

The Shepherd

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FROM THE FATHERS

"BRETHREN, we shall hymn with praise the tongues of the disciples, because not with elegant speech, But in divine power they have revived all men. Because they took up His Cross as a reed, So that they might again use words as fishing lines, and fish for the world. Since they had speech as a sharp fishhook, Since the flesh of the Master of all has become for them a bait, It has not sought to kill, but it draws to life those who worship and praise the All-holy Spirit.

St Romanus the Melodist, sixth century

"WHENCE IS IT that we are Christians? Through faith, all will answer. How are we saved? By being born again in the grace of Baptism. For how else could we be? Then, knowing that this salvation is confirmed by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, shall we cast aside this *form of doctrine* (Rom.6:17) handed down to us? Would this not be the cause of the greatest grief, if we now found we were further off from salvation than when we first believed (Rom. 13:11); that we must now deny what before we believed? For it is same loss for anyone to depart this life unbaptised, as to receive that baptism from which one thing of what has been handed down has been omitted. And whoever does not observe the profession we made on our first *entering in*, when delivered *from idols*, we approached the living God, and does not hold fast to it throughout his life as his surest protection, makes himself a *stranger* from the *promises* of God (1 Thess. 1:9); dishonouring the pledge he himself gave at his profession of faith. For if for me my Baptism was the beginning of my life, and that day of my rebirth the first of all days, then plainly the word I spoke on the day of my adoption is the one most of all to be honoured."

Saint Basil the Great, 330 - 379 A.D.

"OUR GOD and *Father is the husbandman*; the God of our salvation [the Son] is *the true Vine*; and the Holy Spirit waters our souls. So ensure by your prayers that the highest Father of the household and the heavenly Husbandman and the careful Gardener attend, haunt, and mark out the garden of my soul like the one in which He taught, prayed and rose again. May He strengthen in me the bond of His love, that I may live as a branch which cleaves to Him. May He order His clouds to rain on me, and remove from my heart debased feelings of carnal reflections, so that He may dispel the creatures hostile to a good harvest."

Saint Paulinus of Nola, 353 - 431 A.D.

"WHEN GOD THE SON was speaking concerning the Holy Spirit, He said not once, but twice in the course of the same speech that the Holy Spirit is 'from the Father.' Why did He not say 'and from Me'? Our opponents reply that He was speaking humbly as a man; but we, quickly answering, convict them at once of a lie. The words I Whom I will send unto you,' were not spoken as man, but rather as God; for a man

does not send God, if the Holy Spirit is indeed God. Therefore, twice He said 'from the Father' in order to confirm such a sublime utterance and to stop the mouths of those who in the future would say that the Spirit proceeds from the Son."

Saint Photius the Great, 820-891 A.D.

COME, O YE PEOPLES, LET US WORSHIP THE GODHEAD IN THREE PERSONS

By

Saint John of Shanghai the Wonderworker

GOD is a Holy Trinity. A Trinity consubstantial and indivisible. Consubstantial, i.e., of one essence, one nature. A Trinity indivisible: the Son has never been divided from the Father, nor the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, and never will be divided.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three gods, but one God, since They have one nature, but not merely because of this. People also have one nature, one essence. But with people one cannot say that two or three people are one person, no matter how close to one another and harmonious they may be. People not only have separate bodies, but each also has his own will, his own tastes, his own moods. No matter how similar people may be in body and character, it still never happens that everything is in common or that everything is the same.

With the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity everything is in union. The boundless love of the Father for the Son, of the Son for the Father, and the same love between Them and the Holy Spirit make Their will and all of Their actions to be common. They have one will, and They do everything together. Whatever pleases the Father also pleases the Son and the Holy Spirit. Whatever displeases the Holy Spirit also displeases the Father. Whatever the Son loves, the Father and the Holy Spirit love also.

Everything is accomplished jointly by the Holy Trinity. At the creation of the world, it says in the Bible: *And God said, let there be light: and there was light'* (Gen. 1:3). What does "said" mean? It means that God the Father created by His Word, by that Word of Which the Gospel says, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (Jn 1:1), and Which is the Only-begotten Son of God.

God the Father created everything by His Word; in other words, He accomplished everything through His Son. The Father does not create anything without the Son, just as the Son does not create anything without the Father, and the Father and the Son always assist the Holy Spirit. It is said in the Bible about the creation of the world: *And the Spirit of God moved over the waters* (Gen. 1:2). It "moved" over creation, but did not merely move over it - not having exactly the corresponding expression in Slavonic [*St John is addressing his flock in Russian and therefore quoting the Scriptures in Church Slavonic, but in fact the same applies to the English translations of the Scriptures - ed.*], the word in the Hebrew original

signifies "to cover", "to warm," similar to a hen sitting on her eggs, giving life to them by her warmth, so that a living creature might come forth.

By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them by the Spirit of His mouth (Ps. 32:6). All that exists was created by God the Father through the Son and was brought to life by the Holy Spirit. In other words, everything which the Father wanted or wants, was or is immediately fulfilled by the Son and is animated by the Holy Spirit. Thus was the world created, thus was all accomplished by the providence of God concerning the world and mankind.

In order to save man, who through sin had fallen away from God and become mortal, the Son of God, in accordance with the pre-eternal counsel of the Holy Trinity, obeying the will of the Father, came down to earth, was born of the Ever-Virgin Mary through the action of the Holy Spirit, proclaimed to the people the True God the Father and His divine will, taught the true worship of God, suffered for our sins, descended in soul into hades, and having freed the souls of the dead, rose from the dead.

Even before His suffering, Christ promised His apostles, chosen by Him from among His disciples, to give them power to loose and to bind -to remit people's sins or to leave them in them. After His resurrection, the Lord did not bestow this grace-filled gift separately on each one of the apostles, but on all of them together: He established His Church, the repository of that grace, uniting in Her all those who believe in Him and love Him.

Having promised His apostles to invest them with power from on high, having sent down the Holy Spirit, having accomplished all for which He had come to earth, the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, receiving in His humanity that glory and honour which He had since before the creation of the world as the Son of God.

Having descended upon the disciples of Christ according to the promise, the Holy Spirit strengthened them in the faith of Christ and through His grace poured upon them the gifts of God. He strengthened them for the preaching and fulfilment in life of the teachings of Christ, for the building up of the Church founded by Christ and brought about through the action of the Holy spirit.

The Church standing on her foundation on earth and headed by the Son of God seated at the right hand of the Father, is mysteriously guided by the Holy Spirit. She internally links all Her children and unites them with God. Through the Church God's gifts of grace are poured out on those who strive to follow the way of Christ, sanctify and fortify all good in them, cleanse them from sin and all impurity, making them able to become receptacles of the radiance of the glory and power of God.

Through the Church man is made a partaker of the divine nature, he enters into the closest relationship with the Holy Trinity.

Not only the soul, but also the body of man is sanctified and communes with God by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, through which he is united with the entire Holy Trinity. Through divine grace, with the participation of his own will and powers, man becomes a new creature, a participant in the eternal kingdom of God.

Nature is being prepared for that coming Kingdom of God, for the imminent cleansing by fire of the consequences of the sin of mankind and the curse which lies on it. She receives the first fruits of sanctification through the descent on her of the Holy

Spirit at Theophany in the blessing of the waters and in many other Church services, so that she may later become a new earth and a new heaven.

This will be accomplished at the time appointed by God the Father, and the Son of God will come in glory to pronounce judgment on the world.

Then those who have loved God and have been united with Him will shine with the rays of divine light and will eternally delight in the uncreated light of the Triune Godhead of the Consubstantial, Lifegiving and Indivisible Trinity.

To God, our Creator and Saviour, be glory, honour and worship unto endless ages:

*Come, O ye peoples, let us worship the Godhead in three Hypostases:
the Son in the Father, with the Holy Spirit;
for the Father timelessly begat the Son, Who is co-eternal
and of one throne; and the Holy Spirit was in the Father,
glorified with the Son; one Might, one Essence, one Godhead,
which we all worship, saying: Holy God, Who didst create all
things through the Son, with the co-operation of the Holy Spirit.
Holy Mighty, through Whom we have known the Father
and through Who the Holy Spirit came to the world
Holy Immortal, the Comforting Spirit
Who proceedest from the Father and restest in the Son.
O Holy Trinity, glory be to Thee.*

(Dogmaticon of Great Vespers of Pentecost)

From The Orthodox Messenger, August 1960

Adapted from

**"THE HOUSE OF GOD
AND THE CHURCH SERVICES"**

By the Priest N. R. Antonov

Continuation

§ 73. A General Overview of the Proskomidi. The clergy vest after reading a short rule of prayer before the Royal Gates, kissing the icons of the Saviour and the Mother of God, and bowing to each other and to the faithful to ask their forgiveness for all their sins and offenses. They then enter the sanctuary, and so that short rule of prayer is referred to as the "Entry Prayers." After bowing before the Holy Table, they vest in the full set of liturgical vestments according to their rank. As each vestment is put on, they silently say a prayer, usually a short psalmic verse.

Then the priest (and deacon) wash their hands before approaching the prothesis table, and make three reverences before it, and prepare the holy vessels.

Taking the first prosphora, the priest makes the sign of the cross over it - (or in the Greek practice when one large prosphora is used, over the central seal of the five) - three times with the lance, saying each time "In remembrance of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ." This means that we are starting the celebration of the Liturgy in accordance with the command of Jesus Christ and in remembrance of Him. Then repeating the prophetic words from Esaias, "He was led as a sheep to the

slaughter.... And as a blameless lamb before its shearers is dumb, so opened He not His mouth.... In His humiliation His judgment was taken away.... Who shall declare His generation," with the lance he cuts deep into the prosphora on all four sides of the seal. Then he cuts deep under the seal, so that a cube-shaped portion is extracted from the prosphora. This cube is called the Lamb. He lifts the Lamb onto the paten or diskos, saying, "His life was taken away from the earth" (see Es. 53:8), then saying "Sacrificed is the Lamb of God for the life and salvation of the world," he cuts across the underside of the Lamb deeply, so that the Lamb now consists of four portions held together by a thin cross-section at the very top. In the Greek usage, he cuts one way with the verse above, and then cuts the other way, remembering the Saviour's crucifixion. The Lamb is then righted, and the priest pierces it with the lance, saying "One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and forthwith there came out blood and water..." And so saying, he pours wine and water into the chalice, and blesses it. Having completed the preparation of the Lamb and the Chalice, he takes the other prosphoras (or seals) in turn.

From the second prosphora, he takes a triangular portion in honour and memory of the Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and he places that on the right side of the Holy Lamb. From the third seal, he takes nine smaller triangular particles, in honour of the nine orders of God's Saints, and he lays these in order on the left side of the Holy Lamb in three rows of three. From the fourth seal, he takes particles to commemorate the living. First of all, for the episcopate of the Orthodox Church, for the local ruling hierarch, and for all the priestly orders, and if it be in an Orthodox country, for the monarch and royal house. These portions he places in front of the Lamb, and later adds to them particles for all the living whom he is asked to commemorate. The fifth prosphora or seal is used for the commemoration of the faithful departed, the Bishop who ordained him, the founders and benefactors of the church, and again all whom he has been asked to commemorate by those attending the Liturgy.

Although Fr Antonov does not mention this, in the Russian practice, he then takes particles from small prosphoras which the faithful have sent up to have blessed in this way, as he commemorates the names of their loved ones.

At the end of the commemorations, when all the particles have been taken from the prosphoras and placed on the paten in front of the Lamb, the priest blesses the incense in the censer, and censens the Asterisk or Star, placing it over the holy Bread and the particles on the paten. Then in turn he censens the first veil and places it over that, and taking the second veil and censening it, he places it over the chalice. Finally he censens the Aer or large veil and places that over both the sacred vessels and their contents. Each of these censening and coverings is accompanied by words of prayer. The priest censens the prothesis and reads a prayer in which he asks the Lord to accept the gifts on His altar above the heavens, and to remember those who have made offerings and those for whom they were made, and that the clergy may be preserved blameless and uncondemned in their sacred ministry with regard to the Divine Mysteries. He then ends by making the lesser dismissal.

§ 74. The Order of the Proskomidi. From what we have explained above in the overview of the Proskomidi, it is evident that its order may be said to fall into the following seven actions:-

- 1) The taking of the Holy Lamb from the first prosphora.
- 2) Placing the Lamb on the paten, and the pouring of wine and water into the chalice.
- 3) Taking particles from the other four prosphoras or seals.
- 4) Placing the Asterisk over the paten.
- 5) Covering the paten and chalice with the veils.
- 6) Censing the prepared Lamb and particles.
- 7) Reading of the prayer that the Holy Gifts may be accepted, and the dismissal.

§ 75. The Symbolical and Moral Significance of the Various Parts of the Proskomidi. In serving the office of the Proskomidi, the sacred things and rites have the following symbolical meanings. The prosphora represents the All-holy Virgin Mary. The keeping of the prosphora in a special separate place (apart from other everyday goods and foodstuffs), even before it brought to the proskomidi table, represents the entry of the Mother of God into the Temple of the Lord and her staying there. The transfer of the prosphora to the proskomidi table signifies the journey of the Holy Virgin and Saint Joseph to Bethlehem. The taking of the Lamb out of the prosphora represents the birth of Jesus Christ from the holy Virgin Mary. The proskomidi table itself, at this moment, represents the cave where Christ was born, and the diskos or paten the manger, wherein He was laid. The veils represent the swaddling bands in which Jesus Christ was wrapped (Luke 2:7); the Asterisk is the Star which appeared to the Wise Men, and the censer and the incense portray the gifts which the wise men offered to the Christ.

Inasmuch as Christ was born that He might suffer for the sins of men and this Passion was fore-ordained of God the Father from all eternity, it follows that, from the moment of the incarnation or birth of Christ, the Cross was already prepared for Him, and so, at the same time as she commemorates the birth of the Saviour, the Holy Church unites with it the commemoration of His Passion, death and burial. Thus as he commemorates the Saviour's birth from the Virgin, as he takes the Lamb out from the prosphora, the priest pierces the Lamb with the lance, and recites the words of the Prophet Esaias, which foretold the Passion of the Saviour (He was led as a lamb...., and the rest). With regard to the remembrance of His Passion, the proskomidi table represents Golgotha, the paten the Tomb, and the veils the burial linens of Jesus Christ. The bread used at the proskomidi must needs be leavened signifying that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." The collection of all the particles around the Holy Lamb on the paten represents the Church of God, at whose head is the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is for this reason that in the proskomidi that we only commemorate the Orthodox Christians, known to be members of the Church. The censing represents the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, Whose Grace is poured forth in the Mystery of Holy Communion.

...to be continued with "The Second Part of the Liturgy."

Troparion of Holy Pentecost

BLESSED at Thou, O Christ our God,
Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise
by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit,
and through them didst draw the world into Thy net.
O Befriender of man, glory be to Thee.

Plagal of the Fourth Tone

THE COMING MONTH

WE BEGIN JUNE this year with a day of the commemoration of the faithful departed, a Soul Sabbath (Saturday 1st/14th June). This memorial is always kept on the day before the Great Feast of Pentecost-Trinity. The reason for this is that we believe that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and disciples on the day of Pentecost than He might bring salvation to the race of man. Those who have departed from this life in the Faith are not excluded from this blessing, for they too are members of the One Church. Thus by keeping this day, and by the bequests that are made for them in the Kneeling Prayers on the Sunday afternoon, we call down upon the departed the blessing and grace of the Holy Spirit, that they might be refreshed thereby.

In Old Russia in some of the larger cities, they used to serve a funeral service on the Thursday for all those who had died, being denied the ministrations of the Church through circumstances beyond their control, but our remembrance on this day commemorates all who have died in the Faith.

The Great Feast itself starts with a festive Vigil Service on the Saturday evening. Usually the churches are decorated with green branches and oftentimes the floor is strewn with grass. It is also the custom in many churches that during the services for Pentecost Sunday the clergy and people hold bunches of flowers. All these things speak of freshness and renewal, of a new flowering. They are outward symbols of the inner renewal of our souls, and the flowering there, that should be our response to the blessing of the Holy Spirit's grace.

Perhaps the most memorable part of the celebration is the reading of the three Kneeling Prayers during Vespers on Sunday afternoon. Because these are of such fundamental importance, in many parish churches the Vespers service is appended to the Liturgy on that day, so that as many people as possible can participate in these prayers. In the first prayer, we beseech God the Father that our sins be forgiven and that we be sanctified. In the second, addressed to the Son, we ask for the spirit of wisdom and for God's compassion. In the third, also addressed to the Son, Who, for the salvation of our kind, descended into hades and despoiled it, we ask that grace be given both to the members of the Church still struggling in this life and to the faithful departed. The priest reads these prayers kneeling at the Royal Gates and facing the congregation. The faithful for their part attend to them, kneeling and with their heads bowed to the ground.

The festival is kept for a week, and during that week no fasting is enjoined. However, the first Sunday after Pentecost is kept as a festival of All Saints, and

immediately after that, on the Monday, we begin the Apostles' Fast. This fast, which reminds us how the Scriptures record that the Apostles and their disciples prepared for their ministry with prayer and fasting, lasts from that Monday until the feast of Sts Peter and Paul on 29th June/12 July. As the fast begins on a day determined by the moveable cycle of feasts dependent on Pascha, and ends on a day determined by the fixed calendar, the length of this fast varies from year to year. It can be as short as eight days or as long as six weeks. This year it lasts just eighteen days.

One can see how ancient the observance of this fast is from a sermon of St Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, who died in 461 A.D. He ends one of his homilies on Pentecost with these beautiful words: "It is the Spirit of Truth Himself Which causes the house of His glory to shine with the splendour of His own light, and in this temple He wills that there should be nothing unworthy, nothing wanting in fervour. It is also by His teaching and assistance that the purification of fasting and almsdeeds has been imposed upon us. For this venerable day is followed by the most salutary practice of abstinence, which all holy men have ever found most profitable to themselves, and which we exhort you, with all pastoral solicitude, that you carefully observe, so that should you in these days have acquired any stain through heedless neglect, then let the correction of fasting cleanse it, and the devotion of your piety amend it."

As readers will observe from the Calendar insert for the month, the Apostles' Fast is not kept so strictly with regard to its dietary prescriptions as is the Great Fast, but the faithful are nonetheless enjoined to apply themselves to prayer, spiritual reading and the practice of the Christian virtues, pre-eminent among them, as St Leo indicates, to almsgiving.

Among the Saints in June, we have:-

Saint Ithamar, Bishop of Rochester (10th/23rd) was a native of Kent, and the first Anglo-Saxon (Englishman), to receive episcopal consecration. He was elected to be Bishop of Rochester on the death of St Paulinus, and it fell to him to consecrate Frithona, the first native Archbishop of Canterbury, to that metropolitan see. On his consecration Frithona took the Latin name, Deusdedit, and it is as St Deusdedit that he is known to us. It was said of St Ithamar that in virtue and learning he deserved to be compared with his Roman predecessors, and so one can guess that then too there was perhaps some suspicion about convert clergy, although perhaps less justified than it is today! He entered into rest in the year 671.

The Virgin Martyr Macra (11th/24th) was born and raised in the district around the present city of Rheims. When the persecution of Diocletian assailed the Christians, she was arrested and interrogated, but she assured her tormentors that they might tear her body but that they would be unable to tear her from the love of Christ. After torture she was thrown into prison, and then taken to the town of Fismes, where again she was tortured. They cruelly cut off her breasts and threw her into prison again. During the night an old man, who was moved to pity by her suffering, gained access to the prison and brought with him a healing ointment in an attempt to alleviate some of her pain and discomfort. The martyr, however, assured him that she was ready to bear any pain for her Saviour. The next day she was taken out and thrown onto a bed of burning coals and thereon gave up her soul. She bore witness to the Saviour c 305 A.D., and the day of her martyrdom was 6th January, but as this coincides with the

festival of the Theophany, 11th June, the day of the translation of her relics, is more often observed as her feastday.

Saint Jonas of Moscow (15th/28th): On this day the Serbs celebrate one of their greatest saints and national heroes, St Lazar, who fell at Kosovo in 1389 A.D., and this Russian saint who lived a generation or so later was one of the Saints who contributed to the establishment of Orthodox Russia. He was born near Soligalich, and as a twelve-year-old boy resolved to take up the monastic life. At first he entered a monastery near his childhood home, but later he transferred to the Simonov Monastery in Moscow. He lived so strictly by the monastic rule that he aroused ire in some of the less assiduous fathers, but his virtue was recognised by others and in 1431 A.D. he was consecrated to be Bishop of Ryazan. Two years later he was elected to be Metropolitan of the Russian Church, but a whole series of obstacles, such as one only seems to find in Russian church life, meant that he was not actually raised to this See until 1443 A.D. St Jonas was a zealous and wise pastor of the flock entrusted to him, and he endeavoured to evangelise the many peoples within the Russian domain who were still pagans. Such was the confidence that he inspired that when, in 1451 A.D., the Grand Prince had to leave Moscow to undertake military offensives against the Nogaitsi, he entrusted the city to the care and administration of St Jonas. While the Grand Prince was absent, however, the Nogaitsi turned and attacked Moscow, they set fire to the suburban settlements, and the winds turned the flames towards the heart of the city and the Kremlin. Through the smoke and clamour, St Jonas led a procession with the Cross, beseeching the merciful God to spare the city and its people, and the winds changed and the city was spared. St Jonas also laboured to bring peace among the various princes of Russia and to help establish the fledgling state which was centring on Moscow. Even more zealously he worked for the establishment of the Church, adorning churches, supporting the monasteries, and striving to extirpate error. He laboured to warn the faithful against the deceit of the Unia which was taking hold, particularly in the South-West. He was also untiring in helping the poor and the needy. All these virtues are to a degree outer ones, and merely indicate the depth and purity of his inner life, but that depth and purity are more expressly manifested by the fact that he was granted the gift of clairvoyance and of healing. He died on 31st March, 1461 A.D. Eleven years later on 27th May, his sacred relics were uncovered and found to be incorrupt. They are enshrined in the Cathedral of the Dormition within the Moscow Kremlin. Some 31 epistles written by the saint survive to this day.

The Righteous Sampson the Hospitable (27th June/10th July) was born into a rich and eminent family in Rome, and was given a good education. In particular he studied medicine. In his love for his fellow man, he served as a compassionate physician offering his services to all in need without charge. After some time, he moved to the New Rome, Constantinople, and there found a small house in which to live and from which to continue his healing ministry. From his wealth he distributed alms to the churches and monasteries and to the poor. Such was his virtue that the Patriarch ordained Sampson to the sacred priesthood. It happened that the Emperor Justinian fell ill, and when physicians had failed to find a cure or to alleviate his distress, the blessed Sampson was called in. He prayed and laid his hand on the ailing Sovereign and thus healed him immediately. Justinian insisted on giving the Saint a huge monetary reward, but the righteous one would not accept it for himself, saying

that for the sake of Christ, he had already given away one fortune. Instead he persuaded the Emperor to build a hospital, which in those days, meant a place where not only the sick, but all those in distress, were looked after and cared for (something we seem to have lost in our "more caring society"!). St Sampson spent the rest of his life caring for the needy in this hospital. He entered into rest on 27th June, 530 A.D., and he is numbered among the Unmercenary Saints, whom the Orthodox call upon in sickness.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

HOW DO WE square up Biblical teaching with evolution and genetics? I think first we have to realise that there are three "types" of science from our point of view. First, much modern science perhaps even helps the Christian. For instance to go back to the decomposition of the body / resurrection problem [*an earlier question raised by our correspondent*]. This must have seemed a great mystery to earlier generations. Now we know that even throughout our earthly life most of the molecules, cells and things in our bodies will change, but we end up at age 95 with the "same" body as we had the day we were born, even though most of the material in it is different. You would know more about this than me, but presumably this is so because of the DNA - the blueprint hasn't changed. For us then, knowing these things from science, it is easier for us to understand something (a very little something) more of the "how" we could be resurrected with the same body when the whole thing will have rotted away, been eaten, burned, atomised in a nuclear war or whatever.

Secondly, some science is neutral. You mention genetics - there seems to be nothing in genetics that is contrary to anything in Scripture -it simply explains how various characteristics are inherited. One might even argue that the OT emphasis on genealogies bears witness to some such genetic reality.

Evolution is a harder area, but much of what passes for the "truth" about evolution is not science. It is another belief system, contrary to the Christian one. In the compass of a note such as this I cannot say much but would recommend that you read Father Seraphim Rose's book on this one.

More fundamentally we have to bear in mind that whether science seems to back up Christian teaching, to be neutral about it, or even contradict it; it is a lower level of knowledge than the revealed truth of the Gospels. We have grown up in a generation which sees science as the apogee of learning and understanding. St Isaac the Syrian discerns three levels of knowledge - science falls into the lowest of these.

N.B. Homily 52 of the Ascetical Homilies of St Isaac the Syrian distinguishes the Three Degrees of Knowledge.

NEWS SECTION

ALLEGED PLOT TO MURDER PATRIARCH

"THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH" (18/5/03) carried a report that His Grace Bishop Timotheos of Vostra has been accused of offering a Yusuf Nairn al-Mufti, \$500,000 to engage a hitman to murder His Beatitude Patriarch Eirenaios of Jerusalem. Bishop Timotheos has denied the charge, but the Athens criminal prosecutor, Dimitris

Asproyerakas, has announced that he would be charged with forming a criminal gang and inciting a criminal act. Al-Mufti claims that Timotheos visited him at his home in Beit Jala to strike a deal. Having found a suitable hit-man, al-Mufti claims that he could not fulfil the contract because of difficulties caused by the then Israeli siege of the Church of the Nativity, in which this man was involved. Before he could engage a second hitman, al-Mufti himself was arrested by the Palestinian authority on theft charges, and it was then that his story came out. Lawyers representing Bishop Timotheos say that he does not know and has never met al-Mufti, and that he intends to respond by tabling a defamation suit against the Patriarch.

SERBIAN HIERARCH GLORIFIED

THE HOLY ASSEMBLY of Bishops of the Serbian Church, issued a statement on 19th May, saying that they had "with one heart and one voice unanimously decided to enter Bishop Nicholai (Velimirovc) of Ohrid and Zicha into the calendar of saints of our Holy Orthodox Church." Noting the fact that Bishop Nicholai, who has the closest links with the Serbian Orthodox Church in Britain, having worked and ministered here, is already widely recognised as a saint by many Orthodox Christians, the statement continues: "By this canonisation the Holy Assembly in fact joyously confirms the widespread and generally agreed upon consciousness of his holiness among the people of God, not only in our own local church, but in all the other local churches as well. The dates of the liturgical commemoration and feast days of this Holy Hierarch are set as the day of his blessed falling asleep in the Lord, 5th/18th March, and the day of the translation of his holy relics from America to Serbia, 20th April/3rd May. The festal Hierarchical Liturgy with all the members of the Holy Assembly participating in honour of the newly-proclaimed Saint Nicholai of Ohrid and Zicha will be held on the feast of the Holy Peers of the Apostles Cyril and Methodius, the Enlighteners of the Slavs, on 11th/24th May, 2003, in the Memorial Church of St Sava on Vracar in Belgrade."

ROCA SYNOD IN MUNICH

THIS YEAR, the Spring session of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad was held, under the presidency of His Eminence Metropolitan Lavr, in Munich between 12th and 14th May. In addition to the Synod members and the auxiliary member Bishop Ambroise of Geneva, Bishops Michael of Boston and Agapit of Stuttgart participated. Subjects discussed included the letter of Patriarch of Moscow proposing the establishment of a Western European metropolia, the situation in the Holy Land, the elevation in the next few months of Archimandrite Peter (Lukianov) to the episcopate as a vicar bishop within the Chicago diocese, and preparations for the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the glorification of St Seraphim of Sarov. The meeting also blessed the preparation of an All-Diaspora Clergy Conference to be held in Lakewood, New Jersey, and the convening of the XI All-Diaspora Conference of Russian Orthodox Youth to be held at the end of June and beginning of July in San Francisco.

In reply to Bishop Ambroise's request for guidance on how to reply to the initiative of Patriarch Aleksii II, the Bishops sent him a letter which they also permitted to be posted on the website.

This letter points out a number of things which were unclear in the Patriarchal letter and in the way it was disseminated. They also note that there are variant

readings, the French language version not agreeing with the Russian. They raise two important points: that the letter addresses individual hierarchs by-passing their higher ecclesiastical authorities, and that it pays no regard to the rights and powers of the ruling hierarchs it addresses and thus separates hierarchs from their flocks. The letter advises Bishop Ambrose, "It must be left to you, as a hierarch who has received such a written appeal, to publish it with your own considerations." They also add: "The woeful events in the British diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate itself further convince us that caution is required in dealing with these questions."

MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE INCREASES PASTORAL WORK IN WESTERN EUROPE

THE HOLY SYNOD of the Russian Orthodox Church (MP) met on 7th May, and a lengthy statement of their decisions has been issued. Among the many matters mentioned, the establishment of several new parishes in Germany, the Canary Islands, Porto (Portugal), Bordeaux (France), Verteros and Uppsala (Sweden), is endorsed. Within Russia itself the Holy Synod authorised the opening of three monasteries and three convents.

In recent weeks a great deal of news print has also been devoted to the subject of the possible successor of Aleksii II as Patriarch of Moscow, but much of this is at worst scurrilous and at best mere supposition. It is perhaps best ignored, until that subject is addressed by the Assembly of the Moscow hierarchs themselves when the need arises.

GOD OR MAMMON: A CHOICE FACING ROMANIAN CHRISTIANS

ARCHBISHOP ANDREI (Andreicut) of Alba Iulia is leading a protest against plans to bulldoze eight churches and nine cemeteries to make way for Europe's biggest opencast goldmine at Rosia Montana in the Apuseni Mountains in Transylvania. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of the town, Gyorgy-Milos Jakubinyi, has joined the protest, and points out that although the Orthodox, Catholic, Reformed and Unitarian churches were consulted over the project, this was only after the government had signed contracts with the Gold Corporation, a Canadian-Romanian joint venture, which aims to extract 300 tons of gold and 1,600 tons of silver from the 4,000 acre site. The project will also mean that about 2,000 people will have to leave their homes. Historians, archaeologists, and environmental groups have joined the protest. The Orthodox Archbishop's protest is moderate. He states that he understands that the government is not intentionally destroying culture and spirituality, and he added: "Although we all want to save our country's spiritual treasures, the tragedy lies in the fact that people are poor and the economic needs immense."

HEALTH CRISIS IN IRAQ, WARNS ORTHODOX OFFICIAL

DAVID HOLDRIDGE, chief operating officer of the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), which is based in Baltimore, Maryland, who is in Amman endeavouring to coordinate the distribution of aid in Iraq, has warned of the dramatic increase in healthcare problems in that country in the aftermath of the US-led war against it. Holdridge spoke of the trauma that particularly the elderly and the children had experienced in the bombing, and of the fact that in the north of the country

between 300,000 and 400,000 people had been displaced. In Baghdad, he said, people were suffering from a lack of basic medical care.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

PLANNING PROGRESS

It is with some gratitude that we are able to head these paragraphs with these words. Just over a week before, we received confirmation that our application would go before the planning committee of Woking Borough Council on 21st May. We were also given to understand that the planning officers were still recommending a refusal, and a few days later we received a copy of their reasons. On Sunday, 18th May, a moleben was chanted after the Divine Liturgy, to St Edward, St Xenia of Petersburg and St Moses of Optina, who was in his lifetime such a great monastery builder. That evening, the site was visited by our newly elected ward Councillor, Philip Goldenberg, who felt there were two main issues to be addressed: - a) demonstrating that there were special circumstances to allow the development in the Green Belt, and b) the design of the proposed building. He promised his support. On the Wednesday afternoon, we received a surprise visit from Mr Chris Fairlamb, the borough's Chief Planning Officer, who discussed the same issues. Over twenty people joined the members of the Brotherhood at the hearing, and Mr Fairlamb announced that they had received 38 letters and e-mails supporting our application and he gave a resume of opinion. In the event, the committee voted to accept that a special exception to Green Belt regulations should be made to allow the building of the monastery house, but asked that the design of the building be modified. No one opposed our application, and of the fifteen committee members only two voted against the majority decision. They did so because they felt that the application and the design should be accepted as they stand, not because they opposed us.

We owe thanks to God and His saints, for bringing the matter thus far, and on the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman we chanted the Thanksgiving Service and Te Deum after the Divine Liturgy. We also owe special thanks to the excellent Cllr Goldenberg, who was as good as his word and spoke with a fiery zeal in supporting us, and to the other councillors who not only supported us, but in several instances spoke in such appreciative terms of the establishment of the Brotherhood within the borough. One called it "an oasis in a wilderness"! We would also like to thank all of you, who prayed for us, and who assisted us by turning up at the meeting and by sending letters of support. These expressions of support do seem to have had a significant influence on the decision.

A meeting has been arranged for 3rd June, at which the planning officers, Cllr Goldenberg, our architect, Irina Aldersley, and a local architect who was formerly chairman of the planning committee, and the brotherhood, will study the subject of design. Once the design of the new building has been approved by a future planning committee meeting, the matter will have to be referred to the Secretary of State for the Environment. So we have some way to go yet, and we still ask the prayers of the faithful for a good outcome of our endeavours.

PRISON VISIT

THE REVEREND ANDREW FORAN, chaplain of H.M.P. Send invited members of the Brotherhood to chant a paschal service for the Orthodox prisoners there in Bright Week. Unfortunately on Bright Saturday, the day appointed, Fr Alexis' mother died, and the visit had to be postponed. So it was on Saturday 17th May, that Fr Alexis and Fr Thomas visited the prison, and held a short service for the women detained there. Almost twenty inmates attended, most of them Orthodox, but some just interested in the service. Afterwards in the chapel "narthex" we were all treated to tea and biscuits and a chance to talk. Rev'd Foran and his assistants expressed the hope that we might do similar services at regular intervals.

VISIT TO BROOKWOOD

PROTOPRESBYTER ALBAN BARTER, the founder and first priest of the St Barbara Orthodox Parish in Chester (Æc. Pat), visited Saint Edward's on Sunday 11th May. He joined us at the buffet lunch that we have on Sundays, and then stayed through the afternoon to renew an old friendship which stretches back more than twenty years.

GIFTS TO SAINT EDWARD'S

IN THE LAST MONTH, we have been given a new holy water basin, donated by Spiridon Stuart of Lancaster. We also owe thanks to Mrs Ekaterina Harwood and her assistants for collecting it from Russia and bringing it back to England. Madeline Antoniazzi has also obtained for us a large icon of the Saviour, Extreme Humility, and one of the holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen, both hand-painted. These were both donated to a Greek church in London, but were unwanted there, and so with the consent of the anonymous donor, and through the good offices of Madeline, were handed down to us.

APOLOGIES

WITH the three deaths that have recently bereaved members of the monastic brotherhood here, we have had rather more travelling to do of late than is usual. Added to this there was a lot of work involved regarding the planning application, and so, if we have seemed to neglect your correspondence, please bear with us and forgive us.

PRACTICAL TIP

BEFORE SETTING OUT on your Summer holidays be sure to find out the address of the nearest church to your holiday destination and the times of the services, so that you can keep your Sunday observance, and not take a holiday from God. Find out the name of the local Orthodox priest there and how to contact him, and carry a note of this, just in case you need him in an emergency. And remember to pack your Prayer Book and an icon, as well as some spiritual reading. If you neglect these things, not only will your holiday bring a spiritual collapse, but you will also find on your return that you will find it much harder to re-establish your spiritual life.