



FROM THE FATHERS

“THE LORD promised to send us the Paraclete (John 16:7), Who would prepare us for God. Just as dry wheat without moisture cannot become dough or a loaf, so also, we who are many cannot be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven. Just as dry earth cannot bring forth fruit unless it receive moisture, so also we, being at first a dry tree, can never bring forth fruit unto life without the voluntary rain from above. Our bodies achieve unity through the washing which leads to incorruption; our souls, however, through the Spirit. Both, then, are necessary, for both lead us on to the life of God.”

HOLY HIEROMARTYR IRENÆUS OF LYONS, + 202 A.D.

“HOLY BAPTISM is important, important for the things perceptible to the mind of those who receive it with fear; for the rich and ungrudging Spirit is always flowing into those accepting Grace, filled with Which the holy Apostles reaped a full harvest for the churches of Christ. For those who have taken possession of this gift sincerely, it endures as co-worker and companion in accordance with the measure of faith, the good dwelling in each one in proportion to the eagerness of the soul.”

SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA, + 394 A.D.

“ON THIS ACCOUNT, our Saviour did not simply command to baptize, but first says, *Teach* (Matt. 28:19), and then, *Baptize in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit*, that the right Faith might follow upon learning, and together with faith might come the consecration of Baptism. There are many other heresies too [i.e., in addition to the Arians], which use the words only, but not in the right sense, as I have said, nor with sound faith, and in consequence the water which they administer is unprofitable, as deficient in piety.”

SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, + 373 A.D.

“I BELIEVE that the figure of Sampson renewed in Christ, both with hair grown anew and in death, is apposite also to every servant of Christ (Judges 16:18-31). *A man who has been overtaken in any fault* (Gal. 6:1), once his hair, so to speak, grows afresh, returns by salutary repentance to the renewal of grace, and *makes his arms a bow of brass* (Ps. 17:34). Those arms are his faith in the true hope and hope unfeigned in the Faith. He also keeps his hands in trim for battle by works of godliness, the performance of which *is profitable unto all things* (1 Tim. 4:8). Then since he has attained muscular strength in his arms, a good conscience and strong faith, he will dare to attack and will be able to overturn the pillars of his enemies. These pillars are the supports of the enemy’s house, in which he feasts as victor over us, mocking his captives as he employs our limbs as weapons of his wickedness. So by the death of our subjected flesh we dislodge this enemy from his house. It is by the help of this flesh that our enemy enclosed within us disturbs our souls with inner warfare. He gains control over us by our voluntary sinning, and has our vices as his supporters against us. By the agency of our outer selves he attacks our inner selves. But let us remember the contract by which we have sworn allegiance to the Cross, buried with Christ through the grace of Baptism, so that we might not deal with the world under the illusion that we live, and so that Christ within and not we ourselves might live. When

He has been restored to us to adorn our heads, the house of the devil will fall, and with the death of our sins the whole retinue of our enemies will die. Therefore the death of Sampson teaches me to die with my enemies; in other words, to mortify my flesh and kill sin at the same time, so that my spirit can survive and I may triumphantly win salvation and say to my soul: *Return unto thy rest, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee* (Ps.114:7).”

SAINT PAULINUS OF NOLA, + 431 A.D.

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FROM THE WATERS OF JORDAN

**THE NEW HIEROMARTYR JOSEPH,
METROPOLITAN OF PETROGRAD,**

+ 1937 A.D.

“Come, let us all receive the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God!”

From the hymns of Theophany

HOW WONDROUS and how sweetly beautiful is this “voice of the Lord upon the waters,” which is now, godly listeners, directed to you all! “Come,” it cries, “receive ye all the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God - which makes Christ manifest!” Nineteen centuries ago, this same voice resounded over the waters of Jordan from the lips of the Great Forerunner, who pointed out to the people God the Word, manifest in the flesh, and invited all with faith and love to receive Him. And from that time, thousands and thousands of times it has resounded, even until now, even as it does on this present and renowned day of the blessing of the waters, which makes present that blessing at Jordan. It resounds from lips of the ministers of that

Same God the Word, who call all those who thirst for the grace of renewal of life to be renewed and hallowed in those waters which, by the coming down of the Holy Spirit, have been sanctified no less than those of the Jordan itself when the Lord Himself blessed their pure streams by being immersed therein in His immaculate Divine flesh. And just as then, when the banks of the Jordan were abundantly covered with a throng of pious people who were moved with compunction, when the Jordan itself, receiving in its streams the Most Pure Master, turned back, and being in dread was about to retreat and flee, - even so we, pious listeners, huddling together in a tight crowd by this, the Source of our life, with trembling, reverent fear not only like the Jordan do not flee, but rather we gather together, and with daring readiness we receive into the very bosom of our souls the Most Holy One of the holy ones, the Lord, Who desires to come and abide in the depths of the soul of each and every one by the gifts of His bounties, cleansing us of every uncleanness by the power and grace of the waters which have be sanctified by His power and grace.

The three great gifts from this inexhaustible bounty of the Saviour are shown us and promised us in the Jordan hymn quoted above: the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God; but while these three are of paramount importance, it does not mention the multitude and the infinity of the other many-varied gifts, which are so fully sufficient that they should be preferred before any kind of earthly treasure one would fancy, fully sufficient to enrich one in the only way mortal man can be truly rich, such that with tears of compunction and unlimited gratitude he might cry out with the Psalmist: *What is man, O Lord, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him* (Ps 8:4) thus with wondrous, ineffable benefactions?

Come, receive ye all the Spirit of Wisdom! - the Very Spirit Himself of Divine Wisdom, Which was, according to the word of God, from the ages before the beginning the Creator of all, and Who shall not end unto the ages. *She* [Wisdom] *is a breath of the power of God and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty*

(Wis. 7:25). *She is a reflection of the eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God and an image of His goodness (7:26). She is an initiate of the mind of God and an associate in His works (8:4). She came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a cloud... she compassed the vault of heaven and traversed the depths of the abyss (Sirach 24:3, 5). Although She is but one, She can do all things ... She reneweth all things, and from generation to generation She passes into holy souls, preparing friends of God and prophets (Wis. 7:27). She is herself an intelligent spirit, holy, subtle, easily moved, radiant, pure, manifest, beneficent, man-befriending, penetrating through all spirits that are rational, pure and supremely subtle (Wis. 7:22-23). She is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars (v. 29). She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you can desire can compare with her (Prov. 3:15).* With a single nod, She splendidly arrayed the millions of burning fires in a heavenly circle; by one decree She established the unsustainable weight of this earth which bears life upon a nothingness, whose immeasurable, extraterrestrial, spatial abysses She stretched out in one expanse. She made one of Her greatest and inscrutable miracles: man, one who in a small way was a whole world, with a soul representative of the invisible world, and a body representative of the visible world. She was manifest in the wise composition of this body, and constantly maintains it in being and in activity. She inscribed precepts for our mental processes, which to this day are followed by all peoples. She impressed upon the hearts of all peoples the rule of the conscience, with which to this day all peoples are endowed unto the good, but which punishes evil. For man she planted a paradise and, when he was unable to preserve it, She devised every means to return him to the desired, blessed homeland. And with what wondrous, truly surpassingly wise means, well worthy of Wisdom! - it was She [the Wisdom of God], enveloped in the Christ, who appeared in the form of a servant to the fallen sons of God. It was She who lay in the poor Bethlehem manger and was stretched out, through a Love whose embrace is boundless

and all-embracing, on the blood-stained Cross at Golgotha. It was She, stripped bare, who drowned the sin of man in the Jordan and washed human nature of the defilement of flesh and spirit. It was She who sent out the unlettered fishermen into a world puffed up with its own wisdom, and caught it in their nets by their exuberant preaching of the word of the Cross (1 Cor. 1:18). It was She who sang, through the lips of children at the breast, the triumphal hymn of the Conqueror of death (*Hosanna*), and, resplendent before the darkened pagans and the raging enemies of Christ, so captivated them by the beauty of Her spirit, that even frail maidens and even tiny children could by no means be turned by whatsoever powers of Hades from the supremely sweet love of Christ, and even in the intolerable fire of martyrdom they found the courage to confess and glorify their Beloved Heavenly Bridegroom. It is She who even with us irresistibly draws each pious soul towards the inexpressible light of the Tri-hypostatic Godhead, invisibly instructing us in every truth, protecting us from all ignorance and error, sweetening the God-fearing heart with the saving fear of the Lord and with an unconquerable love for the Heavenly Father. She grants that we be unsatisfied by what is vain and transitory, and directs our gaze to what is eternal and is in all truth good, discerning and beautiful. In truth, She alone can do all things. *By me kings reign*, She says herself, *and rulers decree what is just ...* Whoever finds Me, the same shall find life and obtain grace from the Lord (Prov. 8:15, 35). Such is Wisdom and such are Her gifts! Put yourself in remembrance of the blessed soul of this Righteous One, and take account with what wondrous riches our meagre vessels might be abundantly filled, when the Spirit of the Wisdom of God rests therein, with what light of knowledge, with what fragrance of the virtues! Put yourself in remembrance of those surpassingly rich treasure houses, the blessed souls of the Holy Apostles, Prophets, the Godly-wise Fathers and Teachers of the Church, and also the Holy Martyrs and Women Martyrs, the Ascetics and Women Ascetics, these teachers of the Faith and of Christian piety, who are more numerous than the stars in the heavens, who are more varied

than the flowers in a meadow, and study through their radiant examples how it is Wisdom that saves us (Wis. 9:18), and *how great is the one who finds Her* (Sir. 25:11).

But the Giver of every good thing, the Lord, is inexhaustible and unstinting in His giving. *Come, receive ye all*, He invites, *the Spirit of Understanding!* That Spirit of Divine Understanding, from Which originally our rational souls were enkindled, and in Which, as in their Source and Nourisher, they-these small images of the limitless Spirit, - can alone find life conformable to their souls and the ability to act. Every striving to live, every effort to act independently of the Ever-Flowing and Life-bearing Source, every inclination of our thoughts independent of the Creative, Living and Life-Creating thought of the Divinity is a spiritual self-decomposition, a self-annihilation, death! All our happiness and unhappiness consists in agreement or disagreement with the thoughts and predispositions of our heart as they were fore-ordained. The purer, more exalted, more spiritual these thoughts and predispositions, then the fuller, holier and more righteous will be the life of our hearts, and it will be lighter, more comforting and brighter within the soul. And just as in the natural world, when the sun departs or is hidden there is a pronounced gloom, so it is also in the crumbling habitations of our souls. Only when there appears in them and shines therein the noetic Sun, God, only then may it be for us light, and warm and radiant. Oh, if only our Life-creating Little Sun never set within our souls, but always shone there, warming it and quickening it! Oh, if only in their turn our souls did not voluntarily conceal themselves from the quickening rays of this Noetic Unsetting Sun, and did not prefer the gloom of sin and the storm of the passions to the light of piety and Godly understanding! Oh, if only all those who abundantly enlighten themselves with the sciences did not then forget the science of sciences, which is to conquer the sin living within us, and not to submit their understanding to the corrupting captivity of unreason and the passions! Oh, if only we, my listeners, did not blind our own understanding, this spiritual eye, which was given

us to discern the incomprehensible beauty of the Godhead, if only we did not blind it with looking upon what is corruptible and upon the delusive distractions of the world, and did not make the organ of Divine command and converse a tool for experiencing the burden of a slavish servitude! All nature perfectly well knows its Creator, Benefactor and Master, and serves Him, is subject unto Him, and fulfils with exactitude all His precepts.

And furthermore such great good things make us who possess them able rightly to use our understanding. In such a sacred flaming fire that which is unquenchable and quenches the spark of the Divine within us can be consumed, and thereby we, corruptible beings, become, as one says, bone of bone and flesh of flesh of the Thrice-Holy Divine Nature! Be aware of, and make provision for, your greatness, O man! And do not distort your God-like and Divinely glorious inheritance by comparing it with irrational creatures, which nonetheless in their lack of reason fulfil their purpose according to the will and mind of the Creator of all. To you it has been granted to discern between good and evil. To you there has been freely given, and this for your greater understanding and your greater blessedness, to choose which, and to strengthen yourself in the former and to rise above the latter. You can always, if only you so desire, sense, understand, taste aforesaid the inexpressible blessedness of contemplating the Divine beauty through the noetic eye of the heart. If at some time God was far from you, now it is you yourself who alienate yourself and do not want to receive Him. If you, having betrayed God, change the freedom which you have subjected to the foe, and begin to be a friend of God, then now, as you call upon God and await freedom from Him, you become a beloved child of God and an abode of the Holy Spirit, Who is well pleased to abide in you. If until now you have been feeble, then now there is given you all the *Divine power that pertains unto life and godliness* (2 Ptr 1:3). And after this are you brought down from the height of this wondrous greatness, and do you do wrong to the One, Who is Eternal truth, holiness, perfection? Let us be horrified, brethren, of the very possibility of such blasphemy, and

with all our heart to the Divinity, now far distant from us, let us cry out the plea: “Come, receive us all, Spirit of the fear of God!” This is not a servile fear, in which there is only torment, but that real fear of the Lord, which is *glory and honour and a crown of rejoicing* (Sir. 1:11). This is that Divine fear, which, sweetening the heart, filling it with love for the Lord, powerfully restrains it and protects it from everything impure and malicious. This is that fear, without which even wisdom is a downfall, even reasoning ruinous for man, without immersion in which there is no wisdom, no rationality, for *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* and it is *the root of good things*. Only the one who *fears the Lord* will *wisdom meet like a mother, and welcome him like a young bride* (Sir. 15:2). *To fear the Lord is the fullness of wisdom ... the fear of the Lord is the crown of wisdom* (Sir. 1:16, 18). They that fear the Lord will not be distrustful regarding His word and, loving it, will keep its ways. They that fear the Lord prepare their hearts and humble their souls before Him, saying: “We fell into the hands of the Lord and not into the hands of men, for as is His majesty so too is His mercy.” The fear of the Lord hates evil and cuts off all that is attached to it. *The Lord hateth all abominations, and such things are not loved by those who fear Him* (Sir. 15:13).

The fear of the Lord is Wisdom Herself, leading all who love Her to the first source of wisdom, to God. The fear of the Lord is Understanding itself, which, with a enlightened and purified eye, gazes upon the blinding light of the Three-Sunned Godhead. What a wondrous combination of the unity of the virtues, in number like the Trinity, which supplement each other, and repose in each other! What a life-bearing fulness, abundance of riches and what delightful gifts of the Divine Spirit, manifest by Christ, are poured out upon us through His limitless love for us! And how truly sweet, persuasive and abundant in love must that voice be, which calls and invites all to come and receive this most precious, most varied treasury which greatly surpasses reality, but is manifest by Christ, through the power of His Cross by which we were procured.

How then can we achieve this? Beloved brethren, let us make a start by denying our false wisdom, our relying on ourselves spiritually, our self-love, pride, malice, hatred of our brothers, and then by the assiduous acquiring of all that pertains to and was enjoined by the Wisdom of God for our salvation and divinisation. Let us receive the Spirit of Understanding, by renouncing the unworthy matters in our perception; let us be free from the corrupting influence of sin and the passions, which constantly war against the soul and initially subject it through the darkening of our mind, for every passion is mind-darkening. Let us liberate our captive mind by obedience to Christ, by humility, casting down *every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God* (2 Cor. 10:5), and in God-befitting manner let us be joined unto the Lord in one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). Let us also accept the Spirit of the fear of God, denial of which is wholly contrary to the caring and long-suffering love of God for us, and fully returning to which let us be received into the all-forgiving embrace! Let us accept the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God with tears of repentance, with compunction, and with love for the All-Righteous One, for the All-forgiving, Kind-hearted and Man-befriending God, and with reverence let us partake of this water which is now hallowed, which has now received from on high the blessing of Jordan and the grace of the coming down of our Comforter, and which, through His good will, possesses a great purifying, sanctifying and healing power for everyone who with faith, love and reverence partakes thereof, washes themselves therewith or is sprinkled therewith.

The All-holy Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God, has been manifest and granted us by Thee, Christ. Let us all come and receive the Same, at the unlying invitation of Thy most sweet voice! Let us come to this water, which Thou hast sanctified and abundantly filled with grace through Thy descent into it. And do Thou receive us. Make wise our spirit by Thy wonder-working, heaven-pervading Wisdom. Give our souls

understanding by Thy saving and intrepid Fear, in a most sweet and quiet, constant and persevering rejoicing with Thee!

O Most Sweet Jesus, Son of God, Who through Thy manifestation to us, and by the goodwill of God the Father, hast opened the inexhaustible treasures of the Spirit and poured Him out abundantly into the hearts of those who hope in Thee! Do Thou also come and, through our faith in Thee, receive us. Grant unto us cleansing from sins; grant us enlightenment of mind and heart; grant us to love Thee and desire Thee, as Thou hast loved and desired us. Amen.

*Translated from the Russian from
“The Hieromartyr Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd;
His Biography and Works,”
Moscow and Saint Petersburg, 2011*



Teaching on the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church

BY ARCHPRIEST ALEXANDER RUDAKOV

PUBLISHED IN 1890 IN SAINT PETERSBURG

Continuation

§ 35. **The supplicatory Litany.** This litany begins with the words ***Let us complete our prayer***, and then we have the petition that the Lord will ***help us, save us, have mercy on us and keep us*** by His grace, and then we have the following petitions which are used exclusively in this particular litany:

1) ***That the whole day may be perfect, holy, peaceful and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.*** These requests are made for the present day, which is the one day which we now have to contend with.

2) ***An angel of peace, a faithful guide and guardian of our souls and bodies.*** Here we are not praying that God again send us a Guardian Angel, for one was given to each one of us at our Baptism, but rather we are asking that the Angel given us will not, on account of our sins, cease to guard and guide us in the holy life.

3) ***Pardon and remission of our sins and offences,*** for there is no man that does not sin before the Lord or does not need His mercy.

4) ***Things good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world.*** Here we ask God for what is necessary and needful for us to lead a holy life and one pleasing to Him, from which will follow to some degree peace for the world. [Very often those who preach “peace” the most vociferously today often forget this truth: that peace for the world must start with our living a holy life, pleasing to God. It is not something we can simply impose on others or expect the world around us to adopt.]

5) ***That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance,*** that is, that the remaining days of our life may be passed with brokenness of heart for the sins we have committed.

6) ***A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, peaceful and a good defence before the dread judgment seat of Christ.*** We beseech the Lord that He will grant us to end our lives as Christians, that is confessing and receiving the Holy Mysteries, without a tormenting illness, in the hope of resurrection, and furthermore we ask that He will grant us to give a good and God-fearing answer at the dread judgment seat of Christ.

To all these petitions the choir responds with ***Grant this, O Lord!*** It is on account of this response that the litany is called supplicatory.

All of the former petitions are brought to an end with our commending ourselves to the will of God, and with the exclama-

tion made by the priest, ***For a good and man-befriending God art Thou, and to Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.***

§ 36. **The Liti and the Blessing of the Loaves.** After the two litanies, on the greater festivals, before the chanted verses which follow, the *Aposticha*, other verses pertinent to the feast are chanted, and preceded by a candle bearer the clergy process from the sanctuary through the church to the narthex, for the *Liti* or Entreaty. The people gather there around them for this supplication. The prayers are said in the narthex so that those who are penitents and the catechumens, who in earlier times were not permitted to enter the church itself, can at least for a short time be participants in the prayers. It represents the Church's out-reach and ministry to those not yet joined to Her.

At the Liti, the Church calls upon the intercessions of all the Saints and prays to the Lord for all Orthodox Christians, most especially the hierarchs and all the pastors of the Church, the Sovereign and her Royal House, for Christians souls which are suffering and afflicted, for deliverance from famine, pestilence, earthquake, flood, fire, the sword, the invasions of enemies and civil war. To each of the petitions, the choir responds with numerous Lord, have mercies. The priest ends the entreaties with an exclamation, ***Peace be unto all***, and then a prayer, invoking the saints, and ending with seven short requests: ***Make acceptable our supplication; grant us the remission of our offences; shelter us under the shelter of Thy wings; drive far from us every enemy and adversary; make our life peaceful, O Lord; have mercy upon us and upon Thy world; and save our souls.***

At the end of the Liti, all progress back into the main body of the church, where in the middle a table is prepared, on which there are placed (usually in a special stand) five loaves of bread and small vessels with wine, oil and wheat grains. As they ap-

proach this table, the choir chants the *Aposticha*. Then the Prayer of Saint Simeon the God-receiver, ***Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master***, is read, or in some practices chanted, followed by the ***Holy God to Our Father*** sequence. Then the troparion of the feast is chanted twice and the hymn, ***O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice***, during which the offerings on the table are censed from all four sides, three times. The priest then reads a prayer blessing them, and asking that all who partake of them with faith might receive a blessing. This ceremony is known as the *Artoclasia*.

Then we return to the usual ending of Vespers, with a threefold ***Blessed be the name of the Lord...***, and the reading of Psalm 33, ***I will bless the Lord...*** And the priest blesses the congregation, with the words, ***The blessing of the Lord be upon you, through His grace and love for mankind, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.***

In ancient times, the bread was blessed and distributed to the faithful to sustain them through the long, all-night service. Now it is distributed later in the Vigil service, in small portions dipped in the wine, simply as a blessing. When there is no *liti* or *artoclasia*, after the litanies we have the *aposticha*, the Prayer of Symeon and ***Holy God to Our Father*** sequence, the *troparia* appointed for the day and at the end the priest blesses as above.

§ 37 The General Significance of Vespers. In general the service of Vespers represents the Divine *œconomia* (dispensation) for the salvation of mankind as manifest in the Old Testament. Thus the psalm (103), ***Bless the Lord, O my soul***, immediately depicts the creation of the world. The incense offered then, and dispersed around the whole church during the time of censuring, recalls the Holy Spirit, hovering over the chaos, the candle borne by the deacon reminds us of the word of God, ***Let there be light!*** The Royal Gates being open recalls the state of innocence of man in Paradise; their subsequent closing his fall. The

litanies which follow express his need, which was manifest to man after his fall. The chanting or reading of ***Blessed is the man...*** (the first *kathisma*) expresses the sorrow of the first man over his lost blessedness. The chanting of ***Lord, I have cried*** with its verses is the calling of fallen man for help, and the response, the first promise of the Saviour; the censuring during this chanting recalls the Old Testament sacrifices which were established that the people might remember the promise of the Saviour, the procession with the priest at the Vespers entrance, coming out of the North Door and entering again by the Royal Gates, is the foreshadowing in the understanding of the Old Testament peoples of the Saviour's ministry; the reading of the *paramia*, the open proclamation of Him in the prophesies; the hymn, ***O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice***, recalls the Archangel's annunciation at the conception of the Saviour, and the ***Now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, O Master...*** is the fulfilling of the promise of the Saviour and His meeting with our kind in the person of the Righteous Simeon.

*... to be continued with
"The meaning of the Six Psalms"*



THE COMING MONTH: Space does not permit us to include this section this month, but the quotes from the Fathers we have chosen all pertain to the Orthodox teaching on Baptism, because the principal feast in January is the **Holy Theophany, the Baptism of our Saviour** (6th / 19th). And our main article is a translation of a piece by the New Hieromartyr Joseph of Petrograd on the significance of the blessings we receive at this Great Feast.



POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

“DO YOU have any thoughts on the Turin Shroud? An Orthodox friend (very much into 666 and all that) is a firm believer, so I’ve just re-read Fr X’s publication on it - he obviously believed in it. My friend insists that the carbon-dating was done on the medieval cloth used for repairing the burnt original.” - M.L., Broadstairs, Kent.

RE. THE TURIN SHROUD. Actually when I was at Boston, Jordanville put out articles commending it, but the then Archbishop Vitaly of Canada [later Metropolitan Vitaly, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad] was convinced that it was a fake, and asked Boston to write and demonstrate that it was, and I was detailed to work on that project. Then, of course, we were like you ..., and did not have internet. The reply for Archbishop Vitaly was in fact never published, but from what I read then, I was doubtful about the Shroud.

For a start, it does not correspond with the Gospel narrative, that the Saviour was wrapped and that a separate cloth was about His head. Secondly, those then promoting the Shroud claimed that there were evidences of corruption which had halted, but this is clean contrary to Orthodox teaching that He knew no corruption. Thirdly, had it been genuine, there would surely have been a feast of the shroud from Byzantine times, but there is nothing, and so the story goes on.

Recently in “History Today” there was a very good article on it, which I think answered the questions which arise. The author of the article certainly does not believe it is the Shroud of Christ, and points out another objection: the depictions of the front and back of the head are too close and do not allow for the head having a top!

However, that article does not suggest it is a fake, but rather that it was a genuine artistic representation meant for devotional

purposes, and that the people who produced it did not mean to suggest that it was the actual shroud of the Saviour. Try and get that article if you can. Perhaps that is the answer.

Hope this helps. I would not place too much trust in what Fr X wrote. He was a good man, helped me a lot, but was not a scholar and was, through no fault of his own, very much still a converted Anglo-Catholic. He simply did not have recourse either personal or written to authentic Orthodox sources.

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News Section

GLORIFICATION OF SAINT PARTHENIOS OF CHIOS

THE CELEBRATION of the Glorification of our **Venerable Father Parthenios of Chios**, was celebrated in the Monastery of St Mark the Evangelist in Koropiou, Attica, Greece on 8th / 21st December, the anniversary of the Saint's repose in 1883. The proto-celebrant was **His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos**, the First Hierarchy of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, assisted by **Metropolitans Chrysostomos, Gerontios, and Cyprian and by the Bishops Photios and Clement**. His Eminence, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica and Bœotia delivered a moving and eloquent sermon on the occasion. The saint had been born on the island of Chios in 1805, and as a young man had been engaged to be married, but his fiancée died before the wedding was celebrated. He therefore resolved to take up the monastic life and went to the renowned monastery of Nea Moni on the island. He began to care for an abandoned church dedicated to St Mark and nearby a cave was revealed to him where he settled as a hermit. He was in time granted many spiritual gifts and became a renowned and clairvoyant Elder.

THE BULGARIAN TRADITIONALIST CHURCH ENTERS INTO FULL COMMUNION WITH GOC

THE WEBSITE of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Church Abroad posted the following article:-

The Bulgarian Orthodox Old Calendar Church under the omophorion of **His Eminence, Bishop Photios of Triaditza**, has officially entered into full ecclesiastical communion with the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece. This unity was originally effected with the then existing Synod in Resistance, the Romanian Orthodox Old Calendar Church and Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and has never been broken by any disagreement of dogmatic or ecclesiastical character, however, certain questions delayed the present statement.

ANNOUNCEMENT

on behalf of the Church Council
of the Orthodox Old-Calendar Church of Bulgaria

Beloved in the Lord Fathers, brethren and sisters,

As announced in a previous message on behalf of the Church (Ecclesiastical) Council of 14/27 July, 2014, talks are underway between the Orthodox Old-Calendar Church of Bulgaria and the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians in Greece on establishing full ecclesial communion. During the talks, the Greek side made the point that in order for the prestige and dignity of the Orthodox Old-Calendar Church of Bulgaria to be reiterated as a self-governing Church body, it is desirable that its Synod be formed under the chairmanship of His Grace Bishop Photios with the help of hierarchs of the sister Churches, who are to be included in the Synod's composition, as its interim members. Having discussed and approved this recommendation, the Church Council of the Orthodox Old-Calendar Church of Bulgaria decided unanimously that the Ruling hierarch address the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, His Eminence Metropolitan Agafangel, asking that the Synod of Bishops of the (Russian Orthodox) Church

Abroad bless two hierarchs of its composition to be co-opted for the formation of the Synod of the Orthodox Old-Calendar Church of Bulgaria with a status of its interim members. Metropolitan Agafangel and the hierarchs of the ROCOR Synod responded positively to the call made by our side and granted (us) selfless brotherly support. By a decree of His Grace Bishop Photios #0001 of 5/18 December, 2014 and pursuant to Decision #5 of Oct 24 / Nov 6, 2014 of the Church (Ecclesiastical) Council, a Synod of the Orthodox Old-Calendar Church of Bulgaria was formed chaired by His Grace Bishop Photios of Triaditsa and interim members: Their Eminences Archbishop George of Kishinev and Moldova and Bishop Nikon of Ishimsk and Siberia.

The Greek side has been informed of the actions taken on our part. Yet to be agreed upon are the place and date for the official establishment of full ecclesial communion with the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians in Greece, which shall be fastened by the celebration of the Holy Liturgy by both primates and by hierarchs of the two sister Churches.

Sofia, December 8/21, 2014

Translation: Vladimir Djambov

BISHOP CONSTANTINE RE-INTERRED

THE RELICS of the late **Bishop Constantine (Essen-sky)** were re-interred in the cemetery of the **Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Monastery at Jordanville, N.Y.** on Monday 1st December, n.s. Bishop Constantine had died on 31st May, 1996, while residing at the Christ of the Hills Monastery, at Blanco, Texas. That community was later disbanded and the property is now in secular hands, and so efforts were made to lay the Bishop to rest among his fellow hierarchs and monastic fathers. From 1981 until 1986, Bishop Constantine was the ruling hierarch of the Richmond Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in this country.

On the day that our Brotherhood was founded 5th/18th March, 1982, he served a *moleben* for us at the All Saints Chapel in the old Russian Podvorie on St Dunstan's Road, Baron's Court, London, and he celebrated the first Liturgy in our church at Brookwood on the Saturday of the Laudation of the Mother of God that same year. May he find rest with the Saints and *Memory Eternal*.

DESECRATION OF ORTHODOX GRAVES IN AUSTRALIA

IN MID-DECEMBER more than 70 Orthodox gravestones and crosses were recently overturned or smashed at **Rookwood Cemetery in Sydney, Australia**. As yet we have seen no report that the perpetrators have been apprehended. The cemetery is a huge one, and it appears that only the graves of Orthodox Christian Serbs, Russians and Ukrainians were desecrated. The web-site of the **Australia and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad**, rather beautifully commented on this act of vandalism: "A natural reaction might be sadness and anger. Nevertheless, let us not give in to such feelings, and not let them detract our attention from firm faith and hope in God! The dead are no longer harmed by events in this world. Their souls have departed for the eternal mansions, and only their bodies rest in the graves. No amount of violence to their remains or resting places, although sad and disrespectful, can harm their souls. Instead, the violators are harming their own souls by their evil deeds... One famous example is St Sava of Serbia. His relics were burned by the Turks, but in front of God, he was and remains a glorious saint! The Orthodox people's faith was not touched by the event, indeed, their veneration of the saint became even more fervent. The persecutors of Christians often did not release the bodies of the martyrs to the faithful, knowing how much relics strengthened the people's faith. But God allowed the faithful to recover the bodies, and the Church to grow, watered by the blood of the martyrs.

Many saints actually had very little regard for their bodies. They commanded their disciples to leave their physical remains unburied, or even to allow wild animals to eat them up. These saints considered that their earthly vessel, the body, had some human weaknesses, or maybe committed some small sins, and therefore was not worthy of burial. Instead, God Himself glorified His own people. God did not allow these saints' will to be fulfilled! Animals would not touch the dead bodies, and the disciples would have a very uneasy conscience in obeying... We read in the Lives of Saints that the disciples subsequently buried their fathers with great honour and reverence. ... What can make a difference to our departed ones' souls, is prayer in Church and at home, almsgiving and good deeds. An Orthodox Christian should concentrate his love for his departed relatives and friends on good deeds for the benefit of the soul." Instead of venting pointless outrage, the Australian Diocese has inspiringly used this deplorable incident to further edify their people. One can only hope that the hearts and minds of the perpetrators of the crime will in some way be moved to repentance.

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP OF BROOKWOOD CEMETERY

WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL has secured the ownership of Brookwood Cemetery by purchasing the shares in the companies which owned the Cemetery, Brookwood Park Limited and Brookwood Cemetery Limited, it was announced on 12th December. This was agreed at a Special Council Meeting on 24th November and should secure the Cemetery by establishing Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited, as a subsidiary within its Thamesway Group of companies. The commercial terms of this purchase remain confidential. The Leader of the Council, **Cllr John Kingsbury**, said: "The Council considers Brookwood Cemetery to be a vitally important part of Woking's heritage and its future. Since the end of the First World War, Brookwood Cemetery has declined in quality due to lack of investment. As the Council, we faced a major challenge: to stand by and see it decline further, despite the best efforts

of the current operators; or, to intervene as we have previously done, with great success, in Woking Town Centre. We decided we owed it to future generations to intervene now, despite the challenges ahead. We appreciate that we cannot provide a quick fix for nearly 100 years of decline, but we will work with other agencies to steadily restore the Cemetery and make it once again a high-quality place for burial. Over the next two years we will develop detailed plans for Brookwood Cemetery with a view to implementing a series of improvements by 2020 that will make the Borough proud of this important site.” The WBC website comments: “Brookwood Cemetery is one of the most significant heritage assets in the Borough and it is considered by English Heritage as a site of national significance. The Cemetery was founded in 1852 by the London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company to house London’s dead. In the 1920s, part of the site was sold to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to accommodate the graves of the Commonwealth victims of the First World War, as well as a separate area allocated to the American Battle Monuments Commission for American victims. These war grave areas remain independently managed by the respective Commissions and are not included in the area now owned by the Council.” **Diane Holliday**, the former owner and now Manager of the Cemetery, is reported as saying: “Whilst I’m saddened that I needed to sell the Cemetery, I recognised that the proposal by the Council to acquire the business from me was, for the long term, in the best interests of the Cemetery. Brookwood Cemetery is part of my heart and I am looking forward to working positively with the Council to ensure its future success. I will now be able to concentrate on meeting the needs of our customers whilst the Council, with my full support, establishes its future plans for the Cemetery.” On Monday 15th December, Diane and her son **Kevin** kindly visited us at Saint Edward’s to explain the situation to us personally. The sale does not, of course, include the Brotherhood property, which is freehold with agreed rights of way for access. In reporting this meeting with the other trustees of KEOTCoLtd, we wrote: “Yesterday on their own initiative, Diane and Kevin Holliday came to see us and explain about their sale of the cemetery to Woking Borough Council. In short, it seems nothing which affects us will change. They will still be running the cemetery, things will go on as usual. They said it was impossible to run it as a private enterprise given the amount of work that needs to be done on restoration, and they also thought it should belong in some way to the community. It remains a heritage site. Now

there will be greater investment in the cemetery, they will also have help in dealing with green waste (which the council will deal with), the roads will be better maintained. Kevin is getting married in May and will still move into Glades House with Hana (who also works in their office). So again someone will be living there. Actually, it does seem one of the best things that could have happened. Had a fundamentalist sect bought it or a Russian oligarch, who did not like our jurisdiction, we could have had troublesome neighbours.”



NEWS from the communities in **England of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece,**

PRESENTATION TO OUR TREASURER

THE TREASURER of the **King Edward Orthodox Trust Company Limited**, the charity which administers the Brotherhood property and cemetery, **Elizabeth Castle**, was presented with a small gift at the end of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, 1st / 14th December, the feast of St Philaret the Merciful. This was in anticipation of her birthday, which was to fall later that week. Elizabeth is the only parishioner who has been with us consistently from the foundation of the Brotherhood in March 1982. Almost from the beginning she has worked as the treasurer of KE-OTCoLtd, and has sung in the choir, assiduously attending Divine services several times a week. Most remarkably, as was stated in the short address given when the presentation was made, she has never engaged in any of the “conspiracies,” or private campaigns (for something or against someone) which seem to “adorn” parish life in our times. ***To Elizabeth: Many Years!***

WELCOME INITIATIVES

MARIA GOMES from Somerset recently made some hand-crafted Christmas cards and decorative candle holders with a Christmassy theme, to sell at the back of the church to boost church funds. They proved to be extremely popular, and sold out in a very short time.

YORDANKA KALNIKOVA of Southall suggested that we allow the children to decorate the Christmas tree this year, and thus not only contribute something of their own to the celebration but also help lessen the Brotherhood's work-load. After the Divine Liturgy on Sunday 4th January (n.s.), there will be an opportunity for them to do this. As the **Mayor and Mayoress of Woking** are intending to be present at our Christmas Day Liturgy (7th n.s.), we hope the result will be impressive!
Our thanks to Maria and Yordanka.

FREEWILL OFFERINGS

FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS, the average **WEEKLY** freewill offering in the alms box in the church (which we have instead of taking collections) has been as follows:- July - £492.72; August - £499.26; September - £406.33; October - £342.62; November - £552.48; December - £403.46. Our thanks to all who have supported us in this way, to those who have sent donations and to those who make banker's order payments into our accounts. By the way, we have only two accounts: King Edward Orthodox Trust Co Ltd (KEOTCoLtd, the charity), and Saint Edward Brotherhood (SEB, the monastic community itself). Being monks naturally we do not hold accounts in our own names.

ORTHODOX AID FUND

In 2014 (new calendar), the Brotherhood's Orthodox Aid Fund made donations to other church, humanitarian and environment causes totalling **£10,724.00**. (None of this went to funds supporting our own community). We thank all of you who have made this possible through your contributions. God's blessing be upon you in this life and the next.