

The Shepherd

An Orthodox Christian Pastoral Magazine

VOLUME XXIV NUMBER 8 APRIL 2004

Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!

FROM THE FATHERS

"YOU WILL SAY, how often have I prayed and I have not been answered. Because you have always prayed badly; either without faith, or with a distracted mind, or for things that were not expedient for you. And if at times you prayed for what was expedient for you, you did not persevere, for it is written: *In your patience, possess ye your souls* (Luke 21:19), and again: *He that shall persevere until the end, the same shall be saved* (Matt. 10:22). God sees into the hearts of those who pray. What need then, someone will say, that we should ask God what we need? Does He not know already what we need? Why then should we pray? God does indeed know what things we need, and with generosity provides all we need for the refreshment of our bodies, and since He is good He sends down His rains upon the just and the unjust alike, and causes His sun to shine upon the good and the bad (Matt. 5:45), even before we ask Him. But faith, and the power of virtue, and the kingdom of Heaven, these you will not receive unless you ask for them in labouring and steadfastness. We must first long for these things. Then when you desire them, you must strive with all your heart to obtain them, seeking them with a sincere heart, with patience and with faith, not being condemned by your own conscience, as praying without attention or without reverence, and so in time, when God wills, you will obtain your request. For He knows better than you when these things are expedient for you. And perhaps He is delaying in giving them to you, designing to keep your attention fixed on Him, and also that you might know that this is a gift of God, and may safeguard with fear what is given you. For what we come by with much labour we are zealous to defend, because losing it we lose all our labour, and treating lightly the gift of God we would become unworthy of life eternal."

Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, +379 AD.

"IN REGARD to our relations with our neighbours, according to God's commandments we must always show love. Toward those who live near us, let us show love in word and deed insofar as it never violates our love for God. And toward those who are far away from us, we should stretch out spiritually our love toward them as we drive away from our hearts every kind of evil opinion of them. We should bow our souls reverently before them and fulfil the desire to serve them sincerely. If the Lord sees us acting thus, He will forgive us our sins and He will accept our prayers as a worthy sacrifice, and shower upon us His mercies."

Venerable Neil Sorsky, + 1508 A.D.

"DO NOT LOOK at what other people are doing [*as an example -ed.*] but heed what the word of God teaches."

Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, 1724 - 1783 A.D.

HOW CAN WE PROLONG THE FEAST OF PASCHA?

Venerable Theodore the Studite

(759 - 826 A.D.)

WHY IS IT that we so strongly desire to prolong this Pascha, which comes and then passes? Haven't we celebrated it time and again in previous years? Then as now, Pascha comes and it passes by, for there is nothing in this present time which is constant, but all is temporary and fleeting. And the days and the times of our life vanish like a shadow, they pass by like the sun, they run on like a sprinter, until each of us comes to the very end of his life.

But there is another, most beautiful, Pascha, which does not come just once a year, but always and every day. What is this Pascha? The cleansing of sins, a broken and lowly heart, tears of compunction, purity of conscience, estrangement from carnal passions and from every sin and passion. He who is deemed worthy to achieve such works of virtue celebrates the Lord's Pascha and keeps the radiant festival not just once a year, but throughout his life. On the contrary, he who does not achieve this, but is the slave of the passions and of carnal defilements, cannot celebrate as he should. For in actual fact how can that man celebrate who only has his stomach as his god? How can that man rejoice spiritually, whom the carnal passions burn and inflame? How can that man keep divine festival, whose heart is dissipated and corrupted by a fervour of envy and remembrance of wrongs? How can that man sense the spiritual joy of the feast, who is submerged in the love of money, or enslaved by vain glory, or entangled in other passions? Such people are unable to keep the feast. It be would like saying that someone who was confined to his bed with a raging illness was simply resting, or like saying that someone whose boat had been overturned and was in danger of drowning was just enjoying a swim. Such things are impossible. For just as it is impossible for someone in the dark to see light, so is it impossible for those who commit sins to keep Pascha.

And when we come to understand what is of the greatest value for us, which is the continual Pascha every day, then let us strive to achieve it, celebrating it by the mortification of the passions and the resurrection of the virtues. And may we all be granted to achieve that, through the grace and love for man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is due glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

ON GREETING PASCHA AND ON BEAUTIFUL CLOTHES

An Instruction on Thomas Sunday

By Saint John of Cronstadt the Wonderworker

Christ is Risen!

SEE the festival of festivals has come and gone, and the Royal Gates in the Lord's churches are closed again, and the services have become less festive than they were in Bright Week. But what has this festival left in our souls? You know that the Christian festivals do not pass by us in their appointed order, simply to leave our souls empty; on the contrary they should empty us and free us of all the cares and concerns of this vain world, so that during them we cast aside thinking, being concerned for, or delighting in, or being aggrieved over

what is worldly, earthly and transitory, and instead meditate upon, be concerned for and rejoice in that which is heavenly and eternal. It was just for this that even the festival which has just passed was granted us.

But how do very many people greet and pass the feast of the Radiant Resurrection? One does not want to bring to mind the dirty deeds of men, but we must recall them to condemn them before the face of God and to convict those people who do them. After the radiant paschal service, the all-radiant festival was greeted with dark deeds; with lack of restraint and every kind of sin. Do we really think that we kept a fast before the feast only in order to throw ourselves even more greedily into everything carnal, into sinful deeds, and with even more shamelessness and effrontery to give ourselves over to every kind of lawlessness? Alas! Woe! Woe to us!

Brethren! Let us all shed tears, that we all approached the greatest feast of the Lord so unworthily and that we have all angered our Lord. This is not at all the way in which we should properly approach the feasts of the Lord, with rich and sophisticated foods and drinks, nor should it be with expensive outfits and golden adornments, nor with idleness or with idle-talking, but rather it should be with spiritual joy in the Lord for our deliverance from sin, and because of our eternal salvation through Christ, the Son of God; it should be with works of mercy, with abstaining from the passions, with attending God's house in spirit and in truth, and with simplicity in food and clothing.

O you, who have adorned yourselves with gold and with an abundance of the finest fabrics, women and virgins! In the name of the Lord, I address my speech to you. What a multitude of the poor you could have made glad on the most radiant day of Christ's Resurrection! How worthily you might have greeted this the greatest of feasts, if, in generosity of spirit and Christian love, you had exchanged some of your adornments for money and distributed that money to the poor! How prudent you might have been, in Christian terms, if you had had a less expensive outfit, and had given away the money that remained over from your purchases! On that day, what rich mercy you would have received from Christ the Lord? Yes, how properly in Christian terms you would then have greeted the festival of the Resurrection of Christ! But now, - what? You are adorned like an idol, but there are members of Christ without clothing; you are stuffed, and the members of Christ go hungry; you are wallowing in every kind of luxury, and they are in tears; we are in rich and splendid dwellings, and they are in cramped and filthy hovels, often no better than stables. We have no Christian love; we do not have a true festival of Christ's Resurrection, because he truly celebrates the Resurrection who rises up from doing dead works to doing deeds of beneficence, who rises unto faith and unto Christian love, who tramples down profligacy, luxury and all the passions! Brethren! Let us celebrate the Lord's feasts like Christians and not like pagans! Amen.

*Translated from the leaflet "Our Faith"
Thomas Sunday 1968*

FROM THE SACRED CANONS

WHEN AN UNBAPTISED CHILD dies owing to negligence on the part of its own parents, the parents are to be excluded from Communion for three years, and obliged to exist on xerophagy (eating dry food) during this time and to propitiate the Godhead on bended knees with protracted weeping and alms proportionate to their ability, while doing every day forty prostrations.

*Canon 24 of the Thirty-Five Canons
of our Holy Father John the Faster,
Patriarch of Constantinople*

Adapted from

"THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THE CHURCH SERVICES"

By the Priest N. R. Antonov

Continuation

§ 86. The Times When the Component Parts of the Liturgy Appeared, and its Historical Development. When one says that our Liturgy was composed by Saint Basil the Great or Saint John Chrysostom, then you naturally think that all the prayers and hymns, which make up the Liturgy, were written by these ecclesiastical writers, or at the very least, that they (Sts Basil and John) included them in the order of the Liturgy. In actual fact it was not so. Some of the prayers appeared earlier than Sts Basil the Great (+379 A.D.) and John Chrysostom (+407 A.D.) - the psalms and the "Our Father," for instance, - and other prayers did not appear until after their death, and at various times were inserted into the order of the Liturgy. For example, from the prayers which are heard audibly, we have the prayer "O Only-Begotten Son," which was composed in the year 535 and was introduced into the Liturgy to underline teaching concerning the incarnation of the Son of God. We have the "Holy God" composed in 439 A.D. Of its derivation we have the following account: At the beginning of the fifth century, during the reign of the Emperor Theodosius and when Proclus was Archbishop of Constantinople, there was a devastating earthquake in the city. On account of this the faithful made supplications and a processional litany. During this, a young child was miraculously taken up into the air and he heard the Angels chanting, "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal." When he returned to the earth, he told what he had heard, and then the Christians joined this to the refrain that they were singing, "Have mercy on us," and the earthquake ceased, and from that time the hymn as we have it has been sung. We also have the Cherubic Hymn which dates from c. 573 A.D. In the ancient Church after the prayer for the faithful, the clergy left the altar to fetch the Gifts and bring them to the Holy Table, and so that the thoughts of the faithful should not be dispersed during the interval, it was appointed that the Cherubic Hymn be chanted. We also have the Symbol of Faith, the Creed, introduced at the end of the fifth century (A.D. 488) or the beginning of the sixth (510 A.D). The Symbol was actually composed at the First Œcumenical Council (325 A.D.) and at the Second (381 A.D.), but it was not until at least the end of the fifth century that it was introduced into the Liturgy. Then there is the hymn to the Mother of God, "It is truly meet," which was introduced in 980 A.D. Of the derivation of

this hymn, we know the following: - On Athos in one of the kellia at Karyes there lived an elder and his disciple. On one occasion, when the disciple had been left alone, and the Elder had gone off to another church to pray, a stranger appeared to stay the night in the kellion. During the time of the service, the disciple and the stranger chanted together hymning the Theotokos, but the Guest sang something other than the usual hymn, - in fact the words of the hymn, "It is truly meet." The disciple asked him to write down what he had sung, and he did so on a stone panel, as there was nothing else there to write on. (The Guest was the Archangel Gabriel). When the Elder returned and learned what had happened he reported the matter to the council of Athonite fathers, and they in turn reported it to the Patriarch, showing him the inscribed panel on which the Archangel had written the hymn. There is also the hymn, "Let my mouth be filled," added in 620 A.D. In the Russian Church a prayer for the Emperor was added in 1881 A.D., and after the Revolution and exile, one called the Prayer for the Salvation of Russia (which as one priest, now in the Thyateira Archdiocese, has pointed out might equally be used to refer to any of the countries in the West). Most of the verses and troparia sung on the Beatitudes were composed before the fifteenth century, although of course some derive from later and even modern services to the saints. The Prayer Beyond the Ambon dates from the tenth or eleventh century. And the "O Lord, save the pious" is also later than the fourth century. This last hymn is closely linked liturgically with the ceremonies surrounding the Little Entrance at a Hierarchal Liturgy. In ancient times, until the three antiphons had been chanted not even the priest entered the sanctuary, much less the Bishop. They entered the sanctuary in time for the reading of the Gospel, accompanied by the other clergy. With the passing of time, with the flourishing of the Byzantine imperial power and its attendant ceremony, the entry of the clergy into the sanctuary came to be linked with the Emperor's entry into the church *[nowadays many of the faithful seem to think they are Byzantine Emperors or even greater than he, and come at this time or even later! -ed]*. Usually the Patriarch met the Emperor at the doors of the narthex and progressed with him into the centre of the church. Then the Patriarch first entered the sanctuary and the Emperor followed him. Having bowed to each other, they exchanged the greeting, "*Is polla eti, despota!*" When the Emperor went right into the sanctuary and venerated the Holy Table, the protodeacon would exclaim, "O Lord, save the pious!" as an acclamation. Consequently, this acclamation is in the first instance addressed to the imperial personage.

As regards the second type of prayer - those pronounced by the priest quietly or secretly, - and as touching their appearance and derivation, - we would like to express the views that follow. The prayers read at the initial entry of the clergy (before the Royal Gates), those at their vesting, at the proskomidi, at the reception of the Holy Gifts, and the prayer of the Little Entrance, that of the Trisagion, the prayer of the Great entrance and the Prayer Beyond the Ambon are all significantly later than Saint John Chrysostom. In fact, the proskomidi itself, in its complete form, was only finally composed in the twelfth century, and originally it had its place between the Liturgy of the Catechumens and that of the Faithful, and only afterwards was it placed back before the Liturgy of the Catechumens. The reason why earlier it was immediately before the

Liturgy of the Faithful was that the catechumens could not participate in the offering of the gifts for sanctification in the Liturgy of the Faithful. When the order of the catechumens gradually decreased and the importance of the Liturgy of the Catechumens was somewhat diminished, then the proskomidi was re-sited at the beginning of the Liturgy.

From these observations, those who are learned in such matters have arrived at the following conclusion: if one studies the works of St John Chrysostom in which he frequently makes reference to the Liturgy of his time, and if, further, one excludes those parts of the Liturgy which quite evidently appeared after the time of St John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great, one can deduce how the Liturgy was in their time, at least in its most important aspects. The first thing, after the person presiding had greeted the worshippers with the words, "Peace be unto all," was the chanting of the psalms, then readings from the Old and the New Testaments (the Gospel was read in the centre of the church), and then teaching; there followed a litany and prayers for the catechumens, a prayer for the faithful, and then the proskomidi was performed in a completely separate part of the church, then a litany for the Precious Gifts that were set forth, then the call to peace and love and the kiss, a reminder about securing the doors, the Eucharistic Prayer read in the hearing of all, the sanctification of the Gifts, the prayer for the living and the dead, the litany for the Consecrated Gifts, Our Father, the elevation of the Holy Gifts and "The Holies are for the Holy," Communion, and then thanksgiving for Communion.

Having established that the Liturgy of the fourth century, the time of St John Chrysostom, was thus, academics try to ascertain the times when the other parts of the Liturgy appeared in an attempt to throw light on what the Liturgy comprised in Apostolic times, how it grew and developed, and to discover the exact liturgical input of Sts Basil the Great and John Chrysostom.

To be continued...

BY JACOB'S WELL, Jesus found the Samaritan Woman.
He that covereth the earth with clouds
asked water of her.
O wonder!
He that rideth on the Cherubim
speaketh with a harlot woman.
He asked for water.
Who suspended the earth upon the waters.
He seeketh water,
Who causeth springs and pools of water to flow forth,
for He wished to draw to Himself
her that was truly ensnared by the contending enemy,
and to impart the water of life
unto her that was sorely inflamed with unseemly deeds,
for He alone is compassionate and the Friend of man.
From the Pentecostarion

BOOK REVIEW

Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt

A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Text by Helen C. Evans

Photographs by Bruce White

Published by THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART NEW YORK

in collaboration with Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, NEW HAVEN AND LONDON

Hardback, approx. 9 1/4" x 12," 96 pages

THIS SLIM VOLUME, only about the size of an old-fashioned School atlas, is both beautiful and refreshing. The book opens with an Introduction by His Eminence Archbishop Damianos of Sinai, who cites words of Daniel, the Abbot of Raithu, in his life of St John of the Ladder, and so immediately we are introduced to the spirit of Orthodox asceticism.

By far the greater part of the book is devoted to photographs of Mount Sinai, the Monastery of St Catherine, its sacred icons and relics and its other treasures and, perhaps most interestingly of all, scenes from the lives of the fathers who are struggling there. The end papers show prints of the monastery nestling under the mountain, and Helen Evans' text is interspersed with smaller and fascinating prints. All this makes the book beautiful.

Why it is refreshing is that it is presented as a Christian record of the monastery and its spiritual significance. So many publications of the last half-century or so present anything Christian, as it were, with a sneer, with a note not simply of criticism but of cynicism, if not of outright mockery. In her text, Evans does not do this, she simply and clearly expresses the Christian tradition regarding the sacred monastery and its environs. The present reader was struck that this is even apparent in the captions to the prints and the photographs, but then noticed a small reference to the fact that these had been supplied by one of the fathers of the Monastery, Fr Justin (who, regular readers will remember, last year visited our brotherhood)!

For the present reviewer, who is rather notoriously phobic of Bishops, one of the most affecting photographs was, nonetheless, one of Archbishop Damianos seated on a stone in the shade of a tree, taking tea with the Bedouin in the Monastery grounds. In presenting us with this "photographic essay," he and all those involved in its publication, have done exactly the same: they have granted us hospitality and refreshed, not this time our bodies but our spirits.

THE COMING MONTH

THIS YEAR, all of April falls within the forty-day long feast of the Lord's Resurrection. In the homily from St John of Cronstadt on Thomas Sunday, printed above, St John speaks of the feast as come and gone, but it is evident that he is speaking of the first week of the feast. Bright Week or New Week, which is kept in a special way, with no readings from the Psalter, with the doors of the iconostas open, with the often repeated chanting of the the troparion, and with a special Great Prokeimenon every day at Vespers. On Thomas Sunday, the eighth day of Pascha and thus the Sunday after Easter Day, the Church's services revert to something much closer to their usual form, but we continue to hymn the Lord's Resurrection and to give praise for its consequences for us, up to the Day of the Ascension, which this year falls on Thursday 7th / 20th May. So this year, all the Sundays within the paschal period except the last

fall in April: Thomas Sunday, Ointment-Bearers' Sunday, and those of the Paralytic and of the Samaritan Woman.

On Thomas Sunday, we have in the Apostle's confession a confirmation of the truth of the Resurrection, but this truth is also confirmed by the Saviour's appearing to Thomas bearing the wounds of the crucifixion, demonstrating that Thomas saw and was able to touch the body which had been crucified and buried and that Christ had not appeared to him with the appearance of a body or in some other body. This gives us confirmation regarding the future resurrection of our own bodies, and instructs to treat them and to act with them properly.

On Ointment-bearers Sunday we pay tribute to the extraordinary love of these women, who were granted to become the first witnesses of the Resurrection. Their love for Christ again teaches us how we should strive to love Him. But again, the Church does not leave us without confirmation of the truth of the bodily resurrection of Christ. The Ointment-bearing Women were not only the first to meet the Risen Saviour, but they had also been witnesses of His Passion, His death and His burial. To underline the fact of the bodily resurrection, the Church includes in her hymns on this day Saint Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus the disciple by night, who had taken the body down from the Cross, prepared it as best they could in the short time available before the Sabbath, and laid it in the tomb. These people, better than any others knew that He had died, and they became preachers of His Resurrection, thus bearing witness to the words we profess daily in the Creed: (He) "was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; and arose again on the third day."

On the Sunday of the Paralytic, the Gospel reading at the Divine Liturgy tells us of the healing of the man who had been paralysed for 38 years and whom the Saviour found waiting for the moving of the waters at the Sheep Pool in Jerusalem. The event is not immediately connected with Christ's Resurrection, in fact it happened before He was crucified, but it is celebrated within the paschal period, both because it occurred within the Jewish Pentecost (the fifty days between Passover and the feast of Pentecost) and because the Church sees this miracle an expression of the renewal of the life of mankind through the resurrection of Christ. On this and the next two Sundays, with regard to this renewal we see two themes repeated: a) the mention of water, showing us that our renewal is granted us through Holy Baptism; b) the emphasis that the Healer is a man, thus showing us that the victory over the powers of evil was won for us by one of our kind, the Man, Jesus Christ, and so in His loving condescension God has granted our kind the victory.

The Sunday of the Samaritan Woman tells of the Saviour's meeting with the Samaritan Woman at the well of Jacob. In this instance, she is not healed of a physical infirmity but of a spiritual one, for she had led a shamelessly sinful life. And it is to this sinful woman that the Saviour imparts some of the fundamental teaching about the witness of His Church, primarily that true worshippers worship the Father "in spirit and in truth." He also assures us, by His providential meeting with this woman, that He always meets those who sincerely seek after the truth. He speaks of the thirst which we experience which may be quenched by the Water He gives, but also in this history He tells us of the thirst which He has for our salvation.

On the Wednesday before the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, we have another commemoration which is part of the paschal cycle of services; Mid-Pentecost. That day marks the mid-point between Easter Day and Pentecost Sunday, but the Gospel reading refers back to an event in the life of the Saviour, when in the midst of the feast of Tabernacles (rather than Pentecost), He preached concerning His Divine mission and again spoke of water, this time

referring to the gracefilled Christian teaching and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were to be poured out upon the true believers. The feast itself, which is kept within Pascha for eight days, dates back to the fourth century. In the fifth century St Anatolius of Constantinople wrote hymns for the feast, as did St Andrew of Crete in the seventh century and St John of Damascus in the eighth, and St Theophanes in the ninth - these hymns are still part of our liturgy for the festival. In the Old Testament celebration of the feast of Tabernacles, on the eighth day, the High Priest would lead a procession from the Temple of Solomon to the Pool of Siloam, from which he would take water in a golden vessel. At the sound of a trumpet the procession would return to the Temple, where the water was mixed with wine and he would sanctify the altar. Today in the Orthodox Church, we have the Lesser Blessing of waters on the feast, showing the sanctification granted in the New Testament Church through the outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit.

All those commemorations that we have so far mentioned are part of the paschal cycle and so the date on which they are celebrated depends on the date of Easter itself, but after Holy Week and Bright Week, we begin again to commemorate the Saints, whose days are determined according to the cycle of immovable feasts. Pre-eminently among these, we have the Holy Great Martyr and Trophy-Bearer George, whose feastday falls on 23rd April / 6th May, - the day after Mid-Pentecost. But we also have:-

Another St George, Saint George of Melitene (7th / 20th): He became a monk in his youth and, through his struggles and through Grace, achieved a state of great purity and of humility. He also became renowned for his love and care for the poor, and this was brought to the notice of the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and thus St George came to be appointed Bishop of the town of Meletine on the island of Lesbos. As the pastor of his flock, it became evident that he had been granted the gift of healing and of casting out unclean spirits. During the reign of Leo the Armenian, who promoted the iconoclastic heresy, St George remained staunchly Orthodox and, because of his veneration of the icons and because he boldly convicted the Emperor of his errors, he was sent into exile to Kherson, where in deep old age he died in about the year 816.

The Holy Martyr Thomais (13th / 26th) was born in Alexandria and married to a fisherman. She was distinguished by her chastemindedness, her meekness and guilelessness. Because of his occupation, her husband was often away from home, and her father-in-law became darkened with a passionate carnal desire for Thomais. When she resisted his advances, he murdered her, and thus she won a martyr's crown for her contest for the Christian virtue of chastity. She died in the year 476 A.D. Her sacred relics were taken by the desert father, Abba Daniel, to Scetis, where honouring her contest for purity, he laid them in the cemetery for the priests. Later they were taken to the Imperial City of Constantinople, and she is much resorted to in prayer by those who are troubled by carnal passions.

Our Venerable Father Padarn or Paternus (15th / 28th) was a native of Brittany and lived in the sixth century. His father, Petran, left the family and went to Ireland in order to take up the monastic life, and after some time Padarn resolved to follow him. However, by God's providence, he never reached Ireland and settled instead in Wales. Little is now known about the exact course of his life, but he became the founder of the renowned monastery of Llanbadarn Vaur (which, of course is named after him), and some sources indicate that he was consecrated Bishop. It is known that in addition to living a severely ascetical life of prayer and fasting, he was tireless in caring for the poor and the sick. Breton sources suggest that before his death he returned to his native land. He died in about the year 550.

Saint Severus, Bishop of Naples (30th April / 13th May) lived in the fifth century. Little is known of his life, except that he adorned the city with many churches, one of which was built with a apse, with mosaics depicting Christ and the Apostles with seated Prophets beneath them, and so an early testimony to the adornment of churches with icons. A miracle is recounted of the Saint. It is said that when he was Bishop in the city, a certain man went to the bathhouse, but neglected to take the necessary fee with him. He promised to pay the proprietor, but on returning to his home, he forgot it. He died a few days later with the debt unpaid, and the bathhouse proprietor approached his widow and demanded an immense sum of money from her, saying her husband had owed it to him. The poor woman was confused and did not know what to do. Her husband had mentioned owing the proprietor something, but she was under the impression that it was a trifling amount. In her distress she resorted to Saint Severus, who immediately ordered his deacon to take a bell and summon the people of the city to the grave of the dead man. When they had gathered there, Saint Severus prayed to God to manifest the truth, and then he called to the dead man to tell him how much he owed the bathhouse proprietor. The dead man rose from the grave and confessed exactly what he owed, and then again gave up the ghost. When the people understood how the bath keeper had tried to defraud the widow, in their indignation they fell upon him and would have finished him off, had not Saint Severus restrained them.

In April we also commemorate on a date undetermined one of the New Hieromartyrs of Russia, Metropolitan Arsenius of Novgorod. He was an extremely learned man, and was one of the three candidates for Patriarch of Moscow, when in 1918 the Patriarchate was re-established in Russia. The other two, of course, were Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) who gained the majority of the votes but providentially was not chosen by the lot and later became the First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, and Patriarch St Tikhon himself. The roles of these two great confessors of the Faith played such an important part in the subsequent history of the Russian Church, that the witness of Metropolitan Arsenius is often forgotten. He was one of the leading hierarchs who withstood Metropolitan Sergius' infamous declaration and betrayal of the integrity of the Church in 1927. He ended his earthly course as a confessor in April, 1937 (exact date unknown to us).

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

" I appreciated the homily by Bishop Nikon printed in the last Shepherd, but is there a reason why you tend to print sermons from people who died a generation ago?" - R.A.S., Leamington Spa.

There are several reasons, none of them very compelling in themselves, but together they make a point. First of all, the contemporary ones usually do not reach us until it is too late for publication in the issue dedicated to the feast in question. Secondly, these are usually published in a host of other magazines as well, which many of our readers will be receiving. Thirdly, we believe it is important to treasure our spiritual heritage and this means respecting and learning from what those of an earlier generation had to say. And lastly, to use a paradoxical expression, spiritually they are meatier.

NEWS SECTION

ATHONITE MONASTERY BURNS

THE SACRED MONASTERY of Chilandar on the Holy Mountain, which is the Serbian Orthodox community and one of the Serbian Church's holiest places, caught fire sometime after midnight on 4th March. The monastery was founded in the late twelfth century by Saint Sava, the first Archbishop of Serbia and his father, the Venerable Simeon the Myron-Streaming and former king of Serbia. The fire rapidly spread through a large portion of the monastery and took hours to extinguish. In the end, more than a third of the ancient monastery complex was destroyed. Through the mercies of God, there were no casualties and none of the monks were injured. The buildings destroyed were mainly residential buildings, although a medieval church next to the Tower of St Sava was burned and its iconostas and frescoes dating from the 17th and 18th centuries were destroyed. The fire did not touch the Church of St Milutin, the monastery treasury, the archive or the library, and so many priceless treasures have been preserved. The fathers of the monastery were joined by professional fire-fighters in their attempts to stop the blaze, as well as by pilgrims and monks from other monasteries. Among the latter, it is reported that among the first to arrive and offer their help were fathers from the Zealot Monastery of Esfigmenou, even though, when they were besieged some months ago by the militia in an attempt to force them to commemorate the Patriarch of Constantinople, some of the militia men had been billeted at Chilandar. His Holiness Patriarch Pavle of Serbia and his Synod have issued an appeal for the restoration of the monastery, and it has been widely reported that H.R.H. Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, whose love for the Holy Mountain is well documented, has been among the first to respond by making a donation of £650,000 towards the £7million appeal. The monks are wisely reluctant to seek funding from the European Union, because the Union has been exerting pressure upon the Athonite communities to change their traditions and allow women to visit the Mountain.

VIOLENCE IN GEORGIA

BISHOP AMBROSE OF METHONI, a British convert to Holy Orthodoxy now living in Greece and the assistant to His Eminence Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fill, issued an appeal on Friday 12th March, stating: 'This morning, at 7.30 local time, a large group of armed police entered the Church of the Iveron Icon in Gldani, Tbilisi, Georgia, where a congregation of around 500 parishioners had gathered for the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, and having attacked and seriously injured a large number of persons, including children, arrested the dean, Archpriest Vasili Mklavishvili, the priest Gabriel Neimiridze and another eight people. It is unknown where they are being held, and their safety is in great doubt. It is unquestionably the case that this attack is the result of a request made last week by a group of American Senators demanding that the new Georgian government place under arrest the 'religious fanatics' who are impeding the missionary activities of foreign sectarian groups in Georgia.' Later the Bishop sent out an update on the situation stating that on the following Sunday, Fr Gabriel was released from detention, while others had been condemned to three month's imprisonment. More arrests followed on the Monday, and, he continues, "It is clear that the Georgian authorities are intending to imprison all the active members of our church [*the Traditionalist Synod of Metropolitan Cyprian -ed.*] in Georgia with the aim of destroying our organisation and either demolishing our parish church, built with the blood and sacrifice of our faithful, or handing it over to the Georgian Patriarchate. The threat of war with Adjara over these days, when everyone's attention is turned in that direction, provides an useful occasion for the authorities

to act with impunity." The religious situation in Georgia is obviously very volatile. In 2002, Patriarchal clergymen were behind an attack upon a Roman Catholic pilgrimage in Georgia, and RC leaders later received threatening phone calls warning them not to make this offense widely known. Patriarchal clergy are allegedly responsible for the demolition of a Traditionalist Orthodox Church in the village of Shemokmedi in the same year. And both Patriarchal and Traditionalist clergy have also been accused of attempting, by means that we can only call foul, of disrupting Protestant meetings and those of the Jehovah Witnesses and of seizing and destroying their missionary literature. Fr Vasili Mkalavishvili is among those who are reported to have engaged in such activities, and leaders of the Protestant denominations and the Jehovah's Witnesses have expressed satisfaction at his arrest and the fact that he is being held pending trial. Whether or not he is guilty, it appears to be a gross infringement of religious freedom for the authorities to raid a church causing disruption and injury during the celebration of Divine service in order to arrest suspected criminals. The Georgian Patriarchate itself has condemned the "arrest with the use of force" as "unacceptable," and, although apparently not concerned about the sacrilegious disruption of the Liturgy in what they presumably consider a schismatic group, they have stated rather sensibly "Georgian law enforcers could have arrested Mkalavishvili without clashes."

MORE VIOLENCE IN "LIBERATED" KOSOVO

WE ARE PREPARING THIS ISSUE somewhat earlier in the month than usual, because of the approach of Holy Week, and at the time of doing so, sadly but not at all unexpectedly, in the secular press and media, reports are breaking of the dreadful news of renewed violent clashes in Kosovo. It is impossible at this stage to evaluate these reports, and in any case our readers probably have a better idea of the sad events there than we could portray in a few lines. However, a few days before the violence was generally known in the West, the publishers of "Orthodox America" forwarded us the following message sent them directly from Serbia, which shows that attacks upon churches were also still continuing, and which asks our prayers:- *"I am writing to you as we hear the news of new attacks of Albanians in Kosovo. The seminary in Prizren is burned, and there is an indication that there may be attacks on the Patriarchate of Pec. I talked to Fr. Luka, Abbot of Cetinje monastery an hour ago. He reviewed my translation of the text about the Pec miracle-working icon of Mother of God and gave me his blessing to forward it to you. He informed me about this uprising of Albanians and was very concerned about the sisterhood in Pec. There is only a small group of KFOR soldiers guarding the monastery. Please, pray for our people in Kosovo, and especially for the brotherhood and sisterhood of Patriarchate of Pec, Dechani and Grachanica.* For our part, we also ask all the faithful to pray.

ROCA CLERGYMEN SPEAK OUT ON "SAME-GENDER UNIONS"

THE PASTORAL CONFERENCE of the Western American Diocese of the Russian Church Abroad issued an Epistle on 28th February / 12th March, concerning the "same-gender marriages" that briefly were being allowed in San Francisco, as well as in Oregon and Massachusetts. The Epistle sets forth the Orthodox Christian teaching concerning marriage, and speaks out against modern culture wherein "much emphasis has been placed on the 'culture of the flesh,' and the eternal and spiritual nature of man has been minimised." The epistle faults the specious argument used by proponents of same-sex unions that the liberalisation in the law was simply a natural development in a process because formerly interracial marriages had also been banned by law. [It is, of course, licit for people of different races to marry each other,

but not for people of the same sex to do so]. The Epistle characterises the permitting of same-sex unions as a "flagrant disregard for the laws of God," and points out that "any other 'marital' relationship [other than that between one man and one woman], even though it may bear the sanction of the state or the society at large, cannot be considered marriage and that it is sinful and creates a barrier between God and man and frustrates the purpose of man to enter into union with God."

NEW DOUBTS ABOUT ROMANOV RELICS

THE REPUTED REMAINS of the Tsar-Martyr Nicolas II, his consort Alexandra, and three of their children, all glorified among the Assembly of the New Martyrs of Russia, were laid to rest in the Sts Peter and Paul Fortress in St Petersburg in 1998. There has been much contention regarding the authenticity of these relics, and the Patriarch of Moscow did not attend the ceremonies when the bones were laid to rest. Now a study by Stanford researchers has cast fresh doubt on the DNA testing of the relics. Although the mitochondrial DNA sequences matched those of several Romanov relatives, Alec Knight, a geneticist in the anthropological genetics laboratory at Stanford, and his team have suggested that the DNA strings tested were too long and too perfect to have belonged to the bones themselves, and they believe that the remains may have been contaminated by newer DNA.

SERBIAN CLERGYMAN ADDRESSES QUESTION OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE

HIEROMONK SAVA (YANJIC) has published a paper entitled "Ecumenism in an Age of Apostasy." Fr Sava, who became known all over the world for letting the West know of the situation in Kosovo during the NATO attack upon Yugoslavia and its aftermath, begins his study with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and traces the harm that Sergianism has wrecked in the Church. The English in the translation which has reached us is evidently not perfect, and one can notice a couple of historical errors in the piece, but when Fr Sava addresses the question of ecumenism, he speaks clearly and helpfully of a dilemma which must face many conscientious Orthodox clergymen and lay people today: in the face of the inroads that Ecumenism is making in the life of the Church today, while striving to remain true oneself, does one remain within the Local Churches whose leaders are advocates of Ecumenism or does one separate from them and join one of the Traditionalist Synods, who have "walled themselves off" from error? Fr Sava does not give a definitive answer, but he cites many respected Fathers, some of whom have taken the one course and some the other, and his presentation of the question will perhaps stir the consciences of many.

PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN APPEAL

AN APPEAL has been published for a housing project in the village of Taybeh (the Biblical Ephraim) in the Holy Land. Maria C. Khoury, the author of "Witness in the Holy Land," has issued this appeal. She is a Greek-American Orthodox Christian, and Taybeh is her husband's native village. It is one of the only all-Christian villages in Palestine. The Christian population of the Holy Land has now fallen to below 2%. In an initiative to try and halt the Christian exodus from Palestine, in 1998 the Patriarch allocated land to the Church of St George in Taybeh, upon which homes for thirty Christian families could be built. The hope is that members of the congregation will be able to acquire homes near their church and in their native land at low cost. Donations to aid the endeavour may be sent to:

Metropolis of Boston Holy Land Housing,
162 Goddard Avenue, Brookline, MA 02445, USA;
or to: Taybeh O.C. Housing Project,
P.O. Box 867, Taybeh, Ramallah, Palestine, VIA ISRAEL.

BAPTISM AT THE CONVENT

ON SATURDAY 6th March, Father Peter Baulk baptised Luke, the infant son of Stuart and Natalia, at the Annunciation Convent in Willesden. The baby was named for the holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, and his uncle, Andrew James, and Dr Katy Amar stood as Godparents. May they and the newly illumined servant of God Luke be granted to live in the faith of a pure confession and in all piety and sobriety all the days of their lives.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

THE GUILD OF ST HELENA has as its object to help the wives and families of Servicemen or ex-Servicemen by bringing them into Christian fellowship one with another. Mrs Camilla Ritchie, the wife of the Commandant at Sandhurst, is the warden of the Guild. She is the daughter of one of our most regular parishioners, Justina Trollope. About twenty members of the Aldershot branch of the Guild visited St Edward's Church on Thursday 18th March, which was not only our Foundation Day but also the eve of the commemoration of the uncovering of the Precious Cross and nails by St Helena. They were given a talk by Fr Niphon and shown around the church and then given refreshments.

PRACTICAL TIP

WHEN BRINGING BABIES up to receive the Holy Mysteries, be sure to hold their hands and their legs in such a way that they cannot kick out or flail around and knock or grasp the chalice, risking spilling the Holy Gifts. Also although it is customary in many churches for the faithful to kiss the foot of the chalice (N.B. not the priest's hand) after receiving and it is good to encourage children to learn this as young as possible, there is little benefit to a tiny infant to headbut him against the chalice when he has received, and this too can be very dangerous.

STOP PRESS FROM KOSOVO

THE DIOCESE of Raska-Prizren and Kosovo-Metohija received word today (19/3/04) that the sisterhood of Devic Monastery near Srbica, south of Mitrovica, has been evacuated by KFOR. At least 1,000 armed Albanians circled the monastery which was looted and set on fire immediately after the evacuation. The relics of St. Joanikije of Devic the Miracle-worker - among the most precious sacred objects of Orthodoxy - remain in the monastery. The sisters are currently safe. Mother Anastasia, the abbess and her sisters, confirmed to the Diocese that the French KFOR evacuated them today from the Monastery. ... On the basis of today's reports from Obilic and other parts of Kosovo and Metohija, as well as tragic events of yesterday, the Diocese presumes that at least several dozen, possibly more than one hundred Serbs have been murdered by the Kosovo Albanians. Many have been wounded. The material damage is immense, especially for the Serbian Orthodox Church. Practically the entire centuries-old history of the Serbian people has disappeared in the flames of violence and crime. Remaining Serbs are being evacuated in every direction and there is a justified fear

among Serbs that this is an intentional and pre-planned strategy to divide Kosovo and Metohija which is probably being carried out with the silent acquiescence of certain international circles. It is incomprehensible that this pogrom against the Serbs is taking place in the presence of 18,000 members of KFOR equipped with the most modern equipment in the world, and several thousand members of the UNMIK police.... According to information received this morning, the following newly destroyed churches have been added to the list of destroyed churches and monasteries:

1. Devic Monastery, built in the 14th century
2. Church in Vitina, built in the 19th century
3. Church of St. Nicholas in Pristina, built in the 19th century

The latest news:

According to the latest news groups of armed Albanians are rampaging through Lipljan destroying Serb homes. Two Serb churches are in flames:

1. The church of the Presentation of the Virgin, 14th century
2. The church of Florus and Laurus, reconstructed in 1950s From the southern part of Kosovo Mitrovica the news were confirmed that the church of
3. St. Sava (19th century) has been burned in the early afternoon hours together with the parish house. The priest and his family has been evacuated to North Mitrovica.
4. The church of St. Lazarus in Piskote village near Djakovica which was damaged in 1999 was finally burned to the ground

At the moment the score of destroyed churches & monasteries is 22.