



## FROM THE FATHERS

“THE EVENT which we celebrate today [the Annunciation: 25<sup>th</sup> March / 7<sup>th</sup> April] clearly proves that this mystery is beyond the understanding not only of men but of angels and even archangels. The archangel brought the good tidings to the Virgin that she should conceive (Luke 1:26-38). But when she sought to find out the way it would happen and asked him, *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man* (v. 34), the archangel was completely unable to explain how. He took refuge in God, saying, *The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee* (v. 35). It was as if someone had asked Moses, *How was man formed out of the ground? How were bones, nerves and flesh made out of dust, or the senses out of what is insensate? Or how was another human being created from Adam’s rib? How was the bone stretched out, divided up, joined and fastened together? How were the internal organs, the various juices and everything else formed from a bone?* If someone had asked these questions of Moses, all he would have said was that it was God Who took dust from the ground and formed Adam, and took of Adam’s ribs and made Eve. He would have said who the Creator was, but not the way in which these things were done. In the same way, Gabriel said that the Holy Spirit and the power of the Highest would bring about the birth without seed, but he did not say how. He went on to mention that Elizabeth, who was barren, had conceived in her old age, and all he could say was that with God nothing was impossible (v.v. 35-37). So how could he explain how she was to conceive and bear a child in virginity?”

ST GREGORY PALAMAS, + 1359 A.D.

“FOR OUR GOD, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary in accord with God’s plan: of the seed of David, it is true, but also of the Holy Spirit... The virginity of Mary, her giving birth and also the death of the Lord, were hidden from the prince of this world: three mysteries loudly proclaimed but wrought in the silence of God.”

HOLY HIEROMARTYR IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, + 110 A.D.

“WE BELIEVE, according to the tradition of the Apostles, that God the Word came down from heaven into the holy Virgin Mary, in order that, taking flesh from her and taking also a soul, I mean a rational soul, and thus becoming all that man is except in regard to sin, He might save the fallen and confer immortality on such men as believe in His name.”

ST HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME, + 235 A.D.

“IN THE WOMB of Mary the Infant was formed, Who from eternity is equal to the Father. He imparted to us His greatness, and took our infirmity. He became mortal like us and joined His life to ours, so that we might die no more.”

VEN. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN, + 373 A.D.

“SHE [Mary] must be confessed to be the true and most blessed Theotokos, but not Theotokos in the way in which a certain impious heresy claims, which asserts that she is to be called Mother of God merely in name, because of course she gave birth to that man “who afterwards was made God,” just as we speak of the mother of a presbyter or bishop, not because the woman bore someone who was already a presbyter or bishop, but because she bore a man who afterwards was made a presbyter or bishop. Not in this way, I say, is holy Mary the Theotokos, but rather, it was already in her sacred womb that the sacrosanct mystery was accomplished, that by reason of a certain singular and unique unity of Person, just as the Word in flesh is flesh, so the Man in God is God.

VEN. VINCENT OF LERINS, + C. 450 A.D.

# *Homily on Palm Sunday*

BY ARCHBISHOP MACARIUS  
OF LITHUANIA AND VILNIUS

Given on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1858

*Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel that  
cometh in the name of the Lord* (John 12:13)

THE LAST ENTRY of our Saviour into Jerusalem has been celebrated. He journeyed like a King, and according to the ancient prophesies, *seated upon the foal of an ass*. An innumerable multitude of people, who had come up to the holy city for the feast, heard of the approach of Jesus, took branches from the date palms, and went out to meet Him. And then some went before Him and some walked alongside Him. Some in their delight took off their clothes and laid them down in his path, and others cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in His way, and all of them, not only the adults, but even the children themselves, called out to Him: *Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel, Hosanna in the highest* (Matt. 21:8-9). Is it not surprising that after this which is reported by the Evangelist, Christ, when He drew near to Jerusalem, *beheld the city and wept over it* (Luke 19:41)? What did this mean? Why, when all around the Saviour were rejoicing, did He alone weep? Was it that this celebration of the Jews, this living empathy for Him, this celebratory encounter was not pleasing to Him?

The Jews greeted Him as their King, but they did not fully comprehend Him. Their understanding of the Messiah-King was erroneous, sensorial. The Jews thought that Christ would be their earthly king, their champion, that he would sit on the throne of David having first liberated them from the yoke of the Romans, under which they were at the time found, and that thereafter he would conquer all peoples so that the people of God would be made the dominant influence in the whole world. In the days of His public preaching how greatly the Lord strove to diffuse this pernicious misconception; all the same that misconception remained prevalent among the Jews. And it was with this vain hope that they greeted Christ as their King in Jerusalem. As if that were not enough, at that time when some, whole multitudes of them, greeted Him with joy and acclaimed Him as their King, there were others, His enemies, the scribes and supreme elders of the Jews, who were quietly indignant and becoming even more blinded by their envy and hatred of Him. They applied themselves even more vehemently to bring about His destruction the more quickly (Matt. 21:15). And this is not all: the Lord also foresaw that even those in the rejoicing multitude, now proffering Him royal honours, would within a few days completely abandon Him and would go over to the side of His enemies, that those same people now crying out, *Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel*, would within a few days be yelling, *Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him; we have no king but Cæsar!* (Jn 19:15). But the Lord's vision reached even further. He foresaw that the enemies of the Jewish people, the Romans, would come and surround the holy city of Jerusalem on all sides with countless hordes, that they would destroy her, would kill all her children, and not leave one stone upon another. And why was this? Because now Jerusalem did not understand the day of her visitation by the Lord, because the Jews did not recognise their true Messiah, and within a few days they would give Him over unto death (Lk. 19:4-44). Take note, this is why in the midst of the celebrating Jews the Lord wept over the holy city. He saw not only the outward appearance but their very

thoughts also. He saw not only what happened around Him, but everything that was coming to pass and all that was then being contemplated in Jerusalem. He saw not only the present, but the future of the holy city.

And we, brethren, we are now radiantly celebrating the triumphant entry of our Saviour into Jerusalem. We also are meeting Him as a King, with palms in our hands, thus holding the symbols of victory. We are crying out to Him, as the Conqueror of death, *Hosanna in the highest, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!* But all the same, is there not in our celebration something which is not pleasing to our Lord?

Our understanding concerning Him as the King, is without doubt a true understanding. We believe that He is the King of a blessed Kingdom, that is the Church, which He has founded upon the earth. We know that although He now enters Jerusalem for His suffering on the Cross, He will suffer only that He might conquer our enemies, death and Hades, reconcile us with God and gain for us the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that He might send down the Holy Spirit upon His Apostles and that through them might preach the Gospel to all creation, and that He might make of all the peoples in the world, not only from among the Jews, but also from among the pagans, one grace-filled Kingdom, in which He might reign until the consummation of the age. Such understandings are the very same which the Lord Himself proclaimed, and consequently our festal celebration, permeated with them to the utmost degree in this respect, could not be grievous to Him.

But now is there not among us a repetition, something similar to what happened in Jerusalem when Christ entered therein? Are there not among us people who, regarding the glory of Christ the King, looking upon the spread and flowering of His grace-filled Kingdom upon earth, not only do not participate in the advances of the holy Faith, but even oppose it as far as they are able, and are quite prepared to see it completely extinguished? Are there not

such people, although they are now greeting Christ with joy as He enters Jerusalem in glory, who in a few days will go over to the side of His enemies?

And the enemies of Christ are the devil and all those who do his will. They are the heretics and schismatics, those who rend the Church asunder and those who introduce into the grace-filled Kingdom of Christ rebellion and strife and the destruction of thousands of weak souls. In general they are all those transgressors, who oppose God's will. Are there not among us sons of perdition, who, even if they are not likely soon to yell at Christ, *Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him*, nonetheless spiritually *crucify Him a second time* by their falling away from the Faith and in general by their impiety, and their failure in Christian living? Are there not unfortunates who by their failure to repent of their sins and their bitterness are preparing for themselves an even more dire lot than awaited Jerusalem for failing to recognise the Messiah and for crucifying Him? Are they not preparing eternal torments for themselves? Before the Lord all this is completely open. He sees not only our whole life from the beginning to the end, but our very heart itself. After this, should not each one of us ask whether his participation in the present feast of the Church is really well-pleasing unto the Lord?

Brother Christians! We all know that Christ is the King of the grace-filled Kingdom, the Church. We all have the good fortune to belong to that Kingdom. Then let us love its King and Lord! Let us undeviatingly fulfil His holy will and by all means make use of what He has granted us for our salvation, for in that He founded His Kingdom upon earth and reigns therein, it is only for our salvation. Then it will be that not only on this present feast, but on all the others which we keep in His honour, we shall make ourselves truly well-pleasing unto Him. And meanwhile let us remember that besides the earthly Jerusalem into which Christ now enters, there is also a heavenly Jerusalem; that besides the Kingdom of grace there is another Kingdom of Christ, the Kingdom of Glory.

Christ Himself entered therein in all his glory when He ascended into the Heavens, but there is a time when He will lead therein all His true followers. Oh, if only we should be deemed worthy to enter into that Jerusalem on high! With what joy we should then celebrate that festive entry, celebrating not for one day only, but for the whole of eternity! Amen.

This homily was published in Russian in Saint Petersburg in 1869.  
Much that it says seems to be truer today than it was then, nearly 150 years ago.  
(See also next section but one)



# Unceasing Prayer

THE MOTHER AND WELLSPRING OF JOY IN CHRIST

**“Pray without ceasing”**

**“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation”**

(1 Thess. 5:17; Matt. 26:41)

IN A PREVIOUS DISCUSSION of the blessed Apostolic exhortation, “rejoice always,”<sup>1</sup> we characterized joy in Christ as the reliable barometer of our spiritual state.<sup>2</sup>

Everlasting and unceasing joy is the product of the constant presence of our Saviour within our hearts, and this is attained through unceasing prayer.

1. Continuous prayer is the expression of our fervent love for Christ and of our desire that He, and He alone, should be the Lord of our hearts and the wellspring of our joy: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.”<sup>3</sup>

But is it possible for the faithful to pray without ceasing when they live amid so many secular distractions and face innumerable worldly cares?

The sanctified experience of our Church responds in the affirmative.

“All Christians,” says St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite, “young and old, men and women, should pray at all times, where they ply their trades, when eating, when walking, when taking care of any business, saying this short prayer, sometimes with the lips, and at other times in the mind and in the heart: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.’”<sup>4</sup>

St John Chrysostom assures us that, wherever we may be and at whatever time, it is possible for us to set up a spiritual altar and offer our prayers:

“‘And how is it possible’ — some say — ‘for a man living in the world and tied down [to his work] to pray for three hours a day and run to church?’ [I reply:] ‘It is possible and very easy;’ ‘Let us not make excuses for ourselves, saying that there is no house of prayer nearby; for, the Grace of the Holy Spirit — if we are spiritually awake — makes us ourselves churches of God, and so, from every point of view, it is very easy for us to pray;’ ‘wherever you find yourself, you have the altar, the lance, and the sacrificial victim with you, because you are yourself the priest, the altar, and the sacrificial victim. Wherever you may be, then, you can set up your altar, as long as you evince a vigilant disposition, and neither the place nor the time will impede you; and even if you do not kneel, or smite your breast, or stretch forth your hands to Heaven, but show only fervour of mind, you have fulfilled everything necessary for prayer. It is possible even for a woman who is holding a distaff and weaving to lift up her gaze mentally to Heaven and call fervently upon God. It is possible for a man who goes into the market place, while walking, to offer earnest prayers. And another man, who is sitting in his workshop stitching hides, can consecrate his soul to God [through prayer]. The slave, when shopping, when going up or down the street, and when serving in the kitchen, can pray zealously and vigilantly, when he cannot go to church. God is not embarrassed about the place [where one prays]; He seeks only one thing: a fervent mind and a temperate soul.’”<sup>5</sup>



2. Moreover, through constant invocation of the holy name of the Lord our lips and hearts are sanctified; likewise, all of our affairs and tasks are blessed. In this way, our life is “seasoned,” since we flavour it with the salt of the Holy Spirit, Who is the true source of our joy. It is precisely for this reason that the Saints encourage even craftsmen, saying, as St. John Chrysostom does: “Are you a craftsman? As you sit at work, chant psalms; ...a psalm is a great companion.”<sup>6</sup>

St. Basil the Great considers it an emulation of Angelic hymnody when a pious soul,

“as soon as the day begins, hastens to honour the Creator with hymns and canticles; and then, when the sun is shining brightly, he betakes himself to his various tasks and, with prayer as his companion everywhere, seasons his labours with hymns, as with salt; for, it is the assuagement provided by hymns that bestows on the soul a cheerful and untroubled state.”<sup>7</sup>

3. As well, we should never forget that unceasing prayer is indispensable and necessary for the salvific struggle to achieve inner wakefulness.

Our Lord urged His holy Disciples before His Passion: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”<sup>8</sup>

This injunction possesses perennial and universal validity: it is addressed to every faithful member of our Holy Church, who, though he may live in an intensely worldly environment full of temptations, ought nonetheless to be alert and to preserve his heart pure and free, so that it might be an “abode,”<sup>9</sup> a temple, and a dwelling-place of the Holy Trinity, the inexhaustible wellspring of true joy.

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Indeed, then, our lay brethren in the world...

“are capable of praying, when working, when eating and drinking, when at home and when outside, when sitting, and when

walking, if only they will forsake garrulity and gather their minds into their hearts.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Notes**

1. 1 Thess. 5:16.
2. See *Agios Kiprianos*, No. 285 (July-August 1998), pp. 81-82.
3. Deut. 6:5.
4. St Nicodemus, notes on 1 Thess. 5:17.
5. St John Chrysostom, “On Anna,” Oration 5, §§5-6, *PG*, Vol. LIV, cols. 667-668.
6. *Idem*, Second Baptismal Catechesis, §4, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. 49, col. 237.
7. St Basil the Great, Epistle 2, “To his Friend Gregory,” §2, *PG*, Vol. 32, cols. 225C-228A.
8. Matt. 26:41.
9. John 14:23.
10. St Nicodemus, *Manual of Confession* (Athens: M. Saliberos Publications, n.d.), 3rd ed., pp. 45-46.

**Source: *Agios Kiprianos*, No. 291 (July-August 1999), pp. 209-210.**



***ON THE WORDS OF THE GOSPEL:  
“LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN,  
THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS  
AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN”***

SINCE ancient times, the Russian people have a saying, ‘Words edify, but examples convince’, that is, while words in one way or another edify a person, a good example seen through real-life actions is what inspires people to do the same, and woe to the person whose deeds fail to live up to his words.

In today’s Gospel reading, we heard the words of our Saviour which were directed primarily to His disciples, and through them to all of us sinners, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16), that is, let your good deeds on earth shine before men, so that seeing them, people would glorify your Father in heaven.

These Gospel words remind us of what the heathens said about Christians in the first centuries of Christianity. In the beginning, the Jews, malicious enemies of Christians, tried to distort the Christian dogmas by using all kinds of slander. For example, they said that Christians get together for the sacrament of the Eucharist and slay infants in order to drink their blood. However, in the end, all these slanders were brought to naught, and, as contemporary historians asserted, crowds of heathens converted to Christianity. “Look at the kind of life these Christians lead!” said the heathens with great respect and amazement over what they saw. The Christians’ real-life examples convinced them to accept Christianity and imitate their way of life.

Looking at us today, however, do many people convert to our Faith, to our Orthodox Christianity? In the Far East, Orthodox people lived among the pagan Chinese, and here they are surrounded by the heterodox. What can those people learn from us? That is the question! Holy Scripture not only says that our light should shine before the heathen, but there are yet more fearsome words. The Apostle Paul wrote sternly to his brethren, “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (Rom. 2:24). How can this be? It is a known fact that when a Christian missionary once arrived in a pagan land and started to preach about Christ, people listened to him attentively and respectfully. But then, they said, “Tell us, were those people who first came to us from your country also Christians?” Not knowing what this was leading to, the missionary replied, “Yes, they were also Christians.” They said, “Then go away from us! Your Christians behaved in such an abominable way that none of us want to be Christians!” This was what happened.

And this was not an isolated incident. Instead of being a good example, Christians today are quite the opposite. They blend into their surroundings, living like everyone else, and our Orthodox Russian people are doing this all the time. They are no different from the heterodox surrounding them. By looking at us, no one could imagine how lofty and wonderful our faith really is.

How incredibly marvellous God is, in promising us eternal life, to reign with Christ for eternity, to eternally sing songs in joy and triumph in the never-waning day of the Lord's Kingdom! How great and wonderful are His vows! Yet, by looking at us, can anyone imagine that we live with this expectation? Instead, we are totally committed to this life which has sucked us in. Therefore, every time you hear these words "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works," remind yourself that these words were directed towards us, and that the Lord in due time, at the Dread Judgment, will seek requital if we did not set a proper example to others by how we lived our lives. May the Lord through His grace set us on the right path so that looking at us, other people may truly appreciate the greatness of the Orthodox faith and accept it as their faith also. Amen.

ST PHILARET, METROPOLITAN OF NEW YORK,  
Sermons, Vol. II, pp. 216-217

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"THE CHURCH, inwardly strong by God's grace and protected outwardly is, for Orthodox Christians, 'the city of God,' God's community, His commonwealth, where the path to the Heavenly Jerusalem has its beginning. Various calamities have shaken the world, entire peoples have disappeared, cities and states have perished, but the Church, in spite of persecutions and even internal conflicts, stands invincible; for *the gates of Hades shall not prevail against her* (Matt. 16:18). Today, when the world leaders try in vain to establish order on earth, the only dependable instrument of peace is that about which the Church sings:

*The Cross is the guardian of the whole world;  
the Cross is the beauty of the Church;  
the Cross is the might of kings;  
the Cross is the confirmation of the faithful;  
the Cross is the glory of angels and the wounding of demons."*

ST JOHN OF SHANGHAI, + 1966 A.D.

# Teaching on the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church

BY ARCHPRIEST ALEXANDER RUDAKOV

PUBLISHED IN 1890 IN SAINT PETERSBURG

*Note: In what follows we have expanded on Fr Alexander's original text to make things clearer for contemporary readers.*

§ 101. **The Consecration of a Bishop.** Before the Liturgy on the day of the consecration of a Bishop, the one called to the episcopate, solemnly in the midst of the assembled church, before the assembly of the Bishops, the clergy and the people, makes a confession of the Orthodox Faith and gives a vow to uphold this Faith unassailed, to observe the canons of the Holy Apostles and of the Seven Œcumenical and the Provincial Councils, to be submissive to the Holy Synod, not to spare his own life, and that the most important purpose of his life shall be for the glory of God, for the salvation of the souls of men and for the building up of the Church. He pronounces this standing upon a special eagle mat - a mat with a depiction of an eagle soaring over a city - as a sign that a Bishop must both by his faith and his virtue soar over those in his care, and soar in spirit to the Heavens.

Later, after the chanting of the Trisagion in the Divine Liturgy, the candidate is led by the senior priest and the senior deacon to stand before the Royal Gates, and is then received into the sanctuary by the Bishops. He kneels on both knees before the Holy Table and rests his head upon his crossed hands at the edge of the Table, as he did when ordained priest. The actual act of ordination differs from the ordination to the priesthood in that it is not effected by one Bishop but by a number of Bishops present and that in doing so they hold the opened Gospel Book over the candidate's head. This is done to impress upon the Bishop elect that although he will have authority over other members of the Church, he himself is still subject to the law of Christ.

After the consecration the new Bishop is vested in the episcopal vestments and acclaimed, as he was as deacon and then as priest, with the thrice repeated *Axios!* The consecrating Bishops then greet him with the kiss of peace. At the very end of the service, when they have divested themselves of their liturgical vestments, the newly-consecrated Bishop is presented with his pastoral staff.

*...to be continued with a section on “Marriage”*



## THE COMING MONTH

PASCHA, this year, falls just outside of March on 3<sup>rd</sup> / 16<sup>th</sup> April, but nonetheless March still rejoices in two Great Feasts, the **Annunciation** (25<sup>th</sup> March / 7<sup>th</sup> April) and Palm Sunday (27<sup>th</sup> March / 9<sup>th</sup> April). It is for this reason that in the first two sections of this issue we have included teaching on the Saviour’s incarnation at the Annunciation, and on His Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The greater part of Lent, with its special services and commemorations, and the greater part of Great Week also fall within March, and so the month is dedicated to our preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ at Pascha, the premier festival in the Church Year.

The special lenten services and commemorations prepare to celebrate the Resurrection in truth, as a spiritual reality, rather than just keeping the feast as a folk custom or an excuse for excess. Those who through circumstances are unable to attend the church services should, by praying and reading them at home, try to participate in each one of them as deeply and meaningfully as possible.

For our own community this month also brings the commemoration of the **Martyrdom of St Edward** (18th / 31st March).

This year it falls on a Friday, the day between the **Thursday of the Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete** and the Saturday of the **Laudation of the All Holy Theotokos**. In 1982, on the Saturday of the Laudation, the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated here at Brookwood by Bishop Constantine with a tiny group of parishioners, so the concurrence of these celebrations this year is a blessing.

Among the Saints we celebrate in March, we have two of the greatest saints of the West, **Saint Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome and Apostle of the English** (12th / 25th), who is widely known in the East as **the Dialogist** because his Dialogues were so popular there, and the **Venerable Benedict of Nursia** (14th/27th).

This month we also have:-

**Saint David of Wales** (1st /14th), or *Dewi Sant* as he is known in the Welsh language, is the patron saint of Wales. He lived in the sixth century, and unlike the patron saints of England, Scotland and Ireland was a native of the country of which he is patron. Unfortunately the first life of the saint was written only in the eleventh century by one Rhigyfarch. Giraldus Cambrensis wrote a book about his travels through Wales in the 12th century, and also gave some information about the Saint's early life. It is reported that David was tall and physically strong, and yet a very gentle person who lived an extremely frugal life. It is said that he ate mostly bread and herbs. He is often called David the Water-Drinker because of his abstemiousness, and he is said to have drunk nothing else. Sometimes, as a self-imposed penance, he would stand up to his neck in a lake of cold water, reciting Scripture. Nonetheless, despite the austerity of his way of life, he was of royal lineage. His father, Sant, was the son of Ceredig, who was prince of Ceredigion, a region in South-West Wales. His mother, St Non, was the daughter of a local chieftain. The future Bishop was born near Capel Non (Non's chapel) on the South-West Wales' coast near the present city of Saint David. He was educated in a monastery called Hen Fynyw, his teacher being Paulinus, a blind monk, himself a disciple of St Germanus. The saint struggled in the monastic life there for some years before going forth with a party of disciples on his missionary journeys. He travelled

through Wales, where he established several churches, and also through the south and west of what is now England and Cornwall. He also visited Brittany. Two companions of his, Saints Padarn and Teilo, often accompanied him on his journeys, and together they made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where they were received by the Patriarch. He founded a monastery at Glyn Rhosyn (Rose Vale) on the banks of the small river Alun where the cathedral city of St. David stands today. The rule of the monastic brotherhood that Dewi founded was very strict. It is said that he once raised a youth from the dead. In 519 A.D., at the Synod of Llanddewi Brefi, the Bishops met to consider who might best oppose the Pelagian heresy which was reappearing, and David participated in that council. A great crowd gathered at the synod, and when Dewi stood up to speak, one of the congregation shouted, "We won't be able to see or hear him." At that instant the ground on which he stood rose up until everyone could see and hear Saint David. As the council drew to a close, Saint Dubricius the Archbishop announced that he wished to retire. Unsurprisingly, after the miracle, David was elected Archbishop. At first he steadfastly refused, but was eventually compelled to accept. Being a lover of stillness and quiet, he did, however, move his cathedra from the populous city of Caerleon to Menevia (now St David's). As Archbishop the Saint laboured for the enlightenment and good of his flock for many years dying in A.D. 589, in deep old age. His last words to his disciples were in a sermon on the previous Sunday: *Be joyful, and keep your faith and your creed. Do the little things that you have seen me do and heard about. I will walk the path that our fathers have trod before us.* At the time of his repose, the monastery is said to have been filled with Angels as Christ received his soul, and it is recorded that Saint Kentigern Mungo of Glasgow was granted to see his soul taken by the Angels and committed to the Saviour. The Saint's body was laid to rest in the grounds of his monastery, where the Cathedral of St David now stands. According to a tradition of the ancient monastery of Glastonbury in Somerset, during the reign of the Blessed King Edgar the Peaceable, the father of our St Edward, St David's relics, or a portion of them, were translated to Glastonbury.



Our **Venerable father James the Ascetic** (4th / 17th) settled for fifteen years in a cave near a village called Porphyrianos (now Haifa) in Palestine to lead an ascetic life. Because of his progress in the monastic life, God granted him the gift to work miracles. On account of this he received many who called upon him, including Samaritans whom he led to the Christian faith. Once there was a prostitute who, incited by Samaritans jealous that he had brought their people to Christ, came, dressed as a nun, to see the Saint. She tried to provoke him to sin by pretending to be suffering from an ache in her bosom which she wanted him to touch. He consented but in order to resist carnal temptation, he held his left hand in a flame as he did so. Seeing this, the woman repented, begged his forgiveness and prayers and later indeed became a nun. Desiring peace and quiet and to avoid such temptations, the Elder moved forty miles away to a more isolated cave. But he there fell into another temptation. He began to consider that he had become established in the virtues, and pride entered in. The devil, as always, seized an opportunity. A nobleman, who had a demon-possessed daughter, brought her to the Saint for healing. The Saint prayed and immediately delivered her. The girl's father, fearful that the demon would take possession of her again, left her and her young brother in a nearby cave. Eventually James, unsettled by his pride, was overcome by lust and he sinned with the girl. He then added sin to sin, afraid that his sin would be revealed, and murdered her and her brother. Then yet a third sin: he despaired completely of his salvation and decided to return to the world. However, he was saved by God's mercy. On his way he was met by a God-bearing elder who raised him up from his despair and brought him to hope in God's mercy. The repentant James came upon an old tomb, and took up his abode there, humbly beginning his life of prayer and struggle again. He was in time granted tears of repentance and spent ten years in this tomb, completely hidden and unknown to mankind, venturing forth only under cover of darkness to find some herbs to sustain him. To make manifest that his repentance had been accepted, God granted that the land in that region suffer from drought, and then revealed to the bishop of the nearest

city that only if James, who was hidden in his tomb, prayed would the drought end. The bishop and his flock sought out the Saint and begged him to pray for them. As soon as he prayed there came a heavy rain. From this sign the Saint received good hope that his sins had been forgiven, for God desires not the death of the sinner but that he should turn from his ways and live. Thereafter he added tears to his tears and advanced continuously in humility. Thus he commended his soul into the hands of God in peace at the age of seventy-five. St James lived in the sixth century, and his life gives us assurance that we should never despair of salvation even if we fall into the gravest of sins.

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## POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

*“SEVERAL PEOPLE seem to make the sign of the Cross in the wrong way. Could you say something to instruct them?” - D.M.C., Hounslow.*

THIS is an important matter. The sign of the Cross is a confession of our Faith and an expression of our prayer, and therefore it should not be made without care and attention or thoughtlessly, otherwise it becomes mere empty ritual and flapping about, beating the air, as St Paul would have called it (1 Cor. 9:26).

To make it one should join the tips of the thumb, index finger and the middle finger together. These three signify the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. The ring finger and the little finger you fold into the palm of your hand. These represent the two Natures of Christ, Divine and human. So, by holding the hand in this way you make confession of the two fundamental teachings of the Church, the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Word of God.

Then with the tips of the three joined digits, you touch the forehead, the stomach, the right shoulder and the left shoulder in

turn, and you make a bow, which may either be a slight one or a deep one. You should note that you touch the stomach, below the waist, and not the chest, because in making the sign of the Cross you are tracing the saving Cross of Christ over your body and committing yourself wholly to Him. If you are careless and simply touch the forehead, then the chest and shoulders, the cross depicted will be upside down, shorter below the side arms than above. This, a cross upside down, is considered to be a deliberate insult to the Cross of Christ, and therefore a joy to the evil spirits.

In making the sign over your body you are committing yourselves to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind (Luke 10:27) - wholly, completely. The bow is a prayer for help in doing this, for only with humility is prayer effectual.

Done with due reverence, the sign of the Cross is thus both a confession of our Faith and a prayer that, as we repeat in the litanies, we commend ourselves and one another and all our life unto Christ our God.

The sign of the Cross may be made in our services whenever glory or thanksgiving is given to God, or whenever a prayer or sentiment is particularly close to us, after each petition in the litanies, and before and after the Scriptural readings that we might be enlightened and not hearers of the word only. It should also be made when we enter the church, approach the holy icons or relics, and when you turn to leave church so that you leave with a blessing. You should not make the sign as you approach the chalice for Communion, lest you knock the chalice. At that point it is best to make the sign, if you wish to, before you ascend the ambon or when you are still some way from the chalice, and then approach with your hands folded across your breast to receive.

Also those chanting in the choir and those reading do not make the sign of the Cross when they are about their ministry, so as not to obscure what they are chanting or reading.

How often you made the sign of the Cross is, naturally, a matter of personal choice. Those who have made some progress in prayer often only cross themselves infrequently because they are in that way more able to remain still and attentive, but for those of us who are still at the toddler stage with regard to prayer it often helps to make it more often, as it helps attention to the words being read or chanted and helps us to participate in the services rather than just attending them.

In their daily lives, people may also make the sign of the Cross over people and things to bless them. In doing so they hold the fingers of the hand as they do when they sign themselves. Parents would thus sign their babies and children in bed with the Cross to protect them, when they send them off to school, etc. One can bless food or other things that you are going to use with the sign. But again it should be done with inner attention and prayer and not simply as a form or custom.

The priest, of course, when he blesses others, holds his hand differently. The index finger is held straight (I), the middle finger is held slightly curved (C), the thumb and the ring finger are held so that they cross each other (X), and the little finger is held curved (C). Thus, looked at from the side of the thumb, the fingers spell ICXC, the first and last letters in Greek of the name Jesus (IC) Christ (XC). This to indicate that He is bestowing His blessing.

I have mentioned that the sign should be made reverently and with attention and prayer, I should also perhaps mention that it should not therefore be made ostentatiously. All our movements in church should be made quietly, discreetly and reverently without drawing attention to ourselves or distracting others from their prayers, by what my Protestant mother would rather naughtily have called “bowing and scraping.”

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*“I AM WRITING this message to ask for spiritual guidance on a question which has been bothering me lately. It is con-*

*nected with singing during Divine Liturgy. My question is: which is more important - for the chanters to sing professionally or for them to sing with feeling and humbleness with good harmony although not singing some notes perfectly. Sorry for the stupid question but I hope to receive a patristic answer because I lack any knowledge about this matter and don't know where to look for information to read myself. - K.T., Bulgaria be email.*

RE: THE CHANTING in church. I cannot give you a "patristic" answer as I am not of that calibre, but I would say that the most important thing is that it should be prayerful and reverent.

We have only one monk here who can sing. Before he joined us, our Fr Sabbas did the best he could. One day we went to the Convent in the morning and in the evening we had a Vigil here. As we left the Convent, Mother Elisabeth wished us a good vigil. Fr Sabbas explained that as he was the choir, it would not be that beautiful, and she responded by telling him a story. She said that in an isolated part of Russia there had been a small monastery (I am not sure whether this was factual or just a parable, but there was truth in what she said). The monks there were poor singers and the services rather miserable from a musical point of view. One night when they were preparing for a Vigil, there was a tremendous storm, and then a coach arrived, because they had got stranded because of floods and winds. They asked to be put up. It turned out that the stranded people were professional church chanters on their way to give a concert somewhere, so the monks grabbed the opportunity and invited them to sing for the Vigil, which they gladly did in thanksgiving for the monks' hospitality. They had the most beautifully sung Vigil any of them could remember! It was magnificent. Afterwards when they had all retired to their beds and gone to sleep, the abbot was woken up by an Angel, who told him the Lord said that his monks should do the Vigil. He responded that they had had the Vigil and how beautiful it had been, a joy for them all. But the Angel insisted that that was not what the Lord wanted, beautiful singing, but their prayers, and

he insisted that he stir the monks up to return to the church and chant the Vigil as they usually did. It is a comfort to us here.

Unfortunately in our days, it seems that a growing number of Orthodox approach the services as if they were concerts, and seek out majestic services, fabulous choirs, gorgeous vestments, and the like, which seems to run contrary to the Angel's message in the story above and to the Saviour, Who seeks a broken and contrite heart and nowhere asks for a good performance.

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## NEWS from the Richmond Diocese of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece

### ***BAPTISM AT SAINT EDWARD'S***

ON SUNDAY, 23rd January / 5th February, the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, **Priest Nicolae Oancea** from Romania concelebrated the Divine Liturgy at Brookwood with the monastic clergy and **Fr Borislav Popov**. After the Liturgy, Fr Nicolae baptized **Maria**, the infant daughter of **Kujdesi Bytyci** and **Olivia Magdalena**, with **Georgiana Magdalena** taking on the responsibility of godmother. Maria is named after the All-holy Theotokos.

### ***BURIALS AT BROOKWOOD***

VERONIKA SOUSLOVA, a member of the congregation of the **Russian Orthodox Cathedral Parish, Ennismore Gardens, London**, was laid to rest in Saint Edward's Orthodox

Cemetery on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> / 23<sup>rd</sup> February, following the funeral service at the Cathedral. The graveside prayers were led by **Archpriests Maxim Nikolsky and Joseph Skinner**, and attended by a large number of the parishioners from the Cathedral, many of whom had come in a specially hired coach.

GEORGE FOUNDETHAKIS was laid to rest in St Edward's cemetery on Clean Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> / 27<sup>th</sup> February. The funeral was chanted by **Fr Stavros Solomou** of the **Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St Nicolas in Shepherd's Bush, West London**.

ON Clean Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> February / 2<sup>nd</sup> March, **Fathers Ioan Fodor and Grigore Daniel Pascu** (Romanian Patriarchate) chanted the funeral of **Emilia Malic**, and accompanied her to her grave in Saint Edward's Cemetery.

May George, Veronika and Emilia all find rest with the Saints and **Memory Eternal**. Remember them in your prayers.

## ***VISITORS***

Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February: Immediately after the Divine Liturgy on the feast day, **Surrey Heath Ramblers** unexpectedly arrived at the doors of the church. The forty people in the group were invited in and stayed about twenty minutes, asking questions about our worship, before continuing on their ramble.

## ***NEW ICONS FOR THE CHURCH***

ON THE DAY before the Great Feast of the Meeting in the Temple, two new icons for the church, each depicting four of the **Old Testament Righteous**, were delivered to the Aldershot depot from where we collected them. The icons were beautifully painted by the sisters of the **Convent of Saint Elizabeth of**

**Russia, Etna, California**, and are currently being framed by **Easels of Chobham**. The icon of **St Sabbas the Sanctified of Palestine**, which we mentioned in our last issue, has now been framed and placed in the church. Easels have also framed a new picture of **Her Majesty The Queen** which we have hung in the main hall, to replace the by now rather dated one that we had before the refurbishment there.



## **PRACTICAL TIP**

**RATHER** than a tip, a warning this month! Unless you are disabled, handicapped or live a considerable distance from the church, if you notice that your church attendance has levelled out at the Sunday Liturgy only, with perhaps the Vigil at Christmas and something more on Holy Friday and at Easter, then be aware that you are backing, perhaps even imperceptibly to yourself, towards the exit from Orthodoxy.



**BISHOP AMBROSE** will be coming to England for the Great Feast of the Annunciation. He will then visit Fr Christian Doucet's parish in Paris for Palm Sunday, returning to England for the rest of Great Week and Pascha. Details will be circulated in time.



“A **MONK** who is a glutton [rejoices] on Saturdays and Sundays. He counts beforehand the days till Pascha, and he prepares the food for it several days in advance. The slave of the belly calculates with what dishes he will celebrate the feast, but the servant of God considers with what spiritual gifts he may be enriched.”

**VEN. JOHN OF THE LADDER, + C. 649 A.D.**