

# FROM THE FATHERS

“O NEW and unheard of happening! He is stretched out upon a Cross, Who by His word *stretched out the heavens* (Es. 51:13). He is held fast in bonds, Who has *set the sand a bound for the sea* (Jer. 5:22). He is given gall to drink, Who has given us wells of honey. He is crowned with thorns, Who has crowned the earth with flowers. With a reed they struck His head, Who of old struck Egypt with ten plagues, and submerged the head of Pharaoh in the waves. That countenance was spat upon, at which the Cherubim dare not gaze. Yet, while suffering these things, He prayed for His tormentors, saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:34). He overcame evil with goodness.”

SAINT AMPHILOCHIUS OF ICONIUM, + C. 400 A.D.

“WE MUST then die to the devil, and live unto God; depart from evil doing, that we might rise again to righteousness. Let the past be buried, that a new life may rise up. And since, as Truth Itself tells us, *no man can serve two masters* (Matt. 6:24), let our master be the Lord, Who has lifted up the fallen to glory, not that other who has brought those who stood upright to ruin.”

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

“ *THE DOOR* for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house; and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third (3 Kings 6:8 - on the building of the Temple). The door to the middle chamber was on the right of the house because, when the Lord died on the Cross, one of the soldiers opened His side with a spear. And aptly, does it say, on the right hand of the house because the holy Church believes His right side was opened by the soldier. Here too the Evangelist used the appropriate word when instead of saying he struck or wounded His side, he said opened, that is to say, as it were a door of the middle side through which a path to heavenly things might be thrown open to us. Finally he added the following: *and forthwith there flowed forth blood and water*, i.e. water with which we are washed in Baptism, and blood with which we are consecrated in the holy Chalice. For it is through this door that we have a stairway to the middle storey and from the middle story to the third, because it is through faith and the mysteries of our Redeemer that we ascend from the present life of the Church to the repose of our souls after death, and then, come Judgment Day, from repose of our souls to the immortality of our bodies too, we shall penetrate, as it were to the third storey by a more lofty progress, and from this point on we shall live for ever in the great happiness of both, namely, of body and of soul.”

VEN. BEDE OF JARROW, + 735 A.D.

“ASCEND in your thoughts to Calvary, and realize how much your sins cost.... Is it possible that you will wound the head of the Lord again with the crown of thorns of our sins? Will you again nail Him on the Cross, pierce His side, and mock His long-suffering patience? Or did you not know that in sinning you participate in tormenting the Saviour and will share the fate of His tormentors? But if you cease your sins and repent, then you will share in the power of His death. Choose one or the other: either crucify Christ and perish eternally, or be crucified together with Christ and share eternal life with Him.”

SAINT THEOPHAN THE RECLUSE, + 1894 A.D.

# THE FAITH OF THE ROMAN CENTURION

*A Spiritual Talk by the Blessed & Ever-Memorable  
Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky)  
1863-1936 A.D.*

*“And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out and gave up the ghost, he said, ‘Truly, this man was the Son of God’.” (Mark 15:39).*

SO BEGAN the faith of the centurion. It is clear that this cry of Christ expressed a treasure of moral content in a spirit which the centurion comprehended. Such a connection between a tormenting cry of the soul and the beginning of a new grace-filled life in one who has heard it, is found repeatedly in the Holy Scriptures. We will begin a survey of these places in the Scriptures with the most dramatic one, found in the Book of Esdras:

“I lifted my eyes, and on my right hand I saw a woman, and behold, she was mourning and weeping with a loud voice, and was deeply grieved at heart, and her clothes were torn, and she had ashes upon her head. Then I dismissed the thoughts with which I had been engaged, and turned to her and said to her, ‘Why are you weeping? and why are you so grieved in heart?’ And she said to me, ‘Let me alone, my lord, so that I may weep for myself, and continue to mourn, for I am greatly embittered in spirit, and deeply distressed.’ I said to her, ‘What has happened to you? Tell me.’ And she said to me: ‘Your handmaid was barren, and had no child, though I lived with my husband thirty years. Every hour and every day during those thirty years I prayed to the Most High, night and day. And after thirty years God heard your handmaid, looked upon my lowliness, and considered my distress, and gave me a son. I rejoiced greatly over him; I and my husband and all my neighbours: and we gave great glory to the Mighty One. And I brought him up with much care.

So when he grew up, and I came to take a wife for him, I set a day for the marriage feast. But it came to pass that when my son entered his wedding chamber, he fell down and died. So all of us put out our lamps, and all my neighbours attempted to console me; I remained quiet until the evening of the second day. But when all of them had all ceased consoling me, encouraging me to be quiet, I rose up in the night, and fled, and I came to this field, as you see. And now I intend not to return to the city, but to stay here. I will neither eat nor drink, but will mourn and fast continually until I die.’ Then I broke off the reflections with which I was still occupied, and answered her in anger and said, ‘You most foolish of women, do you not see our mourning, and what has happened to us? For Sion, the mother of us all, is in deep grief, and great distress. It is most appropriate to mourn now, because we are all mourning; and to be sorrowful, because we are all sorrowing. You are sorrowing for one son, but we, the whole world, for our mother. Now ask the earth, and she will tell you that it is she who ought to mourn over so many who have come into being upon her. From the beginning, all have been born of her, and others will come; and, lo, almost all go to perdition, and a multitude of them will come to doom. Who then ought to mourn the more, she who lost so great a multitude; or you, who are grieving for one alone? But if you say to me, “My lamentation is not like the earth’s, for I have lost the fruit of my womb, which I brought forth in pain and bore in sorrow; but it is with the earth according to the way of the earth: the multitude that is now in it goes as it came;” then I say to you, “Just as you brought forth in sorrow; so the earth also has from the beginning given her fruit, that is mankind, to Him Who made her.” Now, therefore, keep your sorrow to yourself, and bear with a good courage that which has come upon you. For if you acknowledge the decree of God to be just, you will receive your son back in due time, and will be praised among women. Therefore go into the city to your husband.’ She said to me, ‘I will not do so; I will not go into the city, but I will die here.’ So I spake again to her, and said, ‘Do not do that, but let yourself be persuaded - for how many are the adversities of Sion? - and be consoled because of the sorrow of Jerusalem. For you see how our sanctuary has been laid waste, our altar thrown down, our temple destroyed; our harp has been laid on the ground, our song has been silenced, and our rejoicing is at an end; the light of our

lampstand has been put out, the ark of our covenant has been plundered, our holy things have been polluted, and the name by which we are called has been almost profaned; our children have suffered abuse, our priests have been burned to death, our Levites are gone into exile, our virgins have been defiled, our wives have been ravished; our righteous men have been carried off, our little ones have been cast out, our young men have been enslaved, and our strong men made powerless. And, worst of all, the seal of Sion has been deprived of its glory, and given over into the hands of those who hate us. Therefore, shake off your great sadness, and lay aside your many sorrows, so that the Mighty One may be merciful to you again, and the Most High may give you rest, a respite from your troubles.’ While I was talking to her, her face suddenly began to shine exceedingly; her countenance flashed like lightning, so that I was too frightened to approach her, and my heart was terrified. While I was wondering what this might be, she suddenly uttered a loud and fearful cry, so that the earth shook at the sound. When I looked up, the woman was no longer visible to me, but a city was being built, and a place of huge foundations appeared. I was afraid, and cried with a loud voice, and said, ‘Where is the angel Uriel, who came to me at first? For it was he who brought me into this overpowering bewilderment, and my end has become corruption, and my prayer a reproach.’ While I was speaking these words, the angel who had come to me at first came to me, and when he saw me, lying as one dead, deprived of my understanding, he grasped my right hand and strengthened me, and set me on my feet, and said unto me: ‘What ails you? And why are you so troubled? And why are your understanding and the thoughts of your mind troubled?’ I said, ‘It was because you abandoned me. I did as you directed, and went out into the field, and, lo, what I have seen I saw, and can still see, I am unable to express.’ He said to me, ‘Stand up like a man, and I will instruct you.’ ... ‘Therefore I beg you to give your servant an explanation of this bewildering vision.’ He answered me and said, ‘Listen to me, and I will teach you, and tell you about the things you fear; for the Most High has revealed many secrets to you. He has seen your righteous conduct, and that you have sorrowed continually for your people, and mourned greatly over Sion. This, therefore, is the meaning of the vision. The woman who appeared to you a little while ago, whom you saw mourning, and whom

you began to console - (you do not now see the likeness of a woman, but there appeared to you a city being built) - and who told you about the misfortune of her son - this is the interpretation: The woman, whom you saw is Sion, which you now behold as a city being built. And as for her telling you that she had been barren for thirty years: the reason is that there were three thousand years in the world before any offering was made in her. And after three thousand years Solomon built the city, and offered offerings; then it was that the barren woman bore a son. And as for her telling you that she brought him up with much care, that was the period of residence in Jerusalem. And as for her saying to you, "My son died as he entered his wedding chamber," and that misfortune had overtaken her: this was the destruction that befell Jerusalem. And so you saw her likeness, and how she mourned for her son, and you began to console her over what had happened. For now, the Most High, seeing that you are sincerely grieved and profoundly distressed for her, has shown you the brilliance of her glory, and the loveliness of her beauty. Therefore, I told you to remain in the field where no house had been built, for I knew that the Most High would reveal these things to you. Therefore I told you to go into the field, where there was no foundation of any building, because no work of man's construction could stand in a place where the city of the Most High was to be revealed. Therefore do not be afraid, and do not let your heart be terrified, but go in, and see the splendour and greatness of the building, as far as it is possible for your eyes to see it ..." (2 Esdras 9:38 - 10:55).

What was it that God's chosen ones, pre-eminently Christ the Saviour, were appealing to Him for when they uttered such a cry? For deliverance from death? The Apostle Paul gives an answer to this question:

"In the days of His flesh [Jesus] offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to Him Who was able to save him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence toward God" (Heb. 5:7).

This Divine crying out (Matt. 27:50) created a regenerative influence not only on the conscience of the centurion, but even on inanimate nature: "the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent" (Matt. 27:51). Moreover, "the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which

slept arose.” Such were the terrible, grace-filled last sufferings and death cry of Jesus Christ. This saving cry was foreshadowed by the suffering woman whom Esdras saw, and this mystical event is repeated again in the Apocalypse:

“And a sign was seen in the heavens: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars . . . and she brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations . . . her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God...” (Rev. 12:1, 5-6).

We clearly understand that in this vision, as in Esdras’ vision of the grieving woman, we find imaged the birth of the Son of God from the Most Holy Virgin, which birth, though painless, was foreordained for struggle and sufferings. Such is the factual aspect of this prophecy. This aspect is not, however, the main one and not the substance: it is only a concrete expression of a broader idea lying at the basis of these visions and prophecies. It is expressed in this broader sense in the farewell colloquy of the Lord Jesus Christ: “A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world” (John 16:21).

This is an exposition of the closing days before Christ’s sufferings and Resurrection, but more than that, it reveals that grace-filled law of spiritual life according to which a believer must suffer the torments of death, casting aside all the sinful content of the old man and opening himself to the acceptance of the new life of Grace. This experience, which is both martyric, and at the same time, a joyous expectation, is amazingly united in the souls of those who are saved, as is explained in the cited Scriptural visions. This is what comprises the dogma of redemption, the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection, contrary to the theory of the juridical sentence of the threatening Roman Catholic [and evangelical Protestant] god, for this transformation in a person’s heart takes place with the participation of Divine Grace.

All this is explained in detail in the book, *The Moral Idea of the Dogma of Redemption*, in which I strove to gather and explicate the main

places of Scripture which reveal this mystery. We return to them now, desiring in particular to comprehend and clarify the meaning of that Biblical cry which Saint John Chrysostom said signified, not merely suffering, but the active striving of the soul toward God.

Let us return to the maxims of the Scripture. This expression, “to cry out,” “to cry,” is met most frequently in the Psalms, the most elevated book of the Old Testament. Its superiority is understandable: man praying to God converses with Him and becomes a participant of the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4) as the prayer in the appendix of the Psalter declares, and in accord with the words of the Apostles Peter and Paul (compare 2 Peter 1:4 and Heb. 3:14; 6:4). This is why the greatest revelations are sent from God to His chosen ones mainly during prayer. The highest degree of the striving of the spirit in one praying is expressed in Scripture by such words as “to cry,” “to cry out,” “to lament.”

There are many passages about this in the Bible, just as there are about the Lord accepting into His heart such prayerful lamentations, even when a person has seemingly fallen into a hopeless situation.

The most literal meaning of the word notwithstanding, such a grace-filled cry or lamentation is sometimes expressed with no sound at all. Such was the prayer of Moses before the crossing of the Red Sea. Moses’ prayer was soundless, yet the Lord said to him, “Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward” (Ex. 14:15). Such was also the prayer of Prophetess Hannah, the mother of Prophet Samuel: “She spake in her heart: only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard” (1 Kings [Samuel] 1:13).

She later changed this to a thankful glorification of God, which entered the Divine Services among the eight Old Testament odes which comprise the eight daily key hymns (irmoi) of Matins. And so this mortal lamentation of the soul, later replaced by a triumphant doxology and thanksgiving, is like a foreshadowing or foretelling of that death lamentation of Christ on Golgotha, which was, after Christ’s Resurrection, seen to be the beginning of the resurrection “of many bodies of the saints which slept” (Matt. 27:52).

Now we can more clearly see how closely united are this seemingly despondent, prayerful death cry and the subsequent outpouring of Divine power - that foreshadowing of the resurrection which was revealed in the resurrection of many saints at the moment of Christ's death on the Cross. Many are the passages in the Psalms about the death cry of sufferers, and their salvation sent from God. We shall cite only some of them. Before us is the book of the Prophet Jonas. Here, in the whale's belly, he is near death but the cry of his departing soul unites with an unwavering faith in God's mercy and in His victory over death. Remarkable is the assuredness of salvation united in the heart of the prophet who is already departing from this earthly life: "And he said, 'In my affliction, I cried out to the Lord my God, and He heard me... For Thou hadst cast me into the deep of the seas; and the floods compassed me about. All Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of Thy sight; yet I shall look again toward Thy holy temple'" (Jonas 2:2-4).

The hymn of Prophet Jonas, like the songs of Sts Moses and Hannah, is repeated daily at Matins. It is especially worth remarking that Jonas, who is praying here, is not limited to a confession of personal feelings before God, but appeals to all mankind with instruction, comfort, and enlightenment: "They that observe vain and false things have abandoned mercy for themselves. But as for me, with the voice of praise and thanksgiving will I sacrifice unto Thee; whatsoever I have vowed for my salvation, I will pay unto Thee. My salvation is of the Lord" (vs 8-10). This is even more clearly and instructively presented to us when we read in the Psalms about a similar conversion from sin to repentance, from death to life of a whole nation, of a whole multitude. This conversion, this change or rebirth, is also expressed in and accompanied by a deathly cry. While testing one's own inner strength, such a lamentation, like that of even the Lord Himself, compels one to come to the help of the one crying out and to comfort him in his suffering.

Attend to the oft-repeated expressions in the Psalms: "They cried unto the Lord in their affliction, and out of their distresses He saved them" (106:19). And about the nation: "With labours was their heart was brought low; they waxed feeble, and there was none to help. And they cried unto the Lord in their affliction, and out of their distresses He saved them" (106:12-13; cf. 119; 137:3).

If the Lord does not respond immediately to a voice crying to Him, then man will come to despondency or grumble, but he pours out his lamentation again before God. Such is the content of Psalm 21 (cp. Ps. 87:2), and also the book of Job, who lamented over earthly injustice (19:7), and the other prophets who lamented about the same (Lam. 2:28). Thus did the Holy Scripture prepare the nation to understand the suffering pre-death cry of the Redeemer, and behold, the Roman centurion understood what Christ’s cry signified. It is not known whether he had read the cited passages of Holy Scripture, but it is clear that he understood the connection between the death cry of a righteous one and of heavenly help and salvation from God. We have already had occasion to write that this salvation is not the fate only of the most elevated Sufferer, but of those whom He places in His soul [compare words of Apostle Paul, “Death worketh in us, but life in you” (2 Cor. 4:12)].



## ON MONASTICISM

**By the Ever-Memorable Archbishop Averky  
of Jordanville**

*Continuation*

The third vow, which one entering the monastic life gives, is that of **obedience**. Such voluntary monastic obedience consists in the complete and free submission of the monk to the superior and to the Elder / spiritual father in all things, and in placing his full trust in him. **“In all his actions in his cell, and even in deciding about every drop of water that he wants to drink, a monk must be guided by the counsels of the Elders,”** says the venerable Antony. **Pride, or self-love**, which is the source of all the sinful passions, was the paramount unhealthy ailment of our souls at the time of the fall of our first parents.

In giving the vow of obedience and renouncing his own will, the monk by this means **cuts off evil at its very root**, and thereafter his struggle with the passions is significantly easier, for they are all only outgrowths of pride of self-love. The monk who lives in obedience flees the self-trust and self-opinion, which usually serve as the main causes of our mistakes in life, of frequent unhealthy lapses, disillusionments and of complete perdition.

According to the witness of the Holy Fathers, who were experienced in the spiritual life, he who does not live according to his will, but is guided in everything by the directions of his Elder, his spiritual father, such an one journeys on the true and undeviating path to the promised goal, because, the Lord Himself, as if rewarding his self-renunciation, will grant wisdom to the Elder and inspire him, precisely so that he might best minister unto the spiritual progress of the obedient one under his direction. **This is one of the hidden mysteries of the life in God of those people who have consecrated themselves to God.**

“When I was in the cœnobium,” Abba Dorotheus relates, “in everything I opened myself to the Elder, Abba John, and never did I decide to do anything without advice. It would happen that a thought would provoke me: What else can the Elder tell you? Why disturb him? But I would answer this thought: May you and your opinion be cursed, and your reasoning, and your sophistry, and your way of things, because that which you know, you know from the demons. And so I would go to ask the Elder, and it would happen that the Elder would give me the very same advice, as had come to my mind previously. Then the thought would say to me: See, that is exactly as I said to you; it was in vain that you disturbed the Elder! I would answer this thought: Now it is alright, now it comes from the Holy Spirit, but your advice was bad because it derived from the demons and from a **passionate disposition**. In this way, without asking counsel [of the Elder], I would never allow myself to pay attention to that thought. And believe me, brethren, that I abode in great peacefulness, in such a great lack of sorrow, that I even began to be disquieted when I heard that ‘it is with many afflictions that it behoves us to enter into the Kingdom of God,’ and I could not see any such affliction within me. Therefore I became fearful and was perplexed, not

comprehending the cause of this peacefulness, until at the last the Elder explained it to me, saying, **‘Do not be afflicted, for everyone, who gives himself over to the Fathers in obedience, is rewarded with this peacefulness and lack of sorrow.’**”

To clarify the importance of the vow of obedience as a means of overcoming sinful self-will, one must pay attention to what follows. Our nature is to such an extent damaged, maimed by sin, that we are unable properly to assess our own actions, our own conduct; one might conclusively say, that with regard to observing ourselves, as we really are, we are in fact completely blind. This is why in Great Lent we pray to God, as we were instructed by that great ascetic and knower of the heart of man, the Venerable Ephraim the Syrian; **“Grant me to see my own sins!”** We do not see our own sins with the clarity that is necessary for fruitful repentance; we are incapable of the necessary criticism when it comes to ourselves, to our own emotional stirrings, because we are blinded by the passions within ourselves. We even do not notice how our actions, which might even seem to us to derive from a pure idealistic inspiration, in actually spring up having some sort of secret passion or sinful inclination within. And when we accept this, we deceive ourselves; we lead ourselves astray, considering that we are doing a good deed, when in actuality, not only are we acting in accordance with some passion, but we are also nourishing it, and strengthening it within us, instead of rooting it out. Only an Elder, experienced in all the subtleties of the spiritual life, can dispassionately assess our actions, and our disposition, and give us good counsel, on what to do in this or that situation, and to such an one, for the sake of God, we entrust ourselves, revealing our whole soul to him and binding ourselves to him in full obedience. **“You saw one who had perished,”** says the same Abba Dorotheus, **“then know that he followed himself and not the counsel of the Fathers.”** A saying from the Book of Proverbs serves as the basis for the vow of obedience: **“Where no counsel is, the people fall; but in much counsel there is salvation”** (Proverbs 11:14), and in the Book of Deuteronomy, **“Ask thy father, and he will show thee; thine elders, and they will tell thee”** (32:7).

The Lord Jesus Christ serves as the highest example for imitation for all true obedient, for, according to the words of the Apostle, **“being**

**in the form of God... he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:6, 8), and He Himself says: “I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30).**

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



# **Book Review**

## ***ONE FLEW OVER THE ONION DOME***

***American Orthodox Converts, Retreads and Reverts***

**Fr. Joseph David Huneycutt**

**Regina Orthodox Press Inc.**

ISBN 1-928653-27-8, Softback, 144 pages, \$14.95

THIS BOOK is both a jolly good read, insightful, and in many ways helpful, but, at the same time, something of a disappointment. Perhaps first I should explain the terminology in the subtitle. “Converts” is self-explanatory; “Retreads” is the term Fr Joseph uses for clergymen from other denominations who convert to Orthodoxy; and “Reverts” are those brought up as Orthodox, who subsequently lapse or apostatise and then later return to Orthodoxy. Fr Joseph also uses the term “Cradles” for those who were brought up in an Orthodox home and have, so far, remained Orthodox.

Immediately, a problem arises because these headings are not in reality clear-cut divisions, and not everyone in each grouping is the same. It is a broad-brush generalization, undoubtedly a necessary one, but the reader should bear that in mind. To give him his due, Fr Joseph humbly acknowledges this himself as he draws his book to its conclusion.

The book is primarily addressed to the situation in America, and, it appears, to Southerners in particular, although it is also relevant to the

contemporary situation of the Church in this country. However, not being American, the present reviewer found the style at times difficult to comprehend. No serious Orthodox Christian can have any objection to humour, but the persistent humour, jokeyness, folksiness and glibness in this book, becomes rather tedious, as well as, on many occasions, obscuring valuable things he has to say. I, several times, had the thought that perhaps it would have been better presented as an audio-cassette, so that one could better catch the nuances in Fr Joseph's expressions.

Much of the book is anecdotal, and a large part evidently springs from Fr Joseph's own experiences in converting to Orthodoxy and in his priestly ministry within the Orthodox Church. One sees the issues that he and others have faced: the, perhaps, inevitable hurts that occur between Cradles and Converts. Those hurts may be minor or catastrophic, and Fr Joseph is an excellent diagnostician. But, though this in itself is of great value, his book contains very little that would contribute to healing.

What there is in this regard is often superficial, worldly wise, and slick. One is reminded of the advice given by Polonius in Shakespeare's "Hamlet." One would have wished for a deeper drawing on the teachings of the Fathers and their wisdom.

His approach can be spiritually dangerous, I feel. May I draw the attention of your readers to one point, out of the many that I could have chosen? I have taken this one because it could be said to refer exactly to your situation in Brookwood, and so may interest your readers.

Fr Joseph writes: *Given the plethora of Orthodox jurisdictions in America, it's easy for Converts to move to another Orthodox community. Sometimes this may be best for all involved; but when clergy do it, it's a whole different story. In most cases, this is done through Canonical norms. Yet some Retreads, viewing themselves as St Mark of Ephesus, leave their bishop for perceived greener pastures. Upon leaving their rightful bishop for another, "more correct," one, these Retreads (especially if they bring a group in with them) are often hailed by their new jurisdiction as heroes of the Faith. "Ah! Look at the great sacrifice they have made!" But remember, obedience is better than sacrifice. The God-pleasing reasons for clergy to abandon their bishop are few, grave, and rare* (pages 7-72).

Superficially, there is a lot of value in this paragraph, but, like so many other things in the book, it also contains slippery statements that could be utterly misleading. Let us look at it more closely. Are most clergy transfers done through canonical norms? Sadly, I think not. Why does Fr Joseph limit this practice to Retreads? Others jurisdiction jump as well. These two points just indicate some sloppiness in his handling of the issue, but are essentially of no great import. But then, he adds, “viewing themselves as St Mark of Ephesus” and “leave their bishop for perceived greener pastures.” Here the ground is slipperier. First of all, he appears to lump together those who change jurisdiction for some perceived gain, with those who do so on some perceived issue of confession of Faith. This is unfair. Secondly, with regard to the latter, whether they be correct or mistaken in making their move, how many indeed consider themselves to be like St Mark of Ephesus? I would suspect a very tiny minority of seriously deluded souls. Most whether their concerns are well-based or not, more probably consider themselves as falling well short of St Mark, and are only concerned to do what they believe (rightly or wrongly) to be the right course. But mud has been slung, and some will stick. Yes, those who take a group from one jurisdiction to another are often hailed as heroes, sometimes wrongly. But it is not always the case that they are unjustly praised. More mud slung. “More correct” is also a slippery epithet. It has a connotation of presumption, but what indeed if the new Bishop is more correct, - in the best sense, - in holding fast to the Faith? “Obedience is better than sacrifice” - a biblical reference to the Lord’s instruction to the Prophet Samuel. Can one gainsay it? No - it is from the Lord Himself. But it does have to be applied appropriately. Is obedience to what is wrong better than sacrifice? The Biblical context itself makes clear that it is a obedience to the voice of the Lord which is better than sacrifice, not just any and every obedience. And at the end of the last sentence here, Fr Joseph directs us to a footnote at the end of the book, which refers us to Apostolic Canon 31, and its interpretation by St Nikodemos and St Agapios. Here we have something more solid, but it is woefully inadequate, and tucked away in a footnote could go unnoticed. If one is going to bring up the *God-pleasing reasons for clergy to abandon their bishop*, then one needs also to explain them in some detail. One could go through much of the book justly criticizing it in this way.

It is so easy to criticise, and much of the work seems to lack the “taste” of Orthodoxy, but we must also add that there are shafts of wisdom here that are helpful, and I particularly warmed to Fr Joseph’s last two chapters on the priesthood, and on his home life of prayer with his wife and children.

Looking through the footnotes, one notices that less than a handful refer to teachings of the Fathers and the Saints. Many more look to secondary sources. This also is characteristic of the main text of the book. Fr Joseph has insightfully pointed out many of the problems that face us in contemporary Orthodox life, which like the world around us, is quite suddenly becoming “multi-cultural.” He has done a great service in drawing these problems to our attention, and will doubtless help many, who will see from his book that they are not alone in facing these problems. Further, his book is, as I said in my opening remarks, a jolly good read, and well worth reading, but it disappoints in largely failing to offer the healing balm of the teaching of the Fathers to the ills which it so perceptively highlights. S.F.A.

\* \* \* \* \*

# **Friends of Woking Community Hospital**

## **Annual Spring Market**

**Saturday, 21st May between 9.30 am & 11.30 am.**  
**Woking Community Hospital, Heathside Road, Woking.**

The Admission and Car Park are *free*.

There will be a Plant Sale in the Car Park, and inside the Hospital there will be more stalls with a variety of goods on sale, including cakes, books, a Grand Raffle & Tombola.

HELP US HELP PATIENTS & STAFF AT THE WOKING COMMUNITY HOSPITAL SUPPORT THIS VALUABLE WOKING ASSET & BECOME A “FRIEND” FOR £5. pa

\* \* \* \* \*

# THE COMING MONTH

APRIL is crowned this year with the holiest days in the Church Year, **Holy Week**, more properly called **Great Week** or **Passion Week**, and **Pascha** itself, with the joyous services in the week that follows, which is variously called **Bright Week** or **New Week**.

In contemporary church life, here in the Orthodox diaspora in the West, these very celebrations bring in their wake two difficulties. One is that, because of the pressures of modern life, the beautiful services of both weeks are largely observed by non-observance. Many, who try to be conscientious, make special efforts at least to attend the services of the last three days of Passion Week, which is commendable. But some simply turn up for Pascha night. But what is the Resurrection without the Passion, the Crucifixion, and the Burial of our Saviour? It is meaningless. For this reason, although Pascha falls in this month, this year we have included quotes from the Fathers (above) about the Passion and its significance for us. Even if one lives far from a church, one should try to read some of the Passion Week services at home, in readiness for Pascha, to pray alongside the Church, so that one might celebrate with her on the greatest of her festivals.

The second sad modern phenomenon is a trivialisation of the festival. One thinks of the great homilies of the Fathers which expounded the spiritual depth of these celebrations. Now there is so little teaching, simply vapid exhortations to rejoice, to remember what Pascha was like in some long-lost homeland, to make merry. But real rejoicing consists not in wearing fine cloths, in exchanging greetings, in singing, in foods and partying, but, as the name **New Week** indicates, in renewal of the heart. The other things may well be expressions of that inner renewal, and can well be enjoyed as such, but sadly in our times they often seem to replace it altogether. People will fast for the 48 days for Great Lent and Passion Week, only to “celebrate” Pascha by over-indulging or even getting drunk. This indicates not true joy in the arising of Christ and therefore the hope we express in the last phrase of the Symbol of Faith, but rather our being taken captive by the passions, and our attachment to the “good things” of this life.

Among the Saints in April, we have great Saints such as St George, and St Mark the Evangelist, and:-

**Saint Maximian, the Patriarch of Constantinople** (21st April / 4th May) is one of those little known saints, who nonetheless provided a great service to the Church. He was born into a well-to-do patrician family in Rome, but like many in the period when Constantinople was gaining ascendancy, while Old Rome was troubled with disorders and barbarian invasions, he moved to the Imperial City. There he used his wealth to honour the holy martyrs and he was subsequently ordained priest by the Patriarch, St Sisinius. However, when St Sisinius died, the Patriarchal Throne was filled by Nestorius, who shortly thereafter began spreading his infamous heretical doctrine. Even though he was just a priest, Maximian withstood the Patriarch's wrong-doing, upholding the Orthodox Faith. When at the Council of Ephesus, Nestorius was deposed, Maximian was unanimously chosen to be Patriarch. He was already an old man, and only guided the Church two and a half years, before reposing in peace, but St Cyril of Alexandria attributed the restoration of peace within the stricken Church of Constantinople to the prayers and pastoral wisdom of this holy man.



## **POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE**

*“DURING THE LITURGY (at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Faithful), the deacon (or priest) orders the catechumens to leave the church (“Let all catechumens depart. Let none that are catechumens remain...”) When St. Innocent of Alaska was in Alaska, he was told to enforce that (exceptions could be made if it was deemed expedient) (see Afonsky, Bishop Gregory. A History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska (1794-1917). St. Herman’s Theological Seminary. Kodiak, Alaska. 1977. or Garrett, Paul D. St. Innocent, Apostle to America. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press. Yonkers, New York. 1979. It was in one of these sources: I came across this when researching for a paper.) Why is that not enforced today?” - N.L., U.S.A.*

... REGARDING WHY, in many churches, catechumens are not expected to leave the church at their dismissal: Here at Brookwood we do indeed exclude the catechumens at that point, and make them go out into the narthex for the rest of the Liturgy. I suspect that there are various factors at play here. First maybe the situation - some churches do not have a narthex to put the catechumens in. It is odd but churches are built with the proper separation between the sanctuary and the nave, but they often neglect the separation between the nave and the narthex. Then remember that perhaps for centuries (especially in the Russian Church) there were hardly any catechumens, and so they probably forgot how to do it. Nowadays it could be for any number of reasons, including some bad ones (laxity, for instance, or ecumenical sensitivity), but it is primarily a pastoral matter and so I suspect that it very much left to the pastor in each parish.

Here our practice is rather odd because we allow the non-Orthodox to stay, simply because we think that if we threw them out they would probably be turned off Orthodoxy, but we expel the catechumens, because by then they have had some training, they know the issues, they are "under starters' orders," and I think it is a constant reminder for them that they are as yet seeking entry into the Church.

On Mount Athos in some monasteries they will not allow any non-Os to attend services and in some monasteries they will not even permit them to enter the church (a R.C. visitor to Athos once asked me about this), but their situation on the Holy Mountain is different, - they are not living in a heterodox world and their primary work is not overtly missionary, - and so they use a different pastoral economy.

*“IN ALL THE BOOKS is says that the Prayer of St Ephraim is said in all the services in Lent, but it has not been used at all in our parish. Is there a reason for this?” - S.D., Leicestershire*

THIS IS REALLY a question you should address to your priest. I cannot possibly know what goes on in your parish, but the thought occurs to me that perhaps it is because you only go to church on Sundays, and

never on weekdays. Of course, here in Britain, it seems that it is only the Cathedral parishes and the monastic communities that are likely to have daily services, and so maybe this is all you can do in any case. However, the Prayer of Saint Ephraim is used in all of the lenten services that we chant from Monday to Friday within the Great Fast, and, in fact, on the Wednesday and Friday services in Cheesefare Week. It is also used on the first three weekdays in Holy Week. It is not used on Saturdays and Sundays. Having said that, bear in mind that the Vespers on Sunday evening is a service beginning the Monday service cycle, and the Prayer is used at the end of that service. Your question does point up one of the sad things about the practice of Orthodoxy here in the diaspora. In fact, the vast majority of Orthodox Christians in our times never attend a lenten service, and so their observance of the fast is often confined only to the food fasting, and whatever efforts they make on their own at home. This, in turn, means that we should make every effort that we can in our prayer life within the home and with the family.



# NEWS SECTION

## *REPOSE OF ARCHIMANDRITE PANTELEIMON*

ARCHIMANDRITE PANTELEIMON (Koulouris), of the **Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Aghia Sophia in Bayswater**, recently reposed in the Lord. He was a native of the island of Cephallonia, and graduated from the Theological School at Chalki. After serving for periods in Germany, Austria and France, in 1968 he was appointed to the Greek Cathedral in London, where he served for almost forty years, and where he subsequently became dean. He was known for his great pastoral care. He also had a strong chanting voice. Many years ago, he chanted a funeral here at Brookwood, and did so completely by heart. His last years were clouded by illness and he was no longer able to serve, but even in old age and weakened by illness he showed love for his people. Within the last

year, he attended at Divine Liturgy at the Convent of the Annunciation, intending afterwards to join the family of a beloved friend at his grave side for a pannikhida, but unfortunately en route to the cemetery at Pinner he had a severe heart attack, and we had to stop and call an ambulance and he was admitted to hospital. On 14th March, his own funeral service was chanted at Aghia Sophia. **His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira** officiated, assisted by eleven priests and a deacon. The service was conducted in Greek and English, and the Archbishop himself read the Gospel in both languages. At the end, **George Kozobolis** who had cared for Father Panteleimon in his declining years gave a personal memorial address in Greek, which Father Alexis was asked to read in an English translation. Archbishop Gregorios then preached a spirited and heartfelt homily. After the service, in the crypt below, refreshments were offered to the mourners, who almost filled the Cathedral Church. Fr Panteleimon was then taken to Cephallonia to be laid to rest in his native land. *May his rest be with the Saints and his Memory Eternal!*

### ***RETIREMENT OF FR MILUN KOSTIC***

PROTOPRESBYTER-STAVROPHORE **Milun Kostic**, of the **Serbian Orthodox Church of Saint Sava**, in Ladbroke Grove, London, announced his retirement as rector of the parish just before Great Lent. For many years Fr Milun has been a friend and supporter of our community, as the Serbian Orthodox Cemetery lies alongside our own here at Brookwood. After his retirement Fr Milun was intending to spend the greater part of Lent and the paschal period in his native Serbia, but he will return to live in London during May. We wish him and his presbytera, Dobrila, a long and happy retirement, while being sure that this will not be the end of his ministry in the Church, his priestly offices and pastoral experience will doubtless be called upon many times again.



# SÍR-UK NEWS

## **BISHOP SOFRONIE'S VISIT & A BAPTISM AT BROOKWOOD**

ON THE SUNDAY of the Holy Cross, 14th / 27th March, **His Grace, Bishop Sofronie of Suceava** celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Brookwood. Arriving, as is his custom, while we were chanting Mattins, he nonetheless presided over **the veneration of the Holy Cross** at the end of that service, giving his blessing to the many Orthodox Christians who came to venerate the Cross when it was brought forth. Never before, at Brookwood, have we had so many at this ceremony, and the choir had to repeat the appointed verses many times. During the Divine Liturgy itself, His Grace was assisted by the Brotherhood clergy, and at the end he preached to the many Romanian faithful who had gathered to be with their beloved Archpastor. After the Liturgy he celebrated **the Baptism of Sara**, the infant daughter of **Daniel and Daniela Vraciu** of Welwyn Garden City. The sponsors were **Ioan and Geanina Turcu**. After the Baptism and Chrismation, His Grace read the churching prayers for Daniela and her daughter, and the newly illumined Sara was, for the first time, imparted the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Bishop then stayed in the church for some time, not having taken any refreshment, to hear the confessions of several of the Romanian faithful. The day was physically a tiring one, all the services together lasting for the Brotherhood about seven hours, but the relatively frequent visits we now have from Bishop Ambrose and Bishop Sofronie, because of their evident pastoral care and love, leave us with a joyous feeling of spiritual uplift, for which we are truly grateful. Our thanks are also due to those who prepared such an ample Parish Breakfast for all who attended, given the numbers here, that was quite a feat. By the time you receive this issue, we should, D.V., have had a visit from **Bishop Ambrose**, and His Grace will be with us at Brookwood again for the Holy Unction Service on Wednesday of Holy Week, for the Agape Vespers on the Day of Pascha itself, and for the Liturgy on Bright Monday - *see calendar insert*.

## *NEW CATECHUMEN*

ON THE SUNDAY of St John Climacus, 21st March / 3rd April, **Peter Bartlett** was enrolled as a catechumen at the end of the Divine Liturgy at Saint Edward's. We have so many Peters named after the Holy Apostle, that we agreed to draw lots for his name, and from eight choices, the **Righteous Deacon Peter of Rome**, the disciple of St Gregory the Great (feast day; 12th / 25th March) was drawn. Through his prayers, may the Gospel of Righteousness be revealed unto the newly enlisted Peter, and in due time may he be granted the illumination of Holy Baptism.

## *VISITORS*

DR. JONATHAN CONLIN of **Southampton University** brought a group of about thirty of his students to see the Church and Exhibition Room on Wednesday 23rd March. One student, who was an Evangelical Christian, rather perceptively remarked that the church evoked a feeling of reverence which she found missing in her denomination.

VAL PRETLOVE came on 25th March, with a group of 26 people from the "**Friends of City Churches**" to see Brookwood Cemetery, and during their visit, they also came to Saint Edward's Church and were offered refreshments in the Brotherhood's Old Mortuary building.

## *VOLUNTEERS*

OUR THANKS to **Peter Bartlett of Chertsey**, who, during the fast, has volunteered to come in each time we have a Presanctified Liturgy and prepare the breakfast afterwards for us - and very nice it has been too! Thanks also to his wife, **Valerie**, who ships the foods in for us.

On Saturday, 2nd April, **Oana Roxana Amarie, Elena Amarie & Anca Ellena Iliescu** came and did a **thorough Spring Clean** in the Old Mortuary building, cleaning parts which had hitherto never seen a mop, or sponge or cloth. We are extremely grateful for all they did, although there was perhaps one drawback in all this good work - we suspect that dozens of species of micro-organisms which had formerly thrived there are now facing extinction!

# PRACTICAL TIP

LAST MONTH, we mentioned some of the practical matters about death and dying, so we have decided this month to mention some matters concerning birth. First of all, there are prayers which expectant mothers can say, for the wellbeing of their unborn babies and the safe delivery of their babies. If you do not have these prayers, then ask at the church for them. Also during pregnancy, mothers are advised to partake of the Holy Mysteries as often as possible. They are not required to fast strictly while carrying or breast-feeding a baby. If the mother unfortunately has a miscarriage, there are prayers which should be read by her priest for her. It is customary as the birth approaches, to pray to Saint Elevation (feast day: 15th December) for a safe delivery. If at birth the baby is in mortal danger and the priest cannot be contacted, any Orthodox Christian may baptise the baby. Ask your priest about this beforehand, but do not call in a clergyman of some other denomination. If the baby then lives, in due time it is taken to church and the priest completes the rites. However, if it should die, even though it was baptized by a layman, it dies as an Orthodox Christian. In any case, the priest should be called on the day of the birth to read prayers for the mother and child. He comes again on the eighth day in order to read prayers to name the baby, and the best practice is that the baby is given the name of a Saint. Although of course, it is advisable to avoid names which might seem outlandish, you should choose the Saint rather than the name, so read the lives of the Saints you are considering, and pray about it first. Until the fortieth day, the mother does not come to church, but is given a period of rest, then on the fortieth day, she should bring the baby to the church, to have the churching prayers read, and from then on she may attend the church services regularly. Among many Orthodox the baby is baptized before the fortieth day, so the parents are not present, thus emphasizing that the baby is being given a new birth and into a new family, not a worldly one but the heavenly one, the Orthodox Church. A boy baby will require one male sponsor or godparent, and a girl one female sponsor. You can have more than one. Before choosing the godparents, parents should discuss their choice with the priest, so that he may advise them. The sponsors must be Orthodox Christians of good standing and capable of taking responsibility that the child is brought up in the Orthodox Faith. With certain limitations one can have family members as sponsors, but it is a good idea to have other people from the congregation, so that bonds of love between members of the worshipping community are strengthened, and we do not all live each in our nuclear family huddles. One must also be prepared to allow the sponsors to exercise their commitment as godparents, and thus, to some extent, “interfere” in family life. Perhaps this too is an assault on our modern isolated nuclear family huddles, but if so, it is nonetheless a good thing.