



FROM THE FATHERS

“JESUS CHRIST our Saviour, made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of Jesus Who was made flesh.”

HOLY MARTYR JUSTIN THE PHILOSOPHER, + 166 A.D.

“HE HAS DECLARED that this chalice, which is His creature, is His Blood, by which our own blood is renewed, and that this bread, which is His creature, is His Body, by which He makes our own bodies flourish.”

HOLY HIEROMARTYR IRENÆUS OF LYONS, + 202 A.D.

“ABRAHAM the Patriarch placed earthly food before the heavenly Angels, and they ate of it. A truly great wonder: to behold incorporeal spirits on earth eating the food of corporeal men. But this surpasses all wonder, all understanding, all speech: what Jesus Christ our Saviour, the Only-Begotten Son, has done for us. For He has given us who are clothed in the flesh fire and spirit to eat and to drink, namely, His own Body and Blood.”

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

“THERE are many mothers who, after their maternal sufferings [*in giving birth*], will hand over their child to another to nurse. He [*Christ*] does not endure to do this, but nourishes us Himself, and with His own Blood, binding us to Him by every means.”

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, + 407 A.D.

“LET US therefore receive the Body of Life itself, Who because of us has taken up His abode in a body like ours, as the divine John says: *For the life was manifested* (1 Jn 1:2). And again: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us* (Jn 1:14), *Who is Christ, the Son of the living God* (Matt. 16:16), one of the Holy Trinity. And let us drink of His sacred Blood unto the forgiveness of our sins, and unto the sharing with Him of life everlasting, believing that He is at the same time both Priest and Victim, He Who is offered and He Who offers, He Who gives and He Who is given.”

SAINT CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, +444 A.D.

“BY THE BREAD and the cup He gave His precious Body and Blood, and with great humility He revealed the glory beyond understanding, and He foreshadowed His Passion and Resurrection and consoled and affirmed His disciples.”

VEN. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, + 662 A.D.

“*HE THAT eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him* (John 6:56). As an infant borne in his mother’s womb lives wholly by her, so also the Christian partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ dwells in Christ, as an infant in its mother’s womb, and lives wholly in Christ.”

RIGHTEOUS JOHN OF CRONSTADT, + 1908 A.D.

Become as Little Children

A HOMILY OF ARCHBISHOP DIMITRI
OF KHERSON AND ODESSA

AMONG the various events which accompanied the triumphant entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, one is particularly tender and touching. It involuntarily pierces one's heart and lingers in one's consciousness.

As the Jewish high priests and scribes beheld this great and remarkable occurrence with envy and hidden malice, and as the people, wavering and limping along, now on one side and now on another, were, apparently, seeking to comprehend the delight of the disciples of Christ and to echo their hymn of praise, thrown off as they were by the blandishments of their blind leaders, they beheld with unbelief what happened, for it was then that the children who were in the Temple, untouched as they were by any evil or duplicity, from the fulness of their pure and chaste hearts, wholly given over to an unbounded holy delight, gave praise and exclaimed: *Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!*

But do we not observe the same thing today? While we, the adults, bring to the life-bearing festivals of the Church either indifference or coldness, or even a contrived joyfulness, one excited by gross carnal gratifications, the children alone are given over completely to the joy of the radiant church celebrations, undistractedly and boundlessly. It is only in their chaste hearts, like the sun in a drop of pure water, that the living light of the feasts of God is reflected in all its clarity, and it inspires in them a pure, unfeigned delight, from which the heart of an adult, having become coarse, either under yoke of worldly cares and concerns or under the evil inspiration of the passions of the mind or the carnal lusts, has long since become estranged.

One cannot help but recognise, my brethren, as from time to time one beholds their childlike joy, through which they experience such a genuine, heartfelt delight, that you are involuntarily close to that resplendent world, wherein the blessed spirits fully perceive the glory of God, where there is neither day nor night, but they are ever *singing, chanting, shouting and saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.* When among children at such a radiant celebration of the Holy Church, one cannot help but admit, that one would wish, if it were possible, to be born again so as more fully and completely to be able to give oneself over to such holy delight and joy.

And this is exactly what our Lord Jesus Christ wishes for us and asks of us: *Amen, I say unto you, He says, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* (Matt. 18:3). What is it, you will ask, that is so special in children, that we adults can benefit from in being instructed by them?

Instructive, in the first place, is their candour, their simplicity of heart and their frankness. A child who is as yet unspoiled by bad examples cannot lie; he cannot dissemble, he does not know how to be secretive, distrustful, or suspicious; he speaks as he knows and as he thinks; he does what he wants; he rejoices in that which pleases him; he gets displeased with that which is not good and which operates in a way he finds uncongenial; and out of a pure heart he believes what he is told by his parents and elders. This is surely the one most valuable attribute, which indispensably we need in our relationship with God and in our relationships with our brethren, and upon which, for us men, the peacefulness of our life, both inwardly and outwardly, depends.

What makes our faith unsound, our convictions wavering, our spiritual union with Christ the Saviour unenduring? A lack of sincerity and trust, of simple-heartedness and of committing ourselves fully to the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ, as our true Friend, hides nothing from us, He tells us all the things that He hears from

His Father; with complete openness He announces everything about God's will for us; with full trust He has imparted to us the whole treasury of His graces, wherefore we ought, as His disciples, to have the same sincerity and lack of mendacity with regard to Him.

If we recognise Him as our Lord and God, then we must needs believe in Him alone; we must believe sincerely and from our whole heart. His every word must thus be holy and unquestionable for us, so that we might the sooner doubt our own feelings and understandings, and even our own being, than His Divine word. If we accept the Holy Gospel as His true word, then it alone must be the sole source of our thoughts and feelings, the sole basis of our desires and hopes, the sole rule of our life and activity. If we name Him our Master and Lord, in Whose hands is our life and our breath, our destiny both here and in the future, then we must surrender ourselves to Him completely, holding nothing back, without partiality. If we call Him the one most wise and all-good God, the One Who knows all things and can do all things, the One Who is true and righteous, then we must needs live as He commanded, we must needs follow and subordinate ourselves to Him alone and to none other, because everyone and everything might deceive us, but the One, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, they cannot deceive.

It is only with such sincerity of faith that there can be no place for double-mindedness, wavering and doubt; it is only with such directness within the soul that our faith will be firm, founded on the rock, an unshakable heartfelt conviction, an unbreakable spiritual bond between us and Christ. *I know Whom I have believed* (2 Tim. 1:12), the Apostle Paul says of himself, and nothing in the world could shake his heartfelt adherence to the truth, which is in Christ Jesus.

On the other hand, where do all these flimsy ties in life's course come from? Why are there such apparently strong bonds, such as family ties, which are rarely slackened or sundered? It is also from the lack of sincerity, trust and simple-heartedness. Expe-

riencing insincerity and the falsehood within oneself, we attribute the same thing to others. From this come mistrust of one another, abstruseness with regard to one another, deception of one another, and malice towards each other. We do not believe what others say because our own mouths contradict our hearts; they have become accustomed to not expressing what is in the mind and heart. We regard the actions of others with suspicion, because our own personal actions are often only a mask, behind which we completely conceal from others our aspirations and aims. We strive to secure and protect our own life with every means at our disposal, because knowing our own self-love and self-interest, we believe neither in benevolence, nor in diligence, nor yet in brotherly love for others. We envy and engage in intrigues with each other, because we cannot experience pure-heartedness and benevolence within ourselves; we fear that others are higher or more pre-eminent than ourselves.

And who can number all the aspects of the evil from which the community of mankind suffers, and which everyone gives expression to from this insincerity and falsehood, from the lack of trust and from the suspicion which lie at the root of our communal bonds? In truth, unless we be converted and become as little children, sincere, simple-hearted, candid and trusting each other, we shall not see the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the Kingdom of peace and righteousness, of love and unity of spirit.

No less valuable in children is their poverty of soul, that softness of heart, that sympathy for others, which, as is said, they are able to pour out heart and soul into the souls of others. A little child cannot refrain from crying when it sees tears in the eyes of its mother; it cannot but rejoice when she is joyful; it cannot fail to try to do something pleasing for its parents. They say of this lack of being grown up, that it shows that the children are not independent, that they do not yet so much live their own lives as that of their parents. And we, my brethren, are seemingly completely independent, and yet we are dependent on the all-living, ever-exist-

ing life of God, on our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who nourishes us by His Flesh and Blood, of Whom, as the Apostle says, *we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones* (Eph. 5:30).

But should we not live the life of that [contemporary] community of which we are members? No! That tender child-like sympathy is indispensable for us in our relationship with God our Father and in our relations with our brethren, that we might all be children of that same Heavenly Father.

The Lord Jesus Christ, Who has granted us rebirth by the Holy Spirit, Who nourishes us with His Body and Blood, will then show us, as being His own children and indeed brethren, the same full and living sympathy, and grant us the same intimate participation in every circumstance of our life. Thus it was that the disciples of Christ rejoiced and He rejoiced with them: *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit* (Luke 10:21), the Evangelist records, when the disciples of Christ told Him with joy, *Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through Thy name* (Luke 10:17). The friends of Jesus wept and He wept with them: *Jesus wept* (John 11:35), the Evangelist records again, when He was told of the death of Lazarus, the Friend of Christ. They persecuted the believers, and the Lord reproached the persecutor: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* (Acts 9:4). The disciple of Christ hungers and thirsts, and the Lord says that one had satisfied Him: *I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat. I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink* (Matt. 25:35). A follower of Christ lies ill upon a bed, or is confined to prison, and all this the Lord refers directly to Himself: *I was sick and ye visited Me; I was in prison and ye came unto Me* (Mt. 25:36). Behold, my brothers, how close in His heart our Lord is to us! Can we remain unfeeling in our relationship to Him and not respond to Him with a living feeling of reciprocal love?

In the tenderest and most lively communion, and with a burning warmth of heart, the true disciples of Christ experience all that our Lord has done for us, and, particularly, what He has suffered for us. In fasting and prayer, with tears, from a broken

heart they recall His saving and life-creating Passion. Step by step they accompany Him with prayerful reflections from Gethsemane to Golgotha; they reverence with tenderness of heart each of His most pure body's wounds; they lament with heartfelt tears at every profanity directed against Him by the unjust judges and those who crucified Him.

It is for this reason that the day of His Resurrection for us is one of such indescribable radiance and joy, as though it were the day of our own resurrection, introducing the heart to an ineffable heavenly delight. Without this living feeling for the sufferings and glory of our Redeemer and Lord, there is not, and cannot be, any true love of Him, the love which is from all the heart and all the soul, such as He requires of His followers.

In exactly the same way, there cannot be any true love for our brethren, members of the Church and of the community, without a living, in-born sympathy for them, as being our true brothers.

What kind of love is that, which is distressed to see real misfortune in the face of a suffering brother, which is disgusted just by one sight of poverty or human suffering, and which then is contented to throw a penny into the common collection plate for the poor? What kind of love for man is it that surrenders itself to unbridled joy on the pretext that this was done for the comfort of those who weep, or that then indulges in dainty dishes thinking that it has somehow helped the starving? *Show me thy faith without thy works* (James 2:18), says the Apostle [meaning it cannot be done - *transl.*]; show also your love by an active co-suffering with the unfortunate; take a living part in the afflictions of the impoverished, satisfy the hungry at your own table, give your own clothing to the naked, wash the wounds and sores of the sick with your own hands. Then it is that you will be able to hope to hear the voice of the Lord, Who suffered for us: *Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the earth... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me* (Mt. 25:34, 40).

But we would weary you, my brethren, if we wanted to enumerate in detail all the ways in which we can be benefitted from children. The innocent soul of a little child is a whole Paradise, which blossoms forth many and various flowers. His uncorrupted heart is a treasury, in which are hidden many valuables. Everyone may take from it for his own use. Let those prone to anger and irritability be instructed by the meekness and condescension of a child; the malicious and rememberers of wrongs by the guilelessness and lack of remembrance of wrongs of a child; the self-willed and wilful by the submissiveness and obedience of a child; the deceitful and crafty by the simplicity and humility of a child; those gripped by unclean passions and the lusts of the flesh by the continence, purity and chastity of a child. *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Amen.

Translated from the Russian, published in the Trinity Calendar for 1986, by the Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York.



“THE FAITH of the thief, born of his esteem for Christ’s moral greatness, proved stronger than the faith of the Apostles, who, although captivated by the loftiness of Christ’s teaching, based their faith to a still greater extent on the signs and wonders He wrought. Now there was no miraculous deliverance of Christ from His enemies - and the Apostles’ faith was shaken. But the patience He exhibited, His absolute forgiveness, and the faith that His Heavenly Father heard Him so clearly, indicated Jesus’ righteousness, His moral superiority, that one seeking spiritual and moral rebirth could not be shaken. And this is precisely what the thief, aware of the depth of his fall, craved. He did not ask to sit on the right hand or the left hand of Christ in His Kingdom, but, conscious of his unworthiness, he asked in humility simply to be remembered in His Kingdom, that he be given the lowest place.”

SAINT JOHN OF SHANGHAI, + 1966 A.D.

THE THREE STATES

*His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian
the Elder of Oropos and Fili*

THE DIVINELY INSPIRED Holy Fathers teach us that Christians fall into three categories:

- a) those who exercise their passions;
- b) those who restrain their passions; and
- c) those who uproot their passions.

There are pitiable people who groan under the heavy burden of their passions. In no way whatever do they counteract their sinful passions and that which the Devil, by means thereof, evokes in them. Their sin thus becomes a formidable habit and an inhuman tyrant. These are those who exercise their passions.

In the second category belong all of those who sorrow because they are impassioned, withstand their passions, surmount the dangers, but do not cut off the passions—that is, they do not act in opposition to them; they do not employ a therapeutic treatment.

Finally, there are those who, by the Grace of our Lord, consciously fight the spiritual fight without concessions or compromises, who uproot their sinful passions with the work of unceasing prayer and, in general, by the Divine virtues; and they, by means of purification, proceed towards illumination and deification.

* * *

One simple example:

- Someone insults and humiliates us without reason. We become agitated, flare up, return the insult, constantly remember the evil which he has done to us, and judge him. In this way, we are held in the clutches of resentment and hatred of our brother.

• It could be the case, however, that though we are inwardly sorrowful, we struggle not to answer back. We are possibly defeated in the struggle or carried away by habit, but then we let it go at that. We would, in that case, belong to the second category of those who restrain themselves.

• If, on the other hand, we rejoice that we have been insulted, and if we condemn ourselves and are sorrowful that we were the reason that our brother was troubled and upset, then we are in a God-pleasing spiritual state.

Abba Dorotheos of Gaza says that he who exercises his passion resembles a person at whom the enemy is shooting arrows, and he takes them and thrusts them himself into his heart. As for the one who restrains his passion, he resembles the person at whom the enemy is shooting, but who has put on a breastplate and is not wounded by the arrows. But he who uproots the passions resembles the person who takes the arrows and breaks them, or returns them into the heart of his enemy.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ: now that we are in the midst of the Light of the Resurrection, let us resolve at least not to exercise our passions in the future; that will constitute a sure foundation such that, with the help of the Theotokos and our partaking of the Immaculate Mysteries, we may arrive at the state of those who uproot the passions for the Kingdom of Heaven.

St. Thomas Sunday, 25 April 2005 (Old Style)

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“WHEN HE DIED on the Cross, He tore asunder the veil of the Temple and opened those secret places of the saints that had been hidden, and after the Resurrection when He appeared to His disciples, He opened their understanding, so that they might be able to comprehend these things and the other mysteries of the Scriptures spiritually, with their minds’ eyes unveiled.”

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

Teaching on the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church

BY ARCHPRIEST ALEXANDER RUDAKOV

PUBLISHED IN 1890 IN SAINT PETERSBURG

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

§ 73. A Short Explanation of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, and How it Differs from that of Saint John Chrysostom. Saint Basil the Great revised the Liturgy that had been handed down from apostolic times in the Church of Caesarea and committed it to writing. Wishing to grant a healing salve to the infirmities of the people, who on account of the prolonged services were absenting themselves, St Basil made certain abbreviations. This written form was adopted throughout much of the East. Subsequently, St John Chrysostom made further abbreviations to the Liturgy of St Basil for his flock in Constantinople. In general these abbreviations pertain only to the prayers of the Eucharistic canon itself. From this we see that the Liturgy of St Basil the Great is distinguished from that of St John Chrysostom in the following ways: 1) the prayer at the consecration of the gifts, which is read secretly by the celebrant is much longer, and for this reason the chants used for the hymns chanted at this time are prolonged; 2) the words of this prayer, *He gave it to His holy disciples and apostles, saying* (before the *Take, eat...*) are said out loud, and the same words are repeated aloud before the *Drink ye all from this...* 3) Instead of the hymn, *It is truly meet to call thee blessed...* we chant, *In thee, O full of grace, all creation doth rejoice...*

The Liturgy of St Basil is celebrated ten times a year: either on the Great Feasts of the Nativity and the Theophany or on their

eves (depending on the day of the week on which those feasts fall), on the day of St Basil the Great (1st January), on the Sundays that fall within Great Lent (not Palm Sunday), and on the Thursday and Saturday of Great Week. On all the other days of the year, with the two exceptions of the days when no Liturgy is appointed or weekdays within Great Lent and the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Great Week, when the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated, the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is celebrated in our churches.

There follow three paragraphs here about various festal celebrations, but it seems more appropriate to omit these for the moment, and to include those which deal with the feasts falling this month - ed.

§ 77. Particularities of the Services for the Feast of the Lord's Entry into Jerusalem. This feast is also known as Palm Sunday, and sometimes as Flower-bearing Sunday. During Matins, after the reading of the Gospel, a special prayer is read and palm branches are blessed and distributed to the congregation. In northern countries, where palms are not to be found, very often instead of palms pussy willow branches are given out, as they are in full flower about this time. The palms are held during the services by the faithful as living reminders of the fervour of spirit wherewith the people of Jerusalem greeted our Saviour on this day, strewing palm branches in His way, and they serve also as symbols of victory, the victory which our Saviour is to achieve over death and Hades. This blessing of palms is a widespread and ancient custom of the Universal Church.

§ 78. Particularities of the Services for Pascha. The word, *Pascha*, corresponds to the Jewish word for the Passover, and signifies deliverance. The Jewish Passover, of course, commemorated the deliverance of their forebears from slavery in Egypt and their passing over the Red Sea dry-shod. For the Christian, however, who celebrates the New Testament Pascha, it is a cele-

bration of deliverance through Christ of the whole race of mankind from slavery to the devil, and passing over to life and a blessed eternity. Because of the supreme importance of the benefactions which we have received through the Resurrection of Christ, Pascha is called the festival of festivals, and the services celebrated on this feast have a particular majesty and celebratory character.

In the late evening before the midnight service begins, the faithful come to church, customarily dressed in suitable, modest church attire, but wearing bright and lighter colours than usual, and as we prepare for the service we listen to the Acts of the Apostles being read. About half-an-hour before midnight we read and chant the last of the lenten services, Nocturns. During this a canon is read, and often as this approaches its end the Winding Sheet, *epitaphios*, of the Saviour is taken from the centre of the church and laid upon the Holy Table. This is done quietly and in semi-darkness and represents the Saviour's Resurrection, which was unseen by any earthly creature. He did not jump out of the tomb, semi-naked, waving the flag of England, as is shown on some of the more decadent "icons"! The Winding Sheet remains on the Holy Table for the forty days of Pascha, reminding us Christ was forty days bodily with His disciples after the Resurrection. At midnight, the Resurrection service itself begins. The clergy are vested in their most radiant vestments, and the senior celebrant comes out through the Royal Gates holding a lighted three-branch candlestick, the faithful come forward to light candles that they are holding from his candles, and the choir chants: *Come, receive ye light from the Unwaning Light, and glorify Christ, Who is arisen from the dead.* When everyone has lighted their candles a procession forms and leaves the church, processing around the outside of it three times chanting, *Angels in the Heavens, O Christ our Saviour, praise Thy Resurrection with hymns; deem us also who are on earth worthy to glorify Thee with a pure heart.* While the procession is being made the church is closed and left in darkness and empty, but someone inside lights all the lamps in readiness

for the return of the people. When for the third time the congregation reaches the western doors of the church, they assemble there and the Resurrection is proclaimed by the reading of the Gospel (Mark 16:1-8). The procession has represented the Myrrh-bearing Women coming to the empty tomb of the Saviour. The priest then begins the Matins service, and the paschal troparion is chanted over and over again, and as it is the celebrant greets the faithful with the paschal greeting, *Christ is risen!* - just as the Angel greeted the women with this joyous message. Then the doors of the church are thrown open, and it is now seen to be empty, as was the tomb, and full of light. The clergy and people enter in, repeatedly chanting the troparion, *Christ is risen from the dead, by death hath He trampled down death, and on those in the graves hath He bestowed life.*

A canon, composed by Saint John of Damascus, comprises the greater part of paschal Matins. Between each of the odes there is a Little Litany, and on each ode a censuring, and the people are greeted again and again with the *Christ is risen!* To this they respond with *Truly He is risen!* This is usually done in as many languages as possible. This repeated censuring and greeting represents the numerous times on which the Saviour appeared to His disciples and followers after that He was risen from the dead. The praises follow the canon, and then special paschal hymns. The last of these is, *It is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another...* Properly at this time the clergy come down into the nave and they and all the congregation greet each other with the paschal kiss. For practical reasons, they often start this when the praises are commenced so that there is time enough to greet everyone. Then the Catechetical Homily of Saint John Chrysostom is read, and Matins is brought to a close.

Throughout this service and the Liturgy which follows, and indeed for the seven days of New or Bright Week, the doors in the iconostas are left open, signifying that through His Resurrection Christ has opened unto us the gates of the Heavenly Kingdom.

At the Liturgy itself, the Gospel reading is the first section of St John's Gospel beginning, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God*. It continues until verse 17. This declares to us that our Redeemer was indeed God. In some churches the Gospel is read in a number of languages, showing that the great gift granted us by the Resurrection is offered to all peoples on earth, although properly this reading of the Gospel in various languages is appointed for the Gospel reading later in the day at the Agape Vespers service. At the end of that service a procession is usually made around the church, proclaiming to those outside the Resurrection of our Saviour.

Throughout New Week, the services are almost identical to that on the day of Pascha, and thereafter for the forty days of the feast they are full of paschal elements. On the last day of the feast, in many churches, they are celebrated in the same way as the New Week services.

.... to be continued with "Particularities of the Services for the Feast of Pentecost"

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THE COMING MONTH

THIS MONTH covers the holiest and most important days of the Church Year, and it would be impossible for us to detail all the various aspects of the celebrations. However, we have tried to give readers a taste, and indeed we hope an appetite, by including quotes from the Fathers about the institution of the Eucharist and our teaching concerning it; a sermon based on events during Palm Sunday, a short piece by the late Metropolitan Cyprian preached on Thomas Sunday, and an outline in the "Divine Services" section of the liturgy for Palm Sunday and Pascha. As our Saviour blessed the five loaves and two fishes of the lad and fed the five thousand, may He also bless these offerings and nourish you all spiritually.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

THE FOLLOWING EMAIL MESSAGE, with the question and his answer was sent us by **Subdeacon Nicolas Mabin** of the **Russian Orthodox Church of the Dormition on Harvard Road**, London W4, whom we thank for his contribution.

“I put together this note for one of our catechumens and it occurred to me (rather presumptuously) that it might be suitable for inclusion one day in The Shepherd Q&A section.”

Q: I WAS CURIOUS about the significance of the blood and the water spurting from Christ’s side when he was stabbed with the spear. What does the separation mean? What is the significance of the water? “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” John 19:34

A: WE MAY UNDERSTAND the significance of the piercing of the side of Christ from the liturgical texts in which the Fathers give expression to all Orthodox belief and understanding. Here are some examples:

Today the Jews nailed to the Cross the Lord who divided the sea with a rod and led them through the wilderness. Today they pierced with a lance the side of Him who for their sake smote Egypt with plagues. They gave Him gall to drink, who rained down manna on them for food.

(Matins of Good Friday: Antiphon Six: Tone 7)

Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the Law by Thy precious Blood: nailed to the Cross and pierced by the spear, Thou hast poured forth immortality upon mankind. O our Saviour, glory be to Thee.

(Matins of Good Friday: Sessional Hymn Tone 4)

Thy life-giving side, O Christ, flowing as a fountain from Eden, waters Thy Church as a living Paradise. Then, dividing into

the four branches of the Gospels, with its streams it refreshes the world, making glad the creation and teaching the nations to venerate Thy kingdom with faith. [Genesis 2:10]

(Matins of Good Friday: Sticheron on the Beatitudes: Tone 4)

Every member of Thy holy body endured dishonour for our sakes: Thy head, the thorns; Thy face, the spitting; Thy cheeks, the buffeting; Thy mouth, the taste of gall mingled with vinegar; Thine ears, the impious blasphemies; Thy back, the scourging and Thy hand, the reed; Thy whole body, the stretching on the Cross; Thy limbs, the nails; and Thy side, the spear. Thou hast suffered for us and by Thy Passion set us free from passions; in loving self-abasement, Thou hast stooped down to us and raised us up: O Saviour almighty, have mercy on us.

(Matins of Good Friday: Sticheron at Lauds: Tone 3)

Today the Master of Creation stands before Pilate; today the Maker of all things is given up to the Cross, and of His own will He is led as a lamb to the slaughter. He who sent manna in the wilderness is transfixed with nails; His side is pierced, and a sponge with vinegar touches His lips. The Deliverer of the world is struck on the face, and the Creator of all is mocked by His own servants. How great is the Master's love for mankind! For those who crucified Him, He prayed to His Father, saying: 'Forgive them this sin, for in their wickedness they know not what they do.'

(Vespers of Holy Saturday: Sticheron on 'Lord, I have cried': Tone 6)

A footnote in *The Orthodox Study Bible* says: "The blood and water from Christ's body show the reality of the great sacraments. The water speaks of our baptism, which is participation in Christ's life-giving death (Romans 3:6-11). In Communion, we receive His life-giving Blood, 'drinking from His very side' (John Chrysostom). It is literally the forgiveness of sins and the regeneration of mankind that poured out from our Lord's side.

Finally, here are the words of Saint John Chrysostom on this matter:

Homily 85 of Saint John Chrysostom:

John 19:31: Because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross —they besought Pilate that their legs might be broken.

Do you see how strong a thing is truth? By means of the very things which are the objects of their zeal, prophecy is fulfilled, for by occasion of those things, this plain prediction, unconnected with them, receives its accomplishment. For the soldiers when they came, broke the legs of the others, but not those of Christ. Yet these to gratify the Jews pierced His side with a spear, and now insulted the dead body. O abominable and accursed purpose! Yet, beloved, be not thou confounded, be not thou desponding; for the things which these men did from a wicked will, fought on the side of the truth. Since there was a prophecy, saying, from this circumstance, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced” (John 19:37; Zechariah 12:10). And not this only, but the deed then dared was a demonstration of the faith, to those who should afterwards disbelieve; as to Thomas, and those like him. With this too, an ineffable mystery was accomplished. For there came forth water and blood. Not without a purpose, or by chance, did those founts come forth, but because by means of these two together the Church consists. And the initiated know it, being by water indeed regenerate, and nourished by the Blood and the Flesh. Hence, the Mysteries take their beginning; that when you approach to that awful cup, you may so approach, as drinking from the very side.

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“ON that earlier day of rest [*the Sabbath*] the Jews performed no menial work, and this one day prefigured our entire life. In other words, your life is a spiritual day of rest on which you should always serve God and refrain from sins, because they are menial works and cause their workers to be in servitude forever.”

ABBOT ÆLFRIC OF EYNHAM, + C. 1014 A.D.

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

BISHOP AMBROSE'S BRIEF VISIT

HIS GRACE, **Bishop Ambrose** briefly visited England over the weekend of 11th - 13th March. This coincided with Forgiveness Sunday and His Grace celebrated the Liturgy for that feast and the Vespers of Forgiveness, assisted by **Fr Borislav Popov** and **Hierodeacon Sabbas**. Between Matins and the Liturgy itself, the infants **Matei**, **Ghideon** and **Octavian** were churched, and the forty day prayers read for their mothers, **Georgina**, **Larisa** and **Daniela**. Immediately after the Liturgy, the Bishop was briefly able to attend our buffet-style Parish Breakfast and to talk to some of our people before being taken by **Xenia Antonova** to catch his return flight from Heathrow. At different points during the service, Bishop Ambrose had preached three sermons on repentance and forgiveness, and we are extremely grateful to **Catalin Tamasanu** for arriving before 7 a.m., to set up his excellent amplifier system so that these could be heard by all.

FOUR BAPTISMS AT SAINT EDWARD'S

ON Saturday, 21st February / 5th March, **Fr Ioan Onofrei** from Romania baptized three infants at Saint Edward's Church:-

NICOLAE, the son of **George** and **Andreea Grigoras** of Edgware, with **Florin Cotoc** standing as his godfather. On Sunday, 14th / 27th March, the 40th day prayers were read for Andreea at the Convent and Nicolae was churched.

MATEI, son of **Vasile** and **Georgina Constantin** of Little Stanmore, with **Ioan** and **Mihaela Pintilie** as godparents.

ELISEEA, daughter of **Mihai** and **Casiana Visanu** of Bumbles Green, with **Paul** and **Ionela Chiriac** as godparents.

The next day Fr Ioan served the Divine Liturgy at the **Convent of the Annunciation** in London.

On Sunday, 22nd February / 6th March, **Archimandrite Veniamin**, who had been with us the previous evening for Vespers, concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with us at Brookwood and immediately after the service, celebrated the Baptism of **OCTAVIAN**, the son of **Marius** and **Daniela Alexandru** of Woodford, with **Gheorge** and **Elena Amarie** as godparents.

Nicolae is named for Saint Nicolas the Wonderworker, Matei for the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, Eliseea for the Holy Prophet Elisseus, and Octavian for the Holy Hieromartyr Octavian of Carthage. Please keep them in your prayers.

SUBDEACON DMITRI GALITZINE

SUBDEACON **Dmitri Galitzine** reposed in the Lord on 9th March n.s., while visiting his family in Greece. Born in Perm, Russia, in 1927, he was the son of Prince Nicolas and Princess Irina Galitzine. The family managed to escape Soviet Russia, and since his childhood days he had been a faithful member of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad parish in London. After the death of his wife, **Patricia**, he was made a subdeacon by the then **Bishop Paul of Stuttgart** (subsequently Archbishop of Sydney and Australia). Dmitri was one of the people in the church there who warmly welcomed those of us who were converts to Orthodoxy. He was active in parish life, being on the council and a trustee of the church, and he played an important part in helping the parish to re-locate

when they lost their church at Emperor's Gate. However, after the submission of the majority of their hierarchy to the Moscow Patriarchate in 2007, putting his faith before considerations of his national and aristocratic inheritance, he left and became a member of our communities under the **Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece**. His dying in Greece, after a fall and a successful hip operation, was providential, as he was ministered unto pastorally by the fathers of the **Monastery of Saints Cyprian and Justina** in his last days. His funeral was chanted, with our **Bishop Ambrose** and **Metropolitan Photios** serving, and he was laid to rest at the **Holy Angels Convent at Afidnai**. On the ninth day, for those of his loved ones in England who had been unable to attend his funeral, a memorial service was chanted for him at Saint Edward's. It was attended by **Mother Vikentia**, the superior of the Annunciation Convent, by **Priestmonk Augustine** of the ROAC parish, Guildford, by many of the people from his former parish at the **Russian Orthodox Church of the Dormition** on Harvard Road, West London, and by friends and former work colleagues, about a hundred people in all. The family provided a Mercy Meal in his memory in our old Mortuary hall. May his rest be with the Saints and his *Memory Eternal*.

VISITORS

THE PRIEST, **Fr Kristian Akselberg** of the **Greek Orthodox Cathedral parish of St Andrew, in Kentish Town**, visited us briefly on the Soul Sabbath, 21st February / 5th March. He happened to be in the area and called in, arriving just as the remnant of our congregation that day was about to join us for the breakfast, and so he joined us for that.

MARGARET HOBBS brought a group of about twenty people to see the Church on Monday 14th March n.s. The group had come from Sandhurst and was led by **Elaine Cowley**.

MORTUARY RESTORATION FUND

SINCE our last issue, in which we mentioned the necessity of re-roofing the **Old Mortuary building** and attending to various structural matters, we have received **£5,537.04** from our readers and parishioners towards this work. God bless you all for your ready response. Donations may be sent to the Brotherhood or paid directly into our **King Edward Orthodox Trust Co Ltd** Building Fund account, number 00089278, at the **CAF Bank Ltd**, sort code 40-52-40.

TWO NEW ICONS

WE HAVE received two new icons for the church at Brookwood, **St Swithun of Winchester** and **St Aldhelm**. The icons were painted by the sisters of the **Convent of Saint Elizabeth the Grand Duchess of Russia**, Etna, California. At the present time, they have been photographed by **M.R.M. Studios** in Aldershot, and we hope to publish prints of them in due course. **Easels of Chobham** are now framing the icons.

WOKING NEWS & MAIL

ON THURSDAY, 24th March, the ***Woking News & Mail*** included a collage of photographs, taken during our Procession of Icons on the **Sunday of Orthodoxy**. The photographs were taken by our parishioner **Alex Spiroglou** and another, and in the paper they were included with a short paragraph under the *Your Community News* page of the paper's most illustrious columnist, **Ann Tilbury**.



Pity the word “Easter”

THE PROPER NAME for the feast of the Saviour’s Resurrection is Pascha, from which we derive our adjective paschal, and it has great theological import. However, only the most extreme purist would object to our referring colloquially to it as Easter. Some do, pointing out that the word, Easter, refers to the Germanic goddess Eostre. However, this argument is rather shaky on two counts. Firstly, the vast majority of English speakers today have no idea that there was a goddess Eostre, and the word Easter for them refers to the feast we are considering. Secondly, the word that our Greek brethren use for God, *Theos*, is used in our own Scriptures for pagan gods and demons as well, yet they have not invented a purer word! But now “Easter” is being attacked from another angle! Apparently this year, confectioners are no longer marketing their chocolate eggs as Easter Eggs, lest it cause offense to non-Christians. How silly can we get? Increasingly products are marketed for Hallowe’en, for Eid and Diwali, and it is only a Christian connotation that is considered likely to cause offense. If we travel down this road of puerile political correctness, surely we should at least treat all religions fairly and erase all religious references. And to please the extreme purists perhaps, among ourselves, we should not have Easter eggs, but Paschal ova.



PRACTICAL TIP

AS you approach the chalice to receive the Holy Mysteries, you should state your name clearly so that the celebrant can hear - not simply mouth it. And if you are bringing up a baby or toddler be particularly aware that you need to give his or her name clearly - after all your baby looks unique to you, but perhaps not to an elderly priest, who has seen so many in his life time!