

## FROM THE FATHERS

“WE PITY PEOPLE who hasten to church as though to receive something, and there pay no heed to the word of God, and without any discernment of their own inward life, they neither sorrow at the remembrance of their sins, nor have any fear of the judgment, but, smiling and shaking hands with each other they turn the house of prayer into a place of endless gossiping, heedless of what the Psalmist solemnly tells us, ‘In His temple every man uttereth glory’ (Ps. 28:9). But you, not alone do not speak it, you become a distraction to your neighbour, turning his attention to yourself. God has no need of your glory; but He desires that you become worthy of receiving His glory. And, ‘Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap’” (Gal. 6:7).

SAINT BASIL THE GREAT, + 379 A.D.

“WOULD, my dear brethren, that we say this not to our own condemnation, namely: that all who are called by the name of priest are also named as angels, as the prophet testifies, saying, ‘For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts’ (Mal. 2:7). You, likewise, can reach to the sublimity of this name [angel], if you so wish. For each one among you, in so far as he is able, in so far as he responds to the grace of the heavenly invitation, should he recall his neighbour from evildoing, should he seek to encourage him in doing what is good, when he re-

minds him of the eternal kingdom, or of the punishment of wrong-doers, whenever he employs words of holy import, he is indeed an angel. And let no one say: I am not capable of giving warning; I am not a fit person to exhort others. Do what you can, lest your single talent, unprofitably employed, be required of you with punishment.”

**SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT, POPE OF ROME, + 603 A.D.**

“SHOULD ANYONE in his presumption think that even without the prerequisite struggles and virtues he is able to see things according to their true nature, there is nothing strange in this. For presumption can make even the blind think they can see, and foolish men boast when they have nothing to boast about. Yet if it were easy to see things according to their true natures merely by thinking about them in an abstract way, then inward grief and the purification that comes from it would be superfluous; and so would the many forms of ascetic labour, as well as humility, supranatural grace, and dispassion. But this is not the case at all. For often this capacity to see things according to their true nature comes more readily to simple people, to those whose intellects are free from the hustle and wiliness of this world, once they had submitted themselves to an experienced spiritual father. It may also be granted through the special dispensation of God’s grace, as it was to people in ancient times, before they knew either their left hand or right hand (cf. Jonas 4:11). But the fact that we have served the passions from our youth up, and have practised virtually every form of malice and fraud with complete willingness and zeal, means that it is impossible for us to be freed from such evils and to see things as they truly are without effort, time, and God’s help. It is indeed impossible, unless we devote ourselves to the acquisition of the virtues as once we devoted ourselves to the passions, and unless we cultivate these virtues diligently in thought and action.”

**VEN. PETER OF DAMASCUS,  
ELEVENTH/TWELFTH CENTURY**



Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece

## Holy Synod in Resistance

# Synodal Exhortation

to the Christian Flock  
of our Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction

“For a sheep that is sealed is not easily ensnared, whereas one which is unmarked is an easy prey for thieves.”

(St. Gregory the Theologian, *Patrologia Græca*,  
Vol. XXXVI, col. 377B)

*Light-Wrought Children of the Church;  
Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:*

We embrace you with a holy kiss and greet you with the Apostolic liturgical salutation: “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all!”

On the occasion, and with the great blessing, of the Thirty-Seventh regular Convocation of our Synod of Bishops (October 4-5, 2010 [Old Style]), we, the least among your spiritual Fathers in Christ, the Bishops of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox in Resistance to the innovation of ecumenism, deem it necessary to address to you, for the love of our Saviour, some words of hope, consolation, and edification.

Our desire to address the clergy, monks, nuns, and laity of our jurisdiction is all the stronger at the present historic juncture, since this year marks, among other things, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the formation of our Holy Synod.

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**1. Our homeland**, which was traversed by the Apostles and which has given birth to Saints—and also the entire world—is being shaken to its foundations by a crisis in many forms and at many levels, and everywhere we hear the appeal, “Back to basic values,” as these have been lived perennially and authentically in the context of the Body of Christ, our Most Holy Orthodox Church.

The foundations of a Christian society have always been love, friendship, reciprocity, compassion, self-sacrifice, moderation, integrity, honesty, and sincerity.

The disregard and, ultimately, the abandonment of these basic values, which have Christ our Saviour as their sole foundation and centre, have led to a disturbance of man’s inner order and a breakdown in societal cohesion, to a ruination of fundamentals, and to the creation of impasses.

Self-love in its varied forms, unrestrained consumerism, the pursuit of earthly happiness, a lack of self-respect, and, in general, a practical form of atheism, have led mankind to profound alienation and to veritable social tragedy.

**\* We are called**, today, to emphasize the uniqueness of evangelical and ecclesiastical anthropology and to contribute to the peace and unity of the world, though on the indispensable precondition that we be consistent with our Christian identity and our Christocentric ethos, which springs from the Cross and Resurrection, remaining free from all worldly attachments and idolatry, being Spirit-bearing, life-bearing, and light-bearing.

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**2. In periods** of radical social upheaval there has always been a discernible recrudescence of so-called eschatological frenzy, of a spurious apocalyptic anxiety over the impending appearance of the Antichrist. This leads to a fear of marks of identification and numbers, to constant neurotic suspicions, to a pessimistic view of history, and, in the end, to an unhealthy introversion and a rejection of the achievements of technological civilization.

Orthodox eschatology, however, is active and dynamic: the Church, the holy Root and the good Olive Tree (Romans 11:16, 24), is the People of God, the New Israel, which has been redeemed by the Blood of Christ the Lamb and continues to experience exodus and tribulation as it journeys towards the New City of the Eschaton, in order to participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9).

\* **The Church**, in its martyric exodus, confronts the elements of the world with wakeful vigilance, takes them and transforms them to the glory of God, and finds encouragement in the astoundingly hope-filled and optimistic message of the Book of Revelation, which, through a multitude of visions, symbolic depictions, parables, and hymns portrays the majestic triumph of the Church as a recapitulation of the triumph of our Saviour Christ: just as Christ prevailed through His suffering, so also the Church will prevail in its Cross-centered and Resurrectional course and will be triumphant thereafter, at the End of the Age.

\* **We will deal** at length with this important and timely topic, that is, so-called eschatological frenzy, in another document, which will be published during the coming days under the title: “Proposals for Curing the Eschatological Fear of Identification Marks and Numbers.”

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**3. This year** is also the ninetieth anniversary of the Patriarchal En-cyclical of 1920, which inaugurated, established, and promoted the ecclesiological heresy of ecumenism in the Christian East, and which constitutes, as everyone acknowledges, the founding charter of the ecumenical movement.

During these nine decades ecumenism has progressed with rapid steps, one of which was the calendar innovation of 1924, although the most serious have been the participation of Orthodox ecumenists in the so-called World Council of Churches and their activism at all levels, theoretical and practical, in the inter-Christian and interfaith movements, which cultivate dogmatic syncretism and the relativization of the Truth.

The history of the ecumenical movement fully confirms the observation of the Divine Chrysostomos that innovation is a “disease,”

which, “once introduced, ever spawns innovations” (*Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. LXII, col. 626) and, with the passage of time, fosters the preconditions for changing the identity of the Church, as St. Basil the Great says, “for the wholesale transmutation of the Churches” (*Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXII, col. 424B); that is, the complete alteration of the Churches, so that they might assume a different form with regard to their stability and unanimity in the Faith.

\* **It is** therefore, opportune that we renew the vision of Orthodox resistance and walling-off—within the parameters of the Patristic and Synodal Tradition, of course—so that, “speaking the truth in love” and growing in Christ in every way, progressing spiritually until we resemble Him in all respects, and being filled “with all the fulness of God” (cf. Ephesians 4:15; 3:19), we might be granted the greatest gift of the reunion of the Orthodox and the condemnation of heresy.

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**4. We feel pain** and sorrow in Christ because, at this historic turning point, the Old Calendarist Orthodox anti-ecumenists are, unfortunately, divided in the face of escalating ecumenism and the crisis in society. They are either an essential part of the crisis or are contributing, albeit unwittingly, to its worsening, whereas they ought to represent a healthy element and a way out of the crisis.

The various efforts, both in Greece and abroad, to unite the Old Calendarist anti-ecumenists, who are assuredly exponents of suffering for and witness to genuine Orthodoxy, have not yielded the expected fruits, and [thus] the demand for reunion remains an urgent one.

Before this impasse, and insofar as formal proceedings are lagging or breaking down, in spite of what are assuredly good intentions, we encourage and exhort our spiritual children in a fatherly way to form and cultivate amicable relations and alliances in Christ with our brethren who belong to other Old Calendarist jurisdictions, and indeed at a collective level.

Parishes, monasteries, associations, committees, periodicals, websites, editorial boards, social movements, etc., have the potential to

constitute small mutual and peaceful communities for the promotion of culture, Orthodox theology, and social welfare and intervention, for the purpose of counteracting individual and collective introversion and discouragement.

\* **The “spirit”** of Orthodoxy is a spirit of freedom, hope, and joy, not a spirit of servitude, fear, and anxiety, from which our Lord continually delivers us through our participation in the Mystery of His Church, in the Mystery of His Cross and Resurrection.

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**5. We wish** to conclude our Synodal Exhortation with these humble thoughts and observations, in the Christ-filled hope that we are hereby contributing to a rekindling of zeal in the midst of the Christian Flock of our ecclesiastical jurisdiction and to a demonstration of the deep conviction that we are not alone and forlorn in the labyrinths of history, but are the rational sheep of Christ, our Chief Shepherd, who have been signed with and bear the Seal of the Lamb.

\* **For a sheep** that is sealed is not easily ensnared,” says St. Gregory the Theologian, “whereas one which is unmarked is an easy prey for thieves” (*Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXVI, col. 377B). That is, a sheep which has received the Seal of the Lamb (its Lord) is not easily endangered, whereas that which has not been marked (or has effaced its seal) is easy prey for thieving demons.

\* **The renewal** and activation of the Seal of the Lamb, which we have been vouchsafed to receive in Holy Baptism and Chrismation, must be an unceasing process, through our adopting the attitude of the publican, through self-reproach and repentance, through compassionate and self-sacrificial love, through wakefulness and prayers, and also through continual partaking of the Holy Mysteries of our Church.

May our heartfelt wishes, together with the blessing of the Theotokos and of all the Saints, strengthen, guide, and protect you in your God-pleasing journey towards an experiential encounter with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to Whom belong all glory and thanksgiving, unto the ages. Amen.

Phyle [Fili], Attica  
December 12, 2010 (Old Style)

*For the Holy Synod in Resistance*

† *Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi*  
Acting President

† *Bishop Klemes of Gardikion*  
Secretary



# BAPTISMAL THEOLOGY

BY METROPOLITAN HIEROTHEOS (VLACHOS)  
OF NAVPAKTOS AND HAGIOS VLASIOS

THERE HAS BEEN in the past, and there is in our own day, a good deal of discussion about the Baptism of heretics (the heterodox<sup>1</sup>); that is, whether heretics who have deviated from the Orthodox Faith and who seek to return to it should be Baptized anew or simply Chrismated after making a profession of faith. Decisions have been issued on this matter by both local and Œcumenical Synods.

In the text that follows, I should like to discuss, by way of example, the agreement reached between the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of America and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in America<sup>2</sup> on June 3, 1999. The Greek translation of the original text was made by Protopresbyter George Dragas, a professor at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Boston [Brookline—Trans.], who also provided a summary and critique of this agreed statement between Orthodox and Roman Catholics in America.

The basis of this document is the Balamand Agreement of 1993, “Uniatism, Method of Union of the Past and the Present Search for Full Communion,” which it evidently wishes to uphold.

The text on which we are commenting, that is, the agreement signed by Orthodox and Roman Catholics in America and entitled “Baptism and ‘Sacramental Economy,’” is based on several points, in my observation, that are very typical of the contemporary ecumenical movement and indicative of its entire substance.

The first point is that “Baptism rests upon and derives its reality from the faith of Christ Himself, the faith of the Church, and the faith of the believer” (p. 13). At first sight, one is struck by the absence, here, of any reference to the Triune God—perhaps in order to justify this flexible interpretation of Baptism. Faith, then, becomes the fundamental mark and element of Baptism.

The second point is that Baptism is not a practice required by the Church, but is, “rather, the Church’s foundation. It establishes the Church” (p. 26). Here, the notion that Baptism is not the “initiatory” Mystery whereby we are introduced into the Church, but the foundation of the Church, is presented as the truth.

The third point is that “Baptism was never understood as a private ceremony, but rather as a corporate event” (p. 13). This means that the Baptism of catechumens was “the occasion for the whole community’s repentance and renewal” (p. 13). One who is Baptized “is obliged to make his own the community’s common faith in the Saviour’s person and promises” (p. 14).

The fourth point is a continuation and consequence of the foregoing points. Since Baptism rests upon faith in Christ, since it is the basis of the Church, and since, moreover, it is the work of the community, this means that any recognition of Baptism entails recognition of the Church in which the Baptism is performed. In the Agreed Statement we read: “The Orthodox and Catholic members of our Consultation acknowledge, in both of our traditions, a common teaching and a common faith in one baptism, despite some variations in practice which, we believe, do not affect the substance of the mystery” (p. 17). According to this text, there is a common faith and teaching concerning Baptism in the two “Churches,” and the differences that exist do not affect the substance of the Mystery. The two sides each acknowledge an ecclesial reality “in the other,

however much they may regard their way of living the Church's reality as flawed or incomplete" (p. 17). "The certain basis for the modern use of the phrase 'sister churches'" (p. 17) is to be found in this point. The Orthodox Church and the Latin Church are these two "sister Churches," because they have the same Tradition, the same Faith, and the same Baptism, even though there are certain differences between them. Hence, the following opinion is repeatedly affirmed in the text: "We find that this mutual recognition of the ecclesial reality of baptism, in spite of our divisions, is fully consistent with the perennial teaching of both churches" (p. 26). Misinterpreting the teaching of St. Basil the Great, the signers of this document aver that the two "Churches," in spite of the "imperfections" that exist, constitute the same ecclesial reality: "By God's gift we are each, in St. Basil's words, 'of the Church'" (p. 26).

The fifth point is that the authors of the Agreed Statement find fault with St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, who, in interpreting the views of St. Cyprian of Carthage, St. Basil the Great, and the Second Œcumenical Synod, talks—as do all of the Kollyvades Fathers of the eighteenth century—about exactitude (ἀκρίβεια) and economy (οἰκονομία) with regard to the way in which heretics are received into the Orthodox Church. That is to say, the Fathers have at times received heretics by exactitude—namely, by Baptism,—and at times by economy—namely, by Chrismation. However, even when the Church does receive someone by economy, this means that She effects the mystery of salvation at that very time, precisely because the Church is superior to the Canons, and not the Canons to the Church, and because the Church is the source of the Mysteries and, *eo ipso*, of Baptism, whereas Baptism is not the basis of the Church. The Church can receive this or that heretic by the principle of economy, without any implication that She recognizes as a Church the community that previously baptized him. This is the context within which St. Nicodemos interprets the relevant decision of the Second Œcumenical Synod.

Confusion is certainly heightened by the fact that one of the recommendations of the Agreed Statement is subject to many different interpretations. According to this recommendation, the two Churches should make it clear that "the mutual recognition of baptism does not of itself re-

solve the issues that divide them, or reestablish full ecclesial communion between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, but that it does remove a fundamental obstacle on the path towards full communion” (p. 28).

From this brief analysis, it is obvious how much confusion prevails in ecumenist circles regarding these issues. It is also obvious that [Orthodox] ecumenists understand the acceptance of the baptism of heretics (Catholics and Protestants, who have altered the dogma of the Holy Trinity and other dogmas) to mean accepting the ecclesial status of heretical bodies and, worse still, that the two “Churches,” Latin and Orthodox, are united in spite of “small” differences, or that we derive from the same Church and should seek to return to it, thereby forming the one and only Church. This is a blatant expression of the branch theory.

When there is such confusion, it is necessary to adopt an attitude of strictness, which preserves the truth: that all who fall into heresy are outside the Church and that the Holy Spirit does not work to bring about their deification.

In any event, baptismal theology creates immense problems for the Orthodox. From the standpoint of ecclesiology, the text under consideration is riddled with errors. The Patristic Orthodox teaching on this subject is that the Church is the Theanthropic Body of Christ, in which revealed truth—the Orthodox Faith—is preserved and the mystery of deification is accomplished through the Mysteries of the Church (Baptism, Chrismation, and the Divine Eucharist). The essential precondition for this is that we participate in the purifying, illuminating, and deifying energy of God. Baptism is the initiatory Mystery of the Church. The Church does not rest upon the Mystery of Baptism; rather, the Baptism of water, in conjunction with the Baptism of the Spirit, operates within the Church and makes one a member of the Body of Christ. There are no Mysteries outside the Church, the living Body of Christ, just as there are no senses outside the human body.

In closing, I should like to cite the conclusion of Father George Dragas, which he appends to his “Summary and Critique”:

*These recommendations will not win the agreement of all Orthodox, and certainly not of those who are Greek-speaking (or Greek-minded),*

*and consequently they are, by their very nature, divisive. My primary reason for coming to such a negative conclusion is that this inquiry into sacramental theology is devoid of any ecclesiological basis and that it one-sidedly interprets—or rather, misinterprets—the facts of Orthodox sacramental practice, and particularly vis-à-vis the heterodox at different periods in the history of the Church. These recommendations and conclusions and, indeed, the entire Agreed Statement are the epitome of Western skepticism. Their acceptance by Orthodox theologians signals a deliberate betrayal of Orthodox views and a capitulation to the outlook of Western ecumenism. This is something that we should reject.*

### **Translator’s Notes:**

1) We have retained, here, for the sake of faithful translation, the word “heretic,” though with some concern that many readers may assume that it carries with it the vitriol that has been attached to it in Western Christianity—and especially since the Inquisition—or by some of the more irresponsible and less reflective and spiritually-enlightened Orthodox traditionalists today. We could have justifiably used the word “heterodox,” which is not frequently used as an *ad hominem* epithet, as the word “heretic” so frequently is, but which simply indicates what both words actually mean: a person who holds to views that deviate from established belief and, in the Orthodox Church, who accepts an opinion held in opposition to the Patristic consensus and the conscience of the Church. The word takes on wholly pejorative meanings, in the Orthodox Church, only when applied to those who, in their absolute intransigence, fail to succumb to the entreaties of the Church (and to spiritual sobriety), in the face of their error, and thus cause harm to the harmonious ethos of Orthodoxy and lead others into error and delusion.

2) To be precise, the agreement in question was signed by members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, meeting at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, N.Y.

*Translated from the Greek original in Έκκλησιαστική Παρέμβαση, No. 71 (December 2001), p. 12., & taken from the Synod in Resistance website.*

## Editor's Notes:

The piece above needs to be read with some care, because in places Metropolitan Hierotheos is stating the false teaching of modern Orthodox ecumenists, in order to highlight its deviation from true teaching.

It should also be pointed out the "Baptismal Theology" to which he addresses this work is not the theology of Baptism as taught by the Orthodox Church, the belief in the one Baptism of the Church, as stated in the Creed, but refers instead to the ecumenists' erroneous view that "all Christians" (or sometimes a certain number of denominations) share "one baptism."

Finally, it is perhaps instructive to point out that Orthodox ecumenists often dismiss those who adhere to the traditional teaching of the Church in this regard, and baptise converts from the heterodox confessions, by characterizing them as "fanatics," "Old Calendarists," "schismatics" or "outside the Church," as if just a few cranks believed these things nowadays. However, Metropolitan Hierotheos is a ruling hierarch of the New Calendarist State Church of Greece, and the Father George Dragas, whom he quotes at the end of his essay, is a priest of the New Calendarist Ecumenical Patriarchate. Fr George was ordained in this country within the Archdiocese of Thyateira, and later was for a period the Dean of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, within the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, New Calendarist and itself within the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Both men are respected and competent scholars.



*“Tobias thus set out and the dog followed him* (see Tobit 6:1). When the Lord came to save the nations, holy preachers followed in His footsteps to fulfill what He commanded: *Go and teach all nations* (Matt. 28:19). And so the Lord Himself first filled Cornelius’ household with the Holy Spirit, and Peter duly baptized them with water (Acts 10:44-8). Now teachers are here called *‘dogs’* because they defend the Master’s spiritual household, wealth, and sheep from thieves and beasts, that is, from unclean spirits and heretical persons.”

THE VENERABLE BEDE OF JARROW, + 735 A.D.

# ON MONASTICISM

By the Ever-Memorable Archbishop Averky  
of Jordanville

## *Continuation*

When the monk has struggled for a certain prolonged period in the Little Schema, he might be tonsured to the highest degree of monasticism, the Great Schema, which is called the Great Angelic Habit. [*Here and in the subsequent paragraphs, Archbishop Averky is relating the present Russian practice. In many Local Churches and monasteries, the monk is tonsured immediately to the Great Schema - transl.*] The service of the tonsure to the Great Angelic Habit is very much like that of the Little Schema, for essentially it is a repetition of the vows given then, but their repetition obliges one to a greater strictness in fulfilling them, and for this reason the tonsure is conducted with greater solemnity.

The Great Schema monk receives special articles of clothing, which the mantia monk does not have; the great paramandias, and the *kouloulion* and *analavos*. The *koukoulion* is worn instead of the *klobuk*, and is a pointed hat with extended portions, which fall from the head upon the shoulders and back of the monk, and it is decorated with five crosses on the forehead, the chest, both shoulders and the back.

Among the particular ascetic struggles which should distinguish being a schemamonk, the services emphasizes quiet or silence. For this reason in many monasteries, the monks of the Great Schema live a special life, apart from the other brethren, rarely meeting them and even in the services and at trapeza (refectory) they remain separate from the other brethren. They are also given another new name, as a sign that they are beginning a new life, distinct from their earlier life in monasticism. Therefore their rule is stricter; their prayer rule is longer, and their food more limited.

Customarily monks of the Little Schema do not eat meat, and the monks of the Great Schema often refrain from any animal products, eating only vegetable products. However, all these degrees of strictness cannot be presented as something rigidly specified, - uniformly fixed everywhere and always. Rather there are variations in various countries and monasteries, in accordance with local conditions, customs and traditions. **More importantly, in Orthodox monasticism there resides a spirit of life, not of mere form, which would have only a derivative, commemorative and self-fulfilling meaning.**

What, then, does the spirit of Orthodox monasticism consist in? What is the essence, purpose and significance of the vows made at the tonsure?

Monks are those people, who have stoutly resolved **to deny their own sinful will**, to crucify it in themselves, so that, in doing so, they may do only **the will of God**.

And what does the will of God consist in, with special regard for us, people?

**“This is the will of God,”** says the Apostle Paul, **“your sanctification,” “for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness”** (1 Thess. 4:3, 7).

God desires to see us like Himself, holy, perfect, and for that reason, in expounding His New Testament precepts in the Sermon on the Mount, as something more perfect, compared with the less perfect Old Testament precepts, and as something which calls to perfection, Christ the Saviour said:

**“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”** (Matt. 5:48).

The operation of sanctity, the attainment of spiritual perfection impedes the evil, which has dwelt in human hearts from the time of the fall of our forefathers into sin. To do this, to reach holiness, spiritual perfection, it is indispensable to overcome the atmosphere of evil, spread

throughout the world by the prince of this world, the devil. **“The whole world lieth in wickedness,”** John the Theologian, the disciple of Christ, bears witness (1 John 5:19).

This means that the principle occupation of the monk is **the battle with evil**, because he is, and is called, a warrior of Christ, and is clothed in the whole armour of God during the order of the tonsure.

So that he might more effectively carry on this battle with evil, it is necessary that he himself clearly comprehend what this evil is and how it is expressed. This that same Apostle and Evangelist, John the Theologian, explains, when he says: **“All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”** (1 John 2:16), which we may translate into the language of the Holy Fathers as, the three fundamental passions, which give birth to all the rest: **love of pleasure, love of money, and love of glory.**

So it is essential to conduct a war with these fundamental passions, in order to overcome the evil which reigns in the world. In so far as these principal passions are destroyed and rooted out, evil will be curtailed.

But, how and where do we begin this battle with these passions?

Would it be right if we began to spy out the manifestations of these passions in other people, and then persuade them to get healed of these passions, while at the same time remaining ourselves subject to the influence of these passions in our own souls? This way, might it not be taken so that one not to be censured for self-centeredness in simply caring for his own soul? But surely it is abundantly clear, that this would be a wholly incorrect course of action, one which could never be crowned with success. In actuality, it is ludicrous and ridiculous to teach other people about the correction of their lives, and not to think in the very least about one's own life. Such a way would only lead to those whom we are instructing nurturing a complete and justified indignation against us. **“Physician, heal thyself,”** we would hear as a response.

This is why monks have chosen the more proper path, and have made their own a course of action in the battle with evil, which without a doubt will more truly lead to success. They have resolved to start the

battle with evil in their own souls, to root out their own particular passions, which inwardly work upon them, crushing within themselves every manifestation of **love of pleasure, love of money, and love of glory.**

Surely one cannot call this egoism?

Is this not, if we discern rightly, something completely the opposite: to crush and root out all the self-centred feelings in one's soul? For it is even exactly such passions which are manifest in the self-centredness of infants.

But in what way do the monks arm themselves against these three principal passions? With what means do they think to root them out of their souls?

They strive to extinguish them, and to conquer their growth within their souls, by the virtues which are completely contrary to them, and for this reason they give vows of **chastity, non-possessiveness, and obedience.**

*... to be continued in the next issue.*



## **POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE**

*“I am writing with the following questions: 1) Why do the dead are often referred to as ‘the ones who have fallen asleep’? Does the church have a clear teaching as to what exactly happens to the soul after we die? 2) I bought myself a Psalter but I am now sure how to use it. I guess the psalms have to be sung, is there any music written for them? Please help.” - E. M., Royal Berkshire.*

I WILL TRY and reply to your questions, but forgive me if the answers are inadequate. Yes, the Church does have a clear teaching on what happens after death - after all a great part of her mission is to prepare us for that life. And it is for this reason that She prays so insistently

for those who have departed from this life. In brief, the teaching is that at death the soul departs from the body, and it then undergoes a particular judgment. This is described as a contest between the Angels of light and those of darkness who, depending on how the person lived, will claim him/her for their own. This particular judgment is also often described as a series of trials, relating to the various types of sin, and sometimes called the tollhouses. After this particular judgment the soul is consigned to a place appropriate to its spiritual state. Those who have led virtuous lives will be granted a place of light; those who have led sinful lives will be in a place of darkness. Although there is no repentance after death, the Church teaches that her prayers and those of her faithful do help the departed in this intermediate state. This is why we have services for them, give alms in their memory, bless koliva, etc. On the Last Day, the bodies of the dead will be resurrected, and then, soul and body, all will be judged and assigned to their final place. There is an excellent booklet on this by Constantine Cavarnos, called "The Future Life according to Orthodox Teaching," and it is well worth reading.

Now, about the Psalter - which one do you have? If it is the Boston one, which we use in church at Brookwood, it gives indications of how it is used at the back. This is, of course, for services in church. At home with a family you are hardly likely to be able to do all this! But you may read it quietly, perhaps a kathisma or a third of one every day, and that will be a blessing. In daily reading you may like to follow (even though not in full) the order used in church, and so rather than reading through from beginning to end of the Psalter, take one of the kathismas used on that particular day (Monday, Tuesday, etc) in church (or a third of it) and read, then next week another one, so that you are saying the same psalms, even if not all, as the Church is reciting in her services.

Also you may get to know certain psalms that particularly help you. In times of repentance, of course, psalm 50; and St Ambrose of Optina advises that when we feel under spiritual attack we should read psalms 3, 53, 58 and 142; and when depressed Pss 101, 36, 26, and 90; and to learn patience Ps 39. You may find your own helpful psalms.

Whether to sing or read, well the Church teaches us: - if you notice, in Vespers we only chant the psalms that comprise "Lord, I have

cried,” and in Mattins only those of the Polyeleos and the Praises, and in the Liturgy only psalms 102, and 145. The rest of the psalms in these services, and those in all the other services we have in Church are read. So, the more general practice is to read them. This should be instructive for us in our home use. And in any case, you cannot sing! - otherwise you would have volunteered to join the choir, to help share the load and contribute all that you can to the beauty of God’s service.



## THE COMING MONTH

THE LENTEN TRIODION starts this year on the very last day of January, Sunday 31st (13th February on the new), and so, unlike last year, when Pascha was very early, we have a pause, after the Great Feasts of the Nativity and Theophany, before we start our lenten journey.

**The Theophany, the feast of the Saviour’s Baptism in Jordan** (Wednesday 6th / 19th January) is the premier feast of the month and one of the most important of the whole Church Year. By our Saviour’s Baptism, our own Baptism, and therefore our entry into the Orthodox Church, is inaugurated, for He was baptized not to be cleansed, but to cleanse the waters for our cleansing and rebirth. The celebration is preceded with special Apostle and Gospel readings on the Saturday and Sunday before the feast day itself. The eve of the feast is kept as a strict fast, and we have the same series of services as we have on Christmas Eve, with the addition of the **Great Blessing of Waters** after the Liturgy of St Basil the Great. On the day of the feast itself, that rite is repeated, properly at the sea side, by a river, or by a lake. Sadly many parishes churches in diaspora neglect this practice and simply repeat the blessing in the church, thus losing a valuable opportunity to witness to those outside the Church, and to show that blessings for all creation flow from the Church. The second day of the feast is kept as a celebration in honour of St John the Baptist, and again on the Saturday and Sunday after the feast day itself, there are

specially appointed Apostle and Gospel readings. All these things are to instill in our hearts and minds the paramount importance of this festival, and to instruct us concerning it.

Those of you who conscientiously follow the **Scriptural readings** for each day of the year, as we all should, may find that during this month, **various calendars give different readings**. This is because Pascha was very early last year, and is rather later this year (Sunday, 11th / 24th April), and so the period between the two Paschas is more than a year. In such cases there are often weeks when we repeat readings from earlier in the year. Such weeks always fall about this time of year, because from the beginning of the Lenten Triodion, the system starts again, and there are different systems of appointing the readings for these interpolated weeks in different local (national) Orthodox Churches. Indeed, there are even some usages peculiar to various monasteries or dioceses. One need not be too concerned about this, the important thing is to regularly read the Scriptures.



## ***SIR-UK NEWS***

### ***BISHOP SOFRONIE CELEBRATES LITURGY & BAPTISM AT BROOKWOOD***

HIS GRACE, **Bishop Sofronie of Suceava**, visited us and celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Saint Edward's on Sunday, 29th November / 12th December, in order to care for the pastoral needs of the scattered Romanian Orthodox Traditionalists in the South East. At the end of the Liturgy, he preached in Romanian, and then, almost immediately officiated at the Baptism of the infant daughter of **Joan Bogdan and Niculinu Vasile of Boreham Wood, Hertfordshire**. The baby, **Aryana Andrea** was named after the Holy Martyr Arrian, the former persecutor, who was converted and himself died as a martyr (feast day: 14th / 27th December).

The sponsors were **Roxana Oana Amarie, Christian Carp and Lilianu Carp**, and after the ceremony, Aryana Andrea partook of the Holy Mysteries. The Bishop also spent some time in the church hearing the confessions of the faithful, before returning to London, and the next day to Romania, bringing to an end a very short but spiritually profitable visit.

## ***REPOSE OF GRACE MAGDALENE MEEKING***

ONE of the trustees of the King Edward Orthodox Trust Company Limited, **Grace Meeking**, reposed in the Lord on 7th / 20th December, the feast of St Ambrose of Milan. Grace, whose name in Orthodoxy was Magdalene, had been Orthodox for well over forty years. She was received by Chrismation in mid-March, 1966, and the late **Princess Irina Galitzine** was her sponsor. In her formative years in the Church, she attended the services at the old Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Dormition at Emperor's Gate, or the monthly Liturgies in English which were then held at the All Saints Chapel in Archbishop Nikodem's residence at Baron's Court. She also often frequently worshipped at the Convent of the Annunciation, and became close to the sisters there. Having settled in Windsor, for the last twenty years or so she has been a regular worshipper at Saint Edward's Church, and was elected to be a member of the charity (KEOTCoLtd) which administers our property. She was an accomplished artist and musician, and used her talents to the benefit of the Church, producing greeting cards and other art-work and calligraphy. At the time of her death, she was working on a brochure for the Brotherhood Exhibition Room, to explain something more to visitors about our life and community. In the last two years she suffered a great deal, having contracted cancer in the mouth, which necessitated a series of rather unpleasant operations, and meant that throughout that period she could only eat puréed foods and found difficulty in speaking. It has become something of a commonplace to say that such people battle against cancer. In Grace's case, we believe this was not true. She transcended that worldly way, and used her disability to prepare for her end. Her battle, as a steadfast Orthodox Christian, was against other powers. Indicative

of this is the fact that the one book that she took with her into the hospice at the end was “Unseen Warfare,” which was edited by Sts Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain and Theophan the Recluse. Those visiting her in those last days, found that, rather than comforting her, they were receiving instruction from her, being shown the way to approach death. Seeing that she had gained some strength, she was discharged from the **Thames Valley Hospice in Windsor**, to be cared for in her own flat. And thus she died in her own home a few days later. Her funeral was chanted at St Edward’s Church on Friday 18th / 31st December, with Fr Alexis and **Fr Stephen Fretwell** serving, assisted by **Hierodeacon Sabbas**, and she was laid to rest near the grave of one of the three daughters of her God-mother, in the Brotherhood Cemetery. May she find rest in the land of the meek, who have been justified through Faith in the Saviour and through His grace. *Memory Eternal!*

## ***VISITORS***

SVETLANA MORGAN of Camberley led a group of about thirty members of the Camberley branch of the **University of the Third Age** to see Saint Edward’s Church on Wednesday, 8th December. They spent about an hour and a half in the church, asking many questions about our Faith and practices.

## ***WORKERS***

THREE VOLUNTEERS kindly came and spent days here helping with the work. **Dimitri Mihai** came and installed a banister by the steps leading from the paved area behind the new monastic house to the path circling the Old Mortuary, and also re-laid the slabs on the steps which had apparently been originally laid with inferior cement, and had become dangerous. **Cyprian Lam** and **Kristian Akselberg** joined us for the Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, 15th / 28th December, and then stayed through until Vespers and the Paraklesis, and spent the day helping with the various chores.

And in addition to the people we mention month by month in the calendar insert, we should also thank **Elizabeth Castle**, who works throughout the year as our treasurer, and **Elena Holden**, who is the organiser of the Sunday and Festal Buffet Meal Rota and chief chivvier in that sphere - a tiring job indeed! May God's blessing be upon these helpers. Their work is very much appreciated.

### ***ORTHODOX AID FUND***

THIS FUND, which distributes donations to church, humanitarian & environmental charities and good causes on behalf of the Brotherhood, this year (2010) donated a total of **£8,142.92** to causes here & overseas. We were helped in this achievement both by the donations many of you sent with your "Shepherd" Re-Subscription Forms, & by two individuals who monthly give sums for the missions in Africa. May God reward all who have contributed abundantly, both in this life and in the next.

### ***SAINT BONIFACE MISSION, I.o.W.***

WITH THE LOSS of their chapel in **Ryde Cemetery**, a loss apparently necessitated by certain conditions that the Isle of Wight Council were put under by the **Heritage Lottery Fund** when they accepted monies from them, the **Saint Boniface Mission on the Isle of Wight** has suffered a severe set-back. For many months, through the kindness of parishioner, **Melanie Swan**, and her husband, **Martin**, we have been able to use a room in their home at Newport as our temporary place of worship. Now, we have retrenched even further, and for the foreseeable future, only **reader's services** will be held for the Mission. Parishioners will endeavour to join us at Brookwood as often as possible for the Divine Liturgy, and the steering group, that they formed to find ways and means of relocating will continue their work, under the chairmanship of **Martin Smith**. Those wishing to attend their services or who have any ideas about possibilities for a new home for the mission, may contact him: email address: [\*\*<gmsmith@onwight.net>\*\*](mailto:gmsmith@onwight.net). Our particular thanks are due not only to the Swans for their hospitality, but to **Benjamin and Elaine**

**Waterhouse**, who, at very short notice, stored much of the Mission's artefacts in their less than spacious home, and at a time when Elaine is herself far from well, and then twice journeyed up to Brookwood so that these things could be delivered into our safekeeping. *God bless them!* We ask the prayers of the faithful for the Mission during this time of severe trial for them. God grant that it be a trial which, borne with a proper Christian spirit, will in time lead to revival and fresh growth.

### ***FR CHIPRIAN'S MOVEMENTS***

AS MOST of our regular churchgoers know by now, **Fr Archimandrite Chiprian** was unable to return from Romania for the Orthodox celebration of Christmas, which necessitated our re-ordering the schedules of services here and at the Convent. At the time of going to press, we are not sure when he will be free to resume his pastoral duties in England, but we will try and let everyone know as soon as we are in the picture.



## **PRACTICAL TIP**

**YOU** will find it much, much easier to keep your smaller children attentive during the Divine Services in church, if, during your daily family prayers at home, you also require them to stand reverently and pay attention to the prayers. The prayers at home will be a practice ground for them. Admittedly the church services are much longer, and this will not be entirely successful, but at the least, they will thus learn that, in the times set apart for prayer, they have to behave with reverence, and the concept of treating God's house with particular reverence will then not be so strange to them. Furthermore, they will gain benefit from this, because they will learn to pay attention to the prayers, and will learn to pray themselves. Otherwise they will learn nothing but to be disruptive and bored. Furthermore, they will grow up without a firm spiritual foundation for their lives, and much sadness will inevitably follow.