

# FROM THE FATHERS

**“OUR FATHER, Which art in the Heavens, hallowed by Thy Name:** the name is that of the Son of God. Saying *Father* points out to you of Whose goods you have been made worthy, now that you have become a son of God. Saying *in the Heavens* points out your Father’s native country and home. If you wish to have God as a father, look to Heaven and not to earth. For you do not *my Father*, but *our Father* since you have all men as brothers of the one Father. **Hallowed be Thy Name**, that is, make us holy so that Thou mayest be glorified by us. For as God is blasphemed by me, so is He also glorified by me. **Thy Kingdom come**, that is the Second Coming, for he who has a good conscience boldly desires the coming of the Resurrection and the Judgment. **Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven** - just as, it says, the Angels do Thy will, so grant that we may do it. **Give us this day our daily bread** - it means the bread which is sufficient for our nature and existence. He removes the care for the morrow. The Body of Christ is the daily bread, and we pray that we may share it blamelessly. **And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors**, because we sin even after Baptism. We pray that He might forgive us our debts if we do not bear a grudge; for God has me as an example, and what I do to the other, He does also unto me. **And lead us not into temptation**. We men are weak; therefore it does not behoove us to fall into temptation, but rather to pray not to be overwhelmed by temptation. For he who is overwhelmed and overcome is led into the pit of temptation; but he who has fallen, has he prevailed? **But deliver us from the evil one**. He does not say *from evil men*, for they do not wrong us, but *from the evil one*.”

ST GERMANUS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, + 733 A.D.



# ON TRUE AND FALSE HUMBLEMINDEDNESS

*By Saint Ignatius (Brianchaninov) of the Caucasus  
(1807 - 1867)*

**LET NO MAN beguile you, willing in humblemindedness** (Col. 2:18), says the holy Apostle Paul.

True humblemindedness consists in obedience and in following Christ (see Phil. 2:5-8).

True humblemindedness is spiritual reason. It is a gift of God; it is the action of Divine Grace in the mind and heart of a man.

It happens there is a capricious humblemindedness; it makes the soul vainglorious, a deluded soul, one led astray by false teaching, one which flatters itself, a soul which seeks the world's approbation, a soul which wholly strives for earthly prosperity and for earthly pleasures, a soul which forgets eternity and God.

In its particular make-up, capricious humblemindedness consists of numberless, varied contrivances, through which human pride tries to grasp for itself the glory of humblemindedness before a world which has become blind, which loves its own, a world which exalts in vice, when that vice is clothed in the guise of beneficence, and before a world which hates the virtuous, when the virtuous actually appears before its scrutiny in his holy simplicity, in a holy and firm obedience to the Gospel.

Nothing is so inimical to the humility of Christ as self-willed humblemindedness, which casts off the yoke of obedience to Christ, and

under the cover of a hypocritical service to God, sacrilegiously ministers to Satan.

If we constantly take stock of our sins, if we try to scrutinize them in detail, then we shall find in ourselves nothing beneficial at all, nor shall we discover any humble-mindedness.

True, holy virtue is concealed by true humility, just as a chaste virgin conceals her beauty with a mantle, just as the Holy of Holies was concealed from the gaze of the people by the Veil.

True humble-mindedness is a Gospel character, a Gospel disposition, an image of the mind of the Gospel.

True humility is a Divine mystery: it is beyond the comprehension of man. Being the most exalted wisdom, it appears to the carnal mind to be unruly.

The Lord Jesus revealed the Divine mystery of humility to His faithful disciple, who constantly sat at His feet, and paid heed to His life-creating words. And being revealed it remains hidden, it is inexplicable in the words and earthly languages. It is unattainable to the carnal mind, but the unattainable is attained by the spiritual mind, and being attained yet remains unattainable. Humility is the heavenly life upon earth.

The grace-filled, wondrous vision of God's majesty and the innumerable benefactions of God towards man, the grace-filled knowledge of the Redeemer, the following of Him self-sacrificingly, the vision of the abyss of perdition into which the race of man has fallen, - these things are the unseen signs of humility, the reception halls of the spiritual palace built by the Godman.

Humility does not regard itself as humble. On the contrary it sees within itself a multiplicity of proud things. It is concerned to cut back all their branches, but in cutting them back it perceives that there are many more yet to be found.

The Venerable Macarius of Egypt, whom the Church calls the Great, because of his pre-eminent virtue, and on account of his deep humility, a standard-bearing Father and Spirit-bearer, says in his exalted,

holy and mystical talks, that the purest and perfect man has nothing proud within.

This God-pleaser achieved the highest degree of Christian perfection; he lived at a time when there was an abundance of Saints, he saw the greatest of holy monks, Antony the Great, and yet he related that he had not seen even one man who, in the fullest and most precise definition of the word, might be called perfect.

False humility sees itself as humble; absurdly and piteously it takes comfort in deceptive, soul destroying events.

Satan takes on the likeness of an Angel of light; his apostles take on the likeness of the Apostles of Christ (2 Cor. 9:13-15); his teaching adopts the appearance of Christ's teaching; things, originating from his delusions, take on the appearance of things spiritual and grace-filled; his pride and vain-glory, which derive from self-deception and spiritual delusion, take on the appearance of the humility of Christ.

Ah! what escape from the misfortunate, deluded ones, from the dreamers, calamitously contented with themselves, with their own state of self-deception, from the dreamers who think they are comforted and blessed, from whom the words of the Saviour are hidden: **“Blessed are ye that weep now, blessed are ye that hunger now”** and **“Woe unto you that are full, woe unto you that laugh now”** (Luke 6:21,25).

Look most earnestly, look impartially upon your soul, most beloved brother! Is their repentance any more true than their comfort? Is their weeping in this vale of misfortunes truly that weeping which is appointed; does it not rather give rise to an untimely, flattering, foolish and pernicious satisfaction?

Repentance and weeping for one's sins brings eternal blessedness: this is well-known; this is verifiable; this is proclaimed by the Lord. Why plunge yourself into these “holy” attitudes, and continue in them, gratifying yourself, being satisfied with them, pleasuring in them, but also destroying within that blessed hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God, and that saving sorrow for one's sins and for one's sinfulness.

Hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God are the marks of poverty of spirit; weeping is an expression of humility, its voice. The absence of weeping, gratifying oneself and satisfying oneself, these sham-spiritual dispositions expose the pride of the heart.

Fear lest, for the sake of an empty, gratifying satisfaction, you inherit that eternal sorrow, promised by God to those who are self-willedly satisfied now, in opposition to the will of God.

Vainglory and its children, false spiritual comforts acting within the soul, not imbued with repentance, only raise up a spectre of humility. In the soul, true humility is replaced by these illusions. The illusion of truth, occupying the house of the soul, blocks all the entrances into the house of the soul of Truth itself.

Alas, my soul, a temple erected by God for the truth, by accepting within yourself the illusion of truth, by worshipping falsehood instead of Truth, you make yourself a pagan temple!

In this pagan temple an idol is set up: an illusion of humility. This illusion of humility is the most dreadful manifestation of pride. It is with difficulty that pride can be cast out, even when a person recognizes the pride in him; but how can it be when it seems to him to be humility?

In this pagan temple there is the pitiful abomination of desolation. In this pagan temple incense is offered in worship of the idol, hymns are chanted by which Hades is rejoiced. There the thoughts and feelings taste the forbidden food of idol worship, they imbibe wine laced with a death-dealing poison. This pagan temple, the dwelling place of idols and of every uncleanness, is inaccessible not only to Divine Grace, to spiritual gifts, - it is inaccessible for every kind of true virtue, as it is to the Gospel precepts.

False humility so blinds a man, that it compels him not only to think himself humble, to hint to others that he is humble, but it even openly speaks of it, and loudly proclaims it.

This falsehood cruelly mocks us, when being deluded by it, we are laud it in place of the truth.

Grace-filled humility is invisible, as is its Provider, God. It is enclosed in silence, simplicity, sincerity, naturalness, in freedom.

False humility always has a contrived appearance; it is always publicizing itself.

False humility loves scenes; through them it deludes and self-deludes. The humility of Christ is clothed upon with a garment and coat (see John 19:24), - in the most natural clothing; covered by this clothing it is not recognized and not noticed by men.

Humility is a pledge in the heart, holy, an unnamed possession of the heart, a Divine faculty born in an imperceptible manner in the soul, which comes from the fulfilling of the Gospel commandments. (Ven. Abba Dorotheus: teaching two).

The action of humility might be likened to the action of the passion of love of money. For the person infected with the malady of trust in, and love for, corruptible treasures, the more he accumulates them, the more he is greedy for them and the more unsatisfied. The richer he becomes, so much the more he presents himself as poor, and as without a sufficiency. So it is with one taken by humility, the richer he becomes in the virtues and in spiritual gifts, so much the more is he made poor and as nothing in his own sight.

This is natural. When a man has not yet tasted the highest good, then his own good, defiled as it is with sin, has value in his sight. However when he communicates of the Divine spiritual goodness, then his own goodness, which is joined to, and mixed with, evil, has no value in his sight.

For the poor man, the copper farthings, which he has gathered with long labour and much fatigue, are precious. If unexpectedly he becomes rich, when a countless number of pure gold pieces falls to his lot, then he throws away the copper farthings which he formerly held in regard, as if they were a burden and only weighed him down.

The righteous, much-suffering Job, having suffered cruel trials, was deemed worthy of Divine vision. Then he told God in his inspired prayer, **Formerly I heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee.** What was the product which was manifest in the soul of the righteous one from Divine vision? **Wherefore,** he continues and completes his prayer, **I abhor myself, and repent. In me there are but dust and ashes** (Job 42:5-6).

Do you wish to achieve humility? Then fulfil the Gospel commandments, for in doing so it will rejoice in your heart; make it your own, holy humility, or rather make our Lord Jesus Christ your own.

The beginning of humility is poverty of spirit; the middle of progress therein, which exceeds every thought, is attainment of the peace of Christ; and its end or perfection is the love of Christ.

Humility is never roused to anger, it never gives in to man-pleasing, it never succumbs to sorrow, it fears nothing.

Can one succumb to sorrow, who seasonably considers himself worthy of every affliction?

Can one be fearful of misfortunes, who seasonably has committed himself to afflictions, regarding them as the means of his salvation?

Those who pleased God loved the words of the Good Thief, who was crucified alongside the Lord. In their afflictions they customarily cried out, **We receive the due reward of our deeds; remember us, O Lord, in thy Kingdom** (see Luke 23:41, 42). They met every affliction with the thought that they were worthy of it ( see Abba Dorotheus, second teaching).

For these words of humility, a holy peace enters into their hearts. It offers the cup of spiritual comfort at the bed of the sick, and in prison to those detained there, and to those persecuted by men and those persecuted by the demons.

The cup of comfort is offered by the hand of humility even to one crucified on the cross; but the world can only offer him **vinegar mingled with gall** (Matthew 27:34).

The humble man is incapable of harbouring malice or envy; he does not have enemies. If someone causes him some annoyance, he sees this man as an instrument of right judgment or of the providence of God.

The humble man surrenders himself wholly to the will of God.

The humble man lives not according to his own life, but by God.

The humble man is alien to self-reliance, and for this reason he constantly seeks God's aid, and constantly abides in prayer.

The fruit-bearing branch is bowed down to the ground, weighed down by the quantity and heaviness of its fruit. The branch without fruit grows upright, exalting in its fruitless twigs.

The soul, which is rich in the Gospel virtues, is plunged deeper and deeper into humility, and in very deeps of this sea it finds precious pearls, the gifts of the Spirit.

Pride is the truest sign of an empty person, a servant of the passions, a sign of a soul in which the teaching of Christ finds no place at all.

Do not judge a person by his externals; one cannot determine whether a person is proud or humble by the externals. **Judge not according to appearance, but ye shall know them by their fruits** (John 7:24; Matt. 7:16). The Lord tells us to recognise people by their actions, their conduct, and by consequences which derive from their actions.

**I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thy heart** (1 Kings [Samuel] 17:28) said his neighbour to David; but God bore witness otherwise concerning David: **I have found David My servant, with My holy oil have I anointed him** (Ps 88:19), and, **Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart** (1 Kgs [Samuel] 16:7).

Blind judges often see the hypocrite and the base man-pleaser as humble, but he is an abyss of vainglory.

In the opposite way, for these ignorant judges the person who does not seek praise and awards from men and does not cringe before men is accounted proud, but he is a true servant of God; he is sensitive to God's glory, which is manifest to him only through his humility, and

he senses the stench of the glory of man and turns the eyes and sense of smell of his soul away from it.

“What does it mean to believe?” asked one of the great men who pleased God. He replied: “To believe means to abide in humility and mercy” (Abba Pœmen the Great).

Humility hopes on God, and not on itself or on men, and therefore in its behaviour it is always simple, straightforward, firm, majestic. The blinded sons of this world call this pride.

Humility gives no value to earthly good things; in its eyes, God is great, the Gospel is great. It aspires therefore not to grant such corruption and vanity any attention or any regard. This sacred coldness to the corruption and vanity of the sons of corruption, the ministers of vanity, they reckoned to be pridefulness.

There is a holy acquiescence in humility, in respecting one’s neighbour, in respecting the image of God, in showing respect to Christ in one’s neighbour. And there is a depraved acquiescence, a self-interested acquiescence, a man-pleasing acquiescence, which is at the same time man-hating, an acquiescence which is inimical to God and loathsome to God: such as that which Satan employed when he promised the Godman, to deliver unto Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory (see Luke 4:7).

How many, nowadays, prostrate themselves (to wrong) so as to receive worldly possessions! And those, before whom they fall down, praise them for their humility!

Be attentive, do not go astray. When you acquiesce, do you do so from regard for the person, from feelings of love and humility? Or do you bow down to him only to tickle your own pride, to wheedle something for your own temporary benefit.

A great country! Cast your eye over it, there before you wallow vainglory, falsehood and meanness. When they have achieved their ends, they will make a mockery of you, they will betray you at the very first opportunity. Never expend your compassion on vainglory; the vainglorious man is as modest before those higher than himself, as he is insolent,

rude, and inhumane to those beneath him (see *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 22, paragraph 22). You recognise the vainglorious man by his particular propensity for flattery, for servility, for falsehood, for being frangible and diffident in all things.

Pilate was wounded by Christ's silence, which seemed him to be pride. **Speakest thou not, he said, unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee or to crucify thee?** (John 19:10). The Lord explained his remaining silent as a manifestation of God's will, of which Pilate, who had thought he was acting autonomously, was only the blind instrument. Because of his particular pride, Pilate was incapable of understanding that there stood before him the All-perfection of Humility, God Who had become man.

That soul is exalted, the soul which has a heavenly hope, which perceives the corruptibility of the good things of this world, which is incapable of shallow man-pleasing and toadying. It is in error that you call this soul proud, because it does not gratify the demands of your own passions. O Aman! Honour the blessed and God-pleasing "pride" of Mordecai! What, in the your eyes, was pride, was holy humility.

*[Footnote in original: The Book of Esther chapter 4 -7. Aman, a Macedonian was the favorite and first grandee of Artaxerses, the King of Persia. Mordecai, a Jew, was a member of the court, and being deeply pious, did not give himself over to man-pleasing and did not grovel before time-servers. Mordecai's conduct infuriated Aman, and he prepared a high gallows, that he might execute this man whom he hated, who had not cringed before him as had all others. But by the ebb and flow of the earthly condition, circumstances changed, and Aman was hanged on the gallows that he had raised up for Mordecai.]*

**If any man will come after Me, announces Holy Humility, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me** (Matt. 16:24). Otherwise it is impossible to be a disciple and follower of the One, Who humbled Himself even unto death, and death on the Cross. He is seated on the right hand of the Father. He is the New Adam, the Progenitor of the race of the holy tribe of the Elect. Faith in Him grants entry into the number of the Elect; election is accessed by holy humility; it is sealed with holy love. Amen.

+ + +

# ON MONASTICISM

**By the Ever-Memorable Archbishop Averky  
of Jordanville**

*Completion*

HOW MANY centuries has our monasticism existed in Russia, and nobody ever thought to accuse the monastics of egoism for their denying the sinful world. On the contrary, the monks and monasticism were held in the highest esteem and honour. It was not unusual for many who were renowned and glorious in the world to take up the monastic life, seeing it as the surest means to the salvation of their souls; even the princes themselves, if only immediately before their deaths, aspired to be clothed in the monastic schema. The influence of the monasteries and of monasticism on life in the world was so great, that the lives of seculars, not only interiorly in their souls, but also in their outer style of life often was transfigured by the character of the monastic life, as a consequence of which the purpose of the whole of our Russia was even considered to be as one enormous monastery, and from this we can come to understand and to have as something close to our Russian Orthodoxy understanding the compunctionate naming of the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh as “The Abbot of the Land of Russia.”

And it was only, when from the West during the reforms of Peter [I], there percolated through to us the sentimental, falsifying idea of humanism, the idea of a sham service to some sort of hazy, abstract ideal humanity, - an idea intent on changing the Christian teaching of love for one’s neighbour, - it was only then that attacks on monasticism, which is a purely Christian, religious, moral institution, originated, then there arose a fierce persecution of the monasteries, as we have recorded above.

This hatred of the monasteries and of monasticism has grown more and more in recent times and has over-spilled into a furious persecution under the Bolsheviks, which is the more inexplicable in that the

monasteries have exactly the same appearance as these humanists and their natural children, the communist Bolsheviks, have set up as their own ideal communal way of men living together, their communes, in which they pursue a sham benefit to mankind, of which we have already spoken. Besides the purely religious activity of the monasteries, there flourishes as well an enormous generally enlightening, cultural and charitable activity. The monasteries had schools and were themselves centres of learning, and from them there spread among the people literacy and enlightenment from books. In the monasteries whole libraries were established, from which our first writers came. The monasteries taught the people and the men a better way of conducting their affairs, and were for them, as it were, model farms. In the monasteries there were hospitals and hostels, where the monks received, fed and tended strangers, the poor and the indigent. From the monastic communities alms were sent to other places, to those detained in prison in bonds, to the impoverished in the times of famine, and in other sorts of calamity.

From the life of the Venerable Theodosius of the Caves, for instance, it is known that he built near the monastery a complete special home for the poor, the blind, the lame, the paralysed, which the monastery maintained, and, in addition to this, every Saturday he sent a whole wagon-load of bread to those who were held in prison.

The whole history of monasticism eloquently bears witness to the fact that the monks, taking on themselves the highest service to people, the ministry of the work of their salvation, of prayerful and spiritual guidance, also did not neglect to serve their temporal needs.

From whence then this hatred and poorly-concealed malice against monasticism?

Of course, from nowhere else but from the enemy of our salvation, the devil, who tries to slander all that is good, for he is the “slanderer.” The devil even when in paradise envied the blessedness of the first people, and with all his cunning he set out to deprive them of life in Paradise. Through the envy of the devil sin entered into the world, and he corrupted the whole life of man, it was disfigured, made a hell.

When the Lord Jesus Christ conquered all devil's intrigues and again opened the gates of Paradise to mankind, the devil, as the slanderer (for that is exactly what his name means) strove to slander all that had been set up by God on earth, so that he might again prevent people from attaining life in Paradise. This explains his attacks on monasticism, the cunning slanderous insinuations, but which he attempts to discredit this great institution of God's, the truly paradisaical life equal to that of the Angels, as monasticism is justly known. And all those of the people who believe this diabolical slander, and rise up against monasticism, do the work of the devil on earth.

We then, Russian people, must especially remember, what an enormous and beneficial rôle monasticism has played in the whole course of the history of the Russian people [*Naturally the Archbishop is addressing his own people, but the same may well be said for the history of the peoples in this country when the Church here was Orthodox, and indeed of any and every Orthodox country - transl.*]. It to Russian monasticism, as a true stronghold of the faith and piety of the Russian people, that Holy Russia is obliged for this name, and it is to Russian monasticism that a Russian person is obliged for his spiritual cast of mind. And therefore any rebirth of Russia without a rebirth of monasticism is unthinkable.

Monasticism was always a trustworthy indicator of the spiritual condition of the people, as if it were both a thermometer and barometer at one and the same time, showing its religious, moral level. The monastic life flourished, and this meant that the whole people were at a high in their Christian vocation; it falls, monasticism is wiped out, and this is a sign of a religious and moral decline, and the spiritual fall of a given people. This, in its turn, shows that monasticism, although it was as it were divorced from the world, was nonetheless always closely bound to the world by invisible spiritual ties.

This is why a reborn Russia must manifest and confirm its rebirth by a multitude of prayerful monastics in the midst of the Russian people, and these monks, in their turn, must strengthen the faith and piety of the reborn Russian people, must be the heart, the spiritual bulwark of a reborn Holy Russia. For this reason one of the most important tasks in the rebuilding of a future New Russia must be the struggle to further the

re-establishment of the monastic life. Furthermore the establishment, rebirth and strengthening of the monastic life will be the sign of the resurrection of Holy Russia.\*

August 1941, Belgrade, Yugoslavia

*Protosyngel Abbot* (later, Archbishop) *Averkys*

\* Here again the Archbishop speaks specifically to his own people, but what he says has an equal bearing on the missionary work of the Church today in the West. How many missions are set up without any reference to, or even knowledge of, the monastic life? Sadly, because of this they are impoverished, and it might be said that they have a form of Orthodoxy but not its heart. Archbishop Averky has told us of the experience of monasticism in Russia, but if one looks at the histories of many nations within the Orthodox world, from time immemorial, one sees the same: that the enlightenment of the peoples sprang from the witness of the monastics.



# The Coming Month

SEPTEMBER, like August, rejoices in two of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church Year. The first is the **Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos**. This year, this falls on a Wednesday, the 8th /21st of the month. In the Scriptures we read that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. So this feast is appointed to fall on the eighth day of the first month of the Church New Year, signalling the start of a new creation. The Church Year, thus, starts with the Nativity of the Virgin, and ends with her Dormition, and enfolded within this we have the Conception, Nativity and Theophany of the Saviour, and His Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, and the Great Feast of Pentecost. Saint John of Damascus said of this festival, “The day of the Nativity of the Theotokos is a feast of universal joy, because through the Theotokos the whole race of man is renewed and the sorrow of the fore-mother, Eve, is changed to joy.” The day after the feast itself is kept as a Synaxis of the parents of the All-holy Virgin, the **Righteous Joachim and Anne**. Every time the priest gives the dismissal at a service on every day of the year, he com-

memorates Sts Joachim and Anne, thus, as it were, emphasizing the truth of the incarnation of God the Word.

On the second Great Feast this month, that of the **Universal Exaltation of the Holy Cross**, His Eminence, Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna, has recently posted an instructive piece. He writes: “According to Church tradition, the elderly St. Helena, having been asked to do so by her son, the Emperor St. Constantine, found the True Cross on March 6, 326 (in 325 according to some sources). She found a spot near Golgotha, to which a Jewish citizen of Jerusalem had directed her, where a fragrant plant, which she called *vasiliko* (royal) was blooming. Hence our use of basil at the Feast. She had the ground under the basil excavated, where she found three crosses. Of the three crosses found, the True Cross of Christ, was identified when it, among the three, cured an ill (by some accounts, resurrected a dead) woman (by other accounts, an ill or dead man) on whom St. Macarios, the Bishop (Patriarch) of Jerusalem, had all three placed. When the True Cross was made known, the gathered Christians asked to see it. Thus, St. Macarios lifted it up with his two hands, thus holding it up as the people, falling to their knees, repeatedly chanted, “Kyrie eleeson,” as in the contemporary service.” This last sentence refers to the liturgical rite at the end of the Vigil, which is celebrated in cathedral churches and monasteries, when the Cross is raised by the celebrant towards all four cardinal points of the compass, while the choir chants “Lord, have mercy,’ a hundred times. The faithful prostrate to the ground during this blessing. This year, the feast falls on a Tuesday (14th / 27th), nonetheless that day is observed as a strict fast day in honour of the Cross.

In our own community, of course, the **Enshrinement of the Sacred Relics of Saint Edward the Martyr** here on 3rd / 16th September, 1984 is also kept as a feast, and as the dedication festival of our brotherhood and mission. The enshrinement was celebrated by the **Ever-memorable Bishop Gregory of Washington**, and this year we are blessed to have **His Grace Bishop Ambrose of Methoni** heading the Divine Services here. The feast falls on a Friday, but for those celebrating with us, it will be kept as a fish, wine and oil day, as the principle festival of the patron Saint of our church.

Among the saints this month, we also have:

The **Right-believing Empress Pulcheria** (10th / 23rd) was the eldest surviving daughter of the Emperor Arcadius, and was born in A.D. 399. After the death of her father in A.D. 408, her younger brother, Theodosius II, then only seven, became Emperor under the guardianship of one, Anthimus. However, because of her remarkable gifts, six years later, still only fifteen, Pulcheria was proclaimed Augusta by the Senate, and made Regent for her brother. She made a vow of virginity and persuaded her sisters to do the same. She fulfilled all her duties as a ruler for about ten years jointly with her brother. After the marriage of Theodosius to Eudoxia, the new Empress sought to weaken Pulcheria's influence over the Emperor, and, with the aid of some courtiers, succeeded for a time. Nevertheless, Pulcheria had always a powerful position at Court, which she used in behalf of Orthodoxy, as shown by her opposition to the doctrines of Nestorius and Eutyches. For a while, Eudoxia supported Nestorius. Saint Cyril of Alexandria corresponded with Pulcheria, upholding the true Church doctrine, to which she held unwaveringly. Theodosius allowed himself to be influenced by Nestorius to the prejudice of Saint Cyril, but Pulcheria was not deterred from following the Orthodox course. There is no doubt that the final acknowledgment by the Emperor of the condemnation of Nestorius was largely due to Saint Pulcheria. The Nestorians, consequently, spread gross calumnies about her. Court intrigues obliged her to leave the Imperial Palace and retire to a suburb of Constantinople, where she lived like a monastic. When the Empress Eudoxia went to Jerusalem, Pulcheria returned to Court. Then, at Constantinople, Eutyches promulgated his heresy of the confusion of the natures in Christ. The Patriarch, Saint Flavian expressed his opposition, as did also Pope Saint Leo the Great. Once more Pulcheria took up the cause of Orthodoxy. Theodosius II confirmed the decisions of the Robber Synod of Ephesus (449), and the Orthodox hierarchs, who had rejected them, sought to bring the Emperor back to an Orthodox mind, which was brought about with the help of Pulcheria. At the Emperor's death in A.D. 450, the Saint was proclaimed Empress. Then, so that she might secure the succession of an Orthodox and faith-

ful Emperor, she married the able general, Marcian, on the condition that her vow of virginity should be respected. Upon her orders, Marcian was proclaimed Augustus. The Empress was influential in summoning the Council of Chalcedon (451), and with the Emperor attended the sixth session. Saint Leo acknowledged that both the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies had been overcome largely by her efforts. Pulcheria showed no less zeal in promoting other interests of the Church. She built three churches in Constantinople in honour of the Mother of God. In other places, she also built churches, hospitals, houses for pilgrims, and she gave rich gifts to various churches. Under her influence, the sacred relics of St. John Chrysostom, who had died in exile, were translated to Constantinople, to the church of the Holy Apostles. Pulcheria had the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, which were found near Constantinople, enshrined. She reposed at the age of fifty four in A.D. 453.

The **Holy New Martyr Aquilina of Thessalonica** (27th September / 10th October) came from a village near Thessalonica, called Zangliverion. When she was still an infant, her father quarrelled with a Turkish neighbour, the matter escalated and came to blows, and the Turk was killed. The only way her father could save himself from the death penalty was to convert to Islam, which he did, also promising that when she came of age, his daughter would also convert. However, Aquilina's mother remained faithful to Christ, and instilled in her daughter the love of Him, teaching her to prefer death to apostasy. When Aquilina reached eighteen, her father, in accordance with his pledge, required her to convert to Islam. When she refused, he became fearful that he would suffer repercussions for not forcing her to convert. So, he handed her over to the Turkish authorities. When neither threats nor promises would move her, she was beaten until almost dead. Some pious Christians then took her up and took her to her mother, who asked whether she had remained faithful to Christ. She replied that she had kept the confession of the Faith, and mother and daughter gave thanks to God, the Saint reposing in her mother's arms. When she was taken to burial, the air around the coffin was filled with fragrance, and in the night a radiant light appeared over the grave of the Holy New Martyr. She contested and won the crown of martyrdom in the year, 1764.

# POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

*“I’M STILL TRYING to figure out why this seemingly holy man, Father Seraphim Rose, is considered heretical by some people. Something I read about called the “toll house philosophy”??? You see, I am new to Orthodoxy coming from a Roman Catholic background. I considered both faiths very similar but I know believe I am wrong.” - E.M., U.S.A., sent by email.*

REGARDING Father Seraphim Rose, I think we have to exercise a little caution. I never met him, but we corresponded from the late sixties until his final illness. I had no idea that anyone considered him a heretic. Such people must be extremists, and perhaps following the dictates of their own understanding rather than the teachings of the Church. At the same time, I think we have to be cautious in regarding him as a holy man. He may well have been, but we should not hasten to conclusions about the sanctity of people before the Church does.

Regarding his teachings, first of all you must understand that even saints and holy people are not invariably infallible, and make mistakes, and so, even if he is a saint, that does not mean that all that he said or wrote exactly expresses the teaching of the Church. And regarding the toll house controversy, which I remember, what happened was that Fr Seraphim probably overstated his case, and made this teaching as it were too concrete. He also, unwisely, backed it up with a lot of “near-death” experiences and the like. A better way was shown us by the late Dr Constantine Cavarnos, later Schemamonk Constantine, who wrote a much more concise treatise on the life after death, *“The Future Life According to Orthodox Teaching,”* in which he bases what he says on the Scriptures, the Fathers and the hymnology of the Church.

At the time of the controversy, another party, then also in the Russian Church Abroad, was trying to demonstrate that the teaching on toll houses was not Orthodox at all, and so fell into a contrary error. Rather late in the day, the hierarchs, asked Fr Michael Pomazansky to write a piece on the subject, in which very fairly, he pointed out that the teaching on the toll houses has a place in Orthodox teaching, but it is not to be understood in such a concrete way but, as it were, as a parable, as a way

of explaining something which is essentially true but cannot be expressed in terms of our this-worldly understanding. I presume the people whom you have found, who call Fr Seraphim a heretic, for which they should feel ashamed, are the spiritual children of those who first challenged his teaching on this subject and took up a contrary, and probably more erroneous, position.

I hope this helps you a little, but remember I am not a theologian, and I may have made things darker rather than lighter for you.



## **NEWS SECTION**

### ***TOMB OF THE APOSTLE PHILIP REPORTED FOUND***

*NEWSCORE* (27/7/11) reported: “A tomb believed to be that of St. Philip the Apostle was unearthed during excavations in the ancient Turkish city of Hierapolis. Italian professor Francesco D’Andria said archeologists found the tomb of the biblical figure -- one of the 12 original disciples of Jesus -- while working on the ruins of a newly-unearthed church, Turkish news agency Anadolu reported Wednesday. “We have been looking for Saint Philip’s tomb for years,” d’Andria told the agency. “We finally found it in the ruins of a church which we excavated a month ago.” The structure of the tomb and the writings on the wall proved it belonged to St. Philip, he added. The professor said the archaeologists worked for years to find the tomb and he expected it to become an important Christian pilgrimage destination. St. Philip, recognized as one of Christianity’s martyrs, is thought to have died in Hierapolis, in the southwest province of Denizli, in around 80AD. It is believed he was crucified upside down or beheaded. Hierapolis, whose name means “sacred city,” is an ancient city famous for its hot springs and a spa since the 2nd century.” [The Orthodox Synaxarion tells us that St Philip, commemorated 14th / 27th November, was crucified head-down at Hierapolis - ed.]

## ***500 CHURCHES DESECRATED IN CYPRUS***

SINCE THE OCCUPATION of North Cyprus in 1974, 500 churches on the territory have been desecrated, plundered or converted to mosques, according to an **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe** (OSCE) report on the Destruction of Cultural Property in the Northern Part of Cyprus and Violations of International Law. The document, based on the studies and warnings of historians and Christian clergymen, highlights the fact that the Christian Heritage in the Turkish part of Cyprus is on the edge of destruction. The report continues: "The historical values (*sic*) of Christian culture are also reported to have suffered damage. Some 15,000 icons from those churches were either destroyed or sold almost for next to nothing. Seventy-seven churches were converted into mosques and some 28 became military hospital (*sic*)."

## ***ORTHODOX CHURCH IN TRIPOLI LOOTED***

AN HISTORIC CHURCH, **St. George in Tripoli, Libya**, dating back to 1647, has been ransacked in the recent uprisings. The church is the oldest Orthodox church in North Africa [presumably outside of Egypt]. The President of the Greek community, **Dimitris Anastassiou** transferred the news to the Metropolitan of Tripoli **Kyr Kyr Theophylaktos**, who has been in Greece since late June. "I am feeling heart-broken for what is happening in Libya, this beautiful country which was destroyed and whose people are noted for their hospitality," the Metropolitan, who settled in Libya in 1991, is reported as commenting. "I was sad to hear the news from Mr. Anastassiou. The thieves stole the shrine of our patron saint which I had brought from Mount Athos. Old Gospels, chalices, cherubim, censers, one of which we had been given by the Œcumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Those who stole the holy objects contacted the president of the community and asked for money in order to return them. Mr. Anastassiou reported the incident to the police, but as things are at the moment, no one will deal with this matter," he said.

## ***MOTHER THEKLA REPOSES***

MOTHER THEKLA, co-foundress of the **Monastery of the Assumption, Normanby, Yorkshire**, reposed in the Lord, aged 93, on 7th August. She was of Russian Jewish descent. Her mother had converted to Orthodoxy, and the family settled in England after the Revolution. Mother Thekla had a distinguished academic career, but under the guidance of Mother Maria (Gysi) took up the monastic life, and the two of them founded the Monastery of the Assumption at Filgrave in Buckinghamshire, later transferring to the more remote Normanby, near Whitby. The sisterhood was at first under the Diocese of Sourozh (MP), but in 1971 transferred to the Œcumenical Patriarchate. In the nineties, for period it joined the Holy Orthodox Church of North America, and, becoming disillusioned there, was for a period without any canonical attachment, but thereafter returned to the Archdiocese of Thyateira (ŒP). The community never grew to more than three or four members, and sadly was effectively dissolved when the last two members, Mother Thekla and Mother Hilda, separated. Mother Thekla spent her last years in the care of sisters of the Anglican Order of the Holy Paraclete. She is perhaps best known in the wider world for her co-operation with the composer, **Sir John Tavener**, writing the text for his opera, *Mary of Egypt* and several of his choral works. May she find rest with the Saints and ***Memory Eternal.***



“THE PERSON struggling to enter the Kingdom of God must excel in works of righteousness: in almsgiving, by providing out of his own paucity; and in suffering for the sake of peace, by responding to trials with patient endurance in the Lord.”

VEN. ELIAS THE PRESBYTER,  
PROBABLY ELEVENTH OR TWELFTH CENTURY

# SIR-UK NEWS

## *ABBESS FROM RUSSIA VISITS OUR CONVENT*

NUN EKATERINA (Pozdnaykova), the **Abbess of the Saints Martha and Mary Convent of Mercy Convent in Moscow**, attended the Divine Liturgy at the **Convent of the Annunciation**, on Sunday 1st / 14th August, the first day of the Dormition Fast. She came with three other pilgrims from Russia, accompanied by Miss Gail Stewardson, and after the Divine Liturgy they were all given hospitality by Mother Vikentia and her Sisters. The guests from Russia showed a lively interest in the Convent here, taking photographs inside the chapel and outside the building. They gave the sisters in London a souvenir table cloth from Russia. The St Martha and Mary Convent was originally founded by **Saint Elizabeth the Grand Duchess and New Martyr**, was closed in Communist times, and has now been re-opened.

## *BAPTISM & CHURCHINGS AT SAINT EDWARD'S*

XENIA, the infant daughter of **Matias and Elizabeth Fagerlund**, of West London, was baptized at Brookwood on Saturday, 7th/20th August. The baby, named for the Blessed Xenia of Petersburg, was sponsored by **Marina Popova** and **Roxana Oana**. After the Mysterion, the many guests, who had attended, were offered refreshments prepared by the family in the Old Mortuary. On the next day, Xenia received the Holy Mysteries for the first time at the Divine Liturgy. On the following Tuesday, the fortieth day after birth, we read the churching prayers for her mother, and on the feast of the Dormition, the eighth day (after Baptism) prayer was read for the newly-illuminated at the Liturgy at the Convent. With the aid and guidance of her godparents and parents, may Xenia be kept in the confession of a godly Faith all the days of her life.

ON the Sunday of the Holy Fathers, 18th /31st July, the churching prayers for **Paulina Gavriloe**, the mother of baby **Alexia**, were read between Mattins and the Divine Liturgy at Saint Edward's.

## VISITORS

Thursday, 4th August - **Margaret Hobbs** brought “**The London Group**” to see the church. The group consisted of about fifteen people from the London area, led by **Patricia Schofield**. They stayed for about half-an-hour and expressed much interest in Orthodox worship & practice.

Sunday, 7th August - **John Clarke** brought about sixty people to see the Cemetery. They visited the Exhibition Room and some came over to see the Church as well.

Monday 8th August - a group of seven **former District Nurses** from Surrey visited the church. It was an unscheduled visit, but nonetheless they spent about 45 minutes in the church & asked many questions.

Sunday 14th & Wednesday 17th August - **Jan Mahac** from the Czech Republic attended the Divine Liturgy at Brookwood. Jan is a reader in the **Church of St Mary Magdalene and St John of Shanghai in Trest** (SiR), and practises as a GP. He was in England visiting relatives in London.

Monday 15th August - the **Reverend Father Andrew Norman**, vicar of **St Nicolas Church in Guildford**, came to the Brotherhood, simply to spend a quiet day of reflection in our grounds.

Tuesday, 23rd August - **Miss Niruba Chun**, our dentist, her dental nurse, **Melissa Draddy**, and receptionist, **Melanie Williams**, visited the Brotherhood, saw the Exhibition Room, where they were offered refreshments, met the dogs, visited the chickens, and went to see the church. Having to get back to the surgery at Knapp Hill, they are threatening to come again for a longer visit!

**OUR THANKS** to all those of you who have already sent donations in response to our **Shepherd Re-Subscription** request. May we ask those of you, who read it on our web page, <[www.saintedwardbrotherhood.org](http://www.saintedwardbrotherhood.org)>, also to consider sending a contribution so that your interest in the magazine is not subsidized by others. Cheques in sterling or in US dollars may be sent to the Brotherhood address, made out to **Saint Edward Brotherhood**. If you would like to send a contribution in Euros, please send bank notes, as we only have accounts in pounds and dollars.

# PRACTICAL TIP

MANY CHRISTIANS in our days, even Orthodox ones, think that it is only on Sunday that they may come to church. To that extent, they have become protestantized. However, if for some reason you are unable to attend church on a Sunday, then try to attend one of the weekday services. Otherwise your church attendance will become more and more sporadic, and less and less meaningful. Remember also, that for Orthodox Christians the Sunday observance begins with Vespers (or Vigil) on Saturday evening. That too should not be neglected. If, however, you live far from a church and such regular attendance is practically impossible, at the very least try to read the services at home, or in some other way devote the time that you should have been in church to prayer and spiritual reading. Watching TV, surfing the internet, partying or going to entertainments at such time is NOT an acceptable alternative, if you wish to think of yourselves as Christians. Certainly do not approach to receive the Holy Mysteries, before going to confession, if you have not made every effort to keep this observance, lest you receive unto condemnation rather than unto cleansing, enlightenment and salvation.



‘IF THE GRACE of God does not enlighten a person, no matter how much you speak to him, you cannot help him. For a moment he will listen, but then the next minute he is re-captivated by his old ways. If, however, Grace acts at once through your words, a change occurs at that time with the help of his good intentions. And from that moment his life changes tremendously. However, this happens only to those whose hearing and conscience have not hardened. As for those who hear yet remain disobedient in their evil wills, even if you speak with them day and night, even if you pour out the wisdom of the Fathers into their ears, even if you work miracles before their eyes, even if you turn the flow of the Nile upon them, they will not receive even one drop of benefit. They only want to come, talk, and waste there time because of their laziness. This is why I lock my gate.”

BLESSED ELDER JOSEPH THE CAVE-DWELLER OF ATHOS, + 1959 A.D.