



Christ is Risen!

Truly, He is Risen!

We greet all our readers with this most joyous pascal greeting, hoping that your hearts and minds will abound in this joy not only on the night of Pascha itself, which falls this year on 30th March according to the Orthodox Church calendar, but that it will abide there long after to lighten your way and give you spiritual direction. But, as Pascha falls right at the end of March, in this issue we will include quotes from the Fathers and our main homily which treat of the days which lead up to the Saviour's Resurrection, leaving us to concentrate on teaching regarding His victory over sin and death in our April issue.

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FROM THE FATHERS

“INIQUITY does not dwell with virtue; drunkenness hates sobriety; falsehood has nothing in common with truthfulness. Pride has no regard for humility, wantonness for modesty, greed for generosity. And this division awakens such enduring conflicts that, though it may outwardly seem to subside, yet never does it cease from troubling the inmost soul of the just in heart, so that it is indeed true that, *all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12)*, and true as well that all this life is a warfare. Let each faithful soul, learning from his own experiences, arm himself with the Cross of Christ, that he may be found worthy of Christ.”

ST LEO THE GREAT, POPE OF ROME, + 461 A.D.

“HOW MANY are there even now who execrate the Jews for not hearing the words of God; yet, what they were whom they reprove in regard to believing, that they themselves are in regard to the works of Grace? They listen to the teachings of God, they see His miracles, but they refuse to change their evil ways.”

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT, POPE OF ROME, + 604 A.D.

“GOD SEEKS nothing else from us men except that we do not sin; this alone. But this is not a work of law. It is rather a careful guarding of the image and dignity from above.”

VEN. SIMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, + 1022 A.D.

“BODILY discipline is essential in order to make the ground of the heart fit to receive the spiritual seeds and bear spiritual fruit. To abandon or neglect it is to render the ground unfit for sowing and bearing fruit. Excess in this direction and putting one’s trust in it is just as harmful, or even more so, than neglect of it. Neglect of bodily discipline makes men like animals, who give free rein and scope to their bodily passions; but excess makes men like devils and fosters the tendency to pride and the recrudescence of other passions of the soul. Those who relinquish bodily discipline become subject to gluttony, lust and anger in its cruder forms. Those who practice immoderate bodily discipline, use it indiscreetly, or put all their trust in it, seeing in it their merit and worth in God’s sight, fall into vainglory, self-opinion, presumption, pride, hardness and obduracy, contempt of their neighbours, detraction and condemnation of others, rancour, resentment, hate, blasphemy, schism, heresy, self-deception and diabolic delusion.”

SAINT IGNATIUS OF THE CAUCASUS, + 1867 A.D.

The Daughter of Sion and the Daughter of Babylon

HOMILY OF SAINT DEMETRIUS OF ROSTOV
ON THE FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF THE LORD
INTO JERUSALEM, PALM SUNDAY

MY BELOVED BRETHREN, Orthodox listeners! In this age there are two daughters. One is the daughter of Sion, whom Saint John the Theologian recalls, saying: *Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold thy King cometh* (John 12:15). The other is the daughter of Babylon, whom the kingly Prophet David brings to mind in these words: *O daughter of Babylon, thou wretched one, blessed shall he be who shall reward thee wherewith thou hast rewarded us. Blessed shall he be who shall seize and dash thine infants against the rock* (Ps. 136:11-12). Regarding the phrase, *thy King cometh*, we must understand by the word 'King' Christ God, our Redeemer. Thus it is that Saint John the Theologian also calls Him, when he says: *King of kings and Lord of lords* (Rev. 17:14).

I intend, Orthodox listeners, to explain today what these daughters are, and why the daughter of Sion is instructed not to fear when Christ God, the King of glory, comes to her. I pray Christ the Saviour to be my aid, and I ask the attention of your love.

First and foremost, the Jewish synagogue is called the daughter of Sion, for the Jews had settled on Mount Sion. This mountain was once taken by storm by King David, and he built a fortress thereon and made it the capital of his kingdom. It speaks of this in the Books Kings: *David took the stronghold of Sion... and named it his city* (2 Kings [2 Samuel] 5:7, 9). And then, when Christ our Saviour came into the Jewish capital, into the city of Jerusalem, at the very same time it was said within the Jewish synagogue: *Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold thy King cometh*.

Secondly, the Catholic Church is called the daughter of Sion, because the Christians, believing in Christ our True God, will dwell in heaven. The Psalmist speaks thus about Christ, the Son of God: *A sceptre of power shall the Lord send unto Thee out of Sion; rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies* (Ps. 109:2). At the time when Christ comes to the Holy Christian Church, therein the words are heard: *Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold thy King cometh.*

Thirdly, the soul of each and every Orthodox Christian is called the daughter of Sion, because in the Song of Songs the Holy Spirit declares: *O daughters of Sion, come forth and behold King Solomon in a crown* (Song 3:11), - that means our God in the flesh of man, - *with which his mother has crowned him on the day of his wedding* (v.11), that is the day of His Incarnation, the very same day on which Christ, the Son of God, took on the flesh of man and was united to it. And mark, when any person receives the most holy Body of Christ our God and His most immaculate Blood in the Mysterion of the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine, in that very same day it is said to his soul: *Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold thy King cometh.*

Fourthly, the All-immaculate Virgin Theotokos is called daughter of Sion, because just as Mount Sion was the dwelling-place of the Lord God, according to these words of the Psalmist, *this Mount Sion wherein Thou hast dwelt* (Ps. 73:3), so also Christ our God abode in the womb of the All-immaculate Theotokos. While He was yet in the womb of the Theotokos, she was told: *Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold thy King cometh.*

There, Orthodox listeners, I have told you about the daughter of Sion. Now I must speak about the daughter of Babylon.

First and foremost, by daughter of Babylon we refer to the dishonourable city in the land of the Chaldees, Babylon. In that city there was a dishonourable king Nabuchodonosor [Nebuchadnezzar], who on account of his pride was transformed by God into an ox and for seven years had to eat grass in the wilderness (Daniel 4:33). In this same Babylon, God punished the King Baltasar [Belshazzar] by depriving him of his kingdom for his drunkenness

and for defiling the Temple vessels, from which he ate and drank wine with his magnates. Once, when he was feasting in his palace, a human hand appeared and wrote these words on the wall, *Mani, thekel, phares* [*mene, tekel, parsin*], which meant God was taking his kingdom from him (Daniel 5:25). These Babylonians often laid the city of Jerusalem waste, and devastated the whole land of Israel with fire and the sword, taking the people of Israel captive into Babylon. For this reason, King David speaks out against Babylon with anger: *O daughter of Babylon, thou wretched one, blessed shall he be who shall reward thee wherewith thou hast rewarded us. Blessed shall he be who shall seize and dash thine infants against the rock* (Ps. 136:11-12).

Secondly, this present age is called the daughter of Babylon, because just as there lived wild beasts in Babylon, so too in this age evil, unrighteous and sinful people are known for their evil deeds as wild beasts. God Himself, desiring that they should come to knowledge of the True God, called idolaters and sinful peoples beasts. *The beasts of the field*, it is said in Scripture, *shall bless me, the reptiles and young birds, for I have given water in the wilderness* (Esaias 43:20). The people of Israel suffered great oppression and torment in Babylon, just as the Christians bear in this age through the persecution and martyrdom inflicted by heretics and unbelievers. Our Saviour, Christ Himself, spoke of this to His disciples: *Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice* (John 16:20). Wherefore, as it is our part to experience a certain persecution and to undergo temptation for righteousness' sake in this age, in answering the world it becomes us to say: *O daughter of Babylon, thou wretched one, blessed shall he be who shall reward thee wherewith thou hast rewarded us. Blessed shall he be who shall seize and dash thine infants against the rock.*

Further I wish, Orthodox listeners, to show you the particular causes why the daughters of Sion are told not to fear, when the King of glory, Christ, comes to them. For the Most High often appeared to people, but the one to whom He was manifest could not bear this manifestation without fear.

God was manifest to Noah in a dread shaft of an abundance of rain and many waters, which produced the flood and drowned all living creatures on the earth, people, beasts, cattle, birds and insects. And here is what we read in the Book of Genesis: *All the fountains of the abyss were broken up, and the flood-gates of the heavens were opened, and the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. ... And there died all flesh that moved upon the earth, of flying creatures and cattle, of wild beasts and every reptile moving upon the earth, and every man, and all things that had the breath of life* (Gen. 7:11-12, 21).

Moses also experienced fear, when God appeared to him on Mount Sinai, with thunder and lightning, with dread voice of the trumpet, in fire and in cloud. Thus it is recorded in the Book of Exodus: *As morning drew nigh there were voices and lightnings and a dark cloud upon Mount Sinai; the voice of the trumpet sounded loud ... The mount of Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because God had descended upon it in fire; and the smoke went up as the smoke of a furnace, and the people were exceedingly afraid* (Ex. 19:16,18).

Even the Prophet Elias experienced fear when God appeared to him in the fire and the great whirlwind. And the Angel of the Lord spoke to him thus: *Thou shalt go forth tomorrow and shalt stand before the Lord in the mount; and behold, the Lord will pass by. And, behold, a great and strong wind rending the mountains and crushing the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire the voice of a gentle breeze, and the Lord was there* (3 [1] Kings 19:11-12).

And the Prophet Ezekiel experienced fear, when God appeared to him in a chariot, to which four Cherubim were yoked, and each Cherub had four faces, one like a man's, one like an ox, the third like a lion, and the fourth as of an eagle. The prophet himself says: *Four faces to each one.*

Fear seized the Prophet Daniel, when God appeared to him with a thousand thousands and thousands of heavenly powers. Of this the prophet himself says: *Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him* (Daniel 7:10).

And sinful people will be given over to fear and trembling on that last day, when Christ our Saviour will come to judge the living and the dead. For in that same hour, He will despatch them into Hades unto torment, and there, there will be various torments corresponding to the various sins. There they will experience the inextinguishable fire, for Christ our Saviour said: *The fire is not quenched* (Mark 9:44). In that fire those people with unclean thoughts, the adulterous, the dissolute, the wrathful will burn because they have become burned up, some from lust, some from wrath. There will be cruel winter there, and from its coldness the sinners will gnash their teeth. Of this Christ our Saviour spoke: *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* (Matt. 8:12). This cruel winter will have to be borne by those people who were not merciful to the deprived, who did not receive into their homes strangers, who had no refuge and had to bear the snow and cruel frost. Such people lacking in mercy will be the comrades of the devil and his angels. To such people Christ our God says: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels* (Matt. 25:41). Prideful people, who now disdain the poor, who detest them and do not regard them, will have a like comradeship with the devil. There the worms will torment them constantly and consume the sinful people, and never will these worms desist, for it is said: *Their worm dieth not* (Mark 9:44). These worms will consume and torment those people who were extortioners and who deprived their neighbours of their possessions. There, there will be an intolerable stench from the sulphurous fire, for it is written: *Fire and brimstone and wind of tempest shall be the portion of their cup* (Ps. 10:6). The people, who delighted themselves with every kind of sweet-smelling perfume and those who tried out every kind of fragrant herb with passionate ardour, will have to bear this stench.

There will be great anxiety there, so cruel, that if it were possible for them to die, people would hasten to death so as to receive some relief, but even unto eternity they will not die. For it is written: *Men shall seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee them* (Rev. 9:6). Those people, who now constantly live in conviviality, in drunkenness and great luxury, who delight themselves with music and dancing, and never think upon God, will endure this anxiety. There, there will be an encompassing darkness, for it is written: *Bind him hand and foot... and cast him into the outer darkness* (Matt. 22:9). Those consigned to that darkness will sit therein eternally, and never behold the face of God. Those taken into that darkness will be those who never permitted the poor to see their faces. There, there will be a famine, for Christ Himself said: *Woe unto you who are full now, for ye shall hunger* (Luke 6:25). Those people, who in this world did not feed the hungry and poor, will endure that hunger. There, as well there will be a great thirst, for Christ Himself said: *for ye shall thirst*. Those who here on earth did not quench the thirsts of strangers and indigent people will suffer such a thirst there. On the day of the dread judgment, as soon as Christ our God tells the sinners, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*, the ground beneath the sinners will immediately open up, as it did in the days of Moses under Core, Dathan and Abiron, and all the sinners will fall into Hades and the earth thereafter will return to its place.

And in Hades the sinners will continue unto endless ages, as God Himself has said: *these shall go away into everlasting punishment* (Matt. 25:46). And in the like manner that anyone sinned, in the same way shall he suffer there; *one is punished*, says Solomon, by *the very things by which one sins* (Wisdom 11:16).

Now you know, Orthodox listeners, why the daughters of Sion were enjoined not to fear, when they were to behold Christ the King of glory coming to them, for it is written: *Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold thy King cometh*.

The Master and Lord God, the King of all, comes to us not

in a dreadful flood, not with many waters and great rain storms, but He comes with tears of kindheartedness, for three times He let tears pour from His eyes. The first time He wept was over dead Lazarus; the second time over Jerusalem, because it was therein that He was to suffer; and the third time in that same hour when He was nailed to the Cross.

Christ the King and our God does not come to us now in fire and smoke, nor with frightening thunder and the voice of a trumpet, as on Mount Sinai, but he comes accompanied with the song of the children, *Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.*

Christ the King and our God does not come to us now with a great whirlwind, as was the case in the time of Elias, but with the waving of flowering and fragrant branches of palm.

Christ the King and our God does not come to us now with thousands of thousands and ten thousands of ten thousands, nor yet even with the twelve legions of the Angels of heaven, but only with His twelve meek and humble disciples.

Christ the King and our God does not come to us now in a chariot, held aloft by the Cherubim with four faces, as was seen by Ezekiel, but on a lowly donkey.

And lastly, our King and Lord and God does not now come to us to judge the living and the dead, but so that He might be judged of men; He does not come so that sinful people might be cast into Hades for eternal torment or be condemned to death, but so that He Himself might suffer torment and for our sins accept a shameful death upon the Cross. For this reason, Christ came into Jerusalem without glory or magnificence, and so it was that the Jews did not receive Him as King, as they themselves said, *We have no king but Cæsar* (John 19:15).

Let us hasten, brethren, to receive Christ, our King and God, unto ourselves. He knocks at the doors of our heart, and calls us to repentance over our sins. *Repent*, He says, *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Matt. 4:17). He who does not confess his sins

has the doors of his heart closed, and Christ does not come in unto him and will not abide in him. The person, though, who confesses the sins whereby he has angered his Creator, and in repentance promises not to repeat them again, he opens the doors of his heart to Christ his Saviour, and the Saviour comes in unto his heart and will abide with him. For Christ Himself said: *I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me* (Rev. 3:30). Wherefore, brethren, if we confess our sins by which we have angered our Saviour, and make amends for them, then we are opening the doors of our hearts, and He will enter in and abide like a king in a splendid palace. For when Christ entered into the house of Zacchæus, He forgave him all his sins and said: *This day is salvation come to this house* (Luke 19:9). So it shall be with us if we cleanse the house of our souls with repentance and prayers. Then Christ our God will come in unto us, into the house of our soul, and will say, *This day is salvation come to this house*, and will forgive us all our sins by His grace and love for man. Amen.

SAINT DEMETRIUS OF ROSTOV REPOSED IN THE LORD IN A.D. 1709.
HIS FEAST DAY IS 21ST SEPTEMBER / 4TH OCTOBER.



“LET US TAKE ACCOUNT: do we engage in such a struggle? Are we in the midst of this fight for salvation? Do we walk in the newness of life? Do we oppose the tendencies and desires of the flesh? Do we forbid sin to rule and have mastery over us? But those alone are of Christ, who have *crucified the flesh with the passions and desires* (Gal. 5:24). What is the use of being called a Christian, but not actually being one? It is not the name of Christian which shows forth a true Christian, but the struggle against the flesh and every sin.”

SAINT TIKHON OF ZADONSK, + 1783 A.D.

Teaching on the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church

BY ARCHPRIEST ALEXANDER RUDAKOV

PUBLISHED IN 1890 IN SAINT PETERSBURG

Continuation

§ 45. Teaching on the Canon. After the reading of the Gospel, [and Psalm 50, short versicles are appointed, and a long petition calling upon the intercession of the Saints,] then the reading and chanting of the canon. The word, canon, derives from the Greek and means a rule. As used with regard to the Divine services, it is a composition made up of several odes in honour of the Saviour, the Theotokos or the Saints, which are arranged in a prescribed formula.

Mostly, canons are composed in a series of nine odes, each of which comprises several verses or troparia. The first of these verses is called the *heirmos*, which indicates the chant to be used for the subsequent verses (if chanted). The heirmos is also based upon the scriptural odes, of which there are eight in the Old Testament and one in the New.

The first heirmos's composition reflects the thanksgiving hymn of Moses, which he sang when the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea. The Church celebrates the salvation of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, because it foreshadows our being saved from the power of the devil. The second heirmos is based upon Moses' exhortation to the Jews (Deut. 32:1-43), and as such it is chanted only during Great Lent.

The theme of the third heirmos corresponds to the thanksgiving hymn offered up by Anna (Hannah), the mother of the Prophet Samuel, who is herself a foreshadowing of the Church, which before was barren and childless, but now rejoices in a multitude of her children. The fourth heirmos is taken from the hymn of

the Prophet Abbacum (Habbakuk), who in fear foresaw the manifestation of the Lord on earth. In the fifth heirmos, the Church prays in the words of the Prophet Esaias that the faithful might be enlightened by Grace.

The sixth heirmos corresponds to the hymn of Jonas, who was delivered up by the Lord from the belly of the sea monster. It contains the Church's supplication for our deliverance from the waves of life and from every danger on our path to salvation. The seventh and eighth odes are based on the hymn of the Three Children, who blessed God while in the Babylonian furnace. The ninth ode is dedicated to the glorification of the Theotokos, and continues [though this is only apparent in Great Lent] with the prophetic hymn of Zacharias regarding his son, the Forerunner. Before the chanting of this, the ninth heirmos, the deacon, recalling the Mother of God's visit to the home of Zacharias, calls upon the faithful to magnify the Theotokos and Mother of the Light in hymns. And the choir responds, praising her with her very own words which she uttered on her meeting with Elizabeth: *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour...* and to this we add the response: *More honourable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, thee who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.*

After the third, sixth and ninth odes of the canon a Little Litany is intoned to bolster the prayerful spirit of those participating.

After the whole canon [and the exapostilarion] the three following psalms are chanted, in which the whole creation of God is called upon to glorify the Lord. *Let every breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the Heavens, praise Him in the highest. To Thee is due praise, O God.* (Ps. 148, followed by Pss. 149 & 150). [Hymns for the feast or the saint of the day are interspersed between the last verses of these three psalms].



THE COMING MONTH

MARCH, this year, contains the most important celebrations of the whole year. At the beginning of the month we have the **Sunday of the Worship of the Cross** (2nd / 15th); on the 13th/26th we have the **Thursday of the Great Canon**, followed two days later by the **Saturday of the Laudation of the Theotokos**; and at the end of the month we have **Lazarus Saturday** (22nd March / 4th April), **Palm Sunday** (23rd March / 5th April) and then **Great Week**, culminating in the **Lord's Pascha** (30th March / 12th April), the festival of His Resurrection from the dead.

There is a tendency, particularly among contemporary Orthodox and those who have not had the blessing of growing up in a culture shaped by Orthodoxy, to think of the services as a duty or obligation. It is perhaps because of this that many people attend church, but do not begin to participate. It is also, I suppose, a concept borrowed from the heterodox West. But it is oppressive. Rather we should think of the services and the church commemorations as a gift. They lead us to return to something deeper within ourselves, and they illumine us with understanding of God's love for us, calling us to respond with love and thus raising us from preoccupation with worldly things to the heavenly.

Of course, this does not happen automatically. Something else is required. That something is attentiveness. In the **Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete**, we hear how Ismael was driven out as the child of a bond-woman, and we are called to take heed lest the same thing happen to us. Yet often in church, we allow ourselves to become children of a bond-woman, of a mind that has become a slave to the passions or to distractions, to fantasies and fears. Thus, it follows that in celebrating these Divine services we are required to engage in a struggle, a struggle to free ourselves from that captivity of mind and heart.

It is precisely to remind us of the necessity of attentiveness and of this struggle that in our services daily we hear such excla-

mations as “Wisdom,” “Upright,” “Let us attend,” “Let us lift up our hearts,” and most often and most pressingly “Let us pray to the Lord.” Yet, time and again we simply stand and stare and allow our minds to be pre-occupied with other things. It does not much profit us.

We cannot begin to cover all the services of this time of year in the short space available, but we hope the words above will give our readers guidance so that when they attend the Divine Services they will begin to apprehend something deeper, and will not simply be fulfilling what they erroneously see as an obligation.

In March we also celebrate the **Great Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos** (25th March / 7th April), the dedication festival of our Convent in London. This year, this feast will fall on Holy and Great Tuesday, and so the services which prepare us for the Passion of our Saviour will be combined with those for this beautiful feast, which proclaims the good news that *the Son of God becometh the Virgin’s Son* (troparion of the Feast). Among the Saints celebrated in March we have:

The **Holy Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria** and those with them (19th March / 1st April). Chrysanthus was born in Rome, the only son of a nobleman from Alexandria named Poleon. As a child, he lacked for nothing, receiving the finest education. He came across several books which mentioned Christianity, and being a bright and curious student, decided to learn more about this “new” religion. He obtained a copy of the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, which he read, and through which he was converted to Christianity. He found a teacher, a priest named Carpophorus, who instructed him further and baptized him. Poleon was deeply distressed by his son’s conversion. He attempted to make him recant his faith through various forms of temptation, including providing several prostitutes for him. Chrysanthus, for his part, rejected them, maintaining his chastity and dedication to our Saviour. His father then arranged an honourable marriage for Chrysanthus, but to one named Daria, a virgin-priestess of Athena, the pagan goddess, hoping that she would draw him away from

Christ. Out of obedience, Chrysanthus agreed to marry, but only after convincing his betrothed that they should live in virginity following marriage. Daria also wished to maintain her chastity, and rather than drawing Chrysanthus away from Christianity, she was brought to Christ by his example and his exhortations. Thereafter many in Rome were converted by the witness of Chrysanthus and Daria, and the Emperor Numerian became troubled by this. He ordered that the two be arrested and tortured until they denied their faith. Both were horribly tortured, but demonstrated great endurance and faith in the Lord, so much so, that their torturer, Claudius, converted to Christianity, as did Hilaria, his wife, and their sons Jason and Maurus. For this Claudius was drowned, both his sons were beheaded, and his wife was hanged at the gallows. Thus they received the crowns of martyrdom. Chrysanthus was thrown into a large cesspi; however, even there a bright light shone upon him, and the awful stench was replaced with the sweet fragrance of heaven. All who witnessed this were amazed. Daria, for her part, demonstrated such endurance under torture that those present cried out, "Daria is a goddess!" The torturers then despatched Daria to an house of ill repute. But a lion was also sent there by God to protect her. All who tried to defile the saint were cowed by the lion, and while they were in this fearful state Daria told them of Christ and converted them from the ways of uncleanness to the way of salvation. As the public torture of the Saints was ineffectual and gaining more support for the Christians, the Emperor ordered them to be buried alive in a great pit with heavy stones placed upon them to crush them. Both were slowly crushed to death. Following their martyrdom in A.D. 284, Christians began meeting together for prayer in a cave near the place of their deaths. Once while they were thus praying, local pagans rolled a large stone across the entrance to the cave, sealing the Christians within, leading to their martyrdom as well. Eventually, a church was built over the spot, where the two great martyrs were venerated. Their relics were translated to the Via Salaria Nova in Rome.



An Extract

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT is taken from the book, *“The Spiritual Life and How to be Attuned to It,”* by **Saint Theophan the Recluse**. This was published in English translation in 1996 by the **St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, California**. The extract itself is not by the Saint, but is a quotation from a letter addressed to him. His correspondent was a young lady of the upper middle class, who was just beginning to experience spiritual enlightenment and the awakening from the “sleep of sin,” as St Theophan himself calls it in another work of his.

She writes: “For about two days I have been making the usual social rounds here. First I went to the theatre, then I went merry-making, then I went to a party. What kind of crowd is this, with the kinds of things they talk about, the kinds of abstruse opinions they have about everything, the kinds of manners they have? All this is barbarous to me, and I will never be able to collect my thoughts in this mob.”

In a subsequent letter she writes: “I do not think that I will ever reconcile myself to such a life. I look closely and I find that it is not life. I cannot explain it, but I am firmly convinced in my mind that it is not life. There is a lot of motion, but no life.”

And again: “Another thing I see is how everyone rushes around in a huff, in pursuit of something which no one ever manages to catch. When I happen to pass through some crowded street or place, what a fuss and bustle I see! But then I look - it is the same thing in their homes, and it is probably in their souls, too. I am at a loss - is it really possible to live this way? Another thing I see is how they bind, constrain and tyrannize each other; no one has his own will or any freedom. You do not dare dress as you would like to dress, you do not dare to act as you would like to act, you cannot say what you would like to say - you cannot do anything as you would like to do it. Everything they do is subject to some law that was written by no one knows who. It binds everyone, but no one

knows how to break its hold. It is in this way that they tyrannize each other. You dare not listen to anyone - that is unfortunate. ... The burden is unbearable for me... I have noticed this in others, too. There is your freedom for you! Looking from the outside, everyone seems a freeman. A freeman, who gets all tangled up in his arms and legs! It was in regard to this that I began to examine closely whether people do things from the heart. And what of it? Maybe I am mistaken, but I have not seen anything that could be from the soul. There are empty caresses, a readiness to do things for each other, and also mutual admiration. Everything is superficial. Beneath the outward appearance that is elegant and smooth is concealed an entirely different spirit, which if it were to be brought to light, would be found to be neither elegant nor even tolerable. So, it turns out that when we gather together, we are a collection of hypocritical actors and actresses. What a comedy! Furthermore, what I find most astonishing is the coldness coming from everyone. How could this be? Indeed, everyone seems to be everyone else's friend, ready to give them the shirt off their back, but there is an underlying coldness."

COMMENT: These observations were written in nineteenth century Russia, in a society which was ostensibly and, indeed, deeply Orthodox, in days when going to the theatre, a ball, or a party were perhaps the only forms of social "enjoyment," things that would be considered pretty tame by today's standards. Yet this young woman was able to see the emptiness and falsity of it all. Compare our days when we live not in a Christian society but one turning its back on the remembrance of Christian confession, a materialistic and hedonistic society. Compare our days when we have cinema, T.V., internet, social media, mobiles, Twitter, Facebook, clubbing, binge drinking, drugs, "recreational" sexual encounters and dozens of other "distractions" to keep us in the whirl. Compare our days when normal relations between people are perverted by political correctness and other vogue conventions. Yet the amazing thing is how few of us, "enjoying" all this, and enslaved by it all, do not realise what this young lady realised: **that this is not life.**

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

“HOW can we relate the above sections (Matthew 18:15 to 18:20) of the Bible in our current life? - A. H-S, N.W.10

Many thanks for your message. First of all I think you have the wrong end of the stick! You ask: “How can we relate the above sections of the Bible in our current life?” Fundamentally this is not what we are meant to be doing! Rather we should be trying to relate “our current life” to Biblical and Traditional teaching. So it seems you are starting from the wrong point. This is why we have our various disciplines in the Church, feasts and fasts, etc., so that we conform our life to the Saviour’s teaching, not that we adapt His teaching to our current life.

Now regarding that section of Scripture. Note first that it speaks of a “brother” trespassing against you, so this applies only when you feel wronged by someone who is an Orthodox Christian. The Fathers tell us that when we are offended by someone outside the Church we should “concede to him even what is ours” (Saint Theophylact of Ochrid).

Within the Church, we can of course follow these precepts exactly. We can speak to our offender, and secondly we can take two or three witnesses, etc.

Then of course we get into deeper waters: “if he neglect to hear the Church.” It is perhaps for this reason that this passage is read on the Sunday of Orthodoxy during the Rite of Orthodoxy. In this instance, presumably the offence was something very serious, either against Church teaching or the moral life enjoined upon us, to have got to this stage. If the offender is neglecting to hear Church teaching, even when admonished, then of course he ceases to be a brother.

Currently there seems to be an idea among many who consider themselves Orthodox, that once you are Orthodox you always

are, but that is patently wrong. Judas was one of the Twelve but did not die as a follower of Christ, and throughout the New Testament we can read of people who “left us.” The same has happened throughout Church history: the various heresiarchs, the people who just drift off, and those who turn completely away from God - Stalin was a seminarian, but became a God-hater.

In any case, the important thing is for us to conform our lives to the Church, and not to try and relate that teaching to our current life. Such an effort will end in misery in this life and in the next.



News Section

A JOYOUS ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE CHURCH IN BULGARIA

AFTER, as Bishop Ambrose put it, jumping the gun in our January issue and printing a correction in the last issue, we have now received the following press release from the **Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, in Etna, California**, correctly expressing the fact of the union effected between our hierarchy and that of the Old Calendar Church of Bulgaria:-

“THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria has made an official announcement, dated January 19, 2015 (Old Style), of its establishment of formal ecclesiastical communion with the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece (CGOCG). The article states that communion between our two Churches ‘was brought to a successful conclusion’ after a meeting between His Eminence, Bishop Photiy of Triaditza, Chief Prelate of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria, and His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens and the Holy Synod of the CGOCG, in Athens, Greece. The finalization of communion was formalized by the signing of the ecclesiological

confession that brought together the CGOCC and the former Holy Synod of Resistance and its Sister Churches, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania, and now, officially, the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria. (This document was largely the work of His Eminence, Bishop Photiy.) Certain administrative issues and procedures regarding the Old Calendar Church of Bulgaria and the CGOCC remain to be completed, very shortly after which a date for a joint concelebration of the Divine Liturgy will be set. It will take place in Athens.”

EXTREME ISLAMIST TERROR

DAILY we are now receiving reports of the brutal murder of Christians of various denominations, their persecution, and the destruction of churches, icons and Christian artefacts in areas overrun by Islamist extremists. Perhaps the most horrifying of these incidents was the beheading of twenty-one Coptic Christians in Libya in mid-February. To remain silent about these developments would be callous, but we must confess there is little of profit we can say regarding these horrors. Our part is more properly to pray for those suffering and for those deluded people perpetrating these atrocities, and to leave comment to those more expert than ourselves. However, perhaps we should warn our people against the mindless condemnation of all Muslims which is gaining currency even among Orthodox peoples. We cannot counter sectarian hatred with sectarian hatred. We must bear in mind that it is not only Christians that are victims of these purveyors of brutal hatred, but those of other faiths as well, including many Muslims. We should also not forget that the vast majority of Muslims are not supporters of the fanatics, and are probably pained that their faith is now brought into disrepute by the barbarity of the murderous fringe elements that have gained the world’s attention by these evil deeds. For our part let us pray, and hope that in time there may be some way in which we can offer aid.

ANCIENT PRAYER FOUND

IT HAS BEEN REPORTED that the earliest known prayer to the Theotokos has been found on a fragment of papyrus dating back to approximately A.D. 250. In 1917, the **John Rylands Library in Manchester**, acquired a large panel of Egyptian papyrus. The prayer is located on the fragment recorded as reference number Greek Papyrus 470. The prayer on the fragment is written in Koine Greek and may be a personal copy of the prayer, yet the same prayer is still chanted in the Orthodox Church to this day. The early date of this prayer is important for a number of reasons, one of which is that it supports our understanding that the term ***Theotokos***, present in the fragment, was not just a theological concept defended at the Third Œcumenical Council in A.D. 431, but was already current and well-known several centuries before the Nestorian heresy.



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

CHERTSEY MUSEUM AND A MAYORAL VISIT

CONFIRMING our links with Surrey's most illustrious (from an Orthodox Christian point of view) town, on Wednesday 4th February, Fathers Alexis, Niphon and Sabbas attended the opening of the **Magna Carta Exhibition at Chertsey Museum**. The exhibition, thus staged in one of the towns within the Runnymede borough, where 800 years ago Magna Carta was sealed by King John, was very interesting and informative, and we met many friends there who attend our annual blessing of the waters at the

nearby Abbey River. We also met the **Mayor of Runnymede, Cllr Peter Waddell**, who, in conversation, expressed a wish to visit our Brotherhood.

On Wednesday 18th, Cllr Waddell did pay us a visit. He was first offered refreshments in the Exhibition Room, and then shown the church, the mortuary and the brotherhood's work rooms. Cllr Waddell stayed about an hour and a half, and his visit was a very pleasant occasion for us; his conversation was instructive, and we appreciated his giving time to us in what must be for him a particularly busy year. At the time of his visit, **Jenny Graveson** of the **Brookwood Cemetery Society** joined us and was able to give Cllr Waddell an insight into the cemetery's history. Her input was also much appreciated.

The **Mayor of Woking, Cllr Tony Branagan**, visited the cemetery on Tuesday, 10th February, but did not get as far as St Edward's on this occasion. We are hoping to see him again at the **Pascal Midnight Service**.

CHURCHING AT THE CONVENT

ON THE FRIDAY of Clean Week, 14th / 27th February, the forty-day prayers for mother and babies were read at the Convent before the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts for **Tatiana Henderson-Stewart** and her new born twins, **Nicolas and Alexander**.

VISITORS

THURSDAY, 12th FEBRUARY: **Matthew Dell** of **Saint Peter's Catholic School in Guildford**, brought three trainee religious education teachers to view the church. Their visit was welcome but had not been scheduled. As they were looking round, **a group of approximately fifteen Moslem young men** came in to see the church. They considerately asked whether they should

remove their shoes, and when told that was not necessary but they should uncover their heads they obligingly did so. They had been searching for a grave in the cemetery and saw the church and on the spur of the moment decided to have a quick look. They showed great interest in the church and asked various questions about Orthodox worship. When they had gone back to their search for the grave, we were able to turn our attention again to the R.C. teachers and later offered them refreshments in the Exhibition Room.

FRIDAY, 13th FEBRUARY: Six Coptic Christians unexpectedly visited the Brotherhood. The group, all women, was led by a nun, **Sister Thecla**, who had visited last year. After seeing the church, they were offered refreshments in the Exhibition Room.

SATURDAY, 14th FEBRUARY: **Fr Hegoumen Evfimiy** and **Mother Evfrosinia** from the Lesna Icon Convent in France paid us another visit, on their way to their church in Guildford. While they were here we were able to pass on to them the medical supplies which had been donated for them by **Nikolas Taratuchin** and **Oleg Myslov**, and in turn they kindly brought us provisions.

WEDNESDAY, 18th FEBRUARY: A dozen people from the **Chobham Afternoon Women's Institute** visited us to see the church and Exhibition Room. This was the same day that the Mayor of Runnymede came a little later, and at the end of the day **Fr Protosinghel Haralambie from Romania** unexpectedly arrived with a group of pilgrims. They are attached to the Patriarchal Church in Romania and after visiting and praying in the church, they left just before Vespers.

VOLUNTEER TEAM

WE ARE extremely grateful to a team of three volunteers from the congregation here, **Rima Lewis, Anna Rotherham and Alla Sion**, who came in to give the kitchen and utility room in the Old Mortuary a thorough clean on Saturday, 31st January. We appreciate their kindness, initiative and the good work they did!

PRACTICAL TIP

AS WE NOTED in the “Coming Month” section above, in March we have some of the most significant services of the Church Year. We should also be fully aware that we live in a society which year by year appears to make it harder to live a committed Christian life. Nonetheless at this time we should make a concerted effort to participate in these soul-enlightening celebrations as much as possible. Don’t simply drift into this, the holiest period of the year. Arrange beforehand to take days off work, to put aside social engagements, to “clear the decks” so that you can participate to the fullest extent possible. Let us take to heart the message of the kontakion of the Great Canon: *My soul, my soul, arise! Wherefore dost thou slumber? The end is drawing nigh, and thou shalt be troubled. Arouse thyself, therefore, that Christ God may spare thee; for He is everywhere present and filleth all things.*



“IF, however, brethren you cannot go to Church every morning and every morning, either because the Church is far away or because you are prevented by illness or some other reasonable cause, at the very least you should go every Sunday and every feast day, in order to hear the Divine words of the Gospel and to pray in common to God. For it is indeed a great reproach to Christians that other peoples, as soon as they rise from sleep, go to their altars and worship and pray to their false gods, while Christians, who worship the True God, do not go to their Divine Temples and Holy Churches in order to pray and render due worship, adoration and honour to God as befits His servants. I fear, I fear lest pagans, Turks, Jews, and other people will appear, in this regard, more righteous than Christians, while Christians will be condemned for surpassing the pagans themselves in wickedness.”

VEN. NICODEMUS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, + 1809 A.D.