondly, and much more importantly, the use of the archaic form has an immediate relevance to Orthodoxy. It has a second person singular distinct from the second person plural, and this allows for greater clarity of expression. In our services it is often of crucial importance, for theological reasons, to be able to distinguish between the singular and plural; the fact that the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, for instance, are addressed in the singular, as One, expresses a truth which is fundamental to our Faith. For these reasons we adhere to the archaic form.

*AT THE HOUR of prayer  
I promise to repent,  
yet skilfully the enemy  
urgeth me to sin,  
but deliver me from him, O God,  
and have mercy upon me.*

*(From the Lenten Triodion)*

## ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION IN ROME

ON 25th January, in the basilica of Saint Paul Outside-the Walls, His Holiness Pope John Paul II presided over an ecumenical celebration marking the conclusion of the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity." The Pope made an emotive address of the type which has now become familiar to us, but seemed to say little of substance. Afterwards participants made a profession of faith, exchanged the sign of peace, had "a hymn of charity, a prayer to the Father for communion in unity and, lastly, the blessing of Aaron" (Vatican Information Service). Participants included Anglicans, representatives of several Protestant denominations and organisations, members of the Monophysite communions, and sadly, in contravention of our faith and canonical order, representatives of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Orthodox Churches of Greece, Poland and Albania.

## ANOTHER CONSTANTINOPLE - MOSCOW DIVIDE!

GROWING DISCONTENT is reported among the Orthodox participants in the World Council of Churches. The various Orthodox Churches which are members of the

WCC increasingly feel that, as a minority presence amidst a much larger Protestant representation, their interests are overlooked. Dr Hilarion Alfeyev, a priest and member of the Moscow Patriarchate's department of external church relations, told a meeting of the WCC's central committee at Potsdam, that the Orthodox churches feel that there is no space for them to express their concerns. He hinted that unless changes were made, the Moscow Patriarchate, although now committed to the WCC, would leave the organisation. Of course, the Patriarchate should leave the organisation now, because its aims and purposes are inimical to Orthodoxy and there is indeed "no space" for an Orthodox Church within such an organisation as a fully participating member. However, one can rejoice that the sense of injustice that the Orthodox feel by their treatment within the WCC is waking them up to the possibility of withdrawing from what is essentially a pan-Protestant organisation, itself deteriorating into a syncretistic one. While Moscow is, to use a vulgar Americanism, "wising up," Constantinople is fully committed to WCC membership. Fr George Tsetsis, the representative of the (Ecumenical Patriarchate, stated that "The intention of the Orthodox is to remain here, to work together in order to reshape the council." Observation might have told Fr George that the Council has been reshaping over the last five decades, and with each "reshaping" it moves further away from Orthodoxy. His hopes are clearly unrealistic, but it seems that here is another sphere in which the Patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople are moving further apart, and on this occasion to the credit of Moscow.

## **MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE TO GLORIFY NEW MARTYR**

A REPRESENTATIVE from the Moscow Patriarchate's department on relations with the military, Archpriest Alexey Zotov, reports that the Patriarchate is preparing to glorify the Russian serviceman Evgenii (Eugene) Rodionov, who was beheaded by Chechens for his refusal to remove his baptismal cross and to adopt Islam. Three other soldiers are said to have followed his example and given their lives for the Faith, but it seems that precise evidence about their witness is hard to come by.

## **ORTHODOX CHURCH CONSECRATED IN CALCUTTA**

METROPOLITAN NIKITAS of Hong Kong was joined by Metropolitan Kyrillos of Kythera, Greece, when on Saturday 3rd February he consecrated a new Orthodox church at the girls' orphanage in Calcutta, which is supported by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center. Athonite fathers and native Indian clergy were joined by Orthodox faithful from Greece, America, Australia and the Far East for the ceremonies. Both hierarchs praised the missionary endeavours and charitable work of Father Ignatios Sennis who has worked untiringly to establish the orphanage and to further the Orthodox Christian mission in the Calcutta area.

## **GREEK ARCHBISHOP CRITICIZES STANDARDS IN MEDICAL AND SOCIAL ETHICS**

HIS GRACE, Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and All Greece, the primate of the state Church of Greece, addressed the Attica Dentists' Association last month, and took the opportunity to criticize slack standards in medical and social ethics. He

condemned abortion, euthanasia, "test-tube babies," and the possibility of parents being given the opportunity of choosing the sex of their babies. He also criticized commercial exploitation linked to the provision of bodily organs for transplants, although it seems not the practice of transplanting organs themselves. The Archbishop has also recently spoken out against "dechristianized Europeanism." In a sermon given at St Demetrius' Cathedral in Thessalonica, he called the faithful to be on their guard against the media's attempts to undermine and dissolve the significance of the Christian church.

## ROMANIAN PATRIARCH'S PAST QUESTIONED

PATRIARCH TEOCTIST of Romania retired to a monastery in 1990, repenting of his earlier collaboration with the Communist regime, but a few months later he was recalled by the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church to resume his Patriarchate. Now, an historian, Dorin Dobrinu, has discovered a document which purports to prove that, before his Communist involvement, Teoctist was a member of the fascist Iron Guard, that he participated in the organization's rebellion against Marshall Ion Antonescu in 1941 and took part in the burning of a synagogue in Iasi. The daily paper, Monitorul, published this document on 13th January this year, but a spokesman for the Patriarchate has described it as "pure invention." Those who accept the document as authentic believe that the Communists used Teoctist's earlier fascist involvement to blackmail him into collaboration with them.

## HUMAN CLONING DEBATE

THE HOUSE OF LORDS approved the cloning of human embryos on 22nd January, endorsing the earlier decision of the House of Commons in December last year. His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain of the Greek Orthodox Church was one of a group of eleven religious leaders, headed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Archbishop and the then Cardinal-elect of Westminster, who addressed an Open Letter to the Lords urging that the complex issues which surround the issue of cloning should be examined in far greater detail before any decision was reached. Their sensible plea went unheeded.

## A PLEA FROM THE HOLY LAND

SISTER MARIA of Bethany issued the following message on 19th February: "It is 9.30 Monday evening, February 19 in the Holy Land. I just got off the phone with a 35 year old Arab Orthodox woman from Beit Jala. She is huddled in the corner of her darkened house with her sister, a nun of the Russian Orthodox Convent of St Mary Magdalene, and their aged parents, Michael and Mercy. Their home is directly across from the Church of St Nicolas in Beit Jala. Needless to say the nun is trapped in Beit Jala, unable to travel back to her convent in Jerusalem. There has been incessant machine gun firing in the streets in front of them for the last two hours as well as heavy shelling from Israeli tanks positioned in the neighbourhood of Gilo, less than a kilometre to the northeast of Beit Jala.

(Gilo is land which Arabs resided on until 1967 when they were forcibly evicted by the State of Israel. A large Jewish settlement has developed there in the last eight years.) Beit Jala is a town of 14,000 people: 8,000 Orthodox Christian, 2,000 other Christian

denominations, and the remainder Muslim. At this moment the heaviest shelling is occurring in the neighbourhood of the Church of St Nicolas and numerous Christians - doctors, homemakers, grandmothers, teachers, shop owners, are huddled in the basements and dark corners of their homes in Beit Jala as I write, scared out of their wits, and praying that the nightmare will end. Many have already suffered damage to their homes (blown out windows, countless bullet holes in the walls [the children of Beit Jala are becoming 'experts' at determining the different types of bullets shot at them these last five months], chunks of exterior walls shot through with Israeli missiles in earlier attacks). Some families were courageous and determined enough to stay in their homes (where can they go?) and begin to rebuild. The destruction has begun again. There was heavy shelling last Tuesday night (the explosions could be heard in Bethany 15 km to the northeast) and again last night, but it has been the worst this evening. Funny though, I checked the news headlines (CNN, NY Times, etc) a short while ago, and there is little news of any violence in the Middle East. There was an item about a Jewish settler who was released from prison by the State of Israel today. Eight years ago he shot eleven bullets into a Palestinian man who had been arrested. The Palestinian had his hands tied behind his back and was lying blindfolded prone on the ground when he was murdered. I know unfortunately that many places in the world today can claim to be filled with injustice and horrific violence. I can only speak of what I see. Please remember the people of Bethlehem and Beit Jala in your prayers tonight."

## ORTHODOX MISUNDERSTOOD

GERALDINE FAGAN, writing in 'The Tablet' (27th January, 2001), deplures what she sees as the poor ecumenical relations between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholics in Russia. She wonders whether "the much-vaunted revival of Orthodoxy in Russia is a fiction." And goes on to comment: "Many Western commentators have looked for it in vain, expecting a healthy revival to exhibit certain characteristics, such as social work, a desire for ecumenical dialogue or a move towards modernising liturgical language." One wonders why their minds are so closed as to expect the Orthodox to exhibit signs of a revival which conform to their own presuppositions! However, after this disappointment, Ms Fagan indicates that there is indeed a true revival in church life there; she writes: "If one can speak of a revival, it does not exhibit those characteristics sought for by Western Christians. There is a core of sincere, sober-minded practising Orthodox in Russia devoted to their Church, but they tend to concentrate upon the vertical aspects of church life. Asked whether there had been an Orthodox revival in Russia, one young parishioner told me that it was difficult to know what such a revival would be like from the point of view of the New Testament, since 'God's Kingdom is not of this world'. In the light of such sentiments, it is perhaps easier to understand why one of the strongest elements of revival is not in the social sphere, but monasticism." Ms Fagan is certainly not alone in expecting Orthodox Christians to believe and behave not as their dearly held Orthodoxy would require but as "Westerners" think they should. Unfortunately, Orthodox ecumenists often feed "Western" misconceptions, and so their expectations are not to be wondered at, but unwittingly Ms Fagan indicates that there is perhaps something of a truly Orthodox revival in Russia. Any true revival there will surely spring from

monasticism, as did the evangelisation of Russia (and many other countries) in the early centuries.

## CONSECRATION OF NEW HIERARCH

HEGOUMEN AGAPIT of the St Job of Pochaev Monastery in Munich is to be consecrated as Bishop of Stuttgart on Tuesday 1st May this year. The consecration will take place at the Cathedral of the New Martyrs of Russia in Munich and will coincide with the first service there to the newly glorified Saints, Philaret of Moscow, Ignatius (Brianchaninov), Theophan the Recluse and Theophil of Kiev. The ceremonies will begin at 5 p.m. on the Monday evening with the Vigil service. The Divine Liturgy and the consecration of the new Bishop will start at 9.30 on the Tuesday morning.

## ARCHBISHOP MARK IN ENGLAND

ARCHBISHOP MARK hopes to commence his lenten visit to his English parishes on Saturday 31st March, the day of the martyrdom of St Edward. On that day, he will arrive early at Heathrow and come straight to Brookwood to celebrate the Divine Liturgy on our dedication festival. This will be the first time that we have been blessed to have an hierarchical Liturgy on either of the St Edward's days since 1984, when Bishop Gregory received the sacred relics here from the late John Wilson Claridge. On the Sunday, Archbishop Mark will serve at the Russian church in Gunnersbury, and while there will also celebrate the mysterion of Holy Unction, at two o'clock in the afternoon so that members of other congregations can attend. (For confirmation of this time, please first check at Harvard Road). The Archbishop has also requested that as many of the clergy as possible participate in the Unction service.

## BROOKWOOD NEWS

**BISHOP'S VISIT:** On Friday, 9th February, His Grace Bishop Lavrentije of the Serbian Orthodox Church paid a brief surprise visit to Saint Edward's, coming primarily, as he said, to visit his friends in the Serbian Orthodox Cemetery alongside our own. His Grace was accompanied by Father Protodeacon Djordje Cekerevac.

## PRACTICAL TIP

**DURING GREAT LENT** and Passion Week, we prepare for the festival of the Lord's Resurrection, the greatest festival in the Church Year. We all know this, and yet many of us, even those who try to keep the fast and prepare for Pascha, spoil all that we have achieved even as we celebrate Pascha. We end the food fast at Pascha, but we should not end the fast from the passions and sins; we should not immediately squander any spiritual riches we might have gathered through the lenten services and our own spiritual reading. Yet invariably most of us seem to do just that. Any good that we might, through God's grace, have achieved during the fast is usually completely forgotten by about 5 a.m. on Easter morning. Church attendance drops dramatically on the Sundays following Easter Day, whereas, if we have been spiritually enriched, it should increase! We should have realized that our hope, our joy, our heart's desire is to be found with

Christ, and we should be the more zealous to be where He is. This is not the case, because we both fast and keep festival in a completely carnal manner. We keep the fast as a matter of church observance; we find great joy in eating meats, eggs and dairy products after a seven week break. We should keep the fast to cleanse and prepare our hearts to hold a New Treasure, Christ; we should celebrate Pascha as our achieving that Treasure. This year before we spoil yet another Pascha for ourselves, let us take these things to heart, and try our utmost to hold on to the grace of the feast not for a few hours only but for the weeks ahead.