



## FROM THE FATHERS

“THE LORD, that He might transform His outward healings into inward remedies, that after He had brought healing to their bodies might then bring about the cure of their souls, calling His disciples unto Him, and going apart from the multitude that thronged Him, He went up into the solitude of a nearby mountain (Mt. 5:1), so that in the lofty remoteness of this mystic place, He might instruct them in His higher purposes; signifying to them both by the nature of the place and by what was done there, that it was He Who at another time had deigned to speak with Moses (Ex. 19:1-21): there, however, of a terrible justice, but here of a diviner clemency, so that the promise might be fulfilled which He had spoken through Jeremias the prophet, saying: *Behold, the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Jer. 31:31). After those days, saith the Lord, I will give my laws in their hearts and on their minds will I write them (Heb. 10:16).* He therefore has spoken to the Apostles Who of old had spoken to Moses; and the swift hand of the Word writing (cf Ps. 147:3) inscribed the decrees of the New Testament in the hearts of His disciples. But no dense clouds gathered about them as of old, nor were the people terrified of approaching the mountain because of fearful thunder and lighnings (Heb. 12:18); but in clear and tranquil speech His words reach the ears of those who stand about Him, so that the soothing mercy of His Grace might remove the harshness of the Law, and the Spirit of adoption take away the fear that belonged to servitude” (Rom. 8:15).

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

# Teaching

## refuting the light-minded opinion that the young must do their own thing

BISHOP IRENEI OF YEKATERINBURG & IRBIT

*IT IS GOOD* for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth (Lamentations 3:27). This means that, for his own good, a person must, from his earliest years, from his youth, learn to restrain himself, to curb himself, to obey God's law, to submit to the moral demands of the Christian life and resolutely follow the precepts of the will of God, and not the hankerings of his "youthful heedlessness," which the holy Church each time, at the beginning of the school term, prays the Lord to dispel from those who are applying themselves to good teaching. And both those who are teaching and those who are being taught must needs deeply impress this truth in the hearts, by which many avoid moral injury and not infrequently many have avoided their own ruination.

*The young must do their own thing!* - is something that is now said not only by those *in the counsel of the ungodly... seated in the seat of the pestilent* (Ps 1:1), but even in Christian families! And how grievously this ruinous opinion brings guilt upon its proponents! What a mass of sacrifices it has offered to Hades! And incidentally, this kind of talk is not new. Leaders in sin of ancient times spoke in a like manner. Even in the ancient world they proclaimed: *Let us enjoy the good things that are present and make use of creation to the full as in youth. Let us take our fill of costly wines and perfumes, and let no flower of spring pass us by. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither. Let none of us fail to share in our revelry; everywhere let us leave signs of*

*enjoyment, because this is our portion, and this is our lot* (Wisdom 2:6-9). Is this not the same discourse, both in content and in words, as *the young must do their own thing*? This is really an invitation to indecent indulgence in sensual gratification, to which the young are particularly prone.

One cannot leave this without refuting it. In a moment we will look at this issue, although one must recognise that to do so is not easy, in that we will have in opposition to us the whole mind-set of our times, which is chiefly distinguished by its sensual character. We will have the elderly in opposition to us, counting on justifying their own past misdeeds by this same opinion. We will have parents in opposition to us, trying to excuse their weaknesses and their shortcomings in bringing up their children attentively. We will especially have the young in opposition to us, who have no liking for instruction regarding duty, curbing the self, restraint, obedience, and who fantasise about freedom, enjoyments and pleasures. But, nonetheless because of love for the truth and in love for man, we are obliged to expose this error.

The Lord *hath made us, and not we ourselves* (Ps. 99:2). He has redeemed us by His blood. He constantly protects our being and compassionately endows us with His benefactions. Consequently, we belong wholly to the Lord, being His creation, and therefore we must needs serve Him with all our mind, with all our soul, with all our heart, and throughout all our life. But, tell me, does the person, who follows the precept that *the young must do their own thing*, serve the Lord? Can one, who without consideration surrenders himself to the allures of “youthful heedlessness” stay pure and free of guilt? Saint John Chrysostom says: “See how David was wounded, and do you think to remain invulnerable? One glance cast down that pillar, and you want me to put faith in your firmness? For all his holiness, that great King did not hold out at the very first temptation, and you make bold to assert that you will remain unshaken amid so many foes. Your soul is tried by sight, by hearing and the sense of smell, and you want to make me

believe that you are beyond danger? Maybe you are made of stone or iron? Perhaps you are not made of flesh and bones, like all the rest of us? Maybe you can hold fire in your bare hands and not be burned?" Thus it is that in following the rule that *the young must do their own thing*, passing your youth in pleasures, in forgetfulness of God and in grieving Him, you take back from the Lord part of your life, which belongs completely to Him alone. And in fact you take from the Lord precisely that part [of your life] which is most precious to Him. Youth has power, warmth; it is the flower of life, the first fruit of life, and you should know that He asks of us the first fruits in everything. In the Old Testament, He gave the commandment that the first fruits of the field, the firstlings of the herds, and more especially the firstborn of the children, should be dedicated to Him. The Lord Jesus Christ paid especial attention to the young. The Evangelist reminds us of the youth with whom the Saviour conversed and whom He especially loved: *beholding him He loved him* (Mark 10:21). The Apostle John, the beloved disciple of the Saviour, was the youngest of them all. Following the example of their Divine Teacher, the Apostles also refer to the young with love, tenderness and warmth. The Apostle John says: *I write unto you, young ones, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one* (1 John 2:14). Dedicate then your youth to the Lord, you young ones, and not to the amusements and pleasures of life. Follow the example of the pious youth of the tribe of Naphtali, Tobias, who during his lifetime merited the blessing of God and after his death the praise of mankind. Harken unto the voice that addresses you and calls you: Bear the yoke of God's law from your youth that it may be good for you. Do not give in to self-will and sensual gratifications, do not forget prayer, and you will elude the pitfalls of your time of life.

It is not only our holy Faith, but also the simple feeling of gratitude which demands of us that from our youth we dedicate ourselves to God. Everyone knows that simple decency requires that a gift calls for a reciprocal disposition, and that as far as one

can one should be well disposed to the giver. Being valued, of course, is not a gift but a feeling, from which there proceeds that purpose of the heart, which accompanies it. *Give me, O son, thy heart*, demands our Creator. The Lord is infinitely great, and we are as nothing. But once the Lord has been well pleased to accept us unto Himself as a gift, then we must be assiduous that we be, as far as possible, worthy of that gift.

But then we come to that person who follows the precept that *the young must do their own thing*. To devote himself to God, he lingers until the time when, because of his licentiousness and lack of restraint, he has become completely enfeebled and without any strength. Having devoted the flower of his life and his best years wholly to God's enemy, the world, he dares to commit himself in a condition that would subject him to the mockery even of other people, - in a repulsive condition, - to the gift of the Creator. But might he not be treated forbearingly, if it were that he had come to this state as a consequence of passion or lack of understanding? But it is not so! Having dissipated his whole life from his earliest years, he had aforetime resolved that the last years, the tail end of a life spluttering out, the tail end which was of no use to anyone, would be devoted to the service of God. Is this gratitude? Is this love? Does the very magnitude of this not cause the Lord to grieve? But all the same, in His ineffable kind-heartedness, the Lord does not decline to accept even this gift. And what could be more astonishing than the acceptance of this gift? "Come," says the Lord to the unfortunate one, who has mindlessly dissipated his youth, "come unto Me, ungrateful one! I know that you are no longer of any use to anyone. Your heart even now would not have turned to Me, had others not rebuffed you. And it was not love but fear of the everlasting torments which brought you to Me. For a long time you disregarded Me, and now you desire to have a place in My mansions; were this not so you would continue to disregard Me. It is not kind-heartedness but punishment that you deserve, yet I grant unto you a last refuge and I treat you in a way wholly

different from that which you did Me.” From this you can see, beloved ones, how grievous to the Lord are the words, *the young must do their own thing*.

It yet remains for us to demonstrate how ill-advisedly they rave who align their lives with this precept. St Gregory Nazianzen [*actually St Gregory the Theologian - transl.*], who was studying in Athens together with Julian the Apostate and who witnessed his bad conduct in his youth, foretold aforetime his future character: “O state of Rome,” he cried out, “what a monster you suckle at your breasts!” And St Gregory had a firm basis for speaking in this manner, because the character of a man is manifest from his youth. And experience constantly confirms for us the fairness of the popular proverb: “As it was in the cradle, so will it be in the grave.” The person who follows the dishonourable dictum, *the young must do their own thing*, endlessly subjects his soul to danger, first and foremost in that it binds him habitually to lead his life in a way which does not correspond to the true purpose of man on earth, because habits, especially when adopted in youth, become compulsive, they become second nature. And furthermore, he subjects himself to future dangers, making it difficult for himself to resolve things by making a break with his past way of life, which has strayed far from the path of good and the aim of human life. Usually they only strive as far as they can to prolong their youth, imagining that they could have “a second childhood.” If it sometimes happens that it comes into their mind that it is time to change this attractive but perilous way of life, then immediately a hidden voice intrudes suggesting that it is still possible to continue as before. Some devise plans to begin a new and better life, but the application of this is constantly deferred until later. Clearly such a one is abusing the kind-heartedness of God. God Himself proclaims this in those dread words, which should be displayed in large letters in the places where the young gather: *His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust* (Job 20:11). “What you sow, that you reap,” folk wisdom

tells us. And in the word of God, we find this confirmed: *He that soweth iniquity shall reap evils, and the rod of his wrath shall not stand* (Proverbs 22:8).

What way out is there from all this? The recourse is that, if it is really necessary that *the young must do their own thing*, then this must be understood in its true Christian meaning. That is, the young must take up a zealous application to their religious responsibilities, make their own church practices and Christian moral precepts, being instructed in what is truly good and profitable. The young have greater force and strength, than those of other age groups, and therefore they must needs serve God more zealously. Wherefore, if there are some among us who have already spent their youth in light-mindedness and pleasures, let them now adopt heartfelt repentance for their waywardness, crying out with the Psalmist, *The sins of my youth and mine ignorances remember not* (Ps. 24:6). Now, all of you, who are at this wonderful and decisive stage of life, do not forget eternal Wisdom's instruction: *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth ... Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil* (Eccl. 12:1, 13-14).

***Published in Russian in 1901 by the Brotherhood  
of the Righteous Simeon of Verkoturje the Wonderworker.***

\* \* \* \* \*

“IT WILL BE ENOUGH if you take care to instruct your children in the fear of God, instil in them an Orthodox understanding, and by teaching them to be faithful, you will protect them from reasoning that is foreign to the teachings of the Orthodox Church. The good that you sow in the hearts of your children while they are young will blossom forth in their hearts when they come to full maturity, after enduring the bitter trials of school and contemporary life, which often break off the branches of a good Christian upbringing at home.”

VEN. AMBROSE OF OPTINA, + 1891 A.D.

# *“The Thanksgiving”*

I DREAMT that I visited Heaven and an Angel undertook the task to be my guide. We were walking side by side in a huge room filled with Angels. My guide stopped in front of the first work station and said: “This is the Receiving Department. Here we receive all the requests that arrive for God in the form of prayer.” I looked around. There were so many Angels, taking out and arranging requests that were written on bulky piles of paper and notes from all over the world. Then we entered a long corridor until we arrived at the second station. The Angel said to me: “This is the Department of Packing and Delivery. Here favours and prayers that have been asked for are pushed forward and given to those who asked them.” Again I noticed an amount of movement here also. Countless Angels were coming and going, working hard, since so many desires were asked for and were being packed to be delivered on earth. Finally at the end of a long corridor, we stopped at the door of a very small station. To my great surprise only one Angel was sitting there, without actually doing anything. “This is the Department of Thanksgiving,” my Angel friend said softly to me. He seemed a little embarrassed. “How could this be? Isn’t there work here?” I asked. “It is sad,” the Angel said with a sigh. “After the people receive their favours, very few send thanksgiving.” “How can one thank God for the blessing he has received?” I asked again. “Very simple,” he answered. “You only need to say: ‘I thank You, my God!’” “And what exactly must we give thanks for?” “If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of the people on this earth. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet and a few coins on a saucer, you are included in the 8% of people who are prosperous. If you woke up this morning healthier rather than ill, you are more blessed than all those who will not live until



the end of the day. If you have never experienced the fear of war, the loneliness of gaol, the agony of torture and the pangs of hunger, you are in front of 700 millions of people on this earth. If you can pray in a church without fear of being attacked, arrested or executed, for sure you will be envied by about three billion people in the world. If your parents are still alive and still married, you are a rare person. If you can keep your head high and smile, just know that you are an exception amongst all those who live in doubt and despair. And if you are now reading this message, you have just received a double blessing, because it was given to you by someone who loves you, and because you are more fortunate than two billion people who cannot read." "I understand. What shall I do now? How can I start?" "Say, good morning," my Angel said with a smile, "count your blessings and pass on this message to other people, to remind them how blessed they are. And do not forget to send your thanksgiving!"

*A blessing from the Vatopedi dependency Porto Logos,  
Mount Athos, sent us by the Sisters of the Convent  
of the Holy Angels, Afidnai, Greece.*



“THE FACT is that no man at the present time *brings up* and educates his children *in the discipline and admonition of the Lord* (Eph. 6:4), or otherwise than in worldly habits and pagan morals. He cares nothing, and is not anxious like Job, saying: Perhaps my sons are thinking wicked things in their hearts (Cf. Job 1:15). Neither does he tremble nor is he afraid that his sons may have done something heinous and fallen away from the service of Him Who was slain for us, from His dominion, and from being His adopted sons, and may have become servants of the enemy.”

VEN. SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, + 1022 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. We are also now omitting several sections which deal with services at various points of the Church Year, which we will insert as those observances crop up.*

## OCCASIONAL SERVICES

**§ 94. Teaching on the Occasional Services.** Besides the services which are served at the appointed times and are for all the faithful, there are also sacred rites, which are celebrated at special and various times to meet the needs and requirements of the people who ask for them. The services for these are found in the **Book of Needs**, and most importantly among them we have the orders for the Mysteries (Sacraments), and secondly such things as the funeral services, and the services of supplication which are used for the sick, for blessing houses, cars, etc., before travelling, in times of danger, drought, or need, or in thanksgiving.

## BAPTISM AND CHRISMATION

**§ 95.** Baptism is properly preceded either by the rite of giving the candidate a Christian name, that of churching, or that of making one a catechumen.

1) **The Giving of a Name.** An infant, born of Orthodox Christian parents is either visited at the family home or brought

to the doors of the church on the eighth day and then given a name. The priest blesses the baby three times with the sign of the Cross and gives it a Christian name, praying that the Cross may ever abide in its mind, heart and thoughts, so that the newly-born might remain faithful to its Christian calling. Through this rite the baby is promised to the Christian community. The name given is that of a Saint, so that the person so named may have that saint as their example and rôle-model in life, and more importantly as an intercessor for them and a protector. In the case where a newborn baby is likely not to survive, these prayers may be said, along with those which are said for the recovery of the mother who has given birth, on the day of the birth. This follows the Old Testament tradition of granting a child a name on the eighth day when, if he were a boy, he was circumcised (Luke 1:59).

**2) Churching.** On the fortieth day, when the mother comes to the church so that the prayers of purification may be read for her, she brings the newborn infant to be churched. When the priest has read the prayers for the mother, he takes the baby in his hands, and says: “The servant / handmaid of God ... (name) ... is churched in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is done three times, and each time he raises the infant in the form of a cross. The first time it is done before the entrance to the church, the second time in the centre of the church, and the third time before the Royal gates leading to the altar. By this rite, he shows that the baby is given access to the church and to the company of the believers.

If an adult wishes to be baptized, whether they be heterodox, a Jew, a Muslim, pagan or atheist, they naturally have to attend a course of instruction. They are given a Christian name and patron saint when they are subsequently made catechumens. In being made such they have to publicly profess their desire to receive Baptism, renounce their former misbeliefs and promise loyalty to the Bishop as representing the local Church they are joining.

*.... to be continued.*

# THE COMING MONTH

PENTECOST, one of the most important of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church Year, falls this year on the first Sunday in June, 6th / 19th. In anticipation of this celebration, we included a short piece on its meaning and the way in which, among the Orthodox, it is celebrated in our last month's issue.

It must be admitted that one of the besetting temptations in contemporary Church life, is an emphasis on an exclusivist nationalism. The fact that it is exclusivist means that the traditions, customs and practices, and even the faithful themselves of other nations are often looked down upon or not fully accepted in brotherly love. People who come from countries where the majority of the people for centuries have been Orthodox may, perhaps, be forgiven to an extent, because they naturally remember and cling to the things that their forebears held dear and are fearful of losing them. However, often Western converts to Orthodoxy hurl themselves into this un-Christian disposition. They either adopt a nation which is not their own, and with which their only link is Orthodoxy - the very thing that should cure this tendency; or they assume a superiority for their own people on the frail grounds of myths and legends from the distant past. The Contakion for the Great Feast of Pentecost teaches us another way, and that all Orthodox Christians, whatever their ethnic background, comprise one nation named after Christ; it reads:

*Once, when He descended and confounded the tongues,  
the Most High divided the nations [i.e. Babel];  
and when He divided the tongues of fire [Pentecost],  
He called all men to unity;  
and with one accord we glorify the All-holy Spirit.*

The Sunday immediately after the Day of Pentecost is dedicated to **All Saints**, and in relatively modern times on subsequent

Sundays festivals of national or local companies of saints have been inaugurated.

The day after All Saints' Day, having received the gifts of the Holy Spirit and seen the witness and example of the Saints, we are called to begin again our struggle for sanctification, and the **Apostles' Fast** begins. It is so-called because it is kept from that day (the eighth day after Pentecost until the feast of the **Martyrdom of the Holy Chiefs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul** (29th June / 12th July). Thus the beginning of this fast is fixed according of the cycle of services which ultimately depend on the date of Pascha, and so it begins on a different date every year. It ends on a fixed date 28th June, and thus it varies in length from year to year. Some years, when Pascha is as late as it possibly can be, 25th April, this fast will begin on 21st June and last only eight days. When Pascha is as early as it can be, 22nd March, then the Apostles' Fast will begin on 18th May and consequently last exactly six weeks. This year because Pascha was relatively late, the fast will last fifteen days. The discipline with regard to our diet is also relatively mild. On the two Saturdays and Sundays that fall in the fast and on the feast of the **Birth of the Baptist** (24th June / 7th July) we may allow ourselves fish, wine and oil, and on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, wine and oil. Let even those who are not very zealous then try this year to keep the fast well!

Among the Saints we celebrate in June, we have:

The **Holy Martyrs Alexander and Antonina the Virgin** (10th / 23rd June). Antonina was from the city of Krodamos in Asia Minor. She was arrested for being a Christian, and was brought before the governor Festus. He urged her to worship the pagan gods, promising to make her a priestess of the goddess Artemis. But the saint bravely confessed Christ, and she urged the governor to renounce the worship of demons in the form of idols. Festus gave orders that the saint be struck and sent her to the prison. There the martyr spent her time in prayer and fasting, and then she heard the voice of God, "Antonina, strengthen yourself with

food and be brave, for I am with you.” When they led her before the governor again, the martyr continued to confess Christ. Knowing of the Christians’ regard for chastity and purity, the governor ordered the holy virgin to be sent to a house of ill repute and given over for defilement by soldiers, but the Lord inspired one of them, Alexander, to save the holy virgin. He sought permission to go in to her, and all thought it was to satisfy his bodily lusts. However, when alone with her, Alexander told her to put on his military attire and flee. No one recognized her dressed as a soldier, and she walked out of prison. Later the soldiers sent in by Festus found St Alexander alone in the room. He refused to respond to the questions of the governor, and so he was put to torture and mercilessly beaten. Through the inspiration of the Lord Jesus Christ, St Antonina also came to stand alongside her protector before Festus. Failing to get the Martyrs to abandon their love of Christ, they cut off their hands, smeared them with pitch and threw them into a pit where a fire was burning. When the fire died out, they threw snakes into the pit, so that Christians would not be able to gather up the bones of the martyrs. Festus, however was punished: he became numb, and was able neither to eat nor to drink. He died after seven days of terrible torment. The Saints were martyred on 3rd May, 313 A.D. However, their memory is kept on 10th June. The relics of the saints were later translated to Constantinople and placed in the Maximinos monastery.

The **Holy Hieromartyr Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata** (22nd June /5th July), stood firmly for the Orthodox Confession of Faith, proclaimed at the First Council. For this he was persecuted by the Arians, being repeatedly deprived of his see and banished. The Emperor Constantius (337-361), an Arian sympathizer, learned that St Eusebius kept a conciliar decree regarding the election of the Orthodox Archbishop Meletius to the See of Antioch. He commanded him to give up the decree. The saint boldly refused to do as ordered. The enraged emperor sent a message that if he did not hand over the decree, his right hand would be cut off. St Eusebius stretched out both hands to the emissary saying, “Cut

them off, but I will not give up the Decree of the Council, which denounces the wickedness and iniquity of the Arians.” The Emperor marvelled at his steadfastness, and did not harm him. During the reign of Justin the Apostate (361-363), an open persecution against Christians began. The Saint, concealing his identity, went about in a soldier’s uniform across the whole of Syria, Phœnicia and Palestine, urging Christians hold fast to the Orthodox Faith. He ordained priests and deacons and consecrated bishops for the Orthodox, establishing a catacomb Church. When Julian died, he was succeeded by the pious Emperor Jovian (363-364), and the persecutions stopped. Returning from exile, Saint Meletius of Antioch convened a local Council in the year 379, on the advice of St Eusebius. Twenty-seven bishops participated, and it reaffirmed the Orthodox teaching of the First Council. The Arians signed the conciliar definition, fearing the steadfast defenders of Orthodoxy, the holy hierarchs Meletius, Eusebius and Pelagius, who had great influence with the emperor. However, Jovian then died and an Arian, Valens came to the throne. The Orthodox were again subjected to persecution. St Meletius was banished to Armenia; St Pelagius to Arabia, and St Eusebius was condemned to exile in Thrace. St Eusebius left Samosata by night so as to prevent tumult among the people that revered him. Learning of the bishop’s departure, believers followed him and with tears entreated him to return. The saint refused the entreaty of those who had come, saying that he had to obey the authorities, but he urged his flock to hold firm to the Orthodox Faith. An Arian, Eunomius, was installed as Bishop of Samosata, but the people did not accept the heretic. The Orthodox would not go to the church and avoided meeting with him. When the Emperor Gratian (375-383) came upon the throne, the Orthodox hierarchs banished under the Arians were restored. Saint Eusebius also returned to Samosata and continued with the task of building up the Church. Together with St Meletius, he appointed Orthodox hierarchs and clergy to places where the Arians had formerly been in the ascendancy. In the year 380 he arrived in the city of Dolikhina to enthrone the bishop Marinus there. An

Arian woman, hating his Orthodoxy and steadfastness, threw a roof tile at the holy bishop's head. It caused a mortal wound. As he lay dying, he requested those around not to harm her for her sin. The body of St Eusebius was taken to Samosata and was buried by his flock. Antiochus succeeded him as Bishop and continued to confess the Orthodox Faith.

\* \* \* \* \*

## POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

*“HAVING asked around a few places (a Celtic Orthodox Church (sic), a Russian Orthodox Priest and a historian) I was told by the latter that rather than the Anglo-Saxons being formally Orthodox, he said to me that before the Great East-West Schism what we now know as the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches didn't formally exist as separate entities. After Augustine was sent by Rome to convert the population, Celtic and early Roman Christianity were dominant of which the historian tells me neither were specifically Orthodox. Did the Saxons or Celts have Metropolitans or Bishops present at the various councils between AD 300-750 (rough ages)? Did they have their own see? Were they part of the Pentarchy? Also, when listing in descending order of importance, which City would come first - Rome (as it is where St. Peter and Paul were martyred and older than the next City) or Constantinople seeing as it was purposefully built to be a city of religious importance by whom is usually regarded as the first Christian Roman Emperor (sic). The conclusion the historian's reply gave to me is that both modern Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy have the same origins lying in Nicene Christianity yet due to cultural and theological differences they grew apart. What part does/did Rome play in Ecumenical Councils? Are you able to give me any evidence to suggest the Anglo-Saxons or even the Celts and early Roman Christians were Orthodox and that in its fully formed state that Orthodoxy is the one Apostolic, protected Church that Christ himself founded?” - T.B., by email.*



ACTUALLY, before I start, I must warn you that I may not quite hit the mark in my reply, because, first of all I am not a theologian, and, secondly, I am not at all sure what your previous knowledge of these issues is. Are you an Orthodox Christian? Is your interest purely historical, or religious? However, I will try my best, and am willing to answer any subsequent questions if you have them.

The historian's idea of being "formally" Orthodox is not one which the Orthodox themselves would comprehend, though I suspect he means that the Anglo-Saxons in this country may not have generally used that term to describe themselves.

Our belief is that there is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is now represented by what is generally known as the Orthodox Church. This Church has existed from Apostolic times and will do beyond the end of time.

In the West, with the changes in faith and in practice introduced within the Patriarchate of Rome, there was a falling away from the One Church, and the emergence of what we now know as Roman Catholicism. Formality does not enter into the question! The Church may be likened to a tree, and one is either a living part of that tree or not. The branches, twigs, leaves that break off for various reasons for a period bear a resemblance to living parts of the tree, even though they are not living members of the tree, but soon that resemblance diminishes and it becomes apparent that they are no longer living members of the tree. So the question is not one of formality, but whether one is grafted into the tree and living within it or not.

The Anglo-Saxons certainly had an episcopate and their church life was ordered as was general in the then Orthodox Patriarchate of Rome. The earlier Church in Britain had apostolic foundations, though it does seem that through being isolated for a period, they had developed some usages and customs which were peculiar to themselves, but I have not seen anyone argue seriously that they were therefore not Orthodox.

I think, perhaps tempted by the idea of formality, you are placing a little too much emphasis on the Pentarchy. It is certainly an accepted fact of Church history, but like all administrative and jurisdictional questions something secondary to the inner spiritual life of the Church and her prophetic and healing mission. Rome was the premier see, while she remained Orthodox, not because St Peter was there, but because it was the capital of the Roman Empire. Had the apostolic mission occurred only 150 years ago rather than 2,000, the premier see may well have been London! Constantinople was granted second place, and again because it was the centre of the Empire. The vast majority of the ancient sees within the Church were established at the centres of government - for very practical purposes.

Your historian is certainly generally right in his outsider's view of the division between Rome and the Orthodox. Cultural differences played a rôle, as our earthly concerns often do affect our spiritual lives, but the principal reason for the schism of Rome was that she departed from the Apostolic Faith, and since her departure from us she has continued to depart further and further from us.

Until her departure from us, Rome played a full part in the Œcumenical Councils. St Hosius of Cordova represented the Pope of Rome at the First Council, and the Church of Rome endorsed the Councils. There were some minor and temporary misunderstandings, and these seem to have been magnified with the emergence of the Carolingian Empire, which exerted an influence which drove bigger wedges between Rome and the Orthodox East, and greatly furthered Rome's eventual apostasy from the Faith.

Regarding evidences of the Orthodoxy of the Celts (perhaps a misnomer) and the Anglo-Saxon Church, I do not think anyone can seriously question the Orthodoxy of the latter. The English Church was founded by a mission from Rome, when she was Orthodox; her Bishops derived their orders from the Bishops of Gaul. The Anglo-Saxon Church was in full communion with the old Patriarchate of Rome, and one of her Archbishops, St Theodore, was

in fact an Easterner, what we would now call a Greek, from Tarsus in Cilicia. Also, after the Norman Conquest, which decidedly brought England under the [post-schism] papacy, there was an English emigration (something like, though smaller than, the Russian one after the Revolution). The English exiles did not, as one might have imagined go to Scandinavia, or to Spain, or the lowlands (beyond Norman influence) but settled in Constantinople and in the Crimea. Maybe (I will not say more than that) this was also evidence of an attachment to Orthodoxy.

Because of their relative isolation and the lack of historic sources, we have less evidence for the earlier British Church, but the founder of the Church here was one of the Seventy Apostles, St Aristobulus. St Simon the Zealot preached in these islands and according to our earliest records was martyred here. And in the *Nomina Episcoporum* of the Council of Arles we have the names of three British bishops: Eborius of York, Restitutus of London and Adelphius, whose see does not seem to have been recorded. That Council was held at the beginning of the fourth century and so at that date the Church was quite obviously accepted as part of the Catholic Church. ...

As I mentioned in opening this letter, if you have further questions (and are prepared to be patient with regard to my replying) I will try to help.



“WHEN fathers and mothers display to their children the qualities properly theirs, the children, rendering obedience and submission to their parents, are brought up, educated *in the discipline and admonition of the Lord* (Eph. 6:4). But if the parents through slackness fail to provide care and instruction and discipline for their children, assuredly their children’s blood will be required at their hands.”

VEN. SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, + 1022 A.D.

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

## ***BISHOP AMBROSE'S PASCHAL VISIT***

HIS GRACE, **Bishop Ambrose** kindly came to England over Great Week and Pascha, so that the full cycle of services could be continued at both the Convent and Saint Edward's. He arrived in London to celebrate the Vigil for Palm Sunday at the Convent, and then served at the Convent until the Tuesday, when, in the afternoon, he came to Brookwood. On Great Wednesday, he celebrated the last Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts for the year at the Brotherhood and, after Compline, presided at the celebration of the Mysterion of Holy Unction, assisted by Fr Alexis and **Fr Borislav Popov**. Late that evening he returned to the priest's house attached to the Convent, and continued there for the rest of the week, celebrating Pascha with **Mother Vikentia** and her sisters. On the day of Pascha, as has become his custom, he came back to Saint Edward's for the Agape Vespers service and the procession around the church, and the next day, New Monday, he presided at the Divine Liturgy. Members of the Brotherhood took him to Heathrow early on the Tuesday morning for his flight to Moscow, the next stop on his itinerary. Naturally we are extremely thankful to him for the pastoral love that he thus showed our flock in England.

## ***FIVE BAPTISMS AT SAINT EDWARD'S***

ON Saturday, 1st / 14th May, **Fr Ioan Onofrie** visited Saint Edward Brotherhood to celebrate the Baptisms of four babies. In the event, there was a fifth baby to baptise! They were:

**Vladimir and Alexandru**, the twin sons of **Ciprian and Ionela Ursache**. The godparents for both babies were **Paul and Ionela Chiriac**.

**Alexandra**, the daughter of **Daniel-Vasile and Antonina Stirbu**; godparents: **Andrei and Ana Amarie**.

**Denis**, son of **Cosmin and Ana Marie Ionut**, godparents: **Dumitru and Ana Maria Visanu**.

And **Ioana**, the daughter of **Elena Stoica**; godparents: **Dimitrie and Ana Maria Mihai**.

After their Baptism and Chrismation, Fr Ioan imparted the Holy Mysteries to the newly-illuminated and churched them. We ask the faithful to remember our new brothers and sisters in the Faith in their prayers.

The next day, Fr Ioan returned to Brookwood and celebrated the parish Liturgy with Fr Borislav. Fr Alexis served at the Convent, it being Myrrh-bearers Sunday.

## ***TWO ARCHBISHOPS VISIT***

ON the second Tuesday in Pascha, when the Russians keep **Radonitsa**, a special commemoration of the faithful departed, Their Eminences, **Archbishop Elisey of Sourozh** and **Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch**, of the Moscow Patriarchal Diocese in Britain, visited us. They had come with a visiting Archimandrite from the United States, **Deacon Vadim Santsevich** and a coach load of approximately fifteen parishioners to visit the graves of the now rather numerous number of their parishioners buried in the Orthodox cemetery here. After visiting the graves and praying for the souls, they were given a tour of the church and venerated the sacred relics of St Edward. Afterwards, though it was already in a state of some disarray, the builders being in, they were offered refreshments in the Old Mortuary. They, in turn, kindly brought us provisions and made a generous donation.

## ***MORTUARY RESTORATION FUND***

WORK on the restoration of the **Old Mortuary Building** which serves as our parish hall, exhibition room and accommodation for overnight guests, began on Tuesday 3rd May, and the roof slates have been removed. However, in undertaking this preliminary work, it has been discovered that the situation regarding the structural supports of the roof and the damage caused by rain seeping in is much more extensive than we had anticipated. As we mentioned in an email to our parishioners and supporters, it appears that the roof has been held up for many years on a wing and a prayer. The main timber supports have rotted away. Furthermore, they existed with no proper foundation. It was estimated that the extra cost would be in the region of £60,000, but that was two weeks ago and the figure seems likely, as we go to press, to escalate again. We are indebted to our trustees, **Elizabeth Castle** our treasurer, and to **Irina Aldersley** our architect, for the amount of work they have put into dealing with these new and unexpected problems. **Andrew Plumridge**, the architect for the **Surrey Churches Preservation Trust**, the **Woking Association of Voluntary Services** and **Anne Roberts**, a former Mayor of Woking, have offered invaluable help, and the **Woking News & Mail**, on 28th May, published an appeal for funds for us. To all these and all who are contributing financially, our thanks and may God bless you. The amount raised since our last issue is £10,247, which brings the total subscribed since we first brought this to the attention of our readers to £20,008.67. ***Please continue to give as generously as you can.***

## ***VISITORS***

Friday 29th April: **Archimandrite Daniel** arrived to celebrate the last days of Great Week and Pascha with us. He stayed with us until after the Agape Vespers when he was taken to the airport to return to Germany. While here, he helped us immensely by concelebrating the services and hearing confessions.

And on the same day, **Margaret Hobbs** of the **Brookwood Cemetery Society** had brought a group of twenty members of the **Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives**.

Tuesday 17th May: **Padres Ian Colsun** and **Mark Henderson** and **Army Scripture Reader Paul Curd** from the **Army Training Centre at Pirbright**, came to see the church and to introduce themselves to our community. In part they had been motivated to do so because they had noticed an increase in the number of Orthodox Christians among the Army recruits. They hope in future to attend a Liturgy.

Wednesday 18th May: The **Rev'd Fr Andrew Norman** and a group of parishioners from **St Nicolas Church, Guildford**, were brought to the Brotherhood by **Kim Lowe** of the **Brookwood Cemetery Society**. Altogether they spent about an hour in the church and asked many questions.

Thursday, 19th May: In the evening, after Vespers, **Kim Lowe** brought the **2nd New Haw Cubs** to see the church. There were about two dozen people in the group, and they were with us for about three quarters of an hour, before they went on to see the rest of the cemetery.

## ***NEW SOUND SYSTEM IN CHURCH***

ON Lazarus Saturday, from immediately after the Liturgy, **Ioan Turcu**, his brothers **Vasile** and **Gregory**, and **Daniel Ciupercovici** worked almost non-stop until the Vigil for Palm Sunday to install a new sound system in Saint Edward's Church. During the Vigil they monitored its performance, and then stayed later to adjust it, leaving well after ten o'clock. All this was done voluntarily and without charge, including the provision of the equipment itself. ***God's blessing be theirs in this life and the next!***

## ***BURIAL AT BROOKWOOD***

**MERSINIKI EVANGELI** was laid to rest in our cemetery on 5th / 18th May. The funeral service for her was chanted by **Archimandrite Aemilianos** of the **Greek Orthodox Church at Kingston-upon-Thames**. ***May her Memory be Eternal.***

**VOLUNTEERS:** OUR THANKS to **Vasileos and Evphi Calcanteras** for arranging the team of volunteers to decorate the Epitaphios on Great Friday, and for arranging a rota of people to cook for the Brotherhood and those attending church during Great Week, when we have so little time. Thanks also to all those who contributed in so many ways to our celebration of Pascha. We have sent a letter round, and apologize if inadvertently we overlooked anyone. If we have, our Saviour surely will not have! Also on New Monday, four helpful men, **Florin, Costa, Daniel** and **Daniel**, who had stayed over from Pascha night and attended the Hierarchal Liturgy on Monday, spent the rest of the day clearing the rooms of the Old Mortuary building of pictures, furniture and boxes of books, so that the building was cleared sufficiently for **Marshels** of Farnham to begin their work on the roof. We would have spent a week doing the work which they accomplished in one day. **God bless them.**

## **PRACTICAL TIP**

LAST MONTH, we warned about becoming an "**Internet Orthodox.**" Doubtless we should continue in the same theme, and advise that you be even more careful regarding what is euphemistically called the **social media**. As with most technological developments, these can be of benefit, and help one through the practicalities of life in the modern world. However, the conscientious Christian needs to be extremely cautious in using them. What a multiplicity of evils and sinful passions they also facilitate! Among them: gossip, judgment, ill-formed opinion, distraction, chatter, revelation of the perceived sins and failings of others, revealing confidences; the list is endless. And perhaps there are two deeper dangers which engulf the mind and heart when one is hooked on their use. One is that they place you at the centre of a world which you obviously believe is important to others - that they wish to know of your activities, your views, your opinions, - and so pride has crept in. And secondly, one forgets that one of the basic purposes of our life, whether one is a monastic or a lay-person, is to become still. As the Prophet, King and Psalmist David says: *Seek peace and pursue it* (Ps. 33:14), and again, more emphatically: *Be still, and know that I am God* (Ps. 45:10). Surely that is of more worth than knowing the shallow and changing opinions of dozens of light-minded people around us, who quite obviously prefer to be distracted from the things of God.