



Christ is Risen!

Truly, He is Risen!

We greet all our friends and readers on the holy days of the Passion of Our Saviour and His Resurrection from the dead and His triumph over death, hoping that you may all know something of the joy of the victory He has won for us.

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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 *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 by goodness.

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

As Pascha falls very near the end of the Church month of April this year, on Sunday 22nd, and most of the month falls within Great Lent and Great Week, our emphasis this month will be on the Passion.

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THE IMMORTAL MEAL

By Archbishop Innocent of Cherson
1800-1857 A.D.

Come, ye faithful, let us raise our minds on high and enjoy the Master's supper and the immortal meal in the upper room...

Irmos of the Ninth Ode of the Canon for Holy Thursday.

AT LAST the holy Church has a spiritual meal and feast! For a long time the preparation and the fast has extended; after which we have both food and drink uncommon! For a worldly meal or supper satisfy us and delight us for a while, and then often burden us and always give place to a renewed hunger. Here, whoever tastes worthily of the *immortal meal* does not hunger unto the ages. For our Master, in that He loves mankind, cannot bear to see His servants an hungered. He knows that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, and so at the end of the course of the fast, He Himself prepares a feast: *the Master's supper and the immortal meal*. Besides granting peace to, and encouraging, those that hunger, this supper serves as the His farewell, Who laid it on. For it was necessary for Him to leave all and to go on a long journey; it was necessary for Him to be apart and not for a short time. How was He to share the last minutes with those close to Him, with His friends and His associates? How could He not leave something to them in His memory? All the more reason for us to hasten to this festive meal! *Come and enjoy!* Let us all come to this supper, for although it is said, *raise our minds on high*, this is not said as an impediment, because what is presented at the supper is in its very

nature exalted, so that he who is prostrate will not be able to touch what is offered with his lips. And besides there are no special stipulations. It says only, *faithful*. Without faith how could one come here, where without faith it is impossible to take one step. But is it hard to have faith where the Master and Lord of all rules and where, for this reason, omnipotence is in operation? Then abandon all fear and perplexity, ascend to the upper room, and let he who can *enjoy*; let him who is incapable of this, at the very least, look upon what is set forth there, who receives and how, and what follows from what is offered and received?

When even was come, He reclined [at table] with the twelve disciples (Matt. 26:20). Thus Saint Matthew begins his record of the Lord's festive meal. It is known in what circumstances it was held; it was required by the law on this day to eat the paschal lamb in memory of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Thus one might say that this meal was prepared already by Moses, through his law concerning the Passover; but the Lord imbued it with another meaning and name, making immortal that which was mortal. In what way? - Let us see.

Now, let us turn our attention to who sat at that meal. *He reclined [at table] with the twelve*. This means that, for all of us, our Apostle, Saint Andrew the First-Called, sat there, he to whom our country is indebted for the first preaching of Christ [*This refers to the fact that St Andrew preached in regions which were subsequently incorporated into the Russian Empire, and by tradition reached the site of the future city of Kiev, and Archbishop Innocent was, of course, addressing Russians - ed.*].* In his person, all of us as it were reclined at the Lord's table of immortality.

But if *He reclined there with the twelve*, it means Judas was also there. How could he be accepted at that table? In just the same way that even now all unrepentant sinners are allowed at it, manifesting the abundance of the kindheartedness and generosity of the Master of the household, and as a demonstration of the fact that, while we are yet on the earth, this possibility is open to all. At the heavenly Supper, there will only be the wise virgins; but here the doors are not even shut to even the most foolish.

The betrayer also received, like the other Apostles, but for him that participation brought about a contrary effect, in the very same way as the one and the same light of the sun is light and a comfort for one with healthy vision, but for one sick there is a great darkness and it is a torment.

How then did that supper begin? After a long journey it was fitting that the feet of those who had come to the supper be washed. What prompted this? There was no servant there. It would have been for him to do this, but who? The one who was the least, and who was the least? The future eagles of theology were still only fledglings. Instead of the humility which they would later manifest before the face of the whole world, there now arose a contention: who was the greater? Maybe on account of this contention they would abandon the whole idea. No, it was not abandoned. The Master of the household Himself made up that which was lacking in the children of the house.

He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded (Jn 13:4-5). Everyone obeyed; only Peter objected: *Thou shalt never wash my feet!* In vain! Had he earlier taken the towel and washed the feet of the Teacher and his fellow disciples, then again he would have heard: *Blessed art thou, Simon, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father, Which is in the heavens (Matt. 16:17).* But now, although a praiseworthy feeling is expressed in his words, these words arose from that same flesh and blood, and still were unable to inherit the Kingdom of God. For this reason it was said now, and not earlier or at some other time: *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.*

Now there was no further hindrance. Now the feast began that joy might be manifest!

And it has begun. The lamb is consumed, the bitter herbs tasted, the unleavened bread eaten, the cup of thanksgiving is drained, the old covenant is fulfilled.

All that which was mortal has been eaten a thousand times [*i.e. the Old Testament Passover - ed.*] and not once was a soul satisfied. Where then was the Immortal Meal? Where the hospitality of the Master?

Do not lose interest or be afraid! He Who fed the five thousand with five loaves, the Same will also feed us. If He receives even those who are not invited, how much the more will He not turn away those who are invited. *Come, ye faithful, let us enjoy!*

As they (the disciples) were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take and eat, this is My Body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of it; for This is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:6-28).

So, mark what we will be treated to: not bread, but the Body; not wine, but Blood! *This is Body; this is Blood* - and whose body and blood? That of our Saviour - ***My Body, My Blood.***

Whoever could hold to this belief, were it not for the fact that He Himself told of it, were it not that the Apostles heard it from His Person? But how are we to use this food?

How our Master loves us! Seeing that all meals end in decay and do not make us immortal, He brought in the victuals and drink of immortality. They could only be composed of the Flesh and Blood which, alone in the whole world, were not subject to dissolution, but, on the contrary, had the power to give life, and He did not grudge either His Body or His Blood, but offered them at the Supper; He offered them not to His disciples only, but in their persons to all peoples.

The first to receive for us was St Andrew,* but he did so that the same might faithfully be handed down to each of us. And to whom did he not hand it down? Let everyone come, to every church Repast, which is that same Body and that very same Blood, of which the Apostles partook.

But how should we approach this table? How should we taste the Body? How drink the Blood? This is not in our nature. Our Founder knew this and had concern for our weakness.

What is eaten is Body, but its appearance is of bread; what is drunk is Blood, but its appearance and taste is of wine. Thus, it is that, in condescending to our nature, each time not one but two miracles are worked: the bread and the wine are transformed into the Body and Blood, and those Things which have been transformed maintain their former appearance, so that, in this way, there is a place, on our part, for faith.

In truth, that one may delight at this table, it is not fitting to have a base mind. For this it is fitting that with the mind one should fly to the heights of the Saviour's love for us, Who laid down His life for us.

But it is not learning which, in this instance, gives us such exaltation of mind, but faith: *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established* (Esaias 7:9).

Thus let us be believing, approaching the table of the Body and Blood; let our mind not descend into a gully, questioning, *How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?* (John 6:52), or, like the heretics, doubting that under the appearance of bread and wine the Body and Blood might be concealed.

With man this is impossible, but with our Saviour, Who is God and man, *all things are possible*. Furthermore, it would have been unworthy of Him to offer bread alone or wine alone, for everyone of us can do that a hundred times. For Him, as God, something greater was fitting, and He did the very greatest thing, for greater love hath no one than He Who layeth down His life for His beloved. Amen.

Editor's footnote: *For us in the British Isles, we might in a like spirit say that the holy Apostle Simon the Zealot "was the first to receive for us." He preached in Britain and, according to some early accounts, suffered martyrdom here, possibly at Caistor in Lincolnshire. His feast day is 10th / 23rd May.*



A POSITION PAPER PUBLISHED BY OUR SISTER CHURCH IN BULGARIA,
WHICH CONTAINS SOME EXTREMELY INSTRUCTIVE POINTS:

THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL POSITION OF THE OLD CALENDAR ORTHODOX CHURCH OF BULGARIA

FUNDAMENTAL TENETS

The ecclesiological identity of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria is based upon the following fundamental tenets of Orthodox ecclesiology:

- The main criterion for membership in the Church of Christ is the “correct and salvific confession of Faith” (St. Maximus the Confessor)¹, the true and correct Faith (St. Gregory Palamas)².
- This criterion, or principle, applies both to every single individual, with regard to the Church, and to the local Churches, with regard to the Catholic Church.
- The Catholicity³ of the Church of Christ is Her qualitative, not quantitative characteristic; it is Her ontological attribute, revealing the integrity and the completeness of the Truth preached by Her. Therefore, the Catholicity of the Church does not depend on the number of Her members, on Her territorial and geographic scale or on any other empirical conditions.
- The Catholic Church cannot be identified with one particular church, nor can She be regarded, as is the case with Roman Catholic ecclesiology, as a sum of all the local Churches constituting the Œcumenical Church (i.e. the globally distributed Church, from a geographic point of view). What defines the Church as Catholic is the confession of the Orthodox Faith. Moreover, the “Catholic Church (καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία)

Herself is the correct and salvific confession of Faith” (St. Maximus the Confessor)⁴. Consequently, “the correct and salvific confession of Faith” in God (i.e., Orthodoxy) is the ontological foundation of Catholicity as a characteristic of the Church, and it is exactly in this confession that church communion, as communion with Christ and in Christ, is achieved. Church communion attests to unity in Christ precisely through this communion *with* and *in* the Catholic Church, and does so to the utmost extent. However, of itself, church communion is not a condition for unity with the Catholic Church. Communion is a manifestation of unity, and not a means for attaining it. Unity with the Catholic Church is determined not by communion, but by “the correct and salvific confession of Faith.”

- Hence, abiding in the Orthodox Faith and its protection is not simply a matter of ideological conviction and abstract dogmatic debate, but a question of supreme existential significance. The Fathers, who fearlessly confessed and defended the Orthodox Faith, did so on behalf of the Catholic Church and in the name of Her real existence: “For the sake of the Catholic and Apostolic Church” (καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν) “the Apostles, and in their turn the Holy Fathers, teachers, and martyrs sacrificed themselves, in deed and word, in struggle and sweat, with suffering and blood, and finally with their remarkable deaths” (St. Maximus the Confessor)⁵.

It follows from the aforementioned that everybody who confesses the Orthodox Faith is a member of the Catholic Church (or joined to Her) and is in communion with Her, whereas whosoever preaches a doctrine incompatible with Orthodox doctrine separates himself from the Catholic Church and communion with Her. This is valid for individuals and entire ecclesiastical organizations alike, even if they continue to function institutionally as Churches and to call themselves Churches. “Those who do not belong to the Truth do not belong to the Church of Christ, either; and all the more so if they speak falsely of themselves by calling themselves, or are called by each other, holy pastors and hierarchs; because it has been instilled in us that Christianity is characterized not by persons, but by truth and exactitude of Faith” (St. Gregory Palamas)⁶.

THE NAME

The name “Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria” does not exactly reveal its ecclesiological nature. It follows an established tradition. The ethnic definition “Bulgarian” reflects the historically established institutional structuring of the local Churches according to the criteria of ethnicity (subsequently nationality) and state, which gradually replaced the old territorial structuring of local Churches within the multi-ethnic Roman Empire. The term “Orthodox” is identical with the term “Catholic”. Its widespread use in relation to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church has existed since the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. The term “Old Calendar” denotes a distinctive feature of the prevailing liturgical practice of the Church, which was employed from the seventh century up until the 1920s by all local Churches without exception, in concord with the Paschalion and the calendar system of the Great Indiction. Although inaccurate from a strictly ecclesiastical point of view, additional denotations of the Church have appeared at various times in history. It is well known that the Catholic (Orthodox) Church was first called “Eastern” in contrast to the Western Church, i.e., the Roman Catholic Church. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Russian Orthodox Church was called “Greek Russian”, “Eastern Orthodox” and even “The Russian Church of the Greek Rite.” Besides, depending on the political and legal circumstances in the different countries, some local Church structures received various additional denotations because of emerging church issues. For example, since 1996, in Estonia two local Orthodox Churches have existed simultaneously within so-called official Orthodoxy. One is called the “Estonian Orthodox Church,” and is a self-governing local Church under the Moscow Patriarchate. The other is the “Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church,” an autonomous local Church under the Patriarchate of Constantinople. A number of clergy and lay people who left the Estonian Church’s jurisdiction under the Moscow Patriarchate belong to it.

THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF APOSTASY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Modern ecclesiological heresies corrupt the very concept of the Church. Ecumenism, as a theological concept, organized social movement and religious practice, is such a heresy. Many spirit-bearing Orthodox hierarchs and theologians of the preceding twentieth century defined it as heresy in its essence. One of the major steps in the attempt to implement the ecumenical idea of uniting “divided Christians” and reconstructing the “undivided Church” was the church calendar reform in a number of local Orthodox churches during the twentieth century. It should be noted, however, that as a multi-stage, infiltrative heresy, ecumenism defies exhaustive and accurate definition, since, unlike the ancient heresies, it does not seek to find clear and consistent doctrinal expression by claiming to be accepted conciliarly or pose as a truth of the Faith formulated by the consciousness of the Church. On the one hand, for the time being, few are those hierarchs, clerics and theologians who simultaneously consider themselves Orthodox and profess ecumenism in its most extreme forms of inter-religious syncretism, or in its “pure” form of ecclesiological heresy, claiming that, owing to the divisions among Christians, the one visible Church of Christ no longer exists and, therefore, has to be recreated in the womb of the ecumenical movement. On the other hand, ecumenism continues to coalesce with official Orthodoxy. The official Orthodox episcopate is responsible for this phenomenon, demonstrating a crafty political and diplomatic attitude towards the process, categorically refusing to condemn ecumenism as a multi-stage, multi-faceted ecclesiological heresy, albeit it is nonetheless indisputably so in its true nature. In this context, the exit of the Bulgarian Patriarchate from the World Council of Churches in 1998, unfortunately, proved to be only a tactic with a certain ecclesio-political purpose, and not a step determined by a reëvaluation of its attitude towards ecumenism rendered in principle.

Another phenomenon with an ecclesiological dimension is so-called Sergianism, which in the unprecedented circumstances of the persecution of the Church in the former Soviet Union surrendered an out-

wardly proper church institution to the Bolsheviks so that, in their hands, it could become a tool in a fierce battle against the Church Herself, as representing the fullness of the Truth of Christ. In fact, Sergianism is not simply a characteristically Russian phenomenon. It also embraced the local Orthodox churches in the countries of Eastern Europe, where, after World War II, communist régimes were established. Both in the Soviet Union and in these countries, the essence of Sergianism manifested itself in the (self-) delusion that deception could be used as a means to help Truth “survive,” and that collaboration with the enemies of the Church was the way to “protect” Her. In practice, the logical consequence was just the opposite—the episcopate adopting this position became a tool in the hands of the communist atheists, who schemed to achieve full control over the Church, to the end of Her moral and spiritual enfeeblement and with a view to Her ultimate annihilation, which they intended. More specifically, the ecclesiological aspect of Sergianism comes down to distorting the concept of “canonicity.” In the Sergianist context, canonicity is unnaturally torn away from the Spirit and the Truth of canonical tradition and turns into formal adherence to the norm, which can be used to vindicate any act of lawlessness committed by the governing episcopate. Ultimately, canonicity degenerates into a managerial technique for the subordination of the people of the Church to that episcopate, regardless of the direction in which it leads them. In other words, as Archpriest Michael Polsky, an eyewitness to the cruel persecutions and the perfidious fight against the Russian Church in the 1920s, writes, “Metropolitan Sergius and his bishops differ from the Renovationists in that they keep to the canons at all costs and safeguard them more than anything else. They (the Sergianists) do not disregard the canons, as do the Renovationists. But there arises a gross discrepancy. When the Renovationists lied, slandered, or deceived, that was bad because they were not canonical. However, when Metropolitan Sergius slandered and lied, this was considered good, since he was canonical. It turns out that to him who is canonical, everything is allowed. This mocks the canons and morality alike by distorting their meaning.”⁷ After the collapse of the totalitarian régimes towards the end of the twentieth century, under the new conditions of political freedom, Sergianism was preserved as a legacy of the

past and, at the same time, was transformed. Having long incorporated unscrupulousness, deception and pathological servility to those in positions of authority into its inner nature, it not only continues to betray the Church—now no longer for fear of reprisals but for the sake of mercenary motives—but has also started to sell Her freedom, under the guise of “canonicity,” in exchange for gaining the friendship of the powers that be, with the ensuing material benefits and prestigious social status. In this modified form, today Sergianism (as neo-Sergianism or post-Sergianism) affects a large part of the episcopate of the official local Churches around the world.

Once phenomena such as ecumenism and Sergianism become systematic and universal, even when they do not seek a clear doctrinal expression but penetrate and spread into the body of the Church in a “creeping” manner—that is, once they have been actively adopted or passively allowed by all Bishops of one or more local Churches—then the essence of the struggle against these phenomena comes down to the termination of ecclesiastical communion with those bishops who instill heresy in the Church in a conciliar manner, either by preaching it or by contributing to its dissemination through their passivity and silence (see Canon 15 of the First-Second Synod of Constantinople).

THE CONCEPTS OF “OFFICIAL ORTHODOXY” AND “OFFICIAL LOCAL CHURCHES”

These concepts have an idiosyncratic ecclesiological substance and reveal the specifics of the processes of apostasy in the contemporary Orthodox world. Orthodoxy is *sui generis* and does not need further clarification by any additional denotations. The need to add one or another modifier to the term “Orthodoxy” has arisen because of the replacement of its original and authentic substance under pressure from ecumenist and Sergianist mentalities, from liberalism, relativism and other apostatic phenomena. The meaning of the concept of “official Orthodoxy” is closely connected with the meaning of the concept of “official Church” and “official local Churches,” respectively. “Official Orthodoxy” is the peculiar

ideology of the “official local Churches.” It represents an increasingly diluted, pluralistic Orthodoxy, which is gradually tearing itself away from its spiritual identity and increasingly becoming a surrogate for authentic Orthodoxy, without reforming it abruptly or defiantly. The main distinctive feature of official Orthodoxy is its Sergianist conjuncture; i.e., its collaborative adjustment to the realities of our time, with a view towards accommodating various political and ecclesiastical courses: outwardly as an expression of the catholic consciousness of the Church, but in essence, as a situational strategy, with terminology or behaviour typical of the corporate mentality. For example, official Orthodoxy may resound with loud ecumenical tones; and contrariwise, at times, the prevalent tone may be that of traditionalist rhetoric. Moreover, as already mentioned, “official Orthodoxy” never takes a clear, principled, conciliar stand on the nature of ecumenism as the ecclesiological heresy with which it is entwined, inasmuch as the majority of the supporters and propagators of this heresy still avoid designating it wholly openly and clearly as an article of their religious creed. In official Orthodoxy, the connection between announcements and intentions, between speaking and believing, between words and conscience fades out, becomes debased in a Jesuitical manner, and in this sense is severed. Thus, for example, in a private conversation a bishop might dissociate himself from some official deed of his—from a public statement or from a document he has signed containing views contrary to Orthodoxy, i.e., heretical views—but that same bishop chooses not to do this publicly since it is at variance with official church policy.

What does the term “official Church” mean? It is what the Russian catacomb believers called the Church recognized by the Soviet régime (and completely dependent on it), headed by Metropolitan (and later Patriarch) Sergius Stragorodsky († 1943). The terms “Official Church” or “official local Churches” refer to the known, historically formed local Churches whose hierarchical leadership officially accepts, advances or authorizes ecumenism as a theological concept and religious practice, uses conciliar deception on sundry occasions, hides under the cloak of “canonicity” as understood in the spirit of Sergianism, and adopts other forms of apostasy from Orthodoxy. In brief, the term “official Churches”

extends to the known, historically formed local Churches which are in a state of apostasy—a process that has been coördinated or permitted to develop conciliarly by the episcopate.

..... to be completed in our next issue.

FOOTNOTES:

1. See “The Life and Struggle of Our Venerable Father Maximus the Confessor,” PG 90, 93D. Cf. “Letter to John the Chamberlain,” PG 91, 461BC.
2. “Refutation of the Letter of Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch,” Codex Coislianus 99, f. 144a, cited by George Mantzarides, “Περὶ θεώσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Μυστηριακὸς καὶ ἐκκλησιολογικὸς χαρακτῆρ τῆς θεώσεως” (Concerning the deification of man: The myste-riological and ecclesiological nature of deification), in Παλαμικά (Thessalonike: Ekdoseis P. Pournara, 1998), pp. 197 -198 .
3. From the ancient Greek adjective καθολικός—“universal;” since the 3rd century, the word has been used to mean “all-embracing,” “comprehensive,” “global.” As far back as the end of the first century, καθολικός was used in the language of Christians with a specific meaning, denoting a fundamental feature of the Church of Christ.
4. See “The Life and Struggle of Our Venerable Father Maximus,” PG 90, 93D.
5. “From a Letter Written in Rome,” PG 91, 140AB.
6. “Refutation of the Letter of Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch,” Codex Coislianus 99, f. 144a, cited by Mantzarides, “Περὶ θεώσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Μυστηριακὸς καὶ ἐκκλησιολογικὸς χαρακτῆρ τῆς θεώσεως,” pp. 197-198 .
7. Польский, Михаил протопресвитер. Положение Церкви в Советской России, очерк бежавшего из России священника. Параклит, 2004, с. 83. Available from: <http://paraklit.org/knigi/Ispovednicheskye/Polskoj.pdf>



“AMONG US this food is called the Eucharist; of which no one is allowed to partake but one who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the forgiveness of sins and unto regeneration, and who is living as Christ taught us. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, took both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise we have been taught, that the food which is consecrated by the prayer of His word, and by which our own flesh and blood by transmutation is nourished, is the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus Who became flesh.”

HOLY MARTYR JUSTIN THE PHILOSOPHER, + 165 A.D.

The Coming Month

THE HOLIEST DAYS in the Church Year, those commemorating the Passion and Resurrection from the dead of our Saviour, fall in April. The celebrations begin with Lazarus Saturday on 27th April n.s, followed by Palm Sunday, which leads us into the Great Week of the Saviour's Passion (see calendar insert for details). In addition to referring you again to the English translation of *The Lenten Triodion* and essay therein entitled *The Meaning of the Great Fast* written by the then Archimandrite Kallistos, now the Metropolitan of Diokleia, one can only repeat the Apostolic injunction: *Come and see* (John 1:47).

In contemporary practice, Easter Week itself, properly called **Renewal** or **New Week** or, in the Slavic practice, **Bright Week**, is much neglected in parishes in the diaspora. Throughout the week all the doors of the iconostas are left wide open, showing that through the Resurrection paradise has been opened to us. Properly the services are celebrated every day exactly as they are on the Day of Pascha itself, and even for Vespers the priests wear the full liturgical set of vestments, indicating that this whole week is the one day of the Resurrection, during which we are renewed in Christ. An ancient canon prescribes that the faithful should receive the Holy Mysteries on every day in this week. Sadly in fact, for the majority of contemporary Orthodox Christians in the diaspora, their celebration of the Lord's Pascha comes to something of an abrupt end in the early hours of the Sunday morning.

The Friday of New Week is kept also as a celebration of **the Mother of God of the Life-Giving Spring**. The Mother of God is hymned as the Life-Giving Spring, for, in His human nature, Our Saviour, the Living Water, sprang forth from her. But outside of Constantinople there is an actual healing spring which also bears this name and is dedicated to her. Before he became Emperor, Leo the Great, encountered a blind man there, who being tormented with thirst asked him to help him find water.

Leo felt compassion for him and went in search of a source of water but found none. Disappointed in his search and attempts to help this poor man, he heard a voice telling him there was water nearby. He looked again, and found none. Then he heard the voice again, this time calling him “Emperor” and telling him that he would find muddy water in the densely wooded place nearby; he was to take some water and anoint the blind man’s eyes with it. When he had done this, the blind man received his sight. After Leo became Emperor, as the most holy Theotokos had prophesied on this occasion, for it was she who spoke to him, he raised up a church over the spring, whose waters worked many healings and cured maladies by the grace of the Theotokos; from this, it came to be called the “Life-giving Spring.” After the Turkish conquest of the Imperial City, this church was razed to the ground and the materials from it were used for building the mosque of Sultan Bayezid. Nothing remained of that church’s ancient beauty, except for a small chapel, almost completely buried in the ruins. This chapel had twenty-five steps going down into it, and a transom window on the roof, wherefrom it received a little light. Toward the western side of the chapel was the aforementioned holy Spring. Such was the condition of the Spring until 1821. Then even that little remnant was destroyed, occasioned by the uprising of the Greeks against Ottoman rule; the sacred Spring was buried with it and disappeared altogether. In the days of Sultan Mahmud, permission was sought by the Orthodox Christian community to rebuild at least part of the chapel. Thus the work was begun in 1833. The foundations of the ancient church were found, and another new church was constructed upon the foundations of the ancient one. In 1835, the Œcumenical Patriarch Constantine II, serving the Liturgy together with twelve hierarchs and a great company of clergy, as well as a boundless multitude of Christians, performed the consecration of this sacred church and dedicated it to the glory of the Mother of God. On 6th September, 1955, it was desecrated and destroyed again by the Moslem Turks; it has been restored again, but not to its former magnificence, but nonetheless throughout the whole world Orthodox Christians celebrate the feast of this holy place and the many miracles that have occurred there down the centuries, and they are still able to obtain healing waters from the spring.

This year we also have the feast of the **Holy Great Martyr and Trophy-Bearer George** in New Week. It falls on the Monday. Services for these commemorations will be chanted with the paschal hymns.

Among the other saints we celebrate in April, though earlier in the month, we have **Saint Martin the Confessor, the Pope of Rome** (13th / 26th - the Russians have him on the 14th). He was a native of Tuscany, and received a fine education. Being numbered among the clergy of the Roman Church, after the death of Pope Theodore I (642-649), Martin was chosen to succeed him. At this time the peace of the Church was disturbed by the Monothelite heresy (the false doctrine that in Christ there is only one will). The Emperor Constans (641-668) and Patriarch Paul of Constantinople (641-654) were promoting the Monothelite heresy as a kind of “ecumenical” compromise between the Orthodox and the Monophysites (Copts and Armenians) largely for political purposes. The Emperor even published the heretical statement, the *Typos*, which was made obligatory for all the people. The *Typos* was sent to Rome in the year 649. In response, St Martin convened the Lateran Council at Rome to condemn the Monothelite heresy and sent a letter to Patriarch Paul, persuading him to return to the Orthodox confession of faith. The enraged Emperor ordered the military commander Olympius to bring St Martin to trial. But Olympius feared the clergy and the people of Rome who had descended upon the Council, and he sent a soldier to murder the holy hierarch. When the assassin approached St Martin, he was blinded. The terrified Olympius fled to Sicily and was soon killed in battle. In 654 the Emperor sent another military commander, Theodore, to Rome. He accused St Martin of being in secret correspondence with the enemies of the Empire, the Saracens, and of blaspheming the Most Holy Theotokos, and of uncanonically assuming the papal throne. Despite the proofs offered by the Roman clergy and laity of St Martin’s innocence, the military commander Theodore with a detachment of soldiers seized him by night and took him to the island of Naxos in the Aegean Sea. St Martin spent an entire year on this almost unpopulated island, suffering deprivation and abuse from the guards. Then they sent the exhausted confessor to Constantinople for trial. They carried the sick man on a stretcher, but the judges callously ordered him to stand up and answer their ques-

tions. The soldiers propped up the saint. False witnesses came forward slandering the saint and the judges did not even bother to hear the saint's defense. In sorrow he said, "The Lord knows what a great kindness you would show me if you would deliver me quickly over to death." After such a trial they brought the saint out in tattered clothes to a jeering crowd. They shouted, "Anathema to Pope Martin!" But those who knew the holy Pope was suffering unjustly, withdrew in tears. Finally the sentence was announced: St Martin was to be deposed from his rank and executed. They bound the half-naked saint with chains and dragged him to prison, where they locked him up with thieves. These were more merciful to the saint than the heretics. When the Patriarch Paul, who was himself approaching death, was told of the trial of St Martin. He turned away and said, "Woe is me! This is another cause of judgment for me." He asked that St Martin's torments be stopped. The Emperor again sent a notary and other persons to the saint in prison to interrogate him. The saint answered, "Even if they cripple me, I will not have relations with the Church of Constantinople while it remains in its evil doctrines." The torturers were astonished at the confessor's boldness, and they commuted his death sentence to exile at Cherson in the Crimea. There the saint died, exhausted by sickness, hunger and deprivations on 16th September, A.D. 655. He was buried outside the city in the Blachernae church of the Most Holy Theotokos, and later the relics of the holy confessor Martin were transferred to Rome. The Monothelite heresy itself was condemned at the Holy and Sixth Œcumenical Council in A.D. 680.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

"WHEN you read the newsletter you will see that I am starting a Healing Service in the New Year, is Healing something that the Orthodox Church would do in a church or is it done privately?" - Rev. M.C., Devon.

WELL, our concept of the Church is as of a hospital, and so we see the whole ministry of the Church as a ministry of healing. Naturally we also have special healing services. The sick are commemorated in a special petition in our Liturgies, there are short services to be said at the bedside of sick persons,

confession is a ministration of healing and the priest is seen in this instance as a physician (although of course he is also a patient), partaking of Holy Communion is unto healing after proper preparation, and we have the Mysterion of Holy Oil which is administered to the seriously ill, and in many churches also served annually on the Wednesday of Great Week - two days before Good Friday, so that all those parishioners who have prepared by coming to confession may be anointed. They first have to come to confession because there can be no real healing without repentance. There are miraculous headings as well - through the prayers of the saints and of saintly people living among us now. And there are also, of course, our private prayers for each other and for ourselves. What we avoid is anything that might seem “charismatic” in the wrong sense of that word - having people come up and be “healed” demonstratively at rallies and crusades, etc.



NEWS SECTION

INAUGURATION MASS FOR POPE FRANCIS I & ENTHRONEMENT OF THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

THESE TWO CEREMONIES took place within days of each other, and Orthodox leaders participated in both events. That as a matter of courtesy greetings were extended to the new Pope and Archbishop is understandable, and people of goodwill can only hope that some good may ensue from these changes of leadership. However, as is now to be expected, the participation of the Orthodox went far beyond what pertains to faithfulness to our own teaching. Even though throughout the papal inauguration, the Pope’s claim to universal jurisdiction and headship of the Church was reiterated time and again, the **Œcumenical Patriarch, Bartholomeos I**, attended the papal ceremony in person. This has been widely reported as the first time an Œcumenical Patriarch has attended the Enthronement or Inauguration of a new Pope since the Great Schism of 1054. In fact, as **Dr. George Demacopoulos of Fordham University** has pointed out, it is more than probable this is the first time ever that this has happened.

Perhaps a personal recollection can best show how these events deeply confuse the faithful. In a conversation with a member of the Greek Church in this country after the enthronement of **Archbishop Justin Welby**, they expressed joy and pride that their Archbishop had attended the ceremony, and then added with even more pride that he alone among the Orthodox there had read a prayer during the service. They went on to say that they had not liked the sight of the young African men dancing in front of the Archbishop, singing an African hymn *Gbeh Kpa Kpa Ba* (A New Beginning). This they thought was inappropriate for the installation of an Archbishop in England. One suspects that this was merely an expression of a rather dated conservatism, rather than having any racist connotations. However, what confusion there is here! According to their own statistics, far more than half the Anglicans in the world live in Africa, and one suspects than very many more in “the West” are of African descent. It would appear then that it was entirely proper that there should be some African dimension to the enthronement of the Archbishop, who is *a unique focus for Anglican unity*. Whether the particular display was entirely appropriate in an Anglican Cathedral is, of course, a matter for Anglicans, and not for us, to comment on. Had it happened in an Orthodox Church it would have been a scandal to the faithful, but we must allow that Anglicans have values other than our own. But that an Orthodox Archbishop should join in prayer at such a ceremony is clearly against the teachings of the Church which he was manifestly representing. One suspects that the joy and pride which our Greek friend expressed was more firmly founded on nationalism - that one of their kind had been accepted into the Establishment - than on Church tradition.

MOSCOW CHURCH BUILDING PROGRAMME CAUSING DISSENT

ANNA VASIELEVA of *Kommersant-Dengi* reports that “the Russian Orthodox Church is going full-speed ahead with its plan to build 200 new churches in Moscow, despite complaints from non-believers and members of other religious groups... Patriarch Kirill announced in the summer of 2010 that the Russian Orthodox Church would need to build at least 200 new churches... Many see the realization of the 200 Churches Programme as the ideological expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church; even some Orthodox believers are disturbed by it. Most disgruntled of all by this programme are people who live in the districts where the new churches are being built or will be built. In

principle, they are not against this sort of construction, but they say that more thought should be put into choosing the sites - parks and squares should be left untouched. Meanwhile, many Muscovites cannot understand why new Orthodox churches have to be built at all. They say that the churches near them are largely deserted, even during important Orthodox holidays. In their opinion, it would be far more logical for the Russian Orthodox Church to spend its money on shelters for the homeless... The trickiest aspect of implementing the 200 Churches Programme is the privileged position that municipal authorities have accorded the interests of the Orthodox Church. Despite statements to the effect that Moscow is a multi-denominational city, other religious groups have few churches of their own. The [Roman] Catholic Church has two churches and 12 parishes. The Jewish faith has five synagogues; Muslims have four mosques and Lutherans have three churches." People of other faiths are reported as being dissatisfied, and "the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia has informed the municipal authorities many times of the need to build several more synagogues in addition to the existing five. No new synagogues are being built, even though Russian President Vladimir Putin opened the world's largest museum of Jewish history in 2012."

PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH'S PASTORAL LETTER

HIS BEATITUDE, the newly elected **Patriarch of Antioch, John X**, has published an extensive pastoral letter for his flock. It includes sections on Preaching, Responsible Priesthood, Love and Pastoral Work, and the Dialogue of Religions. Much of it is well worth our attention, but it is in this last section that his most worrying and controversial views are expressed, in that he calls for full sacramental union with the Monophysites. He writes; "We, as Antiochians, are aware of the painful wound inflicted on the body of Christ by the schism between the believers." *Here he appears to consider those outside the Church, who accept only three of the Œcumenical Councils, as somehow a schism **with-in** the Church.* He continues: "This has led the Antiochian Church to participate actively for decades in every dialogue to remove the obstacles which block the way to restoring the unity of the Christian world. We will always be faithful to the policy of my predecessors. I insist on the importance of maintaining the absolute respect between the Churches ignoring any arrogance, anathematizing, and schismatization." *One wonders why he places arrogance, which is indeed a sin against love, on the same level as anathematizing which is an expression*

of love and one employed by the Fathers. “I am deeply convinced that Orthodoxy; which is the basis of every interaction between us and other Churches, is a unifying factor not a divisive one. I am also convinced that adhering to it is the right way. With love and humility, we strengthen the common factors that bind us all together. There will undoubtedly be differences, not in essentials, and this a source of propitious diversity. This shall be considered a richness to us, and not a deviation of our adherence to Christ.” *Does this not depend on what those differences are? His lack of clarity here is misleading.* “Therefore, **we hope to accomplish all steps towards a full sacramental unity with our brethren in the Eastern non-Chalcedonian Churches,** [*emphasis ours - it seems too that this is to be pursued without the participation of the other Orthodox Churches*] based on what we have agreed upon in Chambesy [*agreements which numerous Orthodox theologians have pointed out are deeply flawed*] as a positive result of a long and extensive dialogue. If we realize this, we should be able to show that we have offered a living example of the credibility of our endeavours to achieve unity and to witness to our loyalty to the Lord. On this occasion, we also affirm that we will continue all dialogues now taking place between the different Eastern and Western Churches, seeking to show our unlimited readiness to show the face of the bride, that is the Church. In this respect, we should affirm the importance of the living witness which we as Christians should show by living the love we carry to the whole world in the name of Jesus Christ. We call for consultation among ourselves as Christian Churches, about the different issues raised by the modern world, emphasizing the issues that unite us and constitute our common denominators. [*“Issues,” but no mention of matters of Faith*] These common denominators can be offered to the man of today as a consolation from the Lord.” [*This sadly appears simply to be nothing but new-speak*]. ***Our comments throughout in italics.***

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SIR-UK NEWS

SPRING SAINT EDWARD'S DAY

THIS YEAR, as the Spring feast of **Saint Edward the Martyr** coincided with the Roman Catholic Easter, we thought that we would have a rather quieter celebration than usual, especially as some of our less committed members had taken vacations. However, it was not to be. For the Vigil we were joined by

people from both the Russian parishes in London. It was a delight to see how well behaved the small children they brought with them were. On the morning of the feast, we had the Hours and Divine Liturgy, followed by the Lesser Blessing of Waters, after which we blessed the new font given to our church (see below). For this the church was packed, our own people being joined by many others from other churches and parishes. After the Divine services we had the usual parish buffet-style breakfast in the Old Mortuary hall. Our thanks to all who contributed in various ways (but especially by joining us in prayer) to the celebration of this feast, and to all those of you who from near and far sent us greetings. *God bless you all through Saint Edward's prayers.*

GIFT OF A NEW FONT

SOON after arriving at Brookwood in 1982, we had to baptise twin babies and had no font. Having neither time nor opportunity to do any better, we bought a large brass container, which was being sold as a log basket, and in the event it has served us for thirty years. Recently though we have been given a new purpose-made font, manufactured in Suceava in Moldavia. It is stainless steel and light-weight, and decorated with Christian symbols, though without any of the synthetic ostentation of many church products. **Ciprian & Nina Toma, and Constantin & Elena Ungarianu and their families** made this valuable gift to our Brotherhood and arranged for transportation from Romania, and we owe them a debt of gratitude. On the feast of the Martyrdom of St Edward, Sunday 18th / 31st March, when the Lesser Blessing of Waters was served, we blessed the new font with the newly blessed waters.

VISIT OF FATHER DEACON NIKOLAI PETROV

FATHER **Deacon Nikolai Petrov** and the **Reader Stoiko** from Sofia visited us and stayed with us over the weekend of Judgment Sunday (25th February / 10th March). They are clergymen of our Sister Church in Bulgaria, under the spiritual guidance of **His Grace, Bishop Photii of Triaditsa**. Fr Nikolai, who is the brother-in-law of our **Subdeacon Borislav Popov**, served with us at the Saturday evening Vespers and the Sunday Liturgy, intoning his litanies in both Church Slavonic and Greek. He very kindly brought us some beeswax candles from Bulgaria and a beautiful book, *Serdica is My Rome*, which is published with parallel Bulgarian and English texts. (*Serdica* is an ancient name of

Sofia, and the book is about the classical and rich Christian heritage of the city). After the Divine Liturgy, at our buffet-breakfast, Fr Nikolai took the opportunity to talk to the Bulgarian members of our congregation about church life.

VISITORS

THE Merrist Wood Garden Study Group, led by **Valerie Wild**, about twenty people in all, paid an unexpected visit to Saint Edward's Church on Wednesday, 13th March. They were shown around the church and given an opportunity to ask questions.

Alexey Koloydenko and a small group of Russian and Macedonian parishioners from the **Church of the Dormition on Harvard Road, West London**, visited on Thursday, 28th March. They chanted an Akathist before the reliquary of **Saint John of Shanghai the Wonderworker**. They then joined us for our evening meal, kindly bringing some things themselves, and stayed on for Compline in the evening with us.

PRACTICAL TIP

THIS MAY SEEM like advice from a sourpuss, but before we come to Easter be aware of dangers. We have fasted for seven weeks and at Pascha naturally we break the fast, but this should not mean that we just cast away any spiritual profit we may have gained in keeping the fast. Nor does it mean that, as often happens, we then think we have done our bit for a while, and to a greater or lesser extent abandon our prayer life, our spiritual reading, our church-going and all concern for our spiritual life. We have four major fasts throughout the Church Year. Ideally - and we probably do not reach that ideal, but should strive to do so - these should be steps on a ladder of ascent, and not, as so often happens in reality, periods when in the spiritual life we make some small effort to change from stop to go.

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“DO NOT regard the Eucharistic elements as ordinary bread and wine: they are in fact the Body and Blood of the Lord, as He Himself has declared. Whatever your senses tell you, be strong in faith.”

SAINT CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, + 386 A.D.