

FROM THE FATHERS

“SCRIPTURE TELLS how Solomon ordered that *they should take very great, costly stones for the foundation of the Temple, and should square them off* (1 Kings 5:17). These great and costly stones that were laid as a foundation, and supported the entire bulk of the temple built upon them, suggest the extraordinary teachers of the holy Church: ‘great’ because of the outstanding quality of their virtues; ‘costly’ because of the splendour of the signs which those, who heard the word from the Lord Himself, produced by their preaching as the fabric of the growing Church. When in Scripture ‘foundation’ is used in the plural, it means either holy preachers or the unshakable thoughts of the just. Hence there is the verse of the psalmist, *Its foundations are in the holy mountains* (Ps 86:1). When ‘foundation’ is used in the singular, it often indicates the Author of all good things [Christ], concerning Whom the Apostle says, *No one can lay any other foundation except that which has already been laid, which is Christ Jesus* (1 Cor. 3:11); and again he says to believers about it, *But ye are fellow-citizens of the saints and members of the household of God, constructed upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets* (Eph. 2:19-20). For this foundation there were laid great and costly stones to carry the entire temple. First of all the Patriarchs and the Prophets, and afterwards the Apostles, were instructed by [Christ] in order to spread the Church throughout the whole world. The more closely they clung to their love for Him, the more strongly did they support His followers in their building-up of the heavenly [temple]. The king commanded them to square these stones to signify that the teachers of the Church ought to be of settled character and unalterable mind. Just as what is squared will stand upright no matter how it is turned, so the life of those who are perfect, which has been carefully directed by the straight line of truth, cannot be overturned from its base by any pressure from temptations.”

Venerable Bede of Jarrow, + 735 A.D.

Quoted in preparation for the Consecration of our Church at Brookwood



THE IMAGE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST NOT MADE BY HANDS

by **Saint Philaret the New Confessor of New York**

+1985 A.D.

AS WELL as continuing the festival of the Dormition of the Mother of God, the Church now [*16th/ 29th August - second day of the Dormition feast*] celebrates the Image of our Lord Jesus Christ, Not Made by Hands. By tradition the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God came down to us from the deepest antiquity, for it was painted by the holy Evangelist Luke, and received the blessing of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary herself. But the very first depiction of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ was not painted by any artist. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself made it in His good pleasure.

The Church preserves a tradition concerning this, how the King of Edessa, Abgar, who was afflicted with an ailment, had heard a great deal about the Saviour and His miraculous deeds, and sent an artist to Him, who was accomplished in portraiture, so that he might paint a portrait of the Saviour. However much the artist attempted to do this, nothing he did came out right. He saw that everything he depicted on his canvas simply did not correspond to the reality at all, and nothing he did came out right. But the Lord Jesus Christ's good pleasure was to offer help to his efforts. He asked for a cloth as a canvass, and placed it to His Immaculate Face and that face was imprinted upon the cloth, upon that canvass. This was the very first image, not made by hands.

The Church now celebrates this very miracle, this Image. But it is for us, Christians, participating in this feast, not to forget that each one of us was created in the image and likeness of God. The Holy Bible, as you know, says that the Lord, having made heaven and earth, before creating man, took special counsel in the Holy Trinity, where the Lord

One in Trinity spake His well-pleasing Word: “Let Us make man in Our image, and likeness, and let him have dominion over all creation.” In the image and in the likeness. The holy Fathers teach us to distinguish the image from the likeness. The image of God - in the very nature of the human soul, is trinal, like unto the Holy Trinity, which is Divinity one in Essence, but at the same time, in Persons, a Trinity. So it is with the soul of man. The soul of man, being absolutely one, one personality, and one essence, is at the same time trinal in its fundamental powers: for the first - this is the mind in man, another is the heart, man’s feelings, and a third is his will. With the mind man thinks, with the heart he experiences [things], and with the will he acts. But in all these three powers it is yet one and the same soul, and the person is yet one.

And as regards what concerns the likeness of God, it is not without reason that we call the Venerable Seraphim and those like him, righteous fathers [*In Russian “prepodobnye ottsy” - literally “fathers most like unto” (God)*]. They manifest the likeness of God in themselves. If the image of God, as I have told you, pertains to the very nature of man, then, as the holy Fathers say, even if the soul of man is condemned to fiery Gehenna for eternal torment, all the same it remains the image of God. It is simply the case that the person himself degrades this image, defiles it, and makes himself deserving of torment in Hades. The likeness of God - this is the moral side; the more a man becomes like unto God, the closer he approaches Him, and the more manifest is the likeness of God in him.

The Apostle Paul once exhorted his spiritual children, “I beseech you, be ye followers [imitators] of me, even as I also am of Christ” (see 1 Cor. 4:16, & 11:1), that is be like unto me, imitate me, even as I imitate Christ. The sinful man, given over unto sin, loses the likeness of God. The image of God he does not lose, even in the fire of Gehenna, but the likeness of God he can lose completely. It was not in vain that it was said by the Psalmist, that “man being in honour, did not understand” (Ps. 48:12), that is, man did not understand, and did not value that honour of which his Creator had deemed him worthy, and “he is compared to the mindless cattle, and is become like unto them” (Ps. 48:12). What that man is reduced to, who loses the likeness of God and becomes like some-

one else, you and I know! To whom, for instance, is that man like who, in his drunkenness, lies in the filth and mumbles. Who is he like?- in no way like the Lord God!

We must bear in mind that although the image of God is indestructible in each one of us, the likeness of God must needs be renewed in us, and every man must enhance it; - this is the purpose of the life of man. For this reason, remember, O man, and more frequently bear in mind, that the first man, Adam, was created in the image and likeness of God. But even if the image does not depend on us, yet the likeness depends entirely on us, and for that reason our task is to work upon our soul, so that it should be like its Creator, and not like someone else. Amen.

Translated from the Second Volumes of the Sermons and Teachings of Metropolitan Philaret, published by the Russian Orthodox Youth Committee, in 1989



WISHING to save the world, to this end did the Ruler of all come of His own will; and, though as God He is the Shepherd, for us He appeared as a Man like unto us; for by this likeness He called those of like kind, yet as God He doth hear: Alleluia.

From the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos

ON MONASTICISM

By the Ever-Memorable Archbishop Averky
of Jordanville

Continuation

THE FOUNDER of cœnobitic monasticism was the **Venerable Pachomius the Great**. He was born in A.D. 292 in the Thebaid, and into a pagan family. Highly gifted by nature, he also received an excellent education and upbringing. Taken into the army of the Emperor Maximin in A.D. 312, he in time became acquainted with some Christians, who impressed him with their kindheartedness and their love with regard to their enemies. Even before accepting Christianity, he prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and on completing his military service he was baptized and went off into the Egyptian desert, where he placed himself under the guidance of a certain Elder, Palamon. And around him, as also around the Venerable Antony, there began to gather lovers of the solitary life. Accustomed in military service to strict discipline and order, Pachomius resolved to found for the hermits a strictly defined organization. On one of the islands in the River Nile, Tabenna, he built his model monastery.

But in a short time that monastery was not able to accommodate all those who desired to save themselves under his guidance, and he build on the banks of the Nile, close to one another, several other monasteries. He also founded the first women's monastery, where the first superior was his sister.

The life in these monasteries strictly conformed to one clearly defined rule. The basis of the rule was: **chastity, renunciation of everything earthly and obedience with no contradiction whatsoever to the Abba**. The monks formed one community, they all lived together with three in each cell; they occupied themselves with their handicrafts together and together they all partook of their food. All had the same clothing: a **linen tunic without sleeves, a jerkin** on top, and on the head a **cowl** in the form of a felt hood, and for the feet, **sandals**. Day and night at the sounding of a horn or a gong, the monks would hasten silently to church.

There they read the sacred Scriptures, prayed, chanted the Psalms, and listened to the instructions of the Abba. From the neighbouring villages, a priest would come on Sundays to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and give the monks Communion. Because of the danger to the soul of love of position and superiority, the Venerable Pachomius would himself never accept the rank of priest, and did not allow others to do so.

The greatest attention was devoted to spiritual occupations: to prayer, fasting, and the conscious reflection upon God and the spiritual world. But even physical work was considered indispensable in its various forms, so that they could have the means to support themselves and to give benefactions to the poor. Everyone was engaged in the physical work, not excluding the superior himself. Every task was always started and completed with the blessing of the superior. Everything that was produced by the labours of the monks belonged not to them individually, but was for **the common benefit and use of all the brethren**, no personal possessions were permitted.

The food was always the most meager; it consisted of bread, cheese and vegetables, and was taken only once in the (24 hour) day. Only on Saturdays and Sundays was a second, evening meal, laid on. In view of the strictness of the manner of life, everyone wishing to join the monastery was subjected to a preliminary year long training. Despite all this, **the zeal for the monastic life was then so great that, even within the lifetime of the Venerable Pachomius, the numbers in his monasteries reached 7,000 men, and within fifty years after him, 50,000.**

After the Venerable Antony and Pachomius, monasticism quickly began to spread throughout the East. The number of monasteries and of monks increased and increased. One of the disciples of the Venerable Antony, **Ammon**, founded a new settlement for monastics not far from Alexandria on **Mount Nitria**. At the end of the fourth century, there were around **fifty monasteries** there, and **5,000 monks**. Monks from this monastery settled in the Lybian deserts. Even more distant Skete was founded, where the Venerable Macarius of Egypt began his monastic life. One could only find one's way there by the stars, because there were not even any paths.

One of the Venerable Antony's disciples, **Hilarion**, introduced the monastic life into his native land, Palestine, where he founded a monastery near the city of Gaza. From there monasticism spread quickly throughout Syria and Palestine.

Saint Basil the Great, who, after finishing his education, visited the communities in Palestine and Egypt, introduced monasticism to Cappadocia. He established a particularly strict rule. This rule of Saint Basil was very widely disseminated and became the general accepted rule for all of Eastern monasticism.

Each of the subsequent centuries produced its own remarkable pillars and guides of the monastic life.

In the fifth century, **Sabbas the Sanctified** was glorified, who was so-called because with the monastic calling he united the priestly (sanctified) rank. He instituted a monastic community in the Kedron valley near Jerusalem. This community was renowned for **the order of its Divine services**, which also came to be used widely throughout the East.

In the sixth century, the **Venerable John Climacus**, the abbot of Mount Sinai, flourished. He compiled a well-known guide to the spiritual life, under the title, "*The Spiritual Ladder*," from which he in turn received his sobriquet (Climacus / of the Ladder).

In the sixth and start of the seventh century we also have the **Venerable Abba Dorotheus**, who is also renowned for his work called "*Soul Profiting Instruction*," which is ever popular among the monastics.

In the sixth century there also lived one of the great ascetics, the **Venerable Isaac the Syrian**, who has left us his "*Ascetical Homilies*," which are ever edifying and particularly so for those who live in stillness.

At the end of the eighth century and beginning of the ninth, there flourished the renowned abbot of the Monastery of Studium in Constantinople, the **Venerable Theodore the Studite**, who is famed for his struggle against iconoclasm. The number of brethren in his monastery grew, in his time, from twelve persons to a thousand. His monastery was also distinguished for its strict discipline.

Besides the solitary life and cœnobiticism, monasticism in the East also developed other particular forms, the so-called stylitism and foolishness for Christ. The **Venerable Simeon** is honoured as the founder of stylitism; he lived in the fifth century and struggle for 37 years in prayer, never descending from his pillar which was under the open sky. His meager food he partook but once a week, and for the whole course of the Great Lent he ate nothing at all. He was deemed worthy of the gift of wonder-working and of prophecy. After him **Daniel** and **Simeon of the Wondrous Mountain** were remarkable stylites, and in the seventh century the **Venerable Alypius** struggled for more than 50 years on a pillar.

One of the clearest examples of the struggle of foolishness was in the sixth century, the **Ven. Simeon, the Fool-for Christ's-Sake**. The Fools strove to overcome within themselves the very root of all the sins, **pride**, & especially **the pride of the mind**, and for this they purposefully took on themselves before the people the appearance of those deprived of a healthy mind, so that by this extraordinary strategem and their behaviour they might be subjected to the mockery and scolding of the people.

In the West, monasticism spread under the influence of Eastern monasticism. **Saint Athanasius the Great**, while he was staying in Rome, wrote the life of the Venerable Antony, and inspired many with a desire to emulate his life. Many responded to the call of the monastic life in the West, many of the most renowned Fathers of the Western Church: Jerome, Ambrose of Milan and Blessed Augustine. In the West monasticism quickly developed its own special forms and direction in accord with the spirit and disposition of Western man. Such an accommodation of Eastern monasticism to the conditions of life in the West was made by the **Venerable Benedict of Nursia**, who lived at the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth centuries. He gave western monasticism a more practical guideline. The rule of Saint Benedict is not distinguished by the same strictness as the Eastern rules. He did not demand of the monastics such extreme renunciation, but he only gave them precepts on **good order, steadfastness and love of labour**. According to the rule of Benedict, the monks should be occupied with **tilling the earth, with the transcription of books, and with the education of children**, and the **Pope Gregory the Great** added to this **missionary activity**.

... to be continued in the next issue.



THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH

GOD WILLING, at the end of the Church month of August, on Sunday 30th August / 12th September, **His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methoni**, will celebrate the consecration of **Saint Edward's Church in Brookwood**. It therefore seems appropriate that we should include something about the significance of the ceremonies. Unfortunately, of the two descriptions that we have in Russian, one is rather over-long and the other is extremely brief. We will attempt to make a digest of the two, and ask our readers to excuse our many shortcomings.

The church building plays an important rôle in the spiritual life of every Orthodox Christian, and therefore the consecration of a church is of immense significance for the congregation of believers who worship there. In the Old Testament we have the sanctification of the Tabernacle by Moses in the wilderness, and later, when the Chosen People, had settled in what is now the Holy Land, the dedication of the Temple of Solomon. That tradition has been carried over into the New Testament Church, but naturally the ceremonies which formerly foreshadowed the incarnate dispensation of Our Saviour, now proclaim it, and more clearly.

Principally the ceremonies centre on the Holy Table. In ancient times, the Divine Liturgy was often celebrated over the tombs of the Martyrs or at the place of their contest. Now portions of the relics of the Martyrs are deposited under the Holy Table. The Table itself is square, representing that from it peoples from the four quarters of the earth are nourished, and that God's love extends equally to all. It is supported by four columns, one at each corner, and these are said to represent the prophets and the apostles. The ark containing the sacred relics is deposited under the centre of the Table itself. Before he became Orthodox, the compiler of this piece remembers being told many years ago by a priest of the Greek Archdiocese, Fr Cyril Browne, to bear in mind that every

Liturgy is celebrated over the relics of those who had died for Christ's sake, and that he should be prepared to do so if he wished to be Orthodox.

For the ceremony, the Bishop vests in his usual episcopal vestments, but wears over them a long white garment. This has the practical purpose of protecting his vestments, but it also represents the burial shroud of the Saviour.

The columns of the Table are sprinkled with holy water and anointed with wax-mastic. St Simeon of Thessalonica says of this: "The hierarch bears a vessel, in which are found wax and mastic with aromatics, myron, aloes and other things, which all refer to the burial of the Saviour, just as the Sacred Table itself represents the life-bearing Tomb of Christ; wax and mastic are mixed with the aromatics because these adhesive substances are used for strengthening and to bind the board to the corners of the altar, and the tying together of all these things represents Christ the Saviour's love for us and His union with us which extended even unto His dying for us." The top of the Table is also sprinkled with holy water and laid in place, and affixed with trunnions, hammered in with stones, which represents the crucifixion of our Lord, when He was nailed to the Cross. The Bishop then reads a long prayer, which is followed by a litany.

There are, naturally, some slight differences between the practices of the local (national) Orthodox Churches, and here we shall be following the Greek practice, and so now the sacred relics of the Martyrs, which are sealed within a special coffer will be placed beneath the Holy Table. The relics have been anointed with Holy Chrism because the martyrs are united with Christ, and as a reminder of the anointing of the Body of the Saviour by the Myrrh-bearers. They are placed under the Table, reminding us of the words of Revelation (6:9); "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." That testimony is the confirmation of the Church's confession, the pillar of faith, and for it the martyrs poured out their blood.

The Table is then washed with water, wine and rose water, and wiped with sponges by the clergy. This represents the love which sprang from the repentance of the sinful woman who anointed the Lord with the

precious ointment unto the day of His burial (John 12:7). It is with such repentance that we should always approach the Lord's altar. The Table, thus prepared and cleansed, is then anointed with the Holy Chrism, sanctifying it for the offering of the Holy Eucharist.

The Table is next covered with its first cloth covering which is a white fitted cover, called the *katasarkion*, which represents the burial linens of Our Saviour. This is bound round with cord, which is crossed diagonally over each of the four sides of the Holy Table, reminding us that the Lord was brought bound before Annas and Caiaphas. Then the outer coverings of the altar are blessed and laid upon it. These are usually of brocade or embroidered materials, and represent the Divine Glory of our Saviour.

The church itself is then censed, sprinkled with holy water, & the walls are anointed with Holy Chrism by the Bishop. This tells us that the glory of the Lord fills the whole house of the Lord. The Bishop then lights a candle or lamp, which is placed in the High Place, showing that the light of the Grace of Christ shines forth & grants light to the whole world.

At the end of the ceremonies of the consecration of the church, the Bishop takes his usual place on the dais in the centre of the church, and blesses in all four directions with the Holy Cross. Thereafter the Divine Liturgy is celebrated.

This is a very brief and amateurish description of the service, but we hope that it will help our people to understand the significance of the ceremonies to some small extent. We are indeed greatly blessed to be receiving such a blessing in our small community. In the Orthodox diaspora in the West, it is unfortunately often the case that churches are not consecrated, and yet this was a matter which Bishop Ambrose brought up almost immediately when we joined the Synod in Resistance in 2006. In that we have delayed more than three years in doing it from that time, it was through no lack of zeal on the Bishop's part, but simply that we first wanted to have the church building re-roofed and restored so that it would be in good order. It will also probably be one of the rare occasions when the services of consecration will be celebrated in English, and therefore more readily understandable by the majority of the people.

We ask your prayerful support for our efforts in preparing for this significant event, and that, even if unable to be with us on 12th September, you will remember the monastic community and the congregation of Saint Edward's on that memorable day.



THE COMING MONTH

AUGUST is the last month of the Church Year, and is divided neatly in two. The first fourteen days are kept as a fast, one as strict as the Great Lent, in preparation for the **Great Feast of the Dormition of the All-Holy Theotokos** (15th/28th). This feast has a particular significance for the Orthodox in England. The first Orthodox church, opened here after the Schism, was in Soho in 1677 A.D, and was under the Œcumenical Patriarchate. To this day there is a street in Soho called Greek Street. However, pressure from the Anglican Bishop of London ensured that this church was closed five years later, and the Greeks were unable to open another church here until 1838. In the interim the Russians were able to establish a church in 1698, which served for all Orthodox Christians. It was attached to the Imperial Embassy and thus in a position to enjoy a measure of protection. It was dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God, and it is for that reason that both the Patriarchal Cathedral in Ennismore Gardens and the Cathedral of the former Russian Church Outside Russia here were dedicated to that feast, both claiming to be the successor to that first, lasting church established in this country.

Within the Dormition fast, we have the **Great Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Saviour** (6th/19th). The two Gospel readings read at this feast, Luke 9:28-36 at Mattins & Matthew 17:1-9 at the Liturgy, record the revelation of the glory of Christ's Divinity, which this feast celebrates. **St Ephraim the Syrian**, preaching on this festival, says: "He [Christ] showed them also that He was the Creator of heaven and earth, and the Lord of the living and the dead; for He spoke to the heavens, and

they sent down Elias; He made a sign to the earth and raised Moses to life again... He brought them [the Apostles] up to the mountain that He might show them, before His Resurrection, the glory of His Divinity, so that when He had risen from the dead they might then know that He had not received this glory as the reward of His labour, and as one who had it not; but that He had it from all eternity, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.”

Of the Dormition, Saint John of Damascus says: “This day the treasure of Life, the abyss of Grace (I know not in what manner I may make this clear with my presuming and faltering lips), is veiled in Life-bringing death. And she drew nigh to it without fear, who had given birth to death’s Destroyer; if indeed we may speak of her all-holy and life-giving departure as death. For how could she who truly brought Life to all, become subject to death? But she yields to the law laid down by Him Whom she had borne, and as a daughter of the old Adam submits to this inherited chastisement; since her Son, Who is Life Itself, had not refused it; but as the Mother of the Living God she is fittingly restored to Him. For if God said: *Lest he* (who first was made man [Adam]) *put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and live for ever* (Gen. 3:22); how could it be that she who had conceived Life Itself, Which is without beginning and unceasing, suffering neither beginning nor end, would not live for ever in perfect life?”

A third great celebration in August, though not one of the Twelve Great Feasts, is the **Beheading of St John the Baptist** ((29th August / 11th September). We keep this day as a fast day, and this year even though it falls on a Saturday we do not allow ourselves fish, but only wine and oil. In the fourth century, the great Western Father, **Saint Hilary of Poitiers** explains this feast mystically, and in so doing shows us why we fast on this day. He writes: “Mystically John represents the Law, for the Law preached Christ, and John came of the Law, preaching Christ out of the Law. Herod is the prince of the people, and the prince of the people bears the name and the cause of the whole body under him. John then warned Herod that he should not take his brother’s wife. For there are and there were two people: of the circumcision, and of the gentiles; and these are brethren, children of the same parent of the human race,

but the Law warned Israel that he should not take to him the works of the gentiles, and unbelief which was united to them as by the bond of conjugal love. On the birthday, that is amidst the enjoyment of the things of the body, the daughter of Herodias danced; for pleasure, as it were springing from unbelief, was carried in its alluring course throughout the whole of Israel, and the nation bound itself thereto as with an oath, for, for sin and worldly pleasures, the Israelites sold the gifts of Eternal Life. She (Pleasure), at the suggestion of her mother Unbelief, begged that there should be given her the head of John, that is, the glory of the Law; but the people knowing the good that was in the Law, yield these terms to pleasure, not without sorrow for its own danger, conscious that it ought not to have given up the so great glory of its teachers. But forced by its sins, as by the force of an oath, as well as overcome by fear, and corrupted by the example of the neighbouring princes, it sorrowfully yields to the blandishments of pleasure. So among the other gratifications of a debauched people the head of John is brought in a dish, that is by the loss of the Law, the pleasures of the body and worldly luxury are increased. It is carried by the damsel to her mother; thus depraved Israel offered up the glory of the Law to pleasure and unbelief.” Perhaps the most striking and awesome thing about these words is how well they describe the situation of the Orthodox world today, 1,600 years after St Hilary wrote them. The Law of Grace is being lost to unbelief and to pleasure, by people who, nonetheless, still bear the name Orthodox Christian and still attend church and adhere to some of our religious practices. A recent visitor to our community, with much wisdom, said that people believe that the Apostasy, which is foretold before the End, is often thought of as a renunciation of Orthodoxy, but he said much more fearful than that is the apostasy of people who will still call themselves Orthodox but will not be so in their hearts. How exactly the situation of the people of the New Israel, the Orthodox Church, parallels that of the Israel of old at the time of the Baptist. They too were sure that they were keepers of the Law, that they were faithful Jews; they had their hierarchs and leaders proud of their tradition, they were often punctilious in their religious observance (perhaps the one area where modern Orthodoxy does not parallel their example) but they had lost the very purpose of the Law, Christ, and that through pleasure and unbelief.

The day following this sobering commemoration, we, here at Brookwood, will have the additional blessing of the consecration of Saint Edward's Church, if God so wills, and on the following Thursday the feast of St Edward itself. At both of these we hope Bishop Ambrose will officiate.

Among the other saints we commemorate in August, we have:

Our **Venerable Father Or of the Thebaid** (7th / 20th) lived in the fourth century and was one of the great Desert Fathers of Egypt. He lived for many years as a solitary, but then began to receive disciples. In time he founded several monastic communities. He received the Holy Mysteries every day, and was many times granted to see the holy Angels, but he also suffered many things and many temptations from the demons. Once, when one of his disciples told him the day of Pascha had come and he should celebrate it, he went outside, raised his arms in prayer and thus spent three days in unbroken prayer. Then he explained to his disciples that this is celebration for a monastic: to lift up the mind to God. He entered into rest in the last decade of the fourth century.

Our **Holy Father Hosius of Cordova** (27th August / 9th September) was the foremost Western champion of Orthodoxy in the early struggle against Arianism. He was born about 256 and in early life he was a confessor of the Faith in the persecution of pagan Emperors. He was consecrated as Bishop of Cordova in Southern Spain about A.D. 295. His name is recorded amongst the nineteen bishops present at the provincial Council of Elvira (c. 300 A.D.). Hosius had close personal relations with the Emperor, Saint Constantine the Great, on several occasions between 313 and 324, and he is known to have been his chief adviser in dealing with the Donatists. When the Arian troubles began, Constantine charged Hosius with the delivery of his letter to St Alexander of Alexandria and to Arius, in which he urged them to reconciliation. When the Council of Nicæa met, Hosius presided. Some say that he did so representing the Pope, who did not attend; others that he was appointed by St Constantine because of his trust in him. In A.D. 340, St Athanasius the Great was expelled from his see by the Arians, and after passing three years in Rome, went in 343 to Gaul to confer with Hosius, and thence to Sardica, where a council was held in 343. Hosius again presided, proposed the canons, and was the first to sign the Acts of the council. St Athanasius refers to

him as “one who on account of his age, his confession, and the many labours he had undergone, is worthy of all reverence.” The prestige given to the Orthodox cause by the support of the venerable Hosius led the Arians to bring pressure to bear upon Constantius II, who had him summoned to Milan. He was pressured but declined to condemn Athanasius or to hold communion with Arians. He so impressed the Emperor that, despite failing to move him, he allowed him to return to Spain. More Arian pressure led to Constantius writing a letter demanding whether he alone was going to remain obstinate. Undaunted in reply Hosius sent a letter of protest against imperial meddling in Church affairs. Later, in deep old age, under pressure he signed the declaration known as the Second Sirmian Formula, which was un-Orthodox, and thereby, as Saint Athanasius says, lapsed “for a moment.” Shortly after this he died, full of labours, and on his death bed repented of his momentary lapse and renewed his condemnation of the Arian heresies. At the time of his death he was over a hundred, and had been Bishop of Cordova and one of the greatest lights of the Western Church for over sixty years.

Saint Sebbi, the King of Essex who reposed in the monastic habit (29th August / 11th September) shared the rule of the ancient kingdom of Essex with brother, Sighere. His brother apostatized, but Sebbi remained Christian, and was so renowned for his piety, his good works and his care for the poor, that it was said of him that he should rather have been a Bishop than a king. After his brother’s death, he reigned alone. He had a great desire to become a monk, but his wife would not consent to this, until, after a reign of about thirty years, he was seized with a sickness which seemed to betoken his imminent demise. Then she consented to his taking up the monastic life. He was tonsured by the Bishop Waldhere of London, and fearing that in his last moment he might succumb to some temptation he asked the bishop to remain with him with his two personal attendants. Three days before his repose, he was granted a consoling vision and told of the time of his repose. He died peacefully and free of pain, and his sacred relics were laid to rest in Saint Paul’s Cathedral. A stone coffin had been prepared for them, but it was found to be too short. However, in the presence of the king’s son and the Bishop, it was miraculously extended so as to receive his body fittingly. His tomb was revered in the old St Paul’s Cathedral in the city.



POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

“WHAT LESSON can be drawn from today’s reading, Rebekah engineering the theft by Jacob of Esau’s blessing by means of deceit? It hardly comes across as a morality tale! I have always understood that Esau deserved to lose his inheritance because he took it for granted, and sold it for a mess of pottage thinking that Jacob was joking. But clearly he did not do this with Isaac’s blessing - Esau took it very seriously, and went out immediately to follow Isaac’s directions, and returned promptly, but obviously not as quickly as someone who had just been given two goats by his mother and bounced into an elaborate con. Is it one of those stories like the one of the seven wise and foolish virgins that shows that the Kingdom of Heaven is not something you have by right, but must take by effort, prudence and resourcefulness (“the Kingdom of Heaven is taken by violence”)? If so, where do you draw the line on ends justifying means? And what about the fact that Rebekah actually was the one taking the Kingdom by violence on Jacob’s behalf? Is it a similar mechanism to the intercessions of the saints? Or am I missing something?” - K.K. Virginia Water

..... whatever induced you to think that the Bible was a morality tale?

St Ambrose of Milan explains that the fact that Esau and Jacob were both sons of Rebecca demonstrates that within us good and evil emanate from the same source. Esau represents the evil as he led a dissolute life; Jacob represents the good. We have to use every means within our power to ensure that the good prevails, as did St Rebecca. Esau comes first because in our fallen nature the soul first prefers what is fallen. So yes, in that part you are right, resourcefulness is to be used, in ensuring our “Jacob” gains precedence.

Origen also indicates that, even before this supplanting, Esau had strayed from the right way, echoing the Scriptures: Genesis 27:41, Hebrews 12:15 & 16. And in the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete,

which we heard in church last Wednesday [*This query was sent during Great Lent*]: “You have rivalled Esau the hated, O my soul, and given the birthright of your first beauty to the supplanter; you have lost your father’s blessing....” And later again: “Esau was called Edom because of his raging love of women, burning always with unrestrained desires and stained with sensual pleasure.” And so he is a type of that which has fallen away from the right way, and of “a soul that loveth sin.”

The two brothers also mystically represent the two Chosen Peoples - first the people of the Jews, who were supplanted, and then the people of the New Israel. So the tale also reveals God’s love for us in the dispensation that was fore-ordained.

Now in where we draw the line between resourcefulness and the end justifying the means is more difficult to answer. I think we have to bear two things in mind. For the Old Testament righteous things were permitted them that we might find abhorrent, because they had not yet received the fulness of the teaching, nor had they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. So perhaps if a Christian mother acted as St Rebecca did it might be charged to her as a sin. And secondly, we have to remember our own sinfulness and falling short of our Christian calling, and be extremely careful lest we adopt an end justifies the means model. For us, held back by our passions and sins, Jacob has not yet become Israel, “the mind that sees God,” and so we have to proceed with the uttermost caution, taking counsel and advice, striving to follow the precepts that Church tradition teaches us. The Saints, whose minds see God, may exercise greater boldness.

Two small points - from what St Ambrose says above, Rebecca does the violence because she represents the soul which is able to give birth to good and evil, and there is no hint that she represents the intercession of the Saints, but that thought may not be entirely wrong.

And there were five, not seven, wise virgins!!!!



NEWS SECTION

LETTER OF FRATERNAL SUPPORT FROM THE SYNOD IN RESISTANCE TO METROPOLITAN AGAFANGEL (ROCA)

THE SYNOD IN RESISTANCE of the Church of Greece addressed the following letter to **His Eminence Metropolitan Agafangel**, First Hierarchy of the **Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad** on 11th /24th May, the Day of the Holy Spirit: “At the last Meeting of our Holy Synod of Resistance on April 10/28, 2010, we learned of the positive developments in the Holy Synod headed by Your Eminence in answer to the overt attacks on it from the local metropolitanate of the Moscow Patriarchate in Odessa, and we feel the need draw together as brothers in Christ in prayer and address You with this letter. We congratulate You for the sincere effort begun by You to unite the divided Russian Church Abroad, for Your kind desire for further development and strengthening of brotherly relations with us in the Resistance and with the Orthodox old-calendar brethren in Romania and Bulgaria, and also for the correct guidance which You provide Your flock as relates to firmness in Faith and Confession in response to the challenges of today and the absence of malice and prayers for the repentance of the former brothers in Christ, who have now become the persecutors of Your flock and You. Likewise, the approval of the request to accept Bishop Dionisiy (Alferov) into the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad headed by You, and the ordination of the new Bishop for Siberia, are events that bring comfort and give hope, for which we celebrate with You and praise the Lord! May the Grace of the Holy Spirit lead all faithful Orthodox throughout the world to unite in the Truth and strengthen them for the vicious battle against evil and for good. May the hostile and profane attacks of Your enemies not cause You alarm, dear Bishop, rather may they strengthen You and us on the path to the Confession of faith, in Love and Truth, and confirm even more our association with You, blessed by God! We embrace You in the Holy Spirit and the embrace of love, peace and unity in Christ, and close, With respect and brotherly prayer,

On behalf of the Holy Synod

Acting First Hierarchy: + *Cyprian*, Bishop of Oreoi

Secretary: + *Klimes*, Bishop of Gardikion

SAXON ROYAL REMAINS IDENTIFIED

REMAINS, excavated in Magdeburg Cathedral in Germany two years ago, have recently been identified as those of **Queen Eadgyth**, who died in A.D. 946, according to *BBC News*. She was the granddaughter of King Alfred the Great and the great-aunt of our Saint Edward the Martyr, and she married Holy Roman Emperor Otto I, in 929. A spokesman from Bristol University said the bones were the oldest surviving remains of an English royal burial. Eadgyth had at least two children with Otto and lived most of her married life in Magdeburg, Saxony. She died aged about 36. She was buried in the monastery of St Maurice but her bones were moved at least three times. She was finally interred in an elaborate tomb at Magdeburg Cathedral in 1510, wrapped in silk in a lead coffin.

NUN KILLED IN BOMB BLAST

80-YEAR OLD **Nun Lyudmilla** was killed in an explosion that wounded eight others at a church in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Zaporozhye, on Wednesday 28th July, n.s. The explosion took place on the last day of a visit to Ukraine by **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All-Russia**, and, as that visit caused some protest from Ukrainian nationalist elements, it was not clear if the events were linked. Mother Lyudmilla was taken to hospital in a serious condition after the blast, but doctors were unable to save her. The church belongs to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is under the Patriarchate of Moscow. Local police said that the damage to the church caused by the blast was not significant and the device appeared to have been homemade.

SIR-UK NEWS

ROMANIAN SUNDAY AT BROOKWOOD

TO our great disappointment, **His Eminence Metropolitan Vlasie**, the President of the Synod of Bishops of the Traditionalist Hierarchy of the Romanian Church was prevented, through ill-health, from visiting us as planned in July. However, **His Grace Bishop Sofronie of Suceava** was able to come with **Archimandrite Chiprian** from the Monastery at Slatioara and the **Archdeacon Romano** from the same monastery. On Saturday 4th /17th July, in the afternoon, the visiting party, with some of the Romanian people living in London, visited **Mother Vikentia** and her sisters at the **Convent of the Annunciation** in Willesden. Through the hospitality of the nuns, there will now be **Liturgies at the Convent in Romanian**, for the large number of their people here, on the Sundays when otherwise there would normally be no Liturgy there. Fr Chiprian, who is dividing his time between staying at the Brotherhood and with members of the Romanian congregation in North London and Hertfordshire, is staying in this country for some time to celebrate these Liturgies and care for their people. On Sunday 5th /18th July, we served Mattins at Saint Edward's according to our usual typicon, and then, being joined by Bishop Sofronie, we celebrated the Divine Liturgy more in accordance with the Romanian usage than we usually manage, being helped by the participation of other Romanian clergy and by Romanian chanters. His Grace was assisted by Fr Chiprian and Fr Romano, as well as by the Brookwood clergy. After the Divine service, he stayed for the usual Parish Breakfast before leaving to visit members of their flock in London and attend to their pastoral needs.

ISLE OF WIGHT - ST BONIFACE MISSION

THE PARISHIONERS of the **St Boniface Mission** have formed a **steering group**, under the chairmanship of their secretary, **Martin Smith**, to put the administration of the Mission on a more formal setting and to explore possible options for their new church.

GIFTS TO SAINT EDWARD'S CHURCH

ARCHIMANDRITE CHIPRIAN from Slatioara has donated to our church an extremely beautiful hand-painted icon of **Saint Alexis, the Man of God**, the work of the **Monastirea Buna Vestire** (Monastery of the Annunciation) at Valea Rosie in Romania.

An anonymous donor has given us a slipper from the sacred relics of **St Dionysius of Zakynthos**. Like the slippers of St Spiridon, these are changed every year, and usually divided up, and the portions given as blessings to the faithful. In this instance, our donor was given a whole slipper and has very generously donated it to Saint Edward's. We have placed it just to the right of the shrine of St Edward, but covered it with a cloth so that the light does not fade it.

Michael and Margaret Woodrow of Liphook have donated a quantity of **Bulgarian Rose Oil** to us, in preparation for the consecration of the Church.

Archimandrite Matthew of the Sisojevac Monastery in Serbia has generously sent us a number of prayer-ropes and icons to sell from the bookstall at the back of the church.

Mr Egg Guney, the owner of Brookwood Cemetery, has given our community a ride-on mower, which usefully doubles as a small tractor. To all these donors we owe a debt of gratitude, and pray that God's blessings will come upon them.

VISITORS

A GROUP of about 45 retired members of the pharmaceutical company, **Glaxo-Smith-Klein**, were given a cemetery walk by **John Clarke**, and, by prior arrangement, visited Saint Edward's where they were shown round and given a talk by Fr Niphon. They stayed about an hour in the church, asking questions and showed much interest.

KEOTCoLtd AGM

THE AGM of the **King Edward Orthodox Trust Company Limited**, the charity which administers our property (number 284929/0) was held in the Exhibition Room of the Old Mortuary on Sunday 11th July, n.s. **Laurence Bloom-Davis** had resigned as a member because of his old age and the difficulty of driving up from Somerset, and his resignation was noted and it was proposed that a letter of thanks be sent him. After the usual business, we discussed ways of providing some better facilities for young mothers with babies and toddlers.

DRIVEWAY RENOVATION

AFTER SETTTLING all our accounts following the building project and the re-roofing of the Church, we have found that we had a surplus of just under £10,000 in our **Building Fund account**. With this money and some other donations, we are planning to have the driveway and the parking areas put in good order, and at the time of going to press are negotiating with contractors.

FREEWILL OFFERINGS

AS REGULAR worshippers at Saint Edward's will be aware, we do not have collections during our services. They are intrusive, usually taken just as one should be preparing to receive the Holy Mysteries, and they imply a degree of coercion. Ten pence given willingly is of much more value than £50 given because a plate is stuck under your nose! So we simply have the alms box on the candle stand at the back of the church, where people may give, or not, as if they wish. In such a small congregation as ours, people know that we need supporting and do not need coercing to give. The **weekly average** amounts for each of the first six months of this year have been: January £244.39; February £282.03;

March £419.75; April £477.11; May £290.33; June £225.83. We thank all of you who have supported us by your freewill offerings in this way, and all those who give through bankers' orders payments into the trust or Brotherhood accounts. *God's blessing be upon you all.*

CHICKENS ESTABLISHED

WE have now obtained five hens rescued from battery life, and set them up with their own house and run in the vegetable garden. As they come out of the batteries in quite a bedraggled state, we were warned by the man helping at the farm not to expect any eggs the next day. He probably thought we were born in Surrey! In fact, we had three eggs the next day, and they have continued to lay well. They have regained their colour, although their plumage still has some way to go.



PRACTICAL TIP

WHEN approaching to receive the Holy Mysteries, try to help the priest administer them to you. It is best if you position yourself so that your mouth is a few inches from the lip of the Cup, and at the same level or just a little higher. This means that tall people should crouch down a little, and shorter people should stand upright - usually the opposite happens! Do do bow your head down so that the priest cannot see your mouth. Once he has taken the Spoon from the Chalice do not move, or try to "track" his movements. And open your mouth wide! Do do snatch at the Gifts at the very last moment. Simply come up, position yourself properly, and open your mouth wide and wait, and when the minister has placed the Holy Gifts therein, take Them, as the Lord's injunction instructs us. Let your lips be wiped by the deacon or server, and if you feel they have not done so adequately, indicate that they should do so more thoroughly, and then move away quietly. Do not cross yourself when you are near the Chalice - you could knock it and spill the Gifts. If you have the custom of kissing the foot of the Chalice after receiving, do not catch hold of it and pull it towards you to do this, and remember that you kiss the Cup and not the priest's hand, which is quite inappropriate at this time.