



## FROM THE FATHERS

“THE CHRISTIAN should offer his brethren simple and unpretentious hospitality.”

SAINT BASIL THE GREAT, + 379 A.D.

“HOSPITALITY also serves to recommend many. For it is a kind of open display of kindly feelings: so that the stranger may not want hospitality, but be courteously received, and that the door may be open to him who comes.... This especially was Abraham’s praise, for he watched at the door of his tent, that no stranger by any chance might pass by. He carefully kept a lookout, so as to meet the stranger and anticipate him, and ask him not to pass by, saying *My lord, if I have found favour in thy sight, pass not by thy servant* (Gen. 18:3).”

SAINT AMBROSE OF MILAN, + 397 A.D.

“ABRAHAM received the strangers in the place where he abode himself; his wife stood in the place of a servant, the guests in the place of masters. He knew not that he was receiving Christ; knew not that he was receiving Angels; had he known he would have lavished his whole substance. But we, who know that we receive Christ (Matt. 25:35), even so show not so much zeal as he did, who thought he was receiving men.”

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, + 407 A.D.

“ACKNOWLEDGE the duty of hospitality; thereby some have attained unto God. You take in some stranger, whose companion in the way you are yourself, for we are all strangers.”

SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, + 430 A.D.

“THE SOMANITE WOMAN (4 Kgs 4:8) gladly entertained the righteous Prophet; but in thy house, my soul, thou hast not welcomed stranger or traveller, and so thou shalt be cast out weeping from the bridal chamber (Matt. 22:11-13).”

SAINT ANDREW OF CRETE, + 712 A.D.

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# *The Christian's True Cross*

ARCHBISHOP INNOCENT  
OF CHERSON & ODESSA

THE HOLY CHURCH, brethren, now solemnly commemorates the finding of the honourable Cross of the Lord. This joyous event happened, as is well-known, almost three centuries after the Lord's Resurrection, and it was accomplished by Saint Helena, the mother of the Peer of the Apostles, the Emperor Constantine.

When the pious Augusta visited the place which had been sanctified by the life and passion of the God-man, the Holy Spirit inspired in her heart a desire to find the Lord's Cross, which until that time was in a place unknown, on account of the confused circumstances the Church had weathered, being oppressed by the persecutors. It was hard for this searcher, clothed in the purple, to achieve her purpose, for both the Jews and the pagans, who could not endure the Crucified One to be worshipped, had attempted to wipe out all traces of His life there. The Lord's Cross and those of the men crucified with Him on Golgotha had been hidden in

the earth, and over the very place the Romans had subsequently erected a temple to one of their pagan gods. But the zeal of the Empress, Peer of the Apostles, overcame all the difficulties. The place was found, a certain Jew having given them information, and what had been built over it was demolished. When later they began to excavate the spot, then immediately an ineffable fragrance was experienced. Then they uncovered three crosses, and on one there was the superscription, the very same that Pilate had placed on the Cross of the Lord. Despite this sign, the Empress, enlightened by her piety, sought for a further and most trustworthy sign. Saint Macarius, then the Patriarch of Jerusalem, devised a way to achieve this, such as could only inspire a living faith in the Crucified. At his command, a sick man was brought, one who was found near to death. The hierarch touched him first with one and then with the second of the other crosses, without anything happening; but when he touched him with the third Cross, the one with the superscription, then the sick man arose and was completely restored to health. This miracle convinced everyone that it was indeed this Cross that was His, Who is Resurrection and Life. The Cross, found in this way, was taken in procession to the church in Jerusalem, where, on the ambon, the holy Patriarch raised it up before the people, that everyone, both the great and the small, might have a glimpse of the Life-creating Wood. The holy Church, rejoicing in the possession of this Divine Treasure, established that annually the finding of the Lord's Cross should be celebrated on this day. This is the origin of our present festival.

A great and important lesson, brethren, is contained for us in these events. And every Christian, if only he does not bear that name in vain, has a cross, on which he must crucify his sinful flesh with its passions and lusts. This cross consists in the courageous bearing of the inadequacies of our fallen nature and the miseries natural to it, in battling with the inclination to evil common to us all, and against the world's temptations, in the setting aright, working along with Grace, of our evil hearts, and in the renewal of the powers of soul and spirit. And therefore, while celebrat-

ing the finding and exaltation of the Lord's Cross, each of us must with all diligence reflect whether he has maintained his own cross whole and entire. Has he not buried it in the earth, in vain concerns about things that are earthly and corruptible? Is it not the case that in his heart there stands not the Cross of the Lord, but that of a thief, or the temple idol of certain shameless passions?

We have said that the presence of the true Cross of the Lord was revealed by three signs: the fragrance; the superscription of the name of the Lord Jesus, and the revival of the sick man. By these same three signs, each one of us can distinguish for himself the true cross from the false. One's true cross must be fragrant with innocence or repentance; it must have imprinted on itself the name of Jesus, and, finally, it must be life-creating.

In the world, brethren, there are very many afflictions and sorrows, because there are even more sins and passions; but the suffering which derives from our sins does not in itself constitute the Christian's cross. The lover of honours torments himself with a never satisfied desire for distinction and pre-eminence; the envious person is eaten up with sorrow about his neighbours' good things; the lover of passions is tormented by the impossibility of satisfying his unclean desires. All these people suffer in this way, and often more than those who suffer for the sake of what is right. Furthermore, they fail to see that their sufferings, which derive from the torment of their sins, do not win them esteem but rather reproach. So who can fail to say that they bear the cross of a thief?

The true cross is fragrant. It, as we said, consists essentially in the courageous bearing of sufferings which we do not deserve. There are real miseries against which no innocence can cover us, and from which no wisdom can protect us. Such are illnesses, the loss of friends and relatives, the destructive raging of the elements, and all the rest. He whose faith does not grow feeble under the blows of misfortune, is the one who bears a true cross; Job is a witness, who lost everything, and in dust and ashes blessed the name of the Lord (Job 1:21). There are also miseries which derive

from men like us who are malicious: our property might be stolen by secret or manifest enemies; our honour might be besmirched by slander, and we might lose everything; on such occasions there is often no remedy to demonstrate our innocence or even to mitigate the evil. He who hopes on the Judgment of heaven bears with earthly unrighteousness, and he it is who bears the true cross; Joseph is a witness who, for his innocence, was deprived of everything, but remained faithful to the God of his fathers (Gen. 39:9). In our very hearts there takes place an unremitting warfare between good and evil, of the conscience with the desires; wherefore constantly pay attention to yourself, moderate yourself, deprive yourself, curb yourself, correct yourself, so that you do not fall under the influence of evil, that you are not made the plaything of the passions, that you do not become void of good deeds, so that you do not become dead before God. The person who manfully travels this path of inner self-correction and with vigilance maintains a guard over his heart, such an one bears a true cross.

These crosses, which in origin do not depend on the will of man, are prescribed by God Himself. For zealously in the struggle a way is opened for the voluntary bearing of the cross. Your compliance promises you joy and satisfaction in life, and furthermore you can bring contentment to others if, through this compliance, you make sacrifices. Offer such a sacrifice, for this will be a true cross. Moses bore one, for he did not desire to be called the son of the daughter of the king, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God (Heb. 11:24-25). Without brokenness of heart, you will not see how the failing of faith among Christians diminishes love and bolsters impiety. Nourish in yourselves this saving brokenness of heart: this will be a true cross. Elias bore such, for he could not abide impiety in Israel (3 Kgs 19:14). Any powerful man, given over to the passions, may trample upon truth and mankind with impunity; many people endure it, everyone secretly criticizes it, but he is not denounced. But if there lies upon you a duty to unmask unrighteousness, then expose it; the danger that this will expose you to is a true cross. This is what John the

Baptist himself bore, when he denounced Herod and Herodias. To put it briefly, every struggle for piety, every labour of love is a true cross, because it emits the fragrance of innocence.

So, someone will say, what should we do with those countless crosses which lie upon us because of our passions and sins? Is there some means of taking from them the stench of sin? Brethren, there is. The thief upon the cross, though he was undoubtedly guilty as a thief, entered into Paradise. The short words: *Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom* (Luke 23:42), changed everything. The very same can happen for every suffering sinner. Faith, repentance and prayer completely make a recompense for an insufficiency of righteousness, for God's goodness not only forgives, but even turns the suffering, which we deserved, to a certain benefit, as soon as we dedicate ourselves in faith to the service of our Redeemer.

Brethren, from this alone it is already apparent that a second indication is needed to distinguish a true cross, and that it is indispensable that upon it [*such a true cross*] there be inscribed the all-hallowing name of the Lord Jesus, for the most important part of our being cross-bearers, in that we are sinners, is that we can only be true cross-bearers through repentance and faith in the Redeemer. And furthermore there are other reasons why any and every cross has no value apart from dedicated service to the Son of God.

First of all, when we speak of innocence and human righteousness, then we are not considering these virtues with rigorously of thought. Properly speaking, among people there is not one righteous man; there is not one who suffers completely innocently. Actually, even supposing we did not deserve our known sufferings on account of our known sins, are there not sins of ours which otherwise would be unchastened? And wouldn't they be motivated by sin, who are left with no sorrow for sin's consequences? Would Providence, Who allows us to go unchastened at the time when we are straying and also kindheartedly inclines us to repentance, be able to raise us up unchastened while we, being enamoured of our own virtuousness, forget that we are sinners?

But even if we do not deserve it, let us consider the impossible: *Who can bring a clean thing out of a defiled? No one, for his life is as one day upon earth* (Job 14:4-5). Even if we do not deserve this misfortune on account of our own sins, isn't it the case that our sinful nature itself is reason enough for heaven's wrath? Ah! We constantly bear in mind our rights, when to participate in the favours of a great name or accept some property inherited from our forebears, but we do not bear in mind that the sins of the fathers might have been visited on the children, and that over and above this there is a general inheritance from the father of mankind - ancestral sin, with its inherited disordering of our nature, for which all our virtues and our sufferings pay a price. How shall we dare to offer to the Heavenly Bestower of Rewards our so-called innocent sufferings, if they are not consecrated by faith in the Divine Redeemer's ministry? Only by the uniting of our cross in the spirit of faith with the Cross of Christ may our cross be made worthy of the attention of the Heavenly Judge; only under the protection of Christ's ministry might we say with the Apostle: *I suffer, nevertheless I am not ashamed* (2 Tim. 1:12). Then, actually, nothing will shame us, the stain of sin will not remain dark (Rev. 7:14). Wherefore faith in the ministry of the Redeemer must be the indispensable mark of every true cross and cross-bearer.

True bearing of the cross is completely impossible without the grace of Jesus Christ. Worldly wisdom expatiates a great deal on being patient in the midst of misfortunes, of being courageous amidst dangers; but its proponents still exhibit no experience of true cross-bearing. What do we observe in them at the very moment of grave temptation? Either a proud insensitivity or faint-hearted grumbling, both equally unworthy of the man. Human strength often challenges us to engage with misfortunes, but rarely, very rarely, does it not sink at the very beginning, at the very onslaught of the blows of misfortune. And thus it must be, when a man relies only on himself, a frail stick tossed in the wind. Only those who suffer in the name of Jesus and with a living faith in Him are able to suffer without grumbling and even to rejoice

amid their sufferings, - because of the assurance that *our light affliction ... worketh for us an eternal glory* (see 2 Cor. 4:17), they feel that they *can do all things* being strengthened by the Lord Jesus (see Phil. 4:13), that Providence, Who has allowed them to suffer, will not permit them to be tempted more than they can bear, but that He *will with the temptation also make a way to escape* (1 Cor. 10:13). For this reason true sufferers were always aflame with love for the Cross of Christ, and do not by so much as a step withdraw spiritually from Golgotha, for they assuredly knew that if they lose the Cross of Jesus from view, along with this they lose their own cross or fall under it.

But why, in affirming the union of our crosses with the Cross of Christ, do I speak only of the necessity of this union for us? Because, Christian, you have nothing but needs; what other ties would unite you to your Saviour? What has He not done and what is He not doing to obtain your love? To whom could you more appropriately dedicate your tears and sighs that to the One Who poured out His blood for you? Who has more right to your cross than the One Who Himself bore the Cross for you, and Who faithfully values your patient struggle with our sinful nature, your renunciation of that which was oftentimes dear to your heart? Who other than the One Who left all for us, came down from the throne of the Father, appeared in the similitude of a slave, and died as a criminal?

Bearing all this in mind, brethren, it is truly impossible not to grieve from our whole hearts about our fatal inattention to the true profit of our sufferings, which we carelessly fail to consecrate in faith to the ministry of our Mediator. It is when we suffer afflictions on account of our unrighteousness, that we more frequently recall Him and call upon His aid. But when we suffer, considering that we have done nothing evil, then usually we do not consider it at all necessary to flee unto Him. In such instances, there is only one thing in our heart and on our lips: our own "innocence." It is as if the Cross of Christ need only take us under its protection, when we come to Him burdened with every unrighteousness. It is as if Jesus Christ is to be made a minister unto our sin (Gal. 2:17), and



not the Perfecter of our righteousness. In that, as a consequence of this ingratitude, our sufferings do not bear us spiritual fruits, we soon become exhausted under the burden of them, and frequently then beginning to suffer for righteousness, we bring an end to the sufferings of unrighteousness. In the evil of our hearts we set aside as a sacrifice to our Saviour the worst part of our cross, and keep for ourselves the best, on which our “innocence” is inscribed, as if His righteousness takes from our cross that which is best, its vivifying power, and leaves the worse, the deadliness which weighs us down.

Furthermore, a true cross, brethren, is essentially always life-creating, and this, as we have said, is the third sign, as we have said, which distinguishes it from one not true. Even should one spend a long time in the service of the world, in the gratification of one’s passions, in dissipation, and in forgetting God, in neglecting the soul and eternity, if Providence should find him worthy and send him a temptation, and if he bears it with a spirit of repentance and faith, an unprecedented change can occur in his soul, such that he feels such an aversion to his former sinful life, which till this time he did not even notice, so that such a power opens up in his soul that he can achieve virtue, such that he had no knowledge of formerly. And this is very natural. For what is it that in us diminishes and, in the end, completely vitiates life according to the spirit? Why do we grow so feeble in the practice of good, that at the end for us what is in the law is, as it were, made into only what is thought evil? Why do we cease from being vigilant regarding our thoughts, from correcting our desires, abandoning, as they say, oversight of the garden of our souls? Why distracted by necessities and amusements, do we not find time to regard ourselves in the mirror of the Word of God, that we might correct the deficiencies we see in ourselves? Why, caught up in the whirlwind of the vanities of the world, do we forget that we are not our own, but that we belong to the One Who purchased us with His Blood, even though eternity awaits us, even though the judgment lies before us? This is the very cause of our spiritual insensitivity and death.

But the afflictions which we bear, if only we would put them to use, would necessarily cut short the activity of all these destructive elements. They would force us to go deep within ourselves and to see the poverty of our soul and heart; they would turn us to faith and its eternal promises; they would make study of the Word of God and practice in prayer pleasant for us; they would bring to our remembrance what the Saviour has done for us, and what we must needs do for Him; they would lay bare before us the vanity of worldly good things and the delusion of those who limit all their desires to them. It is essential for all this to loose our heart from the earth, and to concentrate it on Heaven, to divert ourselves from the temporary and turn to the eternal. Wherefore if someone undergoing sorrows, feels that his faith is not thereby made alive, his hope exalted, his love for the Saviour and for virtue flaming, his abhorrence of sin decisive, this is undoubtedly a sign that the cross, from which he is suffering, is still not a true one, because it is still not life-creating.

All these things form the greater part of what, at the onslaught of dangers and temptations, causes us to abandon the one understanding we need. Without turning in thought to God, we limit vision to the present life, and do not take the trouble to reflect about the exalted and beneficial purpose of human suffering with regard to the life to come.

The putting aside of these things makes a person's cross to be life-creating again, and he starts to engage in saving activity to the enlivening and strengthening of the powers of his soul. And furthermore, even the bearing of the cross becomes something not so dreadful, as it formerly was, when it does not feel that it is inflicted. The spiritual sweetness of the cross causes us to forget its actual bitterness, just as we forget the bitterness of medical treatment, when we see that it is saving us from death.



**Preliminary Note:** *On 10th March, 1924, the State Church in Greece introduced the New Calendar, naming that day 23rd March. Thereafter the Orthodox Christians who refused to accept the innovation, seeing it as a symptom of a deeper malaise, namely the growth of an ecumenical mind-set among the hierarchs, were pressured and persecuted for their faithfulness. The next year on the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross according to the Church calendar, in confirmation of the stance of the Traditionalist Orthodox, the Lord graciously permitted the following miraculous sign:-*

## The Appearance of the Sign of the Cross Near Athens in 1925

IN 1925, on the eve of the feast of the Exaltation of the All-Honourable and Life-giving Cross of our Saviour, 14th September according to the Orthodox Church calendar, the all-night vigil was served at the church of St. John the Theologian in suburban Athens. By 9 o'clock that evening, more than two thousand of the true-Orthodox faithful had gathered in and around the church for the service, since very few true-Orthodox churches had been accidentally left open by the civil authorities. Such a large gathering of people could not, however, go unnoticed by the authorities. Around 11 p.m. the authorities dispatched a battalion of police to the church "to prevent any disorders which might arise from such a large gathering." The gathering was too large for the police to take any direct action or to arrest the priest at that time and so they joined the crowd of worshippers in the already over-flowing courtyard of the church.

Then, regardless of the true motives for their presence, against their own will, but according to the Will which exceeds all human power, they became participants in the miraculous experience of the crowd of believers.

At 11:30 p.m., there began to appear in the heavens above the church, in the direction of North-East, a bright, radiant Cross of light. The light not only illuminated the church and the faithful but, in its rays, the stars of the clear, cloudless sky became dim and the churchyard was filled with an almost tangible light. The form of the Cross itself was an especially dense light and it could be clearly seen as a Byzantine cross with an angular cross bar toward the bottom. This heavenly miracle last-

ed for half an hour, until midnight, and then the Cross began slowly to raise up vertically, as the cross in the hands of the priest does in the ceremony of the Elevation of the Cross in church. Having come straight up, the Cross began gradually to fade away.

Human language is not adequate to convey what took place during the apparition. The entire crowd fell prostrate upon the ground with tears and began to sing prayers, praising the Lord with one heart and one mouth. The police were among those who wept, suddenly discovering, in the depths of their hearts, a childlike faith. The crowd of believers and the battalion of police were transformed into one, unified flock of faithful. All were seized with a holy ecstasy.

The vigil continued until 4 a.m., when all this human torrent streamed back into the city, carrying the news of the miracle because of which they were still trembling and weeping. Many of the unbelievers, sophists and renovationists, realizing their sin and guilt, but unwilling to repent, tried by every means to explain away or deny this miracle. The fact that the form of the cross had been so sharply and clearly that of the Byzantine (sometimes called the Russian) Cross, with three cross-bars, the bottom one at an angle, completely negated any arguments of accidental physical phenomenon.

The fact that such an apparition of the Cross has occurred during the height of the first great heresy\* must strike the Orthodox with an especial sense of the magnitude of the importance of the calendar question and of all that is connected with it. No sensible person can discuss this issue lightly, with secular reasoning or with worldly arguments. Renovationists, like the Arians in 351,\*\* are left without extenuation or mitigation.

**From Orthodox Life, Vol. 22, No. 2 (March-April, 1972).**

### **Footnotes:**

\* The expression here is not entirely clear, but “first great heresy” refers to Arianism and the author sees the heresy of Ecumenism as on a par with that. Ecumenism has been distinguished by modern confessors as a “pan-heresy” in that, unlike the earlier heresies in Church history, which each attacked one teaching of the Orthodox Church, Ecumenism destroys the Church’s teaching concerning herself, and therefore endangers the whole edifice of Orthodoxy. Thus it is a “pan-heresy” and on par with the “first **great** heresy.”

\*\* This refers to the appearance of the Cross on 7th May, 351 A.D. over the city of Jerusalem, during the episcopate there of St Cyril. The event is still celebrated annually by the Orthodox Church on that day.



## Teaching on the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church

BY ARCHPRIEST ALEXANDER RUDAKOV

PUBLISHED IN 1890 IN SAINT PETERSBURG

§ 27. **Events commemorated at the Twelve Great Feasts.** 1) ***The Birth of the All-holy Theotokos*** (8th September). This feast is celebrated in memory of the birth of the Most Holy Virgin Mary as a child of the righteous Joachim and Anna, who had long been childless but were deemed worthy by God in answer to their fervent prayer to bring forth such a daughter, and in memory of their promise to consecrate her to God, Who had thus been well-pleased to bless them in this way. 2) ***The Entry of the All-holy Theotokos into the Temple*** (21st November). This feast commemorates her presentation in the Temple at Jerusalem that she might be dedicated unto God, in accordance with the vow which her parents had made. At this time the All-holy Virgin was only three years old. She was ceremoniously led into the Temple by her parents accompanied by an assembly of virgins holding lighted candles and chanting sacred hymns. The high priest met her at the entrance of the Temple, and being inspired by God to do so, took her into the Holy of Holies, as had been foretold, for this young child herself was the living Temple of God. 3) ***The Annunciation of the All-holy Virgin Mary*** (25th March). This feast was inaugurated to celebrate the annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel to the All-holy Virgin, who was then living in Nazareth, concerning the birth from her of the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. 4) ***The Nativity of Christ*** (25th December). This feast

commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from the All-holy Virgin Mary. 5) ***The Meeting of the Lord*** (2nd February). This feast is kept in memory of the meeting of the God-Infant Jesus with Simeon and Anna in the Temple, when He, being forty days old, was presented there as a first-born son dedicated to God. The Elder Simeon, to whom it had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ, took Him in his arms, and by a special inspiration proclaimed that the Infant Jesus, Whom he was holding in his hands, was indeed the people's Saviour, the Light of revelation for the nations and the glory of Israel. Then too the Prophetess Anna proclaimed Him to all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. 6) ***The Baptism of the Lord*** (6th January). This feast celebrates the Baptism of Jesus Christ by the Forerunner John, during which the voice of the Father from Heaven called Him His beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit, confirming the word of God the Father, lighted upon Him in the form of a dove. Consequently at the Baptism of Jesus Christ, the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity was made manifest, as indeed was the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and for these reasons the feast is called the ***Theophany***. 7) ***The Transfiguration of the Lord*** (6th August). This feast was established to commemorate the glorious transfiguration of Jesus Christ before the disciples on Mount Tabor, so that He might manifest to them His Divine majesty and strengthen their faith, because His Passion was approaching. 8) ***The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem*** (the Sunday before Pascha). This feast is in memory of the triumphant entry of the Lord into Jerusalem that there He might accept the Passion, and death for the sins of the world. 9) ***The Lord's Ascension*** (on the fortieth day after Pascha). This feast celebrates the Lord's ascension into the Heavens on the fortieth day after His resurrection. 10) ***Pentecost*** (on the fiftieth day after Pascha). This festival celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the fiftieth day after Christ's resurrection. Because the descent of the Holy Spirit manifested more clearly the mystery of the Three Persons of the

Godhead, it is also called **Trinity Sunday**. The day after this is called **Holy Spirit Day**, because it is particularly dedicated to the Holy Spirit. 11) **The Dormition of the Mother of God** (15th August). After the Saviour on the Cross entrusted her to His beloved disciple John, John took her to himself and to his own home, and ministered unto her like a son until her dormition itself. The time of her dormition was announced to her beforehand by an Angel. It was accompanied by many miracles. Her body was laid to rest in the tomb of her parents in the Garden of Gethsemane, close to Jerusalem. On the third day after her repose, when the Apostle Thomas came, who had not been at her burial, the cave tomb was opened and her body was not found. As is universally believed, the Lord raised her up and took her to Heaven before the general resurrection. 12) **The Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord** (14th September). Originally this feast was inaugurated in memory of the finding of the honourable and life-creating Cross of the Lord by the holy Peer of the Apostles the Augusta Helena (A.D. 326), and in the seventh century there was added to this commemoration that of Emperor Heraclius' retrieval of the life-creating Cross from Persia (A.D. 624). Just as happened after the finding of the Cross, when it was returned from Persia, the Patriarch desirous to give all the assembly of the faithful the opportunity to behold the sacred object, raised up the Cross, turning to the four points of the compass, and each time the people fell down in reverence, crying out: *Lord, have mercy.*

.... *to be continued.*



A BROTHER went to visit a monk, and when he left him, he said, 'Forgive me, father, for having made you desist from your rule.' And the monk said to him: 'My rule is to refresh you, and send you away in peace.'

FROM THE PARADISE OF THE FATHERS ON HOSPITALITY

# THE COMING MONTH

THE CHURCH YEAR begins with September, as autumn approaches, just as the Church day begins with Vespers, when the evening falls. Both these things give us a reminder of our mortality and the shortness of this life. We start with autumn, or we start with evening, both times when the light is growing less. This represents to us our life here on earth. Then follows winter or night - to represent our death. In the spring or at dawn, we have a new day, and (as the evening belongs to the next day) it is a day without an evening, to represent to us the life of the Age to Come.

The first **Great Feast** in the year falls on 8th September, and is that of the **Nativity of the All-holy Theotokos**. Again it draws our attention to the life of the Age to Come. Scripturally the Eighth Day represents that Age; there being the seven days of this creation, followed by the Eighth, which represents the life after the Resurrection. Christ Himself rested on the seventh day in the tomb, but arose on the eighth day of the week, Sunday. So, as the birth of the Mother of God is the beginning of the life of the New Creation, it is celebrated on the eighth day of the Church New Year. This year it falls on a Sunday, and so the services for the Resurrection and for the Mother of God are combined.

Later in the month we have the **Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross**. In fact the Cross was discovered by St Helena in the Spring of A.D. 326, and its finding was originally celebrated on the second day of Pascha, but when in A.D. 335, the original Church of the Holy Resurrection (known in the West as the Holy Sepulchre) was consecrated in Jerusalem on 13th September, the feast of the Cross was transferred to the day after that event, so that it could be given greater prominence. As it is a feast of the Cross, the day is kept as a fast day, but as it falls this year on a Saturday, we are permitted oil and wine. We have devoted two of the main articles in this issue to this beautiful festival.



**Our Venerable Mother Theodora of Alexandria** (11th / 24th) at first lived in honourable marriage with her husband, but the evil one contrived to bring about a fall for her. A certain man was captivated by the youthful beauty of Theodora and began with all his abilities to tempt her into adultery, but for a long time he was unsuccessful. Then Theodora, in her simplicity and innocence, was persuaded what the sun does not see is also unknown to God. She betrayed her husband, but, through God's mercies, also soon came to realize the seriousness of her fall, and repented of her sin. Her conscience gave her no peace, and Theodora turned to a renowned Eldress asking her counsel. She, seeing the repentance of the young woman, spoke to her of God's forgiveness and reminded her of the sinful woman in the Gospel, who washed the feet of Christ with her tears and received from Him forgiveness of her sins. In hope of the mercy of God, Theodora resolved to go off to a monastery to purify herself. She left her home secretly, and dressing herself in men's clothes and calling herself Theodore, she went to a men's monastery, since she feared that her husband would find her in a women's monastery. Even the experienced monks were amazed at Theodore's all-night prayers on bended knee, humility, endurance and self-denial. The saint laboured at the monastery for eight years. Her body, once defiled by adultery, now became a vessel of the grace of God and a receptacle of the Holy Spirit. Once, the saint was sent to Alexandria to buy provisions. On her journey she stayed at the guest house of the Enata monastery, where the daughter of its abbot, who had come to visit with her father, was also staying. Attracted by the comeliness of what she thought to be a young monk, she tried to seduce the monk Theodore into the sin of fornication. Meeting with refusal, she committed sin with another guest and became pregnant. The father of the shameless girl, when he saw that a transgression had occurred, began to question his daughter about the father of the child. The girl indicated that it was the monk Theodore. The father at once reported it to the Elder of the monastery where St Theodora lived. He summoned the saint and

told her of the accusation. The saint confessed her innocence, but did not reveal why it would have been impossible for her to have fathered a child. When the girl gave birth, the infant was brought to the monastery where St Theodora lived, and they insisted the infant be cared for by the saint, and she was expelled from the monastery in disgrace. The saint humbly submitted to this new trial, seeing in it the expiation of her former sin. She settled with the child not far from the monastery in a hut. Shepherds, out of pity, gave her milk for the infant, and the saint herself ate only wild herbs. Bearing her misfortune, the holy ascetic spent seven years in banishment. Seeing how meekly he bore with this trial, the monks begged the abbot that the monk Theodore be allowed to return to the monastery with the child. Later it was revealed from God that the sin of the monk Theodore was forgiven, and all the fathers began to witness the signs worked through the prayers of the saint. Once, during a drought, all the wells dried up. The abbot, now convinced of Theodore's innocence, said to the brethren that only Theodore would be able to reverse the misfortune. And indeed, through her prayers, they were granted a plentiful and never-ending supply of water. Before her death, St Theodora shut herself in her cell with the child and instructed him to love God above all things. She taught him Christian virtue and monastic discipline. As death approached, she prayed and, for the last time, she asked the Lord to forgive her sins, and she peacefully departed to receive the reward of her labours. Only after her death, did the brethren find that Theodore had been a woman, had been innocent of the accusation made against her, and yet for many years had borne the reproach of those who judged her. News of St Theodora's repose reached her husband, and he, moved by the example of her repentance, received monastic tonsure at this same monastery where she had been. And the child, raised by the saint, also followed in the footsteps of his foster-mother.

**Saint Ninian of Whithorn** (16th/29th) was the missionary to the Southern Picts in Scotland. Little historical evidence of his life remains, but it is believed that he was the son of a Brit-

ish king or noblemen, who left his worldly inheritance and went to Rome, so that he might devote himself to the Church. There he was eventually ordained and consecrated as a Bishop and sent back to his homeland as a missionary. He settled near the South coast of Scotland at Whithorn in Galloway. It may seem strange to us that he would travel so far through Britain to settle there, but we must remember that in those days the seas were the highways and not the land routes. Whithorn is in fact named after the church he built there, which was known as the “White House” - in Anglo-Saxon: *Hwit Ærne*. It was so called because, unlike most structures of that time, it was built of stone and therefore appeared white. It is also said that on his return from Rome, St Ninian travelled through Gaul and there met and conversed with St Martin of Tours. When his church at Whithorn was completed, on hearing that St Martin had recently reposed, he dedicated it to the saint. Providentially, this church which became the earliest mission centre for the conversion of Scotland, and the chapel in Canterbury, which St Augustine first used as his mission centre in evangelizing the English, are both dedicated to St Martin. According to some versions of his life, St Ninian later went to Ireland where he reposed. Other sources state that he died at Whithorn and was laid to rest near the church there. The Venerable Bede refers to him with reverence, calling him “a most reverend bishop and holy man of the nation of Britons.” Some distance from Whithorn, above the shore at Physgyll, there is a cave in the cliff face, in which tradition tells us that St Ninian used to spend Lent. In 1950, excavations by the noted archaeologist C. A. Raleigh Radford, the same who studied the improvised lead casket in which the sacred relics of St Edward were discovered and helped our Brotherhood in authenticating the relics, revealed internal stone walls, pavements and some disturbed and undated burials. Raleigh Radford also found 18 early Christian carved stones, evidence that from the earliest times, this was regarded as a holy place. Years ago, a group of us, Orthodox Christians, celebrated the Divine Liturgy in that cave, and now we have an icon of the saint in our church here at Brookwood.

# POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

*“ONE QUESTION comes to mind that I really would like to ask - it is whether those such as Miss H. and indeed myself, who have been baptised into the Anglican Church are regarded as being baptised by the Orthodox Church? I have read about Chrismation as something necessary, but if someone has been christened by a non-Orthodox Church do they need to undergo baptism by the Orthodox Church as well to enter into the Orthodox Church or at least to be regarded as Christian? - M. G., by email*

THE SHORT ANSWER to your [initial] question is No, because there are no Mysteries (Sacraments) outside the Church. How could there be? There is one Church. There is one Baptism - that administered within that one Church. However, for pastoral reasons, on occasion the Orthodox have received people simply by Chrismation. Properly this could only be done if the form of a Baptism was present in the rite outside the Church, i.e. that the candidate had been immersed in water three times in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Sadly two things have happened; first this practice, *œconomia* as it is called - departure from the strictness of proper practice as a condescension to pastoral needs, - became widespread at various times and in various national Churches. This led to the commonly held misconception that we accept the baptism of certain denominations. The Traditionalist Orthodox Christians, seeing this spreading error, are careful to apply the strictness of the practice, except in such cases where there is real pastoral need for *œconomia*, when the person is on their death bed, totally infirm, etc. And then *œconomia* is permitted if the Bishop blesses.

The other sad development is that the Orthodox engaged today in Ecumenism have accepted that idea that we share “one Baptism” with the various denominations with whom they foster ecumenical relations, but they will not find a patristic consensus which supports this novel idea.

**NEWS** from the communities in the **U.K.**  
of the **True Orthodox Church of Greece,**  
under the care of **Bishop Ambrose.**

***FIRST & EIGHTH DAY PRAYERS***

ON SUNDAY, 4th / 17th August, the feast day of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, **Daniela Vraciu of Welwyn Garden City,** gave birth to a daughter at the **Lister Hospital** just outside of Stevenage. In the evening the Brotherhood clergy visited mother and baby there to read the first-day prayers. On the following Sunday, after serving at the Convent, we journeyed on to the Vracius' home in Welwyn Garden City and read the naming prayers for the new baby, who has been called **Elisea** after the **Holy Prophet Eliseus** (Elisha); feast day: 14th / 27th June. Through his holy prayers, may Elisea be brought to Holy Baptism, and may her parents, **Daniel and Daniela,** and her brother and sister, **Marcu and Sara,** also be blessed.

***BAPTISM AT SAINT EDWARD'S  
& VISIT OF CLERGY FROM ROMANIA***

TWO CLERGYMEN from the Old Calendar Church of Romania, under the presidency of **His Eminence Metropolitan Vlasie,** visited us in mid-August. **Archimandrite Veniamin** from Galati, and the **Priest Nicolae Condararu,** guests in the country of **Daniel and Andreea Mitrea, of Dartford, Kent,** concelebrated with our clergy at the Divine Liturgy on the feast of the Holy Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon, Saturday 27th July / 9th August. They then joined us for the Parish breakfast. On the following day, the Sunday, the feast day of St Eirene Chrysovalantou, Fathers Veniamin and Nicolae again returned to concele-

brate at the Divine Liturgy with **Father Eonomos Stephen Fretwell**, assisted by Hierodeacon Sabbas. During the service, Fr Stephen preached very beautifully in English, greeting our visitors, emphasizing that, although we come from differing national backgrounds and each Church has liturgical practices and customs of their own, we are united in the confession of the Orthodox Faith. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, Fr Veniamin preached in Romanian. After the Liturgy, **Ioan**, the infant son of Daniel and Andreea, was baptised, Father Veniamin being the celebrant of the Mysterion and **Nicolae Ursache** Ioan's godfather. Afterwards the participants had refreshments, but then retired to a restaurant!

### ***FATHER GABRIEL & PRESBYTERA HELENA***

WE OWE a debt of gratitude to **Father Gabriel Lawani**, and his Presbytera, **Helena**, for travelling down from Droylsden, to assist with the services over the weekend of Saturday and Sunday, 23rd and 24th August, n.s. God bless them for this act of brotherly love and support, and reward them abundantly. On that Sunday Fr Gabriel served with **Fr Stephen Fretwell** at the Brotherhood. Thanks are also due to **Mrs Justina Trollope** of Horsell for offering Presbytera hospitality overnight.

### ***ICONS GIVEN TO SAINT EDWARD'S***

MATIAS and LIGGY FAGERLUND have kindly donated to Saint Edward's Church a beautiful embroidered icon of the **Four Martyrs of Crete**, who include the **New Martyr Manuel**, the name saint of their son and heir.

PETYA GENCHEVA, a young lady working at **Frimley Park Hospital**, who met us when Fr Sabbas went to have his eye treated, and thus learned about our church, subsequently visited

the Brotherhood and then came for the Sunday Liturgy, bringing us a hand-painted icon of the **Sweet-Kissing Mother of God**. Our thanks to Matias, Liggy and Petya for their kindness.

## **VISITORS**

ON Thursday, 31st July, n.s., a group of about 35 people from the **Burpham Evening WI** visited Saint Edward's Church; they were on a cemetery walk led by **Margaret Hobbs** of the **Brookwood Cemetery Society**. Later their president, **Rebecca Mallard**, sent a letter of appreciation to Mrs Hobbs, specifically asking that thanks be passed on the Father (Fr Niphon of course) who had shown them our "fascinating church."

On Thursday, 7th August, n.s., the **Priest Sorin Grecu**, his Preoteasa and their grandchildren, briefly visited the Brotherhood. Fr Sorin is a priest of the New Calendarist Romanian Church and is pastor of a parish in East London.

On Friday, 15th August, n.s., the **Rev. Dr Nick Needham** came to stay with us for a few days, remaining over the weekend, so that after the Sunday Liturgy he was able to meet some of our congregation. Dr Needham has corresponded with us for many years and several times visited us. He is a Baptist minister and the lecturer in Church History at the **Highland Theological College, Dingwall**, a college of the **University of the Highlands and Islands** in Scotland.

On Wednesday 20th August, n.s., **His Eminence Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch**, of the **London Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Ennismore Gardens** visited our cemetery to chant a *pannikhida* at the grave of the **Nun Serafima**. After the memorial service, His Eminence, who had been brought to us by a family of his parishioners, visited the candle factory to see the candle making in process, and then was offered refreshments in the Exhibition Room. He was then laden with vegetables from our garden to sustain him on his return to London.

## ***SISTER ANASTASIA***

WITH THE BLESSING of His Grace, **Bishop Ambrose** of Methoni, **Sister Anastasia** is returning to the Convent of the Holy Angels, Afidnai, Greece.

## ***MORTUARY ROOFING FUND***

AT THE END OF AUGUST the **Mortuary Roofing Fund** just tipped its half-way mark. The total so far collected from our supporters is **£32,212.84**. God bless all those who have helped achieved this. Please make all donations payable to **King Edward Orthodox Trust Co. Ltd** (registered charity number 284929). You may gift aid these donations.

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## **PRACTICAL TIP**

WE SEEM to have an inherent tendency to follow precedents, but one should be careful only to follow good precedents and not bad. Maybe, for example, you see someone sit down during services: that should not be a signal for everyone to do the same. Maybe that person is ill, or infirm, or distressed in some way. Maybe they are doing something wrong. Maybe they are lazy or careless. Maybe they lack understanding. Don't simply follow their example. Consider whether you really need to sit down, because of your own infirmity, and act accordingly. And in other situations too, do not blindly follow the example of others, but try always to reflect first and then to do what is right.

“BE STRONG in trials, weak in dissensions.”

VEN. COLUMBANUS OF BOBBIO, + 615 A.D.