



Christ is Risen!
Truly, He is Risen!



FROM THE FATHERS

“ADAM was heedless as the guardian of Paradise, for the crafty thief stealthily entered. Leaving aside the fruit - which most men would covet - he stole instead the garden’s inhabitant! Adam’s Lord came out to seek him. He entered Hades and found him there, and led him and brought him out to set him once more in Paradise.”

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

THE ISRAELITES kept the Passover when they came out of Egypt. Pascha, the Passover, which we are now keeping ... is enacted in the soul, which comes out from the spiritual Egypt, that is, from sin. When the soul passes over from sin to virtue, then it celebrates the Passover of the Lord.”

VEN. DOROTHEUS OF GAZA, SIXTH CENTURY

“WE ARE MEMBERS of one Body, we have one Head, we are steeped in the one Grace, we live on the one Bread, we tread the same Path, we dwell in the same House. In short, all that we are, in all the hope and faith in which we now stand as we strive for the future, is one in the spirit and body of the Lord; and if we break away from this unity, we are nothing.”

SAINT PAULINUS OF NOLA, + 431 A.D.



Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece

Protocol no. γ-1883

***Encyclical
To the Entire Church***

*“Today the Grace of the Holy Spirit hath gathered us together,
and we all take up Thy Cross saying: Blessed is He
Who cometh in the name of the Lord.”*

Much beloved children in the Lord,

On this day precisely, ninety years are completed since the imposition of the calendar innovation in the Orthodox Church of Greece. March 10th, the second Sunday of the Fast was named March 23rd through an encyclical of the Archbishop of Athens at that time, Chrysostomos Papadopoulos. The pious people of our Fatherland thenceforth were divided into those who adopted the calendar reform (“New Calendarists”) and those who remained faithful to the Patristic Traditions (“Old Calendarists”) namely the True Orthodox Christians. There followed various persecutions against the people of God to compel them to accept the innova-

tion. But one year later during the Vigil of the Orthodox for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in the chapel of St. John the Theologian in Hymettos, at midnight the bright Cross of the Lord appeared. This appearance is the divine confirmation of the correctness of our Holy Struggle. During the suffering of the Genuine Church of Christ that followed: the persecutions, imprisonments, stripping of clergymen, exiles of bishops, demolishing of churches etc. The remembrance of this great miracle of the third appearance of the Holy Cross was a support and a fount of power for the Genuine Orthodox.

Today, this froward day of the imposition of the calendar innovation coincides with the Veneration of the Cross. This fortunate coincidence makes the present day especially filled with symbolic connotations, so that the great event of the Synodal Concelebration of unity and confession be celebrated on this day. Rightly is it appropriate at this point to exclaim: “For behold, through the Cross joy hath come to the whole world!”

Today, according to the goodwill of God, we are truly celebrating a great event, a thirty year division has come to an end. The years of eruptions and divisions have passed away. Behold, the day of peace and harmony has shined upon us.

Truly, the event of the unification of those formerly separated is a great benefaction, according to St. Basil the Great: *Thus its seems generally that the state of the Church (if I may use a vivid figure, though it may seem too lowly) is like an old garment, which is always being torn easily on whatever pretext, and which can never be restored to its original strength. At such a time, then, there is need of great effort and diligence that the Churches may in some way be benefited. It is a good deed that parts hitherto severed be united.*” (Letter to the Presbyters of Tarsus)

This good deed was accomplished last Tuesday, March 5/18 of the present year in the church of the All-Holy Theotokos, “The

Unfading Rose,” in Piraeus where the Holy Synod of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece convened under the presidency of His Beatitude Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens and all Greece, exclusively to address the issue of the union and incorporation of the Orthodox Ecclesiastical Community in Resistance with the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece which was accomplished by the Grace of God.

The ecclesiological agreement, based on the findings of the official dialogue between the two sides, an arduous union attempt throughout fourteen months produced an in-depth Ecclesiological Text entitled: ***The True Orthodox Church in Opposition to the Heresy of Ecumenism: Dogmatic and Canonical Issues***, which constitutes the sure ecclesiological basis of the union which was accomplished.

Having established this, and the canonical impediments having been removed, the Bishops of the Orthodox Ecclesiastical Community in Resistance are now full, canonical members of our Holy Synod and the pious faithful of this Community finally belong to the one, sole ecclesiastical body of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece.

But our joy is not simply a local event, on this past Friday, March 8/21, an Inter-Orthodox Deliberation convened in the Monastery of the All-Immaculate Virgin in Megara, with the participation - aside from the hierarchs of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece - of hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, with its President Metropolitan Agafangel being present, as well as the non-innovating Church of Romania under His Eminence Metropolitan Vlasie. During this deliberation each article of the above-mentioned Ecclesiological Text was examined, the hierarchs having expressed agreement on it, in principle, some days prior. They discussed other dogmatic and canonical issues and by the Grace of God, the many hours of deliberation came to a close in full agreement.

The presentation and the solemnizing of the union occurred through the present Synodal Concelebration of unity and confession today, the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, March 10/23, in the historic monastery of St. Nicholas in Paiania, presided over by His Beatitude Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens and all Greece, and His Eminence Metropolitan Agafangel of New York and Eastern America of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and in the presence of hierarchs of the Church of the True Orthodox Church of Romania. The selection of this place is not without meaning because in this monastery the hierarchical ordinations, and the reconstitution of the hierarchy of our Church in cooperation with hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad took place in 1962. Through this inter-Orthodox concelebration today's feast of the Veneration of the Cross becomes finally a worldwide joyous event. It is appropriate straightway to repeat the verse: "For behold, through the Cross joy hath come to the whole world!"

Beloved children in the Lord,

Our union in love and truth was not motivated in us by worldly authority, nor by some material interest. Our only motivation was the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and our dearest Orthodoxy.

Simultaneously, our hearts turn with love and forbearance towards those who in various ways have cooperated and continue to cooperate with the truly worldwide scandal of the division of the Orthodox in the name of unity with the heterodox, and have breached the ecclesiological and soteriological exclusivity of Orthodoxy. We call them to repentance and to return to the immovable borders of the True Faith and the True Orthodox Church of Christ, **where the fullness of Grace and Truth is found exclusively.**

In this regard, we paternally urge all our spiritual children who participate in the joy of our Church, to continue to pray for the stability of this union, and also that this unity may expand among all the True Orthodox in the Truth and Love of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

In the year of Salvation MMXIV, the 10th/23rd of March

THE HOLY SYNOD

The Archbishop, † **KALLINIKOS of Athens**
& 21 other Hierarchs of the Church of the
True Orthodox Christians of Greece.



*The Fulness of Paschal Joy
is only in Faithfulness to Christ*

THE EVER-MEMORABLE ARCHBISHOP
AVERKY OF JORDANVILLE, + 1976 A.D.

*Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy
no man taketh from you* (John 16:22).

Let us be glad in godly wise... *for Christ,
our everlasting Joy, hath arisen* (Paschal Canon).

OUR Orthodox Christian faith, which never passes away, is a joy living eternally in our hearts. It is the joy of the Risen Lord, the joy of the Resurrection, the joy of Pascha.

It is not without a special profound significance, as the great Father of the Church St. John Chrysostom, testifies, that in the night of Pascha, and thereafter for the whole Paschal period, there is read in our churches the Divinely-inspired book of the Acts of the Apostles. It, like no other book, tells us in a lively and clear

manner of the greatest truth of Christianity, the Resurrection of Christ, and *for the most part contains within itself evidence of the Resurrection* (Works of St John Chrysostom, tome 9). From it we learn that the holy Apostles, in preaching the Gospel teaching, proclaimed first of all the good news of Christ crucified and risen from the dead, and it was just this teaching that had such a powerful effect on the hearers, capturing thousands of hearts unto obedience to Christ.

And this is understandable; for there is nothing mankind so thirsts for as deliverance from the multitude of afflictions inevitably bound up with the *wages of sin*: death (Rom. 6:23). Through the Resurrection of Christ death is conquered; the hellish power of sin is trampled down, and therefore Pascha is festively glorified by us as *the deliverance from sorrow*.

This is why the human heart is so sensitive and receptive to the bright Paschal joy!

But the whole fullness of Paschal joy is accessible to us only in our maintaining an absolute faithfulness to the Risen Christ, a complete commitment to Him as our God and Saviour, and a total irreconcilability to His enemies.

It is not by chance that during the days of Holy Pascha, for the whole course of Bright Week, at the Divine Liturgy in place of the Trisagion we sing the joyful hymn: *All ye that in Christ have been baptized, Christ have ye put on, Alleluia* - which is an essential element in the great Mysterion of Baptism. This is not only because just before the day of Pascha, on the Great Sabbath, many catechumens received Baptism. In this there is also a special and profound, mystical meaning.

Know that Baptism, as the Holy Apostle Paul teaches, is celebrated as an image of the death and Resurrection of Christ:

Know ye not, the holy Apostle asks the Romans, to whom he wrote his epistle, *that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are*

buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection (Rom. 6:2-5).

These words of the Holy Apostle Paul are read precisely at the Divine Liturgy on Great Saturday, showing us the mystical bond which exists between the death and Resurrection of Christ and our own death to sin and resurrection to new life in the Mysterion of Baptism.

In this way, the joy of Baptism and the joy of the Resurrection are essentially one and the same feeling - a feeling of exalted spiritual joy, *joy in the Lord*.

This is the joy of spiritual renewal, the joy of putting on Christ, the joy of being joined to Christ as to the Source of eternal life, the joy of entire dedication, of faithfulness to Christ as our Saviour, Who by His Resurrection has granted us life eternal.

If ye love Me, keep My commandments, Christ instructed His disciples at the Mystical Supper, and in their persons He instructed all of us (John 14:5). Faithfulness to Christ the Saviour, which naturally flows from love for Him, consists before all else in keeping His commandments. He who loves Christ and strives to be faithful to Him must in every way possible guard himself from falling into sins which are contrary to the Gospel commandments. But the Word of God Himself instructs us that to preserve oneself completely from sin is something we cannot do: *There is no man who liveth and sinneth not* (3 [1] Kings 8:46, & the Prayer for the Departed), and: *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves* (1 John 1:8). For this reason the Mysterion of the “second Baptism” or repentance was instituted, which cleanses us anew from the sins which were committed after Baptism.

And even when we fall into the customary sins which stem from the weakness of human nature, we can all nonetheless main-

tain faithfulness to Christ, as our God and Saviour, if we offer sincere repentance. *And this is the most important thing.*

Thus it is that the words, contained in the Office After the Parting of the Soul from the Body, which are such a consolation for us sinful people, bear witness:

“... Grant unto him (the newly reposed) the communion and enjoyment of Thine eternal good things, which are prepared for those that love Thee. For although he hath sinned, yet he did not turn away from Thee and without doubt believed in Thee, the God glorified in Trinity: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; confessing the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity in an Orthodox manner even until his last breath. Wherefore be merciful unto him, and having regard for his faith in Thee rather than for his deeds, grant him rest with Thy saints in that Thou art compassionate. For there is no man that liveth and doth no sin...”

From these words of the prayer it is manifestly apparent that the most dreadful thing is not so much the sins, which are part and parcel of our human nature, *as turning away, turning away from the true Faith, turning away from the true Church, a conscientious departure from service to Christ, as our God and Saviour.*

Such a “departure” inevitably leads to a transfer to the side of Christ’s enemies, that means being together with the servants of Antichrist, who are preparing for his appearance.

Every spirit, the beloved disciple of Christ, Saint John the Theologian said back in apostolic times, *that confesseth not Jesus Christ, come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is the spirit of Antichrist* (1 John 4:3).

This rejection of *the mystery of godliness, the manifestation of God in the flesh* (1 Tim. 3:16), which is saving for us, has hitherto taken various appearances and forms in the various heresies and false teachings. But essentially they are one and the same: distortion of the true Faith and departure from the true Church. Through the whole course of the history of Christianity, the en-

emy of the salvation of man has constantly striven to transpose *the mystery of godliness* with his own mystery, *the mystery of iniquity* (2 Thess. 2:7).

It would not be overstating things to say, that the whole history of mankind from the time of the appearance in the world of the Incarnate Son of God has been a never remitting and persistent battle on the part of *the mystery of iniquity* against *the mystery of godliness*, and nothing other than this. And in this battle the enemy of the race of man does not cease to have recourse to every kind of, and the most multifaceted, contrivances and tricks, and as time goes on his ruses become more and more refined.

We know from the Gospels, that the high priests of the Jews traduced the arising of the Saviour, they *gave large money* to the soldiers, and instructed them to say that *His disciples came by night and stole Him away* (Matt. 28:11-15). This wholly unsophisticated and naive falsehood, which could not be justified, was subsequently changed by other manifestations of falsehood, whose purpose was to undermine in the people the saving faith in the great truth of the Resurrection of Christ.

From those times, falsehood and slander, every sort of distortion and perversion became the weapons of the enemy in his mortal combat against the true faith and the Church. The enemy of the salvation of man, the devil, placing himself on the path of corruption, thereby and by employing various earthly good things as suitable implements among the people, did not cease to slander the true Faith and that Church, calling white black, and black white, truth falsehood, and falsehood truth, expertly sowing faithlessness, heresy and falsehood, a counterfeit faith in place of the true one.

We, however, must not, and cannot dare to, forget that *there is only one, true Faith, just as there is one God* (see Eph. 4:5-6), and equally: *there is only one, true Church* (Matt. 16:18), and not many differing churches.

It would seem that all this is clear and understandable.

Until comparatively recent times this was how it was. But now the adversary has so succeeded in his intrigues and so confused everything in the minds of the people, even, it would seem, those of the faithful and the right-thinking, that they, as it were, begin to fail and become a prey to doubts, fearing even to be seen in the eyes of others as “left out,” insufficiently progressive, but they are like those others who have completely lost the ability to think healthily, not to mention those who, directing their lives according to various plausible ideas, have consciously gone over to the side of the enemy, becoming, in actuality, betrayers of Christ.

It is only by these refined machinations of the enemy that one can explain how widely indifference has spread now among the majority of contemporary Christians with regard to what is fundamental, holy and dear to the heart of the true Christian, to the true Christian Faith, to the ecclesiastical canons, the age-old practices and traditions of our Faith and Church. It is only thus that one can explain the cold scornfulness towards to all this and the impassive disregard of holy things.

Genuine, inner, heartfelt faithfulness to Christ, as God and Saviour, is extremely scarce. There remains only an outward *ve-neer of piety*, and even the power of that is disallowed.

It is only on account of this that there could arise in our times such distorted, spiritually perverted manifestations as the “Living Church” and “Renovationism.” Disdain for the dogmas of the Church, light-minded trampling upon her, and a loss of a living church understanding have led the representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches to enter into the so-called Ecumenical Movement, and in Soviet Russia to the rise of Sergianism, as it is called, and thereafter to the “Soviet Church,” which fully collaborates with the theomachistic Soviet authorities and has made itself the obedient tool of the atheistic communists in their dreadful work and their man-slaying, hellish plans for the world.

All this is that very same “broad domain of apostasy,” concerning which we are informed, in his commentary on the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, by our learned theologian and great guide of Christian piety, the hierarch [now Saint] Theophan, the Recluse of Visherá, who speaks literally thus:

Although the name Christian will be heard everywhere, and everywhere churches and church services will be seen, yet all this will be only an appearance, interiorly there will be a real apostasy.

Isn't this just what we see now?

Isn't it the same “appearance” of the service of Christ that those church hierarchs offer, who have placed themselves in dependence on any of the theomachistic and anti-Christian communities and organizations, both the manifest and the secret, and who in their activities are obliged to fulfil their programmes.

What does it matter if the lips pronounce the name of Christ, and the heart stands afar off from Him? And not only stands afar off from Him, but, follows the diktats of evil masters, who plot against Him and against His true followers and servers?

This dreadful domain of apostasy is, in our opinion, spreading more and more. The spirit of renovationism, of ecclesial modernism, is profoundly inimical to genuine Orthodoxy. The spirit of ecumenism, which recognizes as on a par the mores and values of every confession, and Sergianism, the collaborator with the theomachistic powers and anti-Christian societies and organizations, are energetically clasping in ever increasing bands all the Local Orthodox Churches. The mass rejection of faithfulness to Christ in the name of submitting to Belial, in the person of the theomachistic authorities, is gradually enslaving to itself the whole contemporary world.

Looking at all that is now happening in the Local Orthodox Churches, how hierarchs kowtow to Red Moscow, place wreaths on

the tombs of the persecutors of the Faith and of the Church, how, under the well-seeming pretext of a common unity, they strive for assimilation with groupings which are foreign to true Christianity, how among them the spirit of a genuine Orthodox piety has evaporated to be replaced by the spirit of renovationism, how among them almost all the outer characteristics of church life are being modernized, including the interior accoutrements of the churches, the appearance and conduct of the clergy - looking at all this it is impossible not to recall the truly prophetic word of Bishop [St] Ignatius Brianchaninov:

“Such are the times, the further we go, the harder it will be... The apostasy is prophesied with absolute clarity in the Holy Scriptures, and it serves to bear witness that everything recorded in the Scriptures is reliable and true. The apostasy is permitted by God: do not endeavour to stay it with your feeble hand. *Strive, rather, to protect yourself from it; this will be sufficient for you. Become acquainted with the spirit of the times, learn about it, so that as far as is possible you may escape its influence.*”

The deviation originally for some time progressed speedily, freely and openly. Its consequences will undoubtedly be most grievous. May the will of God be done!

May the kind-hearted Lord protect the remnant of the faithful from it! But this remnant will be meagre; it will become more and more meagre.

The Orthodox Faith's part must be to perceive the coming and decisive denouement.... Only the special mercy of God would be able to halt the all-destroying moral epidemic, perhaps just to stay it for some time, because that which is foretold in the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

Assessing things according to the spirit of the times and with intellectual disquiet, we would have to suppose that *the edifice of the Church, which was shaken long ago, will be shattered terrifyingly and quickly*. None can stop it or counteract it. On the part

of the coteries of this world, which is at enmity with the Church, daring measures to support this have been employed, and, rather than stop it, these will precipitate her fall.

No one should expect a re-establishment of Christianity. Vessels of the Holy Spirit, those treasuries of piety and grace, everywhere are completely coming to an end, even in the monasteries, and the Body of the Spirit of God can only be upheld and raised up by their instrumentality. The kind-hearted and long-suffering God prolongs and defers a decisive denouement on account of the little remnant of those being saved, while meanwhile those rotting and decaying are approaching complete corruption. Those who are being saved must bear this in mind and use the time which has been granted for their salvation, for “the time is short,” and for each one of us the crossing over into eternity is not far off.

We must live in peace with the Church's situation, but at the same time we must take cognizance of it. It is something permitted from on high.

The Elder Esaias told me: “Understand the times. Do not expect a restoration in church affairs generally, and be satisfied with the fact that a portion of the people are set aside unto salvation: those who desire to be saved. *He will be saved who saves his soul*, it is said of the remnant of Christians, it is said by the Spirit of God” (From the Letters of Bishop [now Saint] Ignatius).

Comforting words! There is nothing unexpected for us, nothing that was not foreseen; everything comes to pass as was written. As God permits!

But as the Hierarch Ignatius teaches, “*it is necessary to understand where this comes from. To understand, of course, so that we do not ourselves become impassioned by ‘the spirit of the times,’ but that ‘we dissociate ourselves from it,’ and ‘evade its influence.’*”

And this for the sake of *safeguarding faithfulness to Christ the Saviour*, risen from the dead and granting us life everlasting!

We still have our Russian Church Abroad,* which maintains her historical inheritance from the Russian Orthodox Church of former times. For a long time a battle has been waged against her, which to a noticeable extent has increased in recent times. We must not be disturbed by this warfare; in every way let us protect and guard our Church, the last refuge for us in this world, from being animated by the “spirit of the times,” concerning which Bishop Ignatius speaks.

Let us not fear being left in the minority. The chief thing for us is to be among the small remnant of those who are being saved, whom the Lord Himself called *the little flock*, saying:

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. (Luke 12:32).

One who with all his soul belongs to this, the “little flock” of those being saved, will find nothing fearful in the contemporary world of apostasy; nothing will be able to shake such a one in his firmness of confession, in his standing for God’s Truth, for with him there will always be the fullness of Paschal joy; with him is the *Risen Christ Himself, the Victor over Hades and death.*

Footnote: * Archbishop Averky was a hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad and was primarily addressing their faithful, but his words here, of course, equally apply to all those who remain faithful to traditionalist Orthodox hierarchs.

This sermon is undated but is published in a collection of the Archbishop’s “Homilies and Speeches” given between 1951 and 1960, at a time when the Soviet regime was in power in Russia and had enslaved the official Church there. Now the regime has ostensibly fallen, but sadly the Church-State accord, which was then imposed by terror and persecution, still holds, fed now by the desire for influence, prestige, and power. The Archbishop’s words have, therefore, lost none of their relevance.

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Teaching on the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church will be resumed, D.V., in our next issue.

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THE COMING MONTH

APRIL opens this year with Holy and Great Monday and the services of **the Passion of our Saviour**, with **Pascha** itself falling on the first Sunday of the month (7th/20th). These services are such that it is futile to try and describe them in a resumé such as this. They must be experienced, and experienced not simply as an observer but with prayerful attendance. We hope as many of you as possible will endeavour to do this, and may God grant you blessings for attempting to do so.

For forty days after the day of Pascha itself, we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection, and on each of the Sundays of this period there are special commemorations, which instruct us about the festival. The Gospel readings at the Divine Liturgy on each of these Sundays tell us either about the events surrounding the historical event of the Saviour's arising, or about events in His earlier ministry which reveal the inner significance of that fact.

Among the saints celebrated in April, we have the **Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy-Bearer** (23rd April/6th May) whose importance is such that his feast is celebrated with a Vigil, and whose very memory somehow expresses the paschal joy of victory over the powers of darkness.

Among the lesser known saints celebrated in April we have:-

The holy **New Martyr Panagiotēs** (5th/18th April): He was born in Peloponnesus, Greece in A.D. 1795. He grew up in Magnesia, Asia Minor, where he was a slave of a Turk named Osman Effendi, who was the chief secretary of the Turkish Governor, Suleiman Pasha, who was later made Governor of Damascus. On one occasion, Suleiman Pasha sent Osman to Jerusalem to deal with certain administrative matters. The slave Panagiotēs accompanied his master on this mission. When Osman Effendi had concluded his assignment in Jerusalem, he wished to pray at the Mosque of the Dome of the Rock that was built on the site of Solomon's Temple. Panagiotēs entered the Mosque with him, holding his master's shoes. At that time, the Muslims had a law that forbade non-Muslims to enter the Mosque. When his master later left for Damascus, the Saint remained in Jerusalem because Great Week and Pascha were approaching. Another slave of Osman's also remained in Jerusalem. He was jealous of the favour shown by the Chief Secretary towards Saint Panagiotēs. He convinced the holy one to go with him to the Mosque again. Upon entering the Mosque, the jealous slave denounced the Saint as a violator of the law and demanded that the blessed one should be punished for his blasphemy. This accusation was brought to Suleiman Pasha who was in Jerusalem at that time. Panagiotēs was taken prisoner as he left the Church of the Resurrection on 5th April, 1820. He was tied up and taken to the Governor who offered him the opportunity to escape the death penalty by renouncing our Saviour and becoming a Muslim. He unwaveringly declared that he was a Christian and that he believed that Christ is the Son of the Living God. With a loud voice he proclaimed that he preferred to die a thousand times rather than deny his Faith. He also disdained all the riches which the Governor promised him, should he renounce Christ. The Governor then gave the order for his execution. The soldiers took Saint Panagiotēs towards the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, near the Jaffa Gate. On the way the soldiers tortured the New Martyr, hoping to force him to deny our Lord. They broke one of his arms and cut off the

fingers of his other hand. The Saint remained unmoved and kept repeating: "I do not fear you. I am a Christian. Christ is Risen!" He knelt down, but then he stood up shouting, "Christ is Risen!" The executioner began striking him with his sword lightly on his neck in order to frighten him. The saint kept repeating, "I do not fear you. I am a Christian. Christ is Risen!" The executioner then delivered the final blow and the Saint was crowned as a martyr at the age of 25. The martyrdom was witnessed by Joseph Wolff, a Jew converted to Christianity, who had become a Protestant missionary to the Jews of Palestine. He described the martyrdom in a letter in which he states that the Patriarchate paid the Turks 500 silver Groschen for the holy relics of Saint Panagiotos. The Saint was buried the same day in the Cemetery of Holy Sion. Later his holy relics were taken to the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist.



POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

"Do you happen to know why the Russians have such a lengthy preparation for the Holy Communion? - V.B., Woking

I DO NOT know the exact answer to your question about the long preparation which the Russian Church imposes on communicants, but I have always assumed (presumed) that it was a pastoral reaction to the fact that Russians receive the Holy Mysteries infrequently. I am not sure when these requirements were widely enforced, but I presume that, seeing people did not approach often, the Church leaders decided that they should go through a rather strenuous preparation before receiving. This was probably introduced with good intent, but seems to have backfired, because, in the first instance, it seems to have re-enforced the custom of infrequent communion among adults. Secondly it seems to have

backfired, because of what I can only call the bursting bubble effect! I remember when I served in a Russian parish, the people then (over 30 years ago) strictly adhered to these rules. Some had even stricter disciplines imposed upon them by their spiritual fathers. So, before receiving they had to fast strictly, they had long prayer rules to read, they had to go to confession before each and every reception of the Mysteries. But then - immediately after receiving Communion, they were embraced by friends and families and congratulated on the reception of the Mysteries, chatting would start (while still in church!), then eating and then drinking. So one goes through a cycle: normal life (i.e. sinning, not much spiritual attention), thought of communing, period of strict piety (not as long as the sinning period!), Communion, exhilaration, and sin! I suppose I do not have a “Russian soul” (actually I am sure it is not only the Russians who act in this way, but you are Russian and asked about Russians) but this does not seem a very beneficial way of getting through life or making spiritual progress. It is the religious equivalent of boom and bust in the business world. Gentle, consistent striving would seem to be more beneficial.



News Section

SYNAXIS OF THE PRIMATES OF THE LOCAL CHURCHES

AT THE invitation of **His All-Holiness Œcumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos I**, between 6th and 9th March, the Primate of all the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches met for an Assembly (Synaxis) at the Phanar “in order to deliberate on matters pertaining to the entire Orthodox Church throughout the world and procedural issues for the convocation of the Holy and Great

Council, whose preparation is coming to an end.” Before this, on 4th and 5th March, a Preparatory Committee was held, chaired by **His Eminence, Metropolitan John of Pergamon**, in order to formulate the programme of proceedings and draft the Message of the Primates. On the Sunday of Orthodoxy there was a celebration in the Patriarchal Church, “visibly expressing the unity of Orthodoxy” (website of the Œcumenical Patriarchate). In fact, other reports relate that the delegation representing the Patriarch of Antioch, who was unable to attend personally because of illness, left the Assembly protesting that their dispute with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was not properly handled. In the Orthodox press the proposed Holy and Great Council, which has been scheduled for 2016, is being hailed as the Eighth Œcumenical Council. In fact, of course, whether or not it is accepted as an Œcumenical Council is not something which can be predetermined. It will depend on whether or not it embraces and holds fast to the dogmas of piety.

PROTESTS AGAINST FORTHCOMING R.C. CANONIZATION

CARDINAL STEPINIC, who has already been beatified by the Roman Catholic Church, is reported to be in line for full canonization by the Pope later this year. This news has called forth powerful and legitimate protests. Stepinic was a fervent supporter of the Ustashi (fascist) regime in Croatia during World War II, a regime which attempted to force Orthodox Serbs into Roman Catholicism. Thousands were martyred rather than deny their Faith. It is reported that Stepinic had never protested against the crimes committed against the Serbian Orthodox Church and against the Jewish people. He intervened only in a few cases, even though he knew what was going on in concentration camps throughout the country, and of the hundreds of thousands of murdered Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. A report on the persecution states: “Orthodox worshippers, when not dispatched to concentration camps, suffered the same fate as their clergy. Congregations, unless will-

ing to change their religion, were not only persecuted, hunted down and arrested, but, at times, besides being massacred by the Ustashi bayonets or machine guns, they were killed within their own churches. To terrorize the population into becoming [Roman] Catholic, the Ustashi very often hanged lay Orthodox leaders and their parish priests during mass executions before the very eyes of the faithful. This was one of the most tangible methods of 'persuasion' whenever the Orthodox proved obdurate. Those who escaped with their lives were sent to concentration camps, while about 700 - that is, one quarter of the total number of Orthodox priests - were murdered by the Ustashi in this manner. The ordinary Orthodox clergy became the target of Ustashi [Roman] Catholic ferocity. Priests were imprisoned, hunted down, or simply massacred.... Hundreds of Orthodox clergy perished thus only because they were priests of a religion which refused to join 'the true Church.'" One marvels at the twofacedness of ecumenists, who, on the one hand, proclaim each other "Sister Churches" and "two lungs in one body," and on the other are prepared to honour as saints the persecutor of the faithful of the "other lung."



**NEWS from the communities in the U.K.
of the Diocese of Oropos and Fili of the
True Orthodox Church of Greece.**

BAPTISM AT SAINT EDWARD'S

THE INFANT SON of **Martin and Christine Smith, of East Cowes, Isle of Wight**, was baptized on Saturday, 16th February / 1st March. The baby had been named after the Holy Prophet Zacharias, the father of the Forerunner, and his sponsor

is **Dr Luke Kennard**. After the Mysterion, in the Mortuary hall, the Smith family provided refreshments for all who had attended. Through the prayers and efforts of his godfather and parents, may the newly-illuminated Zachary be raised in piety, and hold fast to the Faith until his dying day.

FUNERAL OF MARTTA WATKINS

ONE of our oldest parishioners, **Martta Watkins** was laid to rest in Saint Edward's Cemetery on Thursday, 28th February / 13th March. The Brotherhood monastic clergy and **Fr Stephen Fretwell** officiated at the service, which was attended by about two dozen friends and relatives, many of them from Finland and Sweden. The chief mourners were Martta's sons, **Dom Basil** and **Glynn**. Dom Basil, a monk of **St Augustine's Abbey, at Chilworth**, brought the Abbot of the house, **Dom Paulinus** and two other monks from that community for the service. After the interment, a Mercy Meal was provided by the family for the mourners in the Mortuary hall, and at the end of it, two young teenage cousins from Finland sang three traditional folk songs from their country, ably introducing them in fluent English. May Martta find rest with the Saints and ***Memory Eternal***.

FUNERAL FOR ONE OF THE BULGARIAN FAITHFUL

ON 14th / 27th March, the Brotherhood chanted a funeral service for **Gencho**, the uncle of one of our parishioners, **Yordanka Kalnakova**. Gencho had died recently in Bulgaria and was buried there, but his family there did not have a church funeral for his repose. May his soul now find rest.

FUNERAL OF LYDIA ROSKILL

LYDIA ROSKILL was baptized in 1989 at Saint Edward's Church. Her mother had been Serbian Orthodox, but Lydia had not been brought up in that Faith. After her mother's repose, she received instruction in the Faith and was baptized. This was initially prompted by her desire to be laid to rest near her mother. Her desire was fulfilled when, on Friday 15th/ 28th March, she was laid to rest in the **Serbian Orthodox Cemetery** adjoining our own. The funeral service was chanted in Serbian and English by **Protopresbyter Dragan Lazic** of **St Sava's Church in London**. Perhaps because for the last years of her life, Lydia had lived a very isolated life by her own choice, it was attended only by her carer and her carer's daughter, by **Mr Ivan Aleksic** representing the Serbian community and two members of our Brotherhood. Lydia who had been baptized by total immersion at the age of 70, died at the age of 95. May she now find rest with the Saints. ***Memory Eternal!***

VISITORS

ON Saturday 23rd March n.s., **Dr Aphroditis Papayianni** brought a group of fifteen mature students from **Birkbeck College** to see the church and attend the Saturday evening Vespers. The students displayed a lively interest in the church and some have promised to attend services again.

MORTUARY ROOFING FUND

AT the time of going to press, the Mortuary Roofing Fund stands at **£17,615.40** - just under 30% of our target figure. Please continue to give as generously as you can. Donations should be made payable to: **King Edward Orthodox Trust Co Ltd.**

INTERMENT AT BROOKWOOD

ON Thursday, 27th March, **John Simpson**, of Belsize Park, London, was laid to rest in our cemetery. John was not an Orthodox Christian, but his widow, **Lydia**, is and so in time they will be laid to rest together. The funeral service was held at the **Queen's Chapel of the Savoy in London**, and the incumbent there, **the Rev'd Professor Peter Galloway**, officiated and accompanied the departed to Brookwood for the interment. After this, he and the family mourners visited Saint Edward's Church, and Lydia told us of her early years with the Russian community in the Holy Land, where she knew such luminaries as the Ever-Memorable Metropolitan Anastassy and Abbess Tamara of Eleon.



PRACTICAL TIP

IN REPLY to a question from one of the Russians who attends our church regularly, we spoke above of the “boom and bust” approach which seems to typify the way in which many of the faithful prepare to receive the Holy Mysteries and then behave after receiving. There is often a parallel in how we approach Pascha, and it is something to be avoided. Some keep the fast quite assiduously, but, come Pascha Night, the “celebration,” instead of being one of spiritual rejoicing, becomes one solely of eating and drinking. Then there often follows a period of lapsing. Some people do not turn up at a church service for three or four weeks after Pascha. This is not profitable and is soul destroying. Each fast in our lifetime should instead be a rung on a ladder which we are ascending. Naturally when the fast ends, we stop confining ourselves to fasting foods, but we should not abandon our practice of the virtues, our struggle against the passions, our practice of almsgiving, and our attention to prayer and spiritual reading.