



FROM THE FATHERS

“GOD hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7). That is, we did not receive the Spirit, that we should shrink from exertion, but that we may speak with boldness. For to many He gives a spirit of fear, as we read in the wars of the kings: A spirit of fear fell upon them (cf Ex. 15:16). That is, he infused terror into them. But to you He has given, on the contrary, a spirit of power, and of love toward Himself. This, then, is of Grace, and yet not solely of Grace, but when we have first performed our own parts. For the Spirit makes us cry, Abba, Father, inspires us with love both towards Him and towards our neighbour, that we may love one another. For love arises from power, and from not fearing. For nothing is so apt to dissolve love as fear and a suspicion of treachery. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. He calls a healthy state of the soul a sound mind, or it may mean sobriety of mind, or else a sobering of the mind, that we may be sober-minded, and that if any evil befall us, it may sober us, and cut off superfluities.”

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, + 407 A.D.

“HE who has become a servant of the Lord will fear his Master alone, but he who does not yet fear Him is often afraid of his own shadow.”

VEN. JOHN OF THE LADDER, + 649 A.D.

SAINT JOHN OF CRONSTADT

SERMON ON THE DORMITION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

15th / 28th August

Magnify O my soul, the honourable translation of the Mother of God from earth to heaven. (Refrain for the 9th Ode of the Canon)

Let us rejoice, beloved brothers and sisters that we belong to the Holy Orthodox Church, worthily and rightly glorifying the Most Holy Sovereign Theotokos on this eminent day out of all the days of the year with special solemnity. There exist on earth many societies and entire governments that do not consider the need nor the obligation to call upon and glorify the Queen of heaven and earth, the Mother of Our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, and other saints and angels; to submissively serve Her lovingly, as the true Mother of God. Sadly in Russia nowadays we have heretics (among us) who actively dishonour the Mother of God, the saints, their icons, their relics and their festivals. O, if only they also unanimously with us glorified the worthy Queen of heaven and earth!

Today the Holy Church solemnly glorifies the honourable Dormition or translation of the Mother of God from earth to heaven. A wonderful translation - she died without serious illness, peacefully. Her soul is taken up in the divine hands of her Son and carried up into the heavenly abode, accompanied by the sweet singing of angels. And then, her most pure body is transferred by the Apostles to Gethsemane where it is honourably buried, and on the third day it is resurrected and taken up to heaven. You see this on the icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos. On it is represented the life-bearing body of the Theotokos lying on a bier, surrounded

by the Apostles and hierarchs, and in the centre of the icon the Lord holding in His hands the most pure soul of the Theotokos. The translation of the Mother of God is a paradigm of the translation in general of the souls of Christians to the other world.

We say that our dead have “fallen asleep” or “passed away.” What does this mean? This means that for the true Christian there is no death. Death was conquered by Christ on the Cross. But there is a translation, that is a rearrangement of his condition, the soul is in another place, in another age, in another world beyond the grave, eternal, without end, that is what is meant by “falling asleep.” It is as if it were a temporary dream after which, by the voice of the Lord and the fearful yet wonderful trumpet of the Archangel, all the dead shall live and come forth each to his place: either to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of condemnation (Jn 5:29). This is what the Christian means by translation. We should be ready for this translation, for the day of the general resurrection and judgment, for this indescribable world event, recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

This preparation for the meeting of the heavenly King before the dread judgment seat, after death, is essentially a preparation for the person throughout the whole of his life. This preparation means a change in all his thoughts, and the moral change of all his being, so that the whole man would be pure and white as snow, washing clean everything that defiles the body and spirit, so that he is adorned with every virtue: repentance, meekness, humility, gentleness, simplicity, chastity, mercifulness, abstention, spiritual contemplation, and burning love for God and neighbour.

Our preparation for meeting the heavenly King, and for the inheritance of eternal life in heaven, should consist of these things. The heavenly King desires souls adorned with immutable virtue, souls prepared so that the Very Lord Himself could abide in them. Do not marvel that the Very Lord wants to live in us. In fact the human soul is more spacious than the heavens and the earth, for it exists in the image of God. And if one removes sins from the soul,

the Lord of all will settle in it and will fill it with Himself. “We will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (Jn 14:23), says the Lord about the souls who love Him.

And so, ye participants in the Christian feasts, and especially the present feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, ye who are brightly adorned with every virtue and translated to the heavenly kingdom, to Her Son and God, proclaim to each and every one about preparing their souls to be the dwelling place of the Lord, about continual repentance, and about the incorruptible adornment of Christian virtue. Let your death also be unashamed and peaceful, serving as the pledge of a good answer at the dread judgment seat of Christ. Amen.



“BE VERY MUCH on your guard, all of you Christians who gather in the Church of Christ, lest you be divided and separated among yourselves, having enmities, hatreds, dissensions. Rather, have love, concord, and unity, being all of the same mind, all breathing one purpose, being all one in body and spirit *in one hope of your calling* (Eph. 4:4), as the Apostle says. Let the very appellation of the Church, in which you are assembled, urge you to this spiritual love and union. For ‘Church’ means union and concourse; and just as the Church unites all of you Christians bodily in one place and gives you a common word of teaching, one Holy Bread, the Body of the Lord, and one common Cup of the Blood of Christ, so likewise it demands of you that you be united in spirit, in mind, and in will ... Hence of necessity you have to do one of two things, O Christians: either forsake enmity and hatred towards your brethren, and then enter the Church of God, or retain hatred and dissension, in which case you are not worthy to enter the Holy Church.”

VEN. NICODEMUS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, + 1809 A.D.

The Most Blessed Theotokos

Our Guide on the Path Towards Deification

THE ALL-VENERABLE Dormition and Translation to Heaven of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos affords us the opportunity to explore in greater depth the mystery of the restoration of the human personality in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

With the Incarnation of the Word “of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,” the true Man is revealed to us.

In the person of the God-Man we see the fulfilment of our own personality.

Christ is “the Imprint of the Archetypal Beauty,” “the unchangeable Image,” our prototypical and sinless Image.

In order to renew our personality, corrupted by sin and disintegrated, we must unite ourselves by Grace with the God-Man.

Faith, Holy Baptism, the practice of the holy evangelical virtues, and partaking of the Immaculate Mysteries mark out our blessed path towards deification. By means of these, the God-Man is incarnated anew within us by Grace; we experience in our lives the great and immaculate mystery of our participation in the Divine life of the Holy Trinity; we commune with our Creator; we discover our fullness; we attain our calling; we become “partakers of the Divine nature”!



MARY THE Theotokos was the first to enjoy this great and most sublime gift in Christ, through the Church.

Our Saviour, the God-Man, is unique. The Panagia is the first perfect human being after the God-Man; she is the first holy

member of the Church; she is the first perfect and completely deified creation of Divine Grace; she is literally the First after the One.

The Most Blessed Mother of God is the author of “noetic renewal”; it is she who precedes mankind, while all the rest follow. She is the Guide on our path towards the much-desired healing in Christ of our deeply ailing personality; it is she who has the second place after the Trinity and helps us by her Grace, as the Mother of God, to rediscover the lost Paradise of delight—our communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; it is she “through whom we have been clad with” uncreated “glory,” and for this reason she is hymned and regarded as “the joy of all generations.”



DELVING INTO these great Mysteries of our holy Faith, within the mystagogical atmosphere of worship and of the Mysteries of Orthodoxy, with especial feeling, compunction, and fervour, let us chant this well-known and blessed troparion to our Guide, the Theotokos:

“I have thee as Mediatrix before the God Who loveth mankind; may He not censure my deeds before the Angels. I entreat thee, O Virgin, come swiftly unto mine aid.”

Source: *Agios Kiprianos*, No. 237 (July-August 1990), pp. 193-194.



“COMPLAINING is worse and more harmful than anything else... You must especially beware of complaining against Divine Providence which arranges everything good and beneficial for our souls through the Mother of God. But due to our faintheartedness, we are often foolishly disturbed and we grieve senselessly over something arranged for our spiritual benefit.”

VEN. AMBROSE OF OPTINA, + 1891 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.

§ 97. The Order of Holy Baptism and Chrismation.

1) **The Blessing of the Waters:** The order of Baptism begins with the priest vested in white vestments and lighting a candle before the font, which things indicate the Church's spiritual rejoicing in the event, that new children are being born again unto her. Then follows the blessing of the waters themselves in the font. This is accomplished in the first place by prayer. In the prayer the priest proclaims the greatness of God and of His wonders, especially referring to the salvation of the race of mankind from the power of the devil, and he reverently calls upon Him, saying: *Wherefore, O King Who lovest mankind, come Thou now and sanctify this water, by the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit.* Then dipping his hand in the waters, he makes the sign of the Cross in them, saying: *Let all adverse powers be crushed beneath the sign of the image of Thy Cross.*

After this prayer there is a second one for the blessing of a vessel of olive oil. Before reading it, the priest thrice makes the sign of the Cross over the oil, both by breathing crosswise upon it and by signing it with his hand, each three times. As the priest and choir chant *Blessed is God, Who illumineth every man that cometh into the world, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages,*

and the *Alleluia*, he completes the blessing of the waters by pouring a little of the oil into it, three times making the sign of the Cross with the oil as he pours it into the water.

2) **Anointing the One to be Baptized:** then taking the rest of the blessed oil, usually aided by the god-parents, the priest anoints the one about to be baptized with it, saying: *The servant / handmaid of God is anointed with the oil of gladness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.* As he does so, he makes a cross with the oil on the forehead; then one on the chest saying, *Unto the healing of soul and body;* on the nose saying, *Unto a spiritual fragrance;* on the mouth saying, *My mouth shall speak wisdom;* on the ears saying, *Unto the hearing of faith;* on the hands saying, *Thy hands have made and fashioned me;* on the knees saying, *That he /she may walk in the way of Thy commandments;* on the feet saying, *To trample down serpents and scorpions and all the power of the enemy;* and on the back saying, *Whoever will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.* Then in many of the Local Orthodox Churches, the whole body of the candidate is rubbed down with the blessed oil, though this is not done in the Russian practice. This signifies that he is to be a spiritual athlete, struggling against the world, just as a champion long distance, - and life is a long distance, - swimmer, is rubbed down with oil before his endeavour.

3) **The Immersion:** The immersion of the candidate then follows. If he is an infant, the priest holds him in his hands and thrice dips him completely under the waters, saying *The servant of God, N, is baptized in the name of the Father, Amen* (immersion), *and of the Son, Amen* (immersion) *and of the Holy Spirit, Amen* (immersion). If the candidate is a child or an adult, he usually makes a full prostration in such a way that he is totally immersed in the waters each time he goes down, and the priest places his hand on his head as he says the words indicated above. Through the total immersion of the candidate in the waters the fundamen-

tal significance of the Mysterion is indicated. The going down is a burial and the coming up a resurrection, and so this signifies death to the world of the flesh, and resurrection, or rebirth, to the spiritual life. The immersion is also being buried with Christ, and the coming up out of the waters is rising again with Him. The immersion is threefold, first of all in honour of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, and secondly to indicate the three day Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

4) The Clothing of the Newly Illumined in a White Garment: When he emerges from the waters of the font, the newly-illuminated is greeted joyously by the Church with the chanting or recital of Psalm 31: *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin,* and so on to the end of the psalm. The newly baptized person is then clothed in a long white garment, which represents his being clothed with Christ, that he is a new man, pure and undefiled, recreated by God unto righteousness. If a girl or woman is baptized she is also given a white head-covering, so that she adheres to the Apostolic teaching. A little later, usually immediately after the Chrismation, they will be given a Cross, recalling the Saviour's precept, *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me* (Matt. 16:24). Finally, they are given a lighted candle, as a sign of their spiritual enlightenment and of joy.

.... *to be continued with "The Mystery of Chrismation."*



“THE PERSON who speaks badly of others provokes the Lord, whereas those who speak badly of themselves placate and appease Him ... Aware of this, let us busy ourselves not with other's vices but with our own ... and let us not only not speak badly of others, but also not listen to others speaking badly.”

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, + 407 A.D.

THE COMING MONTH

AUGUST is the last month in the Church Year, and it brings the year to a close with two glorious Great Feasts, the **Transfiguration of our Saviour** on 6th / 19th, and the **Dormition of the All-Holy Theotokos** on 15th / 28th. Both reflect the triumph of Pascha itself and reveal to us the glory of the God-Man, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the second we see this glory bestowed on His All-holy Mother, giving us assurance that we too may be made partakers of that glory.

As if this were not enough, the month is adorned with three other important feasts: the **Procession of the Precious Cross** (1st / 14th); the translation of the **Holy Mandilion, the Icon of our Saviour, Not-Made-By-Hands** to the Imperial City of Constantinople (16th / 29th); and the **Beheading of the Forerunner, St John the Baptist** (29th August / 11th September). Normally, so that we are not seen to be carousing with Herod and his cronies, we keep this day as a strict fast (f3), however, because it falls on a Sunday this year, the fast is relaxed a little in honour of our Saviour's Resurrection, and we are permitted wine and oil.

On the first day of the month, in addition to the feast of the Cross, we celebrate the **Maccabee Martyrs**. The services for both commemorations are combined. The Martyrs lived before the incarnate dispensation of our Saviour, and yet stand as examples to Orthodox Christians of our times in keeping the traditions of the Fathers. Their contest was for adhering to the fasting prescriptions of the Old Testament Church, and perhaps this is why their feast is celebrated here on the first day of the **Dormition Fast**. The seven holy Maccabee Martyrs Abim, Antony, Gurias, Eleazar, Eusebona, Achim and Marcellus, their mother Solomone and their

teacher Eleazar suffered in the year 166 before Christ under the impious King Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This foolish ruler loved pagan and Hellenistic customs, and held Jewish customs in contempt. He did everything possible to turn people from the Law of Moses and from their covenant with God. He desecrated the Temple of the Lord, placed a statue of the pagan god Zeus there, and forced the Jews to worship it. Many people abandoned the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but there were also those who continued steadfast and true, believing that the Saviour would come. A ninety-year-old elder, the teacher Eleazar, was brought to trial for his faithfulness to the Mosaic Law. He suffered tortures and died at Jerusalem. The disciples of St Eleazar, the seven Maccabee brothers and their mother Solomone, also showed great courage. They were brought to trial in Antioch. They fearlessly acknowledged themselves to be followers of the True God, and refused to eat pork, which was forbidden by the Law. The eldest brother acted as spokesmen for the rest, saying that they preferred to die rather than break the Law. He was subjected to fierce tortures in sight of his brothers and their mother. His tongue was cut out, he was scalped, and his hands and feet were cut off. Then a large pan was heated, and the first brother was thrown into the red hot pan, and he died. The next five brothers were tortured one after the other. The seventh and youngest brother was the last one left alive. Antiochus suggested St Solomone persuade the boy to obey him, so that her last son at least would be spared. Instead, the brave mother told him to imitate the courage of his brothers. The child upbraided the king, and was tortured even more cruelly than his brothers had been. After all her seven children had died, St Solomone, stood over their bodies, raised up her hands in prayer to God and gave up her soul, being joined with them in death. Such was the rigour with which this family held fast to the traditions of their Fathers only in the hope that the Saviour would come. We have seen the fulfilment of that promise, the Incarnation of the Word of God, and yet are often lax and negligent in keeping to the traditions of the New Testament Church.

On the day of the Lord's Transfiguration itself (6th/ 19th) we also have the commemoration of the **New Hieromartyrs, Archbishop Dimitry of Gdov and his priest Nicolas**. The future hieromartyr, Archbishop Dimitry was a native of Saint Petersburg, and graduated from the Theological Academy there in 1883. In 1886 he was ordained a priest and appointed to St. Michael's church in Oranienbaum, and two years later was transferred to St Petersburg to the parish of the Protection of the Mother of God, where he served for over 30 years. This church conducted a wide range of charitable works. It ran an orphanage, old age homes, schools, etc. Fr. Dimitry had great love for the poor and unfortunate people of this parish, and this love and his unselfish labours for them as it were echoed his surname Liubimov, "beloved." After the Revolution Fr. Dimitry was widowed, and subsequent events led him to become a Bishop and an ardent defender of the truth of Christ. The martyrdom of the Metropolitan Benjamin of Petrograd in August, 1922, was followed by the arrest of all four of his vicar bishops, and the old capital remained for four years without a chief hierarch. In 1926 Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk, himself already arrested, appointed Archbishop Joseph (Petrovykh) to the see, raising him to the rank of Metropolitan. Two other bishops were released from prison, and several new episcopal consecrations followed immediately, one of them being that of Father Dimitry. He was tonsured a monk bearing the same name of Dimitry and was made a vicar of the diocese. Metropolitan Joseph did not recognize the infamous Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, and was followed by Bishop Dimitry and a group of bishops, clergy, and laymen. One of the priests in this group, a future co-martyr with Bishop Dimitry, was the ardent young Fr. Nicholas Prozorov. As events developed, Bishop Dimitry was raised to the rank of Archbishop and temporary head of the Petrograd Diocese. Metropolitan Sergius thereupon placed Archbishop Dimitry under interdict, and in his decree concerning this on 17th January, 1928, he showed his mercilessness to the confessors of Genuine Orthodoxy, stating that for insubordination "our Church

threatens direct excommunication and anathema, depriving those guilty of even the right to appeal to a conciliar judgment,” saying further that “no sacraments may be received from them nor any private services, for anyone who enters into ecclesiastical communion with the excommunicated and interdicted and prays with them, even at home, is likewise declared to be excommunicated.” However, Archbishop Dimitry, fearlessly following in the footsteps of Metropolitan Joseph, refused to accept this or any other decrees coming from Metropolitan Sergius, recognizing that by his “adaptation to atheism” he had placed himself in schism from the Russian Church. The secret police, seeking to increase strife within the Church, at first took no action against the “Josephites;” but soon the first blow fell with the arrest in 1928 of Father Theodore Andreev, who after suffering in prison died in April, 1929. Archbishop Dimitry, who had called him an “adamant of Orthodoxy” for his righteous criticism of Bulgakov, Berdyaev, and other pseudo-Orthodox thinkers, celebrated his funeral service. In November, 1929, he was himself arrested together with Fr. Nicholas Prozorov and other clergy and laymen for refusing to recognize the Sergian “Declaration.” Archbishop Dimitry was in solitary confinement and even at the age of 75, he received ten years in the isolation prison. Fr. Nicholas was summoned to his execution on the eve of the feast of the Transfiguration, 1930, and, as he bade farewell to his fellow prisoners, he greeted them: “The Lord is calling me to Him, and now I will be with Him.” He was shot for his steadfastness and refusal to compromise as Metropolitan Sergius had done. The fate of Bishop Dimitry was similar, although we do not know the date on which he received his martyr’s crown. After eight years of solitary confinement in the Yaroslavl isolation prison, he was shot in 1938. As the date of his martyrdom is unknown, he is commemorated on the same day as his faithful disciple, the martyred priest Nicolas. They are among the countless sufferers crowned with the glory of martyrdom.

As it is particularly instructive, and shows very beautifully how the conscience of the true Orthodox “walls itself off” from er-

ror, we include here the **Statement of Separation from the Synod of Metropolitan Sergius** (which later became the Moscow Patriarchate) of St Dimitry, dated 14th /27th December 1927:-

THIS is the testimony of our conscience (2 Cor. 1:12): It is no longer permissible for us, without sinning against the canons of the Holy Orthodox Church, to remain in ecclesiastical communion with the Substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens—Sergius, Metropolitan of Nizhegorod, and his Synod, and with all who think as they do. It is not out of pride—let this never be—but for the sake of peace of conscience that we disavow the person and the deeds of our former head, who has unlawfully and immoderately gone beyond his rights and has introduced great disturbance and the “smoky arrogance of the world” into the Church of Christ, whose duty is to bring to those who desire to see God the light of simplicity and the tribute of wisdom in humility (from the Epistle of the African Council to Pope Celestine).

And we decide upon this only after we have received testimony from the hands of Metropolitan Sergius himself that the new direction and orientation of Russian ecclesiastical life which he has undertaken is not subject to any change.

Therefore, remaining by God’s mercy in everything the obedient children of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and preserving the Apostolic succession through the Patriarchal Locum Tenens Peter, Metropolitan of Krutitsk, we break off canonical communion with Metropolitan Sergius and with all who are under him; and until the judgment of a “full Local Council,” i.e., with the participation of all Orthodox bishops, or until the open and complete repentance of the Metropolitan himself before the Holy Church, we preserve communion in prayer only with those who watch lest the canons of the Fathers be transgressed and lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His Own Blood (8th Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council). Amen.

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The Baker's tale *- or was it a Parable?*

THIS IS A TRUE TALE. In the late nineteen-seventies, because of my appointment I lived in the old Russian Orthodox Church House, the “Podvorie,” on St Dunstan’s Road, Baron’s Court, London. The house and chapel there had been founded by the first Orthodox Bishop consecrated for a see in Britain since the Great Schism, Bishop Nicolas (Karpov), and St John of Shanghai had served there as well as other great luminaries of the Russian emigration. It was undoubtedly one of the holy places in London, with a beautiful chapel. One winter evening, the doorbell rang and a middle-aged man was standing there. He told me that he was temporarily staying in the same road, had seen the church house sign and wanted to introduce himself. I invited him in and he explained that he was in West London running a bakery course in one of the colleges there. But then he told me a story from his earlier life, which I have often wondered might have been an instruction or parable.

He said that he had lived in the North of England, - I think it was Yorkshire. The family moved into a house on the outskirts of a large village, and on their way into the village there was a non-conformist chapel. Every time they passed it, it was closed. Then, one day he found the door open and went in. There was an old lady there doing a bit of cleaning. He asked about the congregation, and she told him that there were only three very old ladies left, and nothing much could be done; they did not even have an organist. He explained that he could play the organ and volunteered to help, and so he and his family started attending services there.

Others came; the congregation grew. They even had a couple of mission crusades and invited guest preachers. After some time the chapel took on a new life, and was packed. But then he said, something curious and sad happened, the original three old ladies began working to oust people. They gossiped and grumbled; they beavered away, usually underhandedly. They worked at it consistently, and before he and his family left that area to come to London, the congregation in that chapel had been reduced again to a “safe” number: the original three old ladies.

He did not tell me why he wanted to tell me this tale. I did not see him again, but in the years that have followed I have seen similar tendencies in various congregations even within our own Church. A kind of possessiveness regarding the church overtakes people; they want it as their own, as they want it - even if it is failing.

But the Saviour gives us a different precept: *Love ye the stranger* (Deut. 10:19). And to those who will be saved, He says: *I was a stranger and ye took Me in ... Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* (Matt. 25:35, 34).



“IF *LOVE* is long-suffering and kind (1 Cor. 13:4), a man who is faint-hearted in the face of his afflictions and who therefore behaves wickedly towards those who have offended him, and stops loving them, surely lapses from the purpose of Divine providence. Watch yourself, lest the vice which separates you from your brother lies not in him but in yourself.”

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

“A PERSON who does not tolerate suspicion or disparagement of others possesses true love.”

VEN. THALASSIUS THE LIBYAN, + C. 660 A.D.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

THE FOLLOWING is an extract from a reply to a lady, not in our church but a friend of our community, who was somewhat worried about the “tone” of some of the encyclicals and articles from the hierarchs, and who had, in our opinion, rather found too much support for her own jurisdictional allegiance in the spiritual discretion of a monastic whose confession was identical to our own. To preserve anonymity, we have edited the response a little, and slightly expanded it to make it more comprehensible to others.

RE. THE ARTICLES, I think there may indeed be a worry about tone sometimes, but remember they are written primarily for a Greek audience, in Greece, by Greeks; - [*As an example, to our original response we might add here that the Greeks will generally refer to Roman Catholicism as Papism. This is entirely correct and is in truth the only concise way to define their faith. In English, however, for various historical reasons, not least the sectarian hatred in Northern Ireland, this sounds gratuitously derogatory. It is not intended to be so by Greek writers, who would not understand our British perspective.*] - just as in the old days with a lot that was true and valuable we had to put up with a lot of Russobfuscation!

That said, what the hierarchs say is true, and our actions are based on our right belief. That is why Orthodoxy is so important – after all we call ourselves Right-Believers. As for rules, I know the Russians love them, but I do not think they are an integral part of Orthodoxy. (The Russians after all have lived for centuries under totalitarian regimes and tend to make a virtue out of rules, orders, rank, awards, etc). Within Orthodoxy we have canons, prescriptions, directions, but they are not legalistic regulations but healing remedies; nonetheless, we are foolish indeed not to follow them.

Why go to the hospital (the Church), see the consultants (the hierarchs and spiritual fathers) and then not take what they prescribe? We will not thus be cured and restored to health.

Regarding X, I think there are probably a number of factors here. That person was a spiritually wise one, but they were also part of the White Russian emigration, who were mostly not theologically trained, although among them there were many spiritually illumined people, and they were also (dangerously) desperate to fit into British society and not to rock any boats. They were after all emigrés, and in a time when society in this country was not in the least multicultural.

That they never suggested you should leave the Moscow Patriarchate might have been for good reasons or bad. They certainly believed that one should not be in it! It was written into their [monastery's] original Trust deed: "not in communion with the Moscow Patriarchate"! But they may not have mentioned it to you, because they felt that they did not have responsibility over you to say such a thing. Had you directly asked their advice, then maybe they would have said something.

Similarly, with their not mentioning the New Calendar issue. It is not for us to judge the New Calendarists, but it is clear from Church Councils, the writings of God-bearing Elders, and from the fruits of the "tree" itself that New Calendarism is wrong, was introduced into the Church for wrong reasons, and against church order. If they said we have no argument with New Calendarists, they may have meant that we do not argue with the poor people trapped in that error, but we do have an argument against the New Calendar itself, and if they denied that they were wrong!

Also remember, that X died some time ago, the ecumenist policies of the proponents of New Calendarism have travelled a very long way since their days. Would they have said the same thing today?

You may disagree with me, but I have the opinion that if one is trying to build a house, one needs good foundations, and within our church life, that means right belief and a careful adherence to the teachings and mind of the Fathers.



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

***BISHOP AMBROSE ORDAINS A PRIEST
FOR A MISSION PARISH IN PARIS***

IN THE EARLY HOURS of the morning on Friday, 1st July, after a flight delay of over three hours, **His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methoni** arrived at Gatwick airport from Romania to be met by members of the Brotherhood. Later that same day, **Christian Doucet** and **his wife Catherine** and five of their seven children (four sons and a daughter) arrived by car from France. Christian and three of the sons and a family friend were accommodated at the Brotherhood, even though the Mortuary was out of commission. Catherine and the others stayed in a B&B in Brookwood village. The Doucets have a small chapel dedicated to **Saint John of Shanghai** in the garden of their home in Meudon.

In the evening, Bishop Ambrose served the Vigil for the feast of St John at Saint Edward's Church, assisted by the Brotherhood clergy, and with Christian and one of his sons, Antoine, both of whom are readers, serving in the altar.

On the Saturday morning, 19th June / 2nd July, **the fiftieth anniversary of the blessed repose of St John**, we made our way to the **Convent of the Annunciation in Willesden**, which had been founded by St John, there to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with **Mother Vikentia and her sisters**.

During the Sixth Hour, Reader Christian was made a Sub-deacon, and at the Liturgy itself he was ordained to the sacred diaconate, thus he will celebrate the anniversary of his ordination every year on the dedication festival of their chapel in Meudon. The Liturgy was celebrated in English, Romanian, Slavonic, Greek, Arabic and French, and the Bishop gave his homily in English, then added words of exhortation to Father Christian and his family in French. As always the sisters offered all those who attended light refreshments afterwards.

On Sunday, 20th June / 3rd July, the **Synaxis of the Athonite Fathers**, which was also incidentally a feast of **Saint Edward** - the anniversary of the miraculous rising of his grave from the earth, - Bishop Ambrose celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Brookwood, assisted by the Brotherhood clergy and **Fr Borislav Popov**. During the Liturgy, Deacon Christian was ordained to the priesthood.

On the Monday, Fr Christian celebrated his first Liturgy at Brookwood, Bishop Ambrose guiding him through, and that day His Grace left for Greece to prepare for a pastoral visit later in the week to the Congo.

Fr Christian's family, some other friends and a group of the faithful from Belgium who had been with us over the weekend, returned home after the ordination, but Fr Christian stayed with us for three weeks so that he might be trained to serve as a priest. His son, Antoine, also stayed with us for about ten days before going on to Cambridge for a course there. Every day until 22nd July, Fr Christian served at Vespers and Matins, and celebrated the Divine Liturgy, either at Brookwood or at the Convent. This

included the two festal Vigils for the **Birth of St John the Baptist** and for the holy **Chiefs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul**. In these services, Fr Christian served in his native French, and so, paradoxically, days after the “Brexit” vote, our community became markedly more continental!

On Saturday 23rd July, Fr Christian left us to take up his ministry in France. We ask the prayers of all the faithful for Fr Christian, that he may ever grow in piety, devotion and application to his priestly ministry, and that therein he may be granted strength, patience and understanding. Pray also for his **Presbytera Catherine** and their children, **Paul, Géraud, Antoine, Jean, Nicolas, Marie and Catherine**, that they ever bear the sacrifice that this entails for them, and that they always help and support their father in his ministry, and that that ministry bring forth in time much fruit. To Father Christian and his family: ***Many Years!***

BISHOP SOFRONIE’S VISIT

HIS GRACE, **Bishop Sofronie of Suceava**, paid us one of his periodic pastoral visits, celebrating the Divine Liturgy at Saint Edward’s Church on Sunday, 27th June / 10th July, the **Synaxis of the New Martyrs of the Turkish Yoke**. On this occasion, His Grace was accompanied by **Deacon Nicolae** from Romania, and they served with the Brotherhood clergy, Fr Borislav and Fr Christian. Immediately after the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Sofronie baptized **Dasia**, the infant daughter of **Paul and Adina Ione-la Chiriac**, and **Efrem**, the infant son of **Nicolae and Danie-la Costin**. **Catalin and Claudia Muraru** were godparents to Dasia, and **Ionel and Maria Strunel** to Efrem. Again we ask prayers for the parents and godparents of our new brother and sister in the Faith, that they may be assiduous in bringing them up in the Faith, and for the newly illumined infants themselves.

INTERMENT AT BROOKWOOD

THOMAS KIRILOFF was laid to rest in Saint Edward's Cemetery on Thursday, 1st / 14th July. The family are members of the congregation of the **London Russian Orthodox Cathedral at Ennismore Gardens**, and **Archpriest Joseph Skinner** served the funeral, with his matushka chanting as choir. Many mourners attended the burial of a young man who had died at only twenty-four years of age. Some had come from Brazil, where the family had previously lived, and others from the United States. May Thomas find rest with the Saints and ***Memory Eternal***, and may all those who were bereaved and attended his funeral find consolation in their faith.

KING EDWARD ORTHODOX TRUST COMPANY LIMITED A.G.M.

THE Annual General Meeting of the **King Edward Orthodox Trust Company Limited** was held in the Exhibition Room after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, 10th July. During the proceedings, **Elena Matthews of Burghclere** was elected to be a trustee, and was invited to join the meeting. She agreed and is now numbered among us. Mrs Matthews is a trained accountant, and it is hoped that she will be able to help shoulder the increasing load that the treasurer's work involves. In addition to the usual chairman's and treasurer's reports, **Irina Aldersley**, our Architect, gave a report on the progress of the Mortuary Restoration from a professional point of view. KEOTCoLtd is a registered charity, number 284929, and in due time the latest financial accounts will be posted on the Charity Commission's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>.

MORTUARY RESTORATION FUND

THE COST has risen yet again by a further **£4,000**, but this is largely due to the fact that remedial works have increased. In order to support the building during its restoration, extensive scaffolding had to be erected within the building and in several instances girders had to be put through existing walls to bear the weight until the restoration work is completed. Naturally this will have to be put back in order. However, we have confidence that now we are nearing the end of that particular tunnel. Also, through your kindness and generosity monies have been coming in. The amount raised since our July issue was published is **£23,101.59**, which brings the total subscribed since we first brought this appeal to the attention of our readers to **£56,138.92**. We estimate that the short-fall at the time of going to press is now approximately **£19,000**. We thank all who have contributed so generously; please help us raise the remaining £19,000, and God bless you and reward you with things spiritual for things material. We hope that in completing this project we will not only save a building of some historic importance, but that we shall also have established the material and physical basis of the Brotherhood, and we pray, and ask you to pray, that in time others, more experienced than ourselves, will come and build up the community here spiritually.

The **Brookwood Cemetery Society** very kindly put extensive coverage of our Mortuary Restoration Appeal in their August newsletter, "**The Brookwood Express.**" The **Stephen Clark 1957 Charitable Trust**, which is located in Bath, Somerset, has also sent us a donation. Our thanks to them and B.C.S.

VISITORS

THE GUILDFORD AREA of the University of the Third Age visited Brookwood Cemetery on Thursday, 28th July, and, the church being open, they came in and were shown round and their questions answered. There were about thirty people in the group.

PRACTICAL TIP

OUR CONDUCT in church should in many ways be a practice ground for our life in the world, but more often than not we bring the ways of the world into the church, rather than the other way round. We have already mentioned the “internet Orthodox” in these tips, and those who are brainlessly addicted to social media, but another modern phenomenon makes itself felt in church life: the “take-away culture.” How many people, often those who would never even think of volunteering to come to church for a couple of hours to wash the lamps or iron the vestments, change the sand in the candle stands, let alone bake a prosphora or do any laundering, treat the Church as if it were a religious “take-away” service. When they want something, they “order” it and expect it to be provided, whenever they want it, whatever it might be: confession, a liti for the departed, a blessing of some sort. And yet when they do not want anything they are quite content to lie dormant with regard to the church and contribute nothing. Of course, the clergy are in conscience bound to meet these demands as far as they can and as far as they consider expedient, but one does wonder whether the “take-away Orthodox” receive much more of a blessing than having satisfied a customary usage and feeling complacent about that.



“THE LORD calls blessed not those who despise their brothers, but the poor; not the haughty but the meek; not the envious, but those who mourn for their own sins and those of others; those who hunger and thirst not for water or in order to despise others, but for righteousness; not those who regard others as of no account, but the merciful.”

VEN. GILDAS THE WISE, + C. 570 A.D.