

# ***The Shepherd***

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

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### FROM THE FATHERS

"IN ACCORDANCE with the will of God and the union of nature, we ought to be of mutual help one to another, and to vie with each other in doing duties, to lay all our advantages as it were before all, and (to use the word of Scripture) to bring help one to another from a feeling of devotion or of duty, by giving money or by doing something, at any rate in some way or other; so that the charm of human fellowship may ever grow sweeter amongst us."

*Saint Ambrose of Milan, +397A.D.*

"WHEN CHILDREN LEARN to read books, they first learn the letters, then spelling, and later on they learn to read. Christians should proceed in the same way in Christian doctrine. First of all they should learn to return good for good, which is gratitude; then not to return evil for evil, insult for insult, offense for offense, and not to take revenge either in word or in deed on the offender; and then after this, even to love their enemies and to do good to those that hate them, and to return good for evil."

*Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, +1783A.D.*

"LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOUR is preceded and accompanied by humility in our human relationships. Hatred towards our neighbour is preceded by condemnation and criticism of him, detraction and disparagement, slander and backbiting, scorn for him: otherwise pride."

*St Ignatius (Brianchaninov) of the Caucasus, +1867 A.D.*

"HAVE THE HEART of a son toward God, the mind of a judge toward yourself, and toward your neighbour the heart of a mother."

*Blessed Elder Cleopa of Sihastria, Romania, +1998 A.D.*

### WOMAN AS A SYMBOL OF CHRIST

By Saint Nicolas Velimirovic

The Ten Drachmas: the Lord in the Guise of a Woman.

CAN YOU BELIEVE that Christ the Saviour portrayed Himself in the guise of a woman in two of His parables? One is that of the woman who took three measures of flour and made dough. But first let us speak of the other one where the Lord tells us about the woman who had ten drachmas and lost one. These are the most mysterious of all the Saviour's parables. As the parable of the lost drachma is short, we quote it in full.

*Or what woman, having ten drachmas, if she loses one, does not light a candle and sweep the house and look diligently till she finds it? And after she has found it she calls in her friends and neighbours and says, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma that I lost."(Luke 15:8-9).*

At first glance this parable seems so simple, or even naive, that it does not impress the reader of the Gospel. But in reality the mystery of the universe is revealed in this simple parable.

If we take it literally, it evokes bewilderment. The woman lost only one drachma. But even ten drachmas do not represent a great sum; in fact a woman who has got only ten drachmas must be very poor indeed. Let us assume, first of all, that the finding of the lost drachma meant a great gain for her. Yet it still presents a paradox, for how is it that if she is such a poor woman she lights lamps and sweeps the house and - strangest of all - calls in all her friends and neighbours to share her joy. And all because of one drachma! Such a waste of time, - lighting a candle and setting the house in order first of all! But then if she invites her neighbours, according to Eastern custom, she is obliged to offer them something to eat and drink, no small expense for a poor woman. To fail to do so would be to ignore an unalterable custom.

Another important point to note is that she did not invite only one woman to whom she might have offered sweets which would not have involved great expense. But she invited many friends and neighbours and even if she entertained them modestly the expense would far exceed the value of the drachma she has found. Why, then, should she seek the drachma so diligently and rejoice at finding it, only to lose it again in another way?

If we try to understand this parable in its literal sense, it does not fit into the frame of everyday life but leaves the impression of something exaggerated and incomprehensible. So let us try to discover its mystical or hidden meaning. Who is the woman? And why is it a woman and not a man when a man is more likely to lose money in the ordinary routine of life? Whose house is it, that she sweeps and fills with light? Who are her friends and neighbours? If we look for the spiritual instead of the literal meaning of the parable, we shall find the answers to those questions. The Lord said, Seek and ye shall find!

The woman represents Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God. The ten drachmas are His. It is He Who has lost one of them and sets out to look for it. The drachmas are not coins of gold or silver. According to Orthodox theologians, the number ten represents fullness. The nine unlost drachmas are the nine orders of angels. The number of angels is beyond the grasp of mortals, for it exceeds our power of calculation. The lost drachma represents mankind in its entirety. Therefore Christ the Saviour came down from heaven to earth, to His house, and lit a candle, the light of the knowledge of Himself. He cleaned out the house - that is, He purified the world of diabolic impurity - and found the lost drachma, erring and lost humanity. Then He called His "friends and neighbours" (after His glorious Resurrection and Ascension), that is to say all the countless hosts of the Cherubim and Seraphim, Angels and Archangels, and revealed to them His great joy. Rejoice with Me. I have found the lost drachma! That means: I have found men to fill the void in the Kingdom of Heaven caused by the fall of the proud angels who apostatized from God. At the end of time the number of these found and saved souls will have grown to billions or, in the language of Scripture, will be as countless as the stars in the sky and the sand on seashore.

Our Lord described Himself as a woman because women are more careful than men in looking after property, in keeping the house in order and in receiving guests. If this short parable, which consists of only two sentences, is explained in this way, whose heart will not flutter? For it contains the whole tragedy of the world, visible and invisible. It explains why the Son of God came to earth. It sheds a bright ray of light on the history of mankind and the

tragedy of every separate individual's existence. It confronts us with an urgent decision, because our life is swiftly passing - a decision as to whether we want to be the lost drachma found by Christ or not. Christ is looking for us. Are we going to hide from Him or let ourselves be found by Him before death hides us from Him, from the world and from life?

It is a vital question and it lies within our will to accept or reject Him. After death it will cease to be an open question, and then no one will expect an answer from us.

### Three measures of flour

And again Jesus said, *To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour till the whole was leavened* (Luke 13:21).

This is another of Christ's mysterious parables that many find hard to understand. The actual theme, taken from everyday life, is simple and clear. From the earliest times housewives have been bakers; they take flour, put it in bowls, prepare leaven, knead the dough, and bake it. It has been the daily task of the housewife in East and West for thousands of years. But it occurred to no one to take this simple work as a figure or symbol of the Kingdom of God. Only the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom nothing was too simple or unimportant, took this familiar chore, and used it to explain something stupendous and extraordinary. He could picture to Himself His own Mother at her work.

I will put the following questions to the reader of the Gospel. Why did Christ take woman as His example instead of man when men have also been bakers throughout the centuries? And why the leaven, while unleavened bread was also in wide use? And why did the woman take three measures and not one or two or four? Finally, what connection or similarity is there between the Reign of God and the kitchen work of a housewife?

If these questions cannot be answered, how can we understand the parable? Yet to answer them without a spiritual key would only lead to further difficulties. All the parables deal with the superficial, but their real meaning lies deep down. They appeal to the eye and seem obvious but they concern the spirit and the spiritual.

This parable has a twofold spiritual interpretation. The first has to do with the three principal races of mankind, the second with the three main faculties or powers of the human soul. In brief, what is outstanding and unusual in this parable is the historical and personal process of man's salvation.

After the Great Flood, there stemmed from the sons of Noah - Sem, Cham, and Japhet - three races of mankind: the Semites, Chamites and Japhetites. These are the three measures of flour into which Christ puts his heavenly leaven - the Holy Spirit. That means He came as Messiah and Saviour to all the races and nations of mankind without exception. Just as with leaven a woman can transform natural flour into bread, so Christ through the Holy Spirit transforms natural men into the children of God, into immortal inhabitants of the Heavenly Kingdom. That is why according to Orthodox teaching, holy men are called earthly angels or heavenly men, because being leavened by the Holy Spirit they are no longer common flour or unleavened biscuits that lie on the earth, but they are leavened bread that has risen. According to the Bible unleavened bread was the bread of slaves while leavened bread was for free men, God's children. So, for that reason, the Orthodox Church uses leavened bread at Holy Communion.

The process of leavening began on that first Trinity Sunday of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended from heaven on the Apostles. From that day on, this process has been continuing down to the present day and will continue till the end of time when all will be leavened. This, then is the historical interpretation of the enigmatic parable about the woman baker.

The second interpretation is psychological and personal and concerns the three main faculties or powers of the human soul: intellect, heart and will, or in other words, the power to think, the power to feel and the power to act. These are the three unseen measures of the soul of the inner man. These three powers either remain totally unleavened, like the bread of slaves, or they are leavened with the leaven of malice and hypocrisy. Therefore, Christ told His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy because that is the worldly and human leaven, which weakens all the powers of the soul and leaves it crippled and sick.

But Christ the Saviour brought to earth a new leaven to raise the powers of the soul. Those who receive this new heavenly leaven through baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity are called the sons and daughters of God, the heirs of the eternal Kingdom. They will not die, for even when they leave the body, they will be alive and will live for ever. This heavenly leaven fills them with the light of reason, the warmth of divine love, and the glory of good works. All three powers of the soul grow together in harmony and ascend to heaven, to perfection. As the Lord said, *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Woman has been taken as the paragon and not man and Christ has compared Himself to a woman baker, because woman as wife and mother lovingly prepares the bread for the family, whereas the male baker bakes bread to sell for gain. But everything that Christ has done for mankind was done out of pure love. Hence, He compares Himself to a woman baker. This is the second interpretation, but both interpretations of this parable are true. The historical and psychological meaning derived from this simple parable is like a branching oak - that grows out of an acorn, for it is truly majestic in its historical breadth and profound in its psychological depth.

*Reprinted from "Orthodox Life" (Numbers 5 & 6, 1951)  
Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York.*

## A RULE AND GUIDANCE FOR THOSE PRAYING IN CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS, brothers and sisters!

IN OUR SIN-LADEN WORLD, the holy church is the only place where we can shelter from the storms and disturbances of life, and from the grime that morally clings to our lives. The church is like heaven on earth; in church the invisible powers of heaven serve with us. Bear in mind and understand that the holy church is the House of God, in which God Himself is invisibly present, and for this reason our conduct in church must accord with the sanctity and majesty of the place.

1. Enter the holy church with spiritual joy. Recall that the Saviour Himself has promised to comfort you in your sorrows: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11 :28).

2. Enter the holy church with humility and meekness, so that you might leave the church justified like the humble Publican in the Gospel.

3. When you go into the church and see the holy icons, think that the Lord Himself and all the Saints also regard you. At this time be especially reverent and have the fear of God.

4. As you enter the church, on weekdays make three full prostrations [*this is not done in all churches, but is done in the Russian practice - ed.*], and on feasts make three deep bows from the waist, praying: "O God, cleanse me, the sinner, and have mercy upon me." "O God, be merciful unto me, the sinner." "All-holy Theotokos, pray to God for me, the sinner." "All the saints, pray to God for me, the sinner."

5. When you cross the church to your place, walk quietly, unobtrusively and with a humble demeanour, and if you pass in front of the Royal Gates, stop for a moment and reverently cross yourself and bow.

6. Always arrive at the church for the beginning of the Divine service. If for some pressing cause you happen to be late, then take every care that you do not disturb the prayer of others, who have come earlier. If you enter the holy church while the Gospel is being read, during the Six Psalms or during the Eucharistic canon in the Liturgy, when the Holy Gifts are changed, then stop at the entrance door, and wait there until these most important parts of the service are over before going to your usual place.

7. When you arrive at your place in church, and others are standing nearby, then bow slightly and silently greet them, but never, even with the closest of friends, shake hands with them or ask them anything. Always behave modestly in church.

8. One should stand in church and not sit (except during the kathismas), and only in cases of extreme fatigue or of infirmity should one relax this rule and sit down to rest a little. As you stand in church, do not be curious and look around on those who stand near you; instead pray with sincere feeling; try to follow the order and composition of the service.

9. If you come to church with children, always stay with them so that you can ensure that they behave in an orderly way, modestly and without making noise. Teach them to understand and to know how they ought to behave in church; teach them to pray. If the children need to leave the church, tell them to cross themselves and to leave quietly or go with them yourself.

10. If infants start crying loudly in church, then take them out immediately.

11. Never permit a child to eat in church, except of course when the priest distributes the blessed bread.

12. In church you must pray and not simply attend; participate in the Divine service, so that the prayers and chants which are being read and sung are emitted from your own heart. Follow the holy service attentively, so that you might pray with everyone there, and more importantly with the whole Holy Church. Sign yourself with the cross and make bows along with the ministers and with all those praying there. On weekdays you may make prostrations to the ground, but on Sundays and feasts of the Lord, only make deep bows, touching your fingers to the floor. On these days, prostrations to the ground are abrogated.

13. When you are in church do not judge, and if any of those serving or taking part makes a mistake do not mock them; it is more profitable and better to pay attention to your own faults and deficiencies, and warmly to beseech the Lord to forgive your sins.

14. When you set off for church, make sure you have change ready for buying the candles, proskynaria and for the collection, so that you do not have to disturb people asking for change, and so that you do not disturb those serving and praying at the service. (*Naturally this only applies in churches where they actually price the candles, etc, or take a collection - ed.*)

15. Unless you have very good reason, do not leave the church until the end of the service, for this is an insult to the sanctity of the church and a sin before God. If you really have a need to leave before the end, you should mention this in confession to the priest.

16. Approach Holy Communion humbly and reverently, folding your hands upon the breast. With fear and love receive God's Holy Mysteries, and do not cross yourself when you kiss the Chalice, lest to cause it to spill. Then return to your place in an orderly way and be sure to stay for the reading of the prayers of thanksgiving to the Lord God - at the Mystical Supper only Judas rushed out after receiving the Gifts.

17. According to an ancient custom, men stand on the right side of the church and women on the left, as you enter. One should not cross the church between the priest or deacon and the Royal Gates, when the priest or deacon are serving in the middle of the church.

18. Both men and women should come to church appropriately and modestly dressed. And women should have their heads covered, whereas the men should not. If through some misunderstanding one comes inappropriately dressed and is asked to wear a scarf or put a jacket over a short-sleeved shirt one should readily comply. Women should not receive Holy Communion or kiss the icons and holy things when wearing lipstick.

*Translated from the Russian*

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

By the Priest N. R. Antonov

*Continuation*

The Cherubic Hymn. The profound mystical significance of the Great Entrance, all those thoughts and feelings, which it should raise in the hearts of those praying, - all this is expressed in the following prayer, which we call the Cherubic Hymn:

*"Let us who mystically portray the Cherubim, and chant the thrice-holy hymn unto the life-creating Trinity, lay aside all earthly care: / That we may receive the King of all, escorted invisibly by the angelic orders. Alleluia, Alleluia. Alleluia."*

Although the Cherubic Hymn is customarily divided into two parts by the Great Entrance, it really comprises one verse, a composed prayer, which is complete inasmuch as one could not add anything by modifying any of its phrases. The Holy Church has appointed this hymn as it were a call to us, who at the very moment, when the Holy Gifts are being offered, are mystically commemorating the Cherubim and are chanting the thrice holy hymn with them to the Holy Trinity that we might lay aside all earthly care, every concern of this life, everything that is sinful, and be renewed, spiritually cleansed, so that the King of Glory might be *raised aloft* by us, He Who at this very same moment is being borne aloft by the Angelic hosts (just as in ancient times the warriors used to raise the king upon their spears), so that we might hymn Him, and afterwards reverently receive Him, that is, partake of Communion.

While the chanters are singing the first portion of the Cherubic Hymn, the priest silently reads a prayer in which he begs the Lord to grant that he might worthily celebrate the Holy Eucharist. In this prayer the thought is expressed that Jesus Christ is at one and the same time both What is offered, as the Holy Lamb, and the One Who, as the Heavenly High Priest, makes the sacrificial Offering. When he has read this prayer, he stretches forth his hands three times, as a sign of the earnestness of his supplication, as he repeats the Cherubic Hymn. Then, with the deacon, he moves over to the prothesis. There he censes the Holy Gifts, lays the Aer, which had been covering the paten and chalice, on the left shoulder of the deacon (in the Greek practice, it is tied in such a way that it lies across his shoulders), and gives the deacon the paten, which he holds on high. The priest himself takes the chalice, and they both leave the sanctuary via the north door, with a candle bearer going in front of them. They come to a halt on the soleas (or in the centre of the church) and turn towards the people. Here they prayerfully commemorate the hierarchy, the ruling house (if Orthodox), and all Orthodox Christians, ending each petition with the phrase, "may the Lord God remember in His Kingdom." Having completed this, they both return to the sanctuary, entering it through the Royal Gates. It is now that the chanters sing the second part of the Cherubic Hymn: "That we may receive...." When they have entered the sanctuary, the priest places the chalice on the Holy Table, and then takes the paten from the deacon and puts it alongside. He then takes the Aer from the deacon and having censed it, covers the Holy Gifts with it. Then the Royal Gates are closed and the veil is drawn across. During the Great Entrance, the Christians should stand with their heads bowed to express their reverence before the Gifts that are being transferred, and as a sign of their prayer that the Lord remember them also in His Kingdom. The placing of the paten and chalice on the Holy Table and their being covered with the aer represents the taking down of the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ for burial, and for this reason while it is being done the priest reads the troparion which is chanted when the Winding Sheet of the Lord is brought out on Holy and Great Friday: "The noble Joseph, taking Thine immaculate Body down from the Tree, and having wrapped It in pure linen and spices, laid It for burial in a new tomb."

After the transfer of the Holy Gifts to the Holy Table, the clergy begin to prepare for the consecration of the Holy Gifts by the Holy Spirit, and the faithful that they might worthily participate in this sanctification. This preparation begins with the recitation of the Supplicatory Litany (the one with the response: Grant this, O Lord). Besides the usual supplications, the following petition is inserted into this litany:-

"For the precious Gifts set forth, let us pray to the Lord."

During the litany the priest reads a secret prayer in which he begs the Lord to deem him worthy to offer the Holy Gifts as a spiritual sacrifice for our sins and ignorances, and "that the good Spirit of Thy grace tabernacle upon us and upon these Gifts set forth." He ends this prayer with the exclamation: "Through the compassions of Thine Only-begotten Son, with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine All-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages."

The words of the exclamation make clear to us that we hope for the reception of the grace of the Holy Spirit for the sanctification of the sacred ministers, of those praying in church, and of the honourable Gifts that have been set forth, and that this is effectively possible only through the "compassions" that is the kind-heartedness, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

After this Supplicatory Litany, the Litany of Oblation, and its exclamation, the priest expresses what is absolutely essential for the reception of such grace, with the words: "Peace

be unto all." Those present respond: "And to thy spirit." Then the deacon exclaims: "Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess." This makes clear that what is absolutely indispensable for the reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and for the reception of the Holy Spirit is peace and love for one another. The chanters complete the deacon's thought: "Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence and undivided." After the words, "that with one mind we may confess," naturally the question arises: what do we confess with one mind? The answer is: "The Trinity one in essence and undivided." As an outward sign of the mutual love that the faithful have one for another, in the ancient Church they used to kiss each other at these words, the men kissing the men, and the women the women for the sake of good order. Nowadays this is done only within the sanctuary between the priests, if they are concelebrating. Before doing this, they bow before the Holy Table three times, and kiss the paten, the chalice and the Holy Table.

*...to be continued with "The Symbol of Faith"*

## THE COMING MONTH

OCTOBER begins with the festival of the Protection of the Mother of God (1st/14th). The celebration was inaugurated to give thanks for an event recorded in the life of Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ. The Imperial City of Constantinople had been besieged by barbarian forces, and the faithful resorted to the Church at Blachernae to beseech the aid of the Mother of God in their plight. Saint Andrew was among those people, and he looked up and saw a vision of the Theotokos holding her veil, as if it were a protection, over the congregation. He pointed this vision out to a young lad, Epiphanius, who stood near him in the church. The enemies were put to flight and the City was delivered. Over the generations, the feast, which was thus inaugurated by an event in the reign of the pious Emperor Leo the Wise (886-912 A.D), has taken on a wider significance and is now celebrated as a thanksgiving for all the occasions when the Mother of God has manifested herself as our protectress. Perhaps one ought to add one thought: in the post-Schism West, at least popularly, the idea seems to have developed that the Mother of God is somehow more kindly disposed to us than Her Son is. Thus she is sometimes seen almost as if she were our shield against God. Such a thought is far from the Orthodox conception. God's love for us is unexcelled and the Mother of God has become like unto Him in loving us. As is apparent from the original tale from the life of Saint Andrew the Fool, the Mother of God protects us not from God, but from our and His enemies. The day after the feast, besides being the festival of Sts Cyprian and Justina, is kept as a celebration of Saint Andrew.

After the Protection, the two most important feasts in October are those of the Optina Elders on 10th/23rd, and of the Great Martyr Demetrius the Myron-Streaming of Thessalonica on 26th October/8th November. Both of these festivals are celebrated with a Vigil service on the preceding evening. Among the other saints, we have:-

The Venerable Ammon the Egyptian (4th/17th) is one of the Great Desert Fathers, a contemporary and close spiritual friend of St Antony the Great. When he was very young, he was orphaned and so was entrusted to the care of an uncle, who brought him up. The uncle in due time arranged a marriage for him, but when the bridal couple retired to their chamber, they opened the Scriptures and began to read from St Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, in which they saw portrayed some of the pitfalls that the married can encounter, and so they decided that they would live in virginity and take up the ascetical life. For a short period they

settled in a hut on Mount Nitria, but they soon realised that living together, even though not as man and wife, was a cause of temptation rather than one of mutual help and support and so they separated. Ammon lived a very austere life, eating only sparingly and that only every two or three days. As he grew in spiritual virtue, disciples gathered around him, and a community was formed. Whenever a new aspirant arrived, Ammon would move out of his own cell, and build a new one for himself, leaving his and everything in it to the new brother. In this way he gave an example of non-possessiveness and detachment. In time the whole mountain was covered with the cells of his disciples. In time some of the brethren wanted to live in greater quietness, and when once St Antony visited Nitria, St Ammon asked him what should be done about this. After eating at the customary ninth hour (three in the afternoon), the two elders walked out into the desert and continued to walk until sundown. At the place which they had reached they planted a Cross in the ground, and at that place a new community was founded, which became known as the Cells, because, as at Nitria, each of the fathers there had his own separate hut or cell. When Abba Ammon died, St Antony was far away on his mountain, but he broke off the conversation that he was having with the monks there, and told them that he perceived the soul of Abba Ammon being accompanied by a host of Angels, going up into Heaven.

The Venerable Martyr Bercharius (16th/29th) was born in Aquitaine, and in his childhood came to the notice of St Nivard, the Archbishop of Rheims, on account of his intelligence and modesty. The Archbishop undertook the education of the child and eventually ordained him a priest. He also permitted the young cleric to seek monastic training under various experienced elders. When he had trained in the monastic discipline, he returned to serve his benefactor, St Nivard. It is said that the Archbishop wished to found a monastic house within his diocese, and set out with the young priestmonk to find a suitable spot. As they rested on their journey under a tree at Hautvilliers, they saw a white dove hovered round the tree, and accepted this as a sign that they should found their monastery there. St Bercharius became the first abbot of the house, and not long after its founding the aged Archbishop died. In addition to this first house, St Bercharius founded other monasteries at Moutier-en-Der and at Louze. Before his end, he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He died as a martyr, one of the younger monks in his monastery, Dagwin by name, chafed under the obedience required of him, and having once been rebuked for his disobedience, he resolved to murder his master. He entered the abbot's cell at night and stabbed him. As he fled from the scene of his crime, he throw the knife into the monastery fishpond, but was horrified to see that it did not sink but floated. This miracle so moved him that he himself sounded the alarm, and he was brought before the dying abbot, who pardoned him his sin. Two days later, as a result of the injury he had received, St Bercharius died (26th March, 685 A.D.). He was buried in the monastery church, but later his relics were found to be incorrupt and were enshrined at Moutier-en-Der.

Saint Bessarion Sarai of Romania (21st October/3rd November) was born in Bosnia in 1714. In his youth he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and joined the Monastery of St Sabbas the Sanctified there, being tonsured a monk with the name Bessarion. On his return to his home country, he visited Mount Athos, but then entered the Monastery of Pakrou in Slavonia. While here he was ordained deacon and priest. At this period the peoples of Banat and Transylvania were living under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and strenuous efforts were made to convert the Orthodox faithful to the Unia. In 1742, the Serbian Patriarch Arsenius IV, seeing the gifts granted to Father Bessarion, sent him to Banat and Transylvania to care for these people and to confirm them in Orthodoxy. Arriving there, he travelled from village to village urging the faithful to remain faithful to Orthodoxy. For his efforts he was

apprehended by the authorities and imprisoned and subjected to torture. He was taken from prison to prison, and eventually to Kufstein in the Tyrol, where, it is believed, he died as a result of the sufferings and torments he had endured. Along with St Bessarion, we also commemorate St Sophronius of Ciorara, a monastic father who also contested against Roman Catholic proselytism in the eighteenth century; and the Martyrs Oprea Milaouch, Moses of Sibiu and John of Gales, who all died confessing the Orthodox faith in defiance of the pressures brought upon the faithful by the Hapsburgs.

## NEWS SECTION

*ROCA SYNOD NEWS* THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS of ROCA met in New York City from 2nd to 4th September. The most important topic on their agenda was the convocation of an All-Diaspora Clergy Conference to be held at Nyack from 9th to 12th December this year. The Conference is to consider the "Path of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia; Past and Future." This conference will be immediately followed by a Council (the full complement) of the Bishops. The Synod also issued statements to calm fears which had arisen over the concelebration of some of our clergy in Dublin with clergy of the Œcumenical Patriarchate (see below) and over the recent consecration to the episcopate of Bishop Peter (Lukianov).

A meeting took place in the Consulate of the Russian Federation in New York on 24 September between the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, members of the Synod of Bishops, and President V.V.Putin of the Russian Federation. Participating in the meeting were Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany and Great Britain, Bishop Kyrill of San Francisco and Western America, the Secretary of the Synod of Bishops Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan, Protopriests Nikolai Artemov and Peter Holodny, as well as the Prior of the stavropighial Monastery of the Meeting of Our Lord in Moscow, Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov). The paths of the Russian Church in the tragic 20th century were discussed, the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the government in present-day Russia, and the perspectives for a constructive dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. A letter from Patriarch Aleksii II to Metropolitan Laurus was presented, which contained an invitation to visit Moscow. The letter was accepted with gratitude. The matters discussed during this meeting will be presented for consideration at the forthcoming All-Diaspora Clergy Conference and Council of Bishops to be held in December. While in New York, President Putin also met His Grace Bishop Mercurii of the Moscow Patriarchate presence there.

*SYNDODAL CLARIFICATION REGARDING THE DUBLIN CONCELEBRATION* "Recently two priests of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia have concelebrated with two clergymen of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Ireland. This concelebration took place without the blessing of Archbishop Mark. It came about because of an unusual concurrence of events, namely the visit of the Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God, and the great enthusiasm of all the church people and clergy who participated, which this visit evoked. It did not, however, correspond with our normal practice, and in such a manner it is not to be repeated. We are indeed grateful to the Greek parish for putting their church in Dublin at the disposal of the parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia for the celebration of the Divine service, but this in itself must not be used as an occasion for acting arbitrarily in the sphere of canonical order."

*ISRAEL & PATRIARCH EIRINAIOS CLOSER* ISRAELI Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has appointed a ministerial committee to decide whether Israel should recognise the election of Patriarch

Eirinaios as head of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Holy Land. This is not the first time the Israeli prime minister has sought to put an end to the issue. In April 2002, Sharon himself headed a committee which came out in favour of recognition and wanted to bring it before the government for a vote. The decision was shelved when it became clear there was stiff opposition around the cabinet table to Eirinaios getting Israeli approval. There are, reportedly, vested interests, both Greek and Israeli, who oppose Eirinaios and unsuccessfully promoted their own candidate for Patriarch, and they mustered opposition to the vote. These vested interests are real-estate developers who concluded a series of profitable deals with the late Patriarch Diodoros, Eirinaios' predecessor. They wanted to see Metropolitan Timothy of Vostra elected.

*SACRED RELICS OF ST JOHN OF RIGA* THE LATVIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (Moscow Patriarchate) reports that on 17th July the sacred relics of the Holy New Hieromartyr John of Riga were uncovered and found to be incorrupt. Archbishop John (Pommers) was born in 1876. At his consecration he was the youngest Bishop in the Russian Orthodox Church and was the first native Latvian to be raised to the rank of Archbishop. He was brutally murdered on 12th October, 1934, by the communists. That night he was tied to a door and subjected to torture and then burned with flames and finally shot. He was glorified with the New Martyrs of Russia by the ROCA in 1981, and by the Patriarchate twenty years later.

*METROPOLITAN SPEAKS ON ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS* METROPOLITAN KYRILL of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, who is often cited as a possible successor to His Holiness Patriarch Aleksii II, spoke at Aachen in Germany at the beginning of September on relations between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholics, saying "the time has arrived to change the present difficult situation between the Orthodox Church of Moscow and the Catholic Church." He looked forward to surmounting present difficulties and to a meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch of Moscow, but warned that a Papal visit to Moscow would have to be carefully prepared. (Surely, during this Pontificate it is out of the question now, given the Pope's declining health - ed.) While expressing a new warmth towards Rome, the Metropolitan was less optimistic about Ecumenism in general, saying quite wisely that it was at a dead end. He characterised the modern ecumenical movement as having "become a hostage to humanist secularism," and suggested that the movement might be re-vitalised by putting "the defense of Christian values in contemporary society" at the centre of concern. From the report, posted on the internet, it appears that both in regard to relationships with the Roman Catholic Church and with the involvement in Ecumenism in general, the Metropolitan, who is head of the Moscow Patriarchate's "Foreign Relations Department," stopped short of putting matters of Faith at the centre of concern.

*UNESCO FUNDING OF BULGARIAN CHURCH RESTORATION* THE CHURCH OF THE FORTY MARTYRS in Veliko Turnovo in northern Bulgaria is being restored with funding from UNESCO. The church is believed to have been built in 1230 A.D. by Tsar Ivan Assen II, and was dedicated to the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste to commemorate the Tsar's victory on their feastday that same year over the despot Theodore Comnenos. Graves of rulers and nobles cluster around the church, and in 1978 a ring, inscribed "Kaloyan's ring," was found and has been attributed to the Tsar Kaloyan who died in 1207. The church has been restored many times, and was for a period used as a mosque under Ottoman rule. Now landslides have caused fresh damage and so the present restoration scheme has been implemented.

*BIBLES IN NON-SLAVIC LANGUAGES TO BE PUBLISHED IN RUSSIA* ABOUT A HUNDRED languages are spoken in the Russian Federation, and the Moscow Patriarchate is undertaking a project with the Holy Scripture Translation Institute, to publish the Bible and Bible stories for children in some of these languages. This good initiative has apparently raised questions about the range of Bibles available in Russian, the language used by the vast majority of the people in the country. The "Synodal" version, published in the nineteenth century is found by many Russians to be so archaic that they claim they cannot understand it. In 1970, a New Testament, called the "Cassian" version, was published in modern Russian, but the translators reportedly tried so hard to adhere to the Greek text that the work is criticised as unreadable. An "Easy to read" version was published in 1989, but it seems to be so inaccurate that it is about as useful as the English "Good News" version.

*ROMANIAN BISHOP LOCKED IN CHURCH* BISHOP TEODOSIE OF TOMI, Romania, was recently locked in a village church by irate parishioners. The priest of the parish, Father Vladimir Cazan had been suspended from his ministry for remarrying. Orthodox clergymen are not permitted by the sacred canons to continue their ministry if they marry a second time or indeed to marry after their ordination. Fr Vladimir refused to obey the suspension order against him, and so the Bishop visited the church to remove the antimimension, so that the Liturgy could not be celebrated there contrary to the canonical norms. The parishioners, ignorant of the Church's teaching, rallied to the side of the disobedient priest (who put in the plea that he had not yet been intimate with his new "wife") and they accused the Bishop of taking holy objects from their church, and so locked him in the church. The Bishop was able to call the police on his mobile and was later freed from his imprisonment.

*REPOSE OF MOTHER ELIZABETH* MOTHER ELIZABETH, who, as we reported in our August issue, was tonsured to the Little Schema on the feast of St John of Shanghai at the Royal Marsden Hospital, died on the 9th September at the Trinity Hospice, Clapham Common, a place where earlier she had worked as a nurse. In accordance with her own wishes, her body was taken to France to be laid to rest with her sisters of the Lesna Icon Convent of the Mother of God, at Provemont, Normandy. Mother Elizabeth left our Brotherhood three icons: one of her namesaint which had recently been brought her from Russia, one of Saint John the Theologian painted by the late Elizabeth Palmer, and one of the Kazan Mother of God, which had been handed down in her family and had been a wedding present to her parents. At the time of the death, Mother Pelagia of the Lesna Convent was in England, and attended the first memorial service chanted for Mother Elizabeth at St Edward's church on the day of her repose. We extend our condolences to her sisters, Margaret, Mary and Clare. May she, the Nun Elizabeth, find rest with the Saints and be granted *Memory Eternal!*

*FOUNDER HONOURED* FATHER ALEXANDER CHERNEY of the Latvian Orthodox Church in this country which is under the protection of the Œcumenical Patriarchate, has been specially honoured by His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomeos of Constantinople. On 11th September, at a service in the private chapel of His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira, he was presented with a gramota bestowing upon him the title: Protopresbyter of the Œcumenical Throne. This was granted in recognition of his long and devoted service to the Church. At the same time he was handed a letter from the Patriarch personally congratulating him on his nameday. Fr Alexander tells us that this title is rarely awarded and that it is the first time ever that it has been granted to a clergyman in the Thyateira Archdiocese. We always remember Father Alexander as one of the founders of our mission at Brookwood, because not only has he given us many gifts over the years, relics, icons, sacred vessels, books and vestments, but using

his competence as an architect, he also drew up the plans for the conversion of the Old Mortuary chapel into our present Brotherhood house. We rejoice to see our benefactor honoured, and hope that the Lord Himself will grant him *Many Years*.

## BROOKWOOD NEWS

### *A NEW YOUNG CONVERT*

ALMOST THREE YEARS AGO, one of the oldest members of the Russian congregation, Nathalia Nicolaievna Sowels, a close relative of the New Martyr Evgenii (Botkin) the physician to the Russian Imperial Family who died with them at Ekaterinburg, was laid to rest after her repose in the Orthodox Cemetery adjoining our church. Recently her widowed husband, John, a lifelong Anglican, requested that he might be received into the Orthodox Church. On Monday 2nd/15th September, the feast of St Mamas, with the blessing of Archbishop Mark, he was received by the mysterion of Chrismation and partook of the Holy Mysteries. The new convert, named for Saint John the Baptist, had just passed his 95th birthday! Father Hierodeacon Sabbas stood as his sponsor. In becoming Orthodox, John joins not only Nathalia but also his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and is made spiritually one with them. May he and they also inherit the Heavenly Kingdom.

### *PLANNING PROGRESS*

As reported in last month's calendar insert, the Department of the Environment raised no objections to our planning proposal for the new monastic house to be built on the old South Station site within our property. This means that we now have permission to build, effective from 1st September, 2003. Our architect, Irina Aldersley, has prepared outline specifications for the new building which we are going to present to a number of contractors to ascertain the likely cost of the work. We will then issue an appeal for funds to help get this work underway. At this stage we would like to thank those of you who have already contributed to the "building fund," and those of you who have helped and supported us through the rather tortuous planning process by your prayers and by "lobbying" on our behalf.

### *VISITORS TO BROOKWOOD*

Among recent visitors to Saint Edward's church, we have welcomed the Very Reverend Fr Minas Constantinou, the Vicar General of the Orthodox Archbishopric of Johannesburg and Pretoria (Alexandrian Patriarchate), Father Lyubisav Adzic and his matushka Miladinka from Serbia, and Archpriest Peter Holodny (who served with Fr Peter Baulk here on the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos) and his matushka and children. Fr Deacon Stavros Solomou of the Greek Orthodox Church in Kingston-upon-Thames joined us with his infant daughter, Sophia, for the feast of the Beheading of St John the Baptist, and while visiting England to see Mother Elizabeth, Mother Antonia from Moscow, attended the Sunday Liturgy here and stayed to chat afterwards. Mother Antonia is a spiritual daughter of Father Artemii Vladimirov, who had earlier visited Brookwood, and she told us that he had spoken on radio in Russia about St Edward. Apparently during the Soviet period, the name Edward became popular in Russia. After the fall of the regime, there was a movement back to Orthodoxy, and many people called Edward were told that they would need to take a Saint's name, as the name Edward was not in the Russian calendars. In his broadcast, Fr Artemii pointed out that it was unnecessary for converts to change their names in this instance, because there was indeed a Saint Edward.

His Grace Bishop Damaskinos from Greece attended the Vigil Service for the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God at the Annunciation Convent in Willesden on Saturday 20th September. The next day he was due to celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Cross and St Michael at Golders Green.

#### *NEW VESTMENTS*

ON THE FEAST of Saints Zacharias and Elizabeth (5th/18th September) at the Convent, a set of new priestly vestments was blessed after the Liturgy. They had been made on the initiative of Mrs Archondoulla Cleovouliou, who had apparently terrorised the nuns, Susannah Dracos and half the Greek women in North London, press-ganging them into helping her. The vestments, made as a gift to our Brotherhood, were of a white brocade with a blue and gold trimming and made in the Russian style. Our thanks for all those who suffered to make this gift possible.

### **PRACTICAL TIP**

DO NOT MISTAKE nerviness for piety! Some people seem to think that if they flap around making dozens of signs of the Cross, or keep bobbing up and down, or try to irritate their priests, by asking if they may ask for a blessing and such like, they are being pious. The Church encourages us to make the sign of the Cross, to show reverence by bowing before holy things or when receiving blessings, to be respectful to the clergy, but all this may be done in a quiet, unobtrusive and orderly way, and does not have to be done as if one were about to suffer a nervous breakdown or as if one's only purpose in following these customs were to draw attention to oneself.