



FROM THE FATHERS

“IT IS NOT PROPER for anyone to engage in any accessory work, or rather distraction, during the time of prayer. For the angel who attended Antony the Great taught him this clearly.”

VEN. JOHN OF THE LADDER, C. 650 A.D.

“OUR EFFORT and struggle against sin is powerless without the help of God. For this reason we must make an effort and pray that the Lord help us in this so important endeavour. The Lord helps those that take care and labour. He strengthens those that struggle and crowns the victorious.”

SAINT TIKHON OF ZADONSK, +1783 A.D.

“WHY IS IT NECESSARY to pray at home and to attend Divine service in church? Well, why is it necessary for you to eat and drink, to take exercise, or to work, every day? In order to support the life of the body and strengthen it. So also it is absolutely necessary to pray in order to support the life of the soul, to strengthen the soul, which is sick with sin, and to cleanse it, just as you employ various kinds of food and drink to cleanse the body. If you do not pray, you behave inadvisedly and most unwisely, supporting, gratifying and strengthening your body in every way, but neglecting your soul.”

RIGHTEOUS JOHN OF CRONSTADT, + 1908 A.D.

“THE WORLD is a sick man, whom sin has made sick, for sin is a sickness, and to scorn sinners is to scorn the sick. With prayer our Healer walks around the grievously sick patient, with prayer He walks, and with prayer He heals and makes whole. Do not scorn sinners, but pray for them, feel pity and compassion for every creature, but do not condemn. Expand and deepen your soul with prayer, and you will begin to weep over the mystery of the world bitterly and vehemently. Make your heart prayerful, together with your soul and your mind, and they will become inexhaustible fountainheads of tears for all mankind.”

SAINT JUSTIN OF CHELIJE, + 1979 A.D.

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Humility is the Foundation and Essence of Christianity

On the Feast of the Kazan Icon

SAINT SERAPHIM (SOBOLEV) OF BULGARIA (+1950 A.D.)

LET THIS MIND be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God... humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name (Phil 2:5-9).

MY beloved children in Christ, it is salutary for us to know why the Holy Church draws our attention to these Apostolic words on feasts of the Theotokos, words that speak of the exaltation by God the Father of His Divine Son on account of His ineffable humility. It is because the Lord has also exalted the Most Holy Mother of God and given her a name, that is, such great glory, as has not been given to any of His rational beings. It

is for good reason that the Orthodox Church magnifies her as more honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim. The Mother of God received this glory because she became like the Saviour Himself in His great humility. The words spoken by the Most Holy Mother of God to the Righteous Elizabeth testify to this truth: *For He hath regarded the humility of His handmaiden* (Lk 1:48).

The question arises: what are the salutary consequences of this for us, my beloved ones?

We, too, are called to the great heavenly glory of Christ's Kingdom and to its eternal, paradisiacal blessedness. The Lord, in His High Priestly Prayer, said: *Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me... before the foundation of the world* (Jn 17:24). The path to our exaltation, to our future heavenly glory, is the very same as that which the Lord trod, as did His Most Pure Mother and all the saints. This path is narrow, sorrowful, and thorny: it is the path of the humility of Christ.

If we wish therefore to follow our divine fore-ordination, we must make real the words of the Apostle Paul: to associate with the humble (Rom. 12:16); that is, we should emulate the humble by possessing humility. According to the teaching of St. Macarius of Egypt, humility is the foundation and whole essence of Christianity: it is our rebirth, renewal, and salvation. The Lord grants His saving grace for this alone, as it pleased Him to declare through His revelation: *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble* (James 4:6; cf. 1 Ptr 5:5; Prov. 3:34).

We need humility not for our future heavenly glory alone, however. It is also requisite for our temporal life, for our deliverance from every misfortune. Thus it is evident why the Holy Fathers of the Church testify that every misfortune is sent to us by the Lord to humble us and, by means of this humility, to unite us with Himself, inasmuch as pride separates us from God and deprives us not only of future blessedness, but of temporal happiness as well.

All our attention should be directed hereto. Inasmuch as the Most Holy Mother of God is our first Defender and Deliverer from all misfor-

tunes, it is clear that all our prayers to her – both for our deliverance from every misfortune and for the attainment of every temporal good – must be founded upon humility. She greatly abhors the proud but greatly loves the humble, as is shown by ecclesiastical tradition, especially by the lives of holy people.

In this regard, let Hieroschemamonk Macarius of the Nizhny Novgorod Caves Monastery, a great ascetic struggler of the Russian Church, serve for us as a salutary example.¹ Even as a simple monk in the Zheltovodsky Makariev Monastery (also located in the province of Nizhny Novgorod) he was noted for his lofty Christian life. Two traits in particular clearly distinguished him among the other monks: he possessed great humility and never spoke a word of judgment against his neighbours. For humility consists in not judging anyone, but rather in blaming oneself. Moreover, he prayed with special fervour to the Most Holy Mother of God.

But a severe trial befell him: he became mortally ill. The minutes of his life were numbered. The brethren came to bid him farewell and the superior had already read the prayers for the departure of the soul. Fr Macarius then suddenly began to doze off. He beheld a wondrous vision: radiant youths appeared to take his soul. The dying one, weeping, began to beg them to let him live so that he could repent properly before God for his sins. But the angels said to him: “Follow us.” With these words, the monk’s soul left his body. The angels showed it the place of infernal torment, where sinners were pleading, like the rich man in the Gospel, for water to be dropped on their tongues to provide at least some relief from the terrible infernal flames. The monk’s soul began to experience such horror as no words can describe. But then the angels raised his soul to the heavenly abode and showed it the celestial mansions of the Heavenly Queen herself. He saw the Heavenly Queen with a countless multitude of angelic powers wondrously singing the church hymn: “All of creation rejoiceth in thee.” Then the Mother of God, turning to the soul of Macarius, said: “Return for fifteen years to your earthly habitation and, for the sake of the prayers of St. Macarius, serve in the altar of his holy monastery.” The dying monk Macarius rose at that very moment

and completely regained his health, to the great astonishment of all his brethren. Gathering in the monastery church, they glorified God for His great miracle by chanting the church hymn: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men* (Lk 2:14).

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, let us emulate this great monk by acquiring the humility of Christ; at the same time, let us pray with humility to the Most Pure Mother of God. Let us entreat her not only with humility, but also with love for her, recalling how gravely she suffered for us and our salvation while standing at the Cross upon which her Divine Son was crucified. Let us not forget that even now the Mother of God continues to suffer for us when we commit grave sins. The vision of St Andrew the Fool-for-Christ testifies to this: he saw how she shed tears and prayed for the faithful while making the sign of the cross over them with her maternal *omophorion*.

Finally, let us pray continuously to the Most Pure Mother of God, inasmuch as she ceaselessly and continuously entreats her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, on our behalf.

May the words of a prayer to her of our Orthodox Church sound more often from our lips: “Never, O Theotokos, will we cease to speak of thy powers, unworthy as we are... Let us never forsake thee, O Lady, for thou dost ever save thy servants from all perils.” Amen.

*Delivered in the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Nicolas in Sofia,
Bulgaria, on 22nd October / 4th November, 1945
(The day commemoration of the deliverance of Moscow
by the Kazan Icon in 1612).*

Translator’s note:

[¹] This account is from the life of the Elder Mardarius (as Fr. Macarius was named in the schema), who reposed on 6th / 19th April, 1859.



Wounds And Benefactions

or

Sand and Rock

THIS is a story about two friends who were walking in the desert. At a certain point they had an argument and one of them slapped the other. The one who was slapped was hurt, but without saying anything he wrote on the sand: *Today my best friend slapped me.*

They continued walking until they came upon an oasis where they decided to go for a swim. But the one who was slapped almost drowned and his friend saved his life. When he recovered he wrote on a rock: *Today my best friend saved my life.*

The one who slapped him and then saved his life asked him: “When I slapped you, you wrote on the sand and now you wrote on the rock. Why?...”

The other friend replied: “When someone hurts us, we must write it on sand where the winds of forgiveness can wipe it out. But when someone does something good to us we must engrave it on rock, where no wind can wipe it out.”

***Learn to write the wounds caused by others on sand,
and engrave the benefactions done by them on rock.***

A lesson sent us by the Sisters of the Sacred Convent of the Holy Angels, Afidnai, Greece. Unfortunately again we have not be able to reproduce the charming illustrations which adorned their handwritten version. How often we do just the opposite of what is enjoined in this tale.

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

VENERABLE THALLASIOS THE LIBYAN, SEVENTH CENTURY

TEACHING

OF THE VENERABLE SERAPHIM OF SAROV

ON THE PRAYER OF JESUS

THE SECOND FORM of attention and prayer is this: when someone gathers his mind within himself, divesting it of everything sensory, guards his feelings, and collects all his thoughts, so that they do not roam over the vain things of this world; sometimes he examines his thoughts, sometimes he pays attention to the words of the prayer which he is pronouncing, and at other times he gathers all those thoughts which have been taken captive by the devil and changed to vain and evil purposes, and at other times with great labour and force he comes to himself after having been conquered and possessed by some particular passion. Struggling in this way and with this warfare inside him, he can never be at peace, and can find no time to do good works, that he might receive the crown of righteousness. This is because such a person is like one who fights at night, in the dark, who hears the voices of enemies and receives wounds from them, but cannot clearly see them, or who they are, or where they come from, or even how or why they war against him. This is because he is hindered by the darkness which exists in his mind, and by the storm in his thoughts. He never can be freed from his noetic enemies, that they might not disturb him. Such a one expends labour and receives no reward, because he is taken captive by vainglory, and, without comprehending this, he thinks that he is attentive. From pride he often holds others in contempt and censures them, but in his delusion considers himself worthy of being a pastor of the sheep and a guide along the way, and he becomes like a blind man who undertakes to lead other blind people.

This is the second method (of attention and prayer). And everyone who desires to be saved and to be attentive to himself as is properly required can see the harm to which it subjects the soul. Yet this second method is better than the first in that a night lit by the moon is better than a dark one, in which the moon does not shine.

The third method is truly wondrous and difficult to explain, and for those who are ignorant of it, it is not only hard to take in but almost incredible. For at the present time there are few who practise this method. And, as I see it, this good thing comes to us from obedience, because obedience shown to a spiritual father, liberates all from concern for himself. Such a person, already estranged from attachment to this world, becomes a wholly zealous and unslothful practiser of this third method provided he finds a teacher and spiritual father, who is true, unerring, and not subject to any kind of delusion. This is because he lays himself and his every concern on God and on his spiritual father, and through true obedience he already does not live for himself, so as to fulfil his own will, but he has died to himself with regard to every attachment to the world and to his own body. How can anything transient conquer or enslave such a man? Or again, how can he have concerns and worries? In this way (attentiveness), which derives from obedience, all the cunning of the demons and every shipwreck, through which they contrive to distract the mind with many and various thoughts, is dispersed and destroyed. Then the mind of such a man becomes free of everything, and it, with great authority, examines the thoughts sown by the demons in a timely way; with great mastery it expels them and it offers its prayers to God with a pure heart. This is the beginning of true life. Those who do not lay down this foundation labour in vain, without being aware of it.

... to be continued.



“JUST as you take care to find food, clothing, shoes, and whatever is necessary for your body which is perishable, take care to acquire holy books, which are useful, profitable, and necessary for your soul, which is immortal. Listen to what the golden-voiced clarion of the Church, the luminary of the œcumene, John Chrysostom, says: ‘Let us not neglect to acquire for ourselves spiritual books. Where there are spiritual books, diabolic action is driven away and there occurs great consolation of virtue. Reading such books constitutes great security, guarding us from sinning... It is not possible to be saved without enjoying spiritual reading continually.’”

BLESSED ELDER PHILOTHEOS ZERVAKOS, + 1980 A.D.

The Coming Month

IN OCTOBER we have no Great Feasts and no special fasts, other than the weekly Wednesday and Friday ones, and Mondays for the monastics. We do begin the month though with the feast of the **Protection of the All-holy Mother of God** (1st / 14th), which among the Russians and Ukrainians, and particularly the Cossacks, popularly ranks almost as a Great Feast, and within the month, on 22nd October / 4th November, we have the festival of the miraculous **Kazan Icon of the Theotokos** (see first article above). Among the other celebrations in the month, we have:-

The **Holy Martyrs Eulampius and Eulampia** (10th /23rd) were brother and sister and lived at the beginning of the fourth century in the city of Nicomedia. Eulampius became upset after reading the decree of the Emperor Maximian (284-305) sentencing all Christians to execution. Eulampius was horrified that the Emperor was taking up arms against his own subjects rather than fighting the enemies of his Empire and tore the imperial notice down. This was observed and the saint was brought to trial and commanded to renounce the Christian Faith. When he refused, they first raked him with iron hooks, and then placed him upon a red-hot bed of coals. All of a sudden the sufferer expressed a wish to visit the pagan temple. The judges were delighted, supposing that they had turned him from Christianity. In the pagan temple of Mars, the saint approached the idol and cried out, "In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command you to fall to the floor and crumble into dust!" The idol immediately crashed down to the floor and was destroyed. The people, seeing this, exclaimed, "Great is the God of the Christians!" St Eulampius was again taken away for torture. Hearing of this, his sister, Eulampia, appeared before the judges and declared that she also was a Christian. Eulampius told her, "Sister, do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul" (Mt. 10:28). The martyrs were tortured and thrown into boiling oil, but the Lord protected them from harm. Finally, they beheaded Eulampius, but Eulampia died from her torments before she could be beheaded. Some two hundred others, who were converted seeing the miracles that

accompanied the martyrdom of the holy siblings, were also slain and received crowns of martyrdom and are celebrated with them. Here at St Edward's Church, we are blessed to have a relic of Saint Eulampius.

Our Venerable Mother Frideswide of Oxford (19th October / 1st November) was born in the southern part of the Kingdom of Mercia, either at Oxford or at Didcot. She was the daughter of pious parents, Didanus, the seventh century sub-King (after whom Didcot is named) and his wife, Safrida. Her parents committed her to the care of a holy woman named, Aelfgith, but, after her mother's death, Frideswide returned to live with her father. She persuaded him to build her a church at the gates of Oxford and, there, she and twelve young women were professed as nuns. Not long afterward, Aelfgar, a minor Prince of Mercia, heard of Frideswide's great beauty, as well as her wealth as Didanus's heiress, and sent a messenger to ask for her hand in marriage. She excused herself, upon the plea of her vow of celibacy but the prince persisted and, eventually, made a plan to abduct her. Frideswide learned of the scheme and fled, just in time, to the River Thames. Finding an unattended boat there, she floated to Frilsham, and there she took up her abode in a deserted hut, formerly used to shelter the pigs that fed upon the acorns in the surrounding forest. A fountain sprang up at her prayer and she was thus able to survive concealed there for about three years. Aelfgar, however, was determined not to be beaten. After some time the Saint felt it safe to return to Oxford, and hearing of her return, Aelfgar besieged the city and threatened to burn it to the ground unless Frideswide was given up to him. He vowed to sacrifice the lady, not only to his own brutality, but to that of his men. Both Frideswide and her father's defending army were worn down and facing defeat. Just as she was about to fall into Aelfgar's hands though, she was reminded of the early saintly women of old who had saved their honour at the price of life. She thus invoked the holy Martyrs Catherine and Cecilia who immediately struck her persecutor blind at the moment he broke through the city gates and entered the town. With their leader so obviously wounded by Divine intervention, Aelfgar's men were stricken with fear and dispersed. The town was spared. Saint Frideswide agreed to restore the prince's sight upon his earnest repentance; but, legend has it, that for centuries there-

after no King of England would enter Oxford, for fear of being similarly struck blind. King Henry III was the first to disregard the tradition and all his misfortunes have been attributed to his presumption. The princess returned to her convent and collected around her a number of nuns and monks, over whose double monastery she presided in great holiness for many years. The origins of the University of Oxford are said, by some, to lie in the school she established there. Abbess Frideswide was well known for the miracles she performed during her own lifetime. One well-known tale reveals how she was once accosted by a local leper who appealed to her, in the name of Christ, to kiss him. Overcoming her fear of infection and natural disgust at his loathsome condition, the holy lady made the sign of the cross and in a sisterly way kissed him. Immediately the scales fell away and his flesh became again like that of a child. In later life, St. Frideswide retired to the tranquillity of a little hermitage at Binsey, not far outside Oxford. There she reposed on 19th October A.D. 735, being buried in her monastery in Oxford, where Christ Church Cathedral now stands. Multitudes of pilgrims resorted to her tomb and to the Binsey Chapel, sources of many miraculous cures.

Our **Venerable Father Arethas of the Kievan Caves Monastery** (24th October / 6th November) lived in the twelfth century. St Arethas was from Polotsk. Despite his monastic vocation, while living at the monastery, he kept many possessions in his cell. The Fathers counselled him against the passion of possessiveness, but he paid them no heed. Nor would he ever give anything in alms, so attached to his wealth was he. One day robbers, hearing of his store of valuables, broke into his cell and robbed him of everything. Grieving over his lost riches, St Arethas began to murmur and blaspheme against God for permitting this. To help bring him to his senses, the Lord permitted that he be stricken with a serious illness. Being at the very brink of death, he was granted a vision and saw how both angels and devils had come for him and were arguing between them. The devils asserted that he ought to be given over to them because of his avarice and complaints against God. Then the angels said to him, “You hapless man, if you had given thanks to God for the pilfered riches, this would have been accounted as charity for you.” After this vision, the saint recovered. He deeply repented and spent his final days as

a hermit, in distress and repentance over his foul sin, having renounced all earthly possessions. St Arethas died not later than 1190, and through his repentance was numbered among the just. His relics were found to be incorrupt.



POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

“YOU MENTIONED that your church was consecrated in 2010, but you moved there in the 1980’s - why the long delay?” G.B., Exeter.

THERE were a number of contributory factors. First of all, when in 1984 we received the sacred relics of St Edward the Martyr, we still had not paid off the debt we had incurred in buying the freehold of the property. It would not have been appropriate to consecrate a church if there was a possibility that we might lose possession of it, and the Ever-Memorable Bishop Gregory of Washington, who enshrined the relics here, simply blessed the church with holy water on the day before their reception. Afterwards, when the debts had been paid off and our tenure here was secure, we were involved in the Court Case regarding the custody of the sacred relics which lasted eleven years, and afterwards with the building of the monastery house, and so, perhaps blameworthy, we did not pursue the matter. Then again there seemed to be a reticence in the Russian Church Abroad to fully consecrate churches. None of their other churches in this country at that time had been consecrated; our own church appeared to very low in the “pecking order” of the concerns of the diocesan administration, and in a sense it seemed not to be the “done thing.” When, however, we placed ourselves under the omophorion of Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, His Grace Bishop Ambrose began to pay us regular archpastoral visits and one of the very first questions he asked was whether the church had been consecrated and he took the initiative in ensuring that it should be. There was then a further delay of three years, because we were going to have the roof replaced, and, as soon as could conveniently be arranged after that essential work was

completed, Bishop Ambrose arranged that the church should be consecrated. Thus, as in regards to most aspects of our life here, we crept forward at a snail's pace.

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“I wanted to share with you my experience yesterday at the school bingo night for raising money for the new school building. I just kept on winning. There were no less than 50 people there and I won 3 out of 15 games, 3 out of 10 raffle prizes and a ‘Stop the clock’ monetary prize where I guessed the exact time the clock had stopped. In the end I felt so embarrassed as there were all these children who did not win anything and I left with a bag full of prizes and money. Later on I felt it was possibly a demon attack just before my confession this Sunday. I will donate money to the school building but would you be able to advise how to approach cases like this. I do not normally gamble but this was to support the school.” - E.M., Berkshire.

THIS is just my personal opinion and not necessarily Orthodox teaching, but I feel that though gambling is definitely a sin, one can draw a distinction between the gambling that becomes compulsive, or where you are really obsessed with the thought of winning, and simply buying the odd raffle ticket to help a charity (usually with no thought of winning). Of course one has to be careful: the former obsession can grow out of the latter casual practice, just as drunkenness or even alcoholism can grow out of having the occasional glass of wine or beer with a meal. I would never buy a lottery ticket, and never have, but that is not from aversion to gambling, but because it seems to me the odds against winning are so tremendously great, that it is in fact simply a slightly disguised way of paying more tax voluntarily!

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“BLESSED is the man who is attached to nothing
subject to corruption and time.”

VENERABLE MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, + 662 A.D.

NEWS SECTION

INTER-FAITH ASSEMBLY AT SARAJEVO

THE ASSEMBLY, which was held between 9th and 11th September was under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the Serbian Orthodox Church Archdiocese of Vrhbosna-Sarajevo, and the Jewish Community in BiH, although political leaders, bankers, journalists and spokesmen of other religions also took part: Roman Catholics, Armenian and Coptic Monophysites, Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans, Evangelicals, Reformed Churches of France and Switzerland, Uniats, Buddhists, Shiites, Kampuchean Buddhists, Hindus, Shintoists, and Zoroastrians, among others. **His Holiness Patriarch Irenej of Serbia, His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos of Nea Justiniana and All Cyprus** (both Primates of their national Churches), hierarchs of the Constantinopolitan, Alexandrian, Romanian, Russian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian Churches were prominent among the participants. **Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone**, the Pope's secretary of state, sent a message in the name of **Pope Benedict XVI** to the Archbishop of Vrhbosna-Sarajevo, on the occasion. The Patriarch of Serbia, Irenej, attended the Roman Catholic mass celebrated in their Cathedral by **Cardinal Vinko Puljic**, standing in the sanctuary and giving an address during the service. Regrettably, on 10th September, Patriarch Irenej gave **a ringing endorsement of Ecumenism**: "The Serbian Orthodox Church, from the very beginning, in different forms, participates in the Ecumenical movement. Since 1965 she is (*sic*) a member of the World Council of Churches. Participation in the Inter-Christian dialogue, especially with the Sister-Roman Catholic Church, our Church considers this to be a very important question, perhaps one of the most important questions of her contemporary mission. Thus, very often some of her representatives participate in different Inter-Church and ecumenical gatherings in the country and abroad. Our Church hosted and organized a number of times such gatherings, including the one of the Joint Commission for the Theological Dialogue of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church from 18-25 September 2006. Why does the Orthodox

Church today as a whole, thus our local Church as well, participate in the ecumenical movement and dialogue, along with other Christian Churches? In short, because her very nature is dialogic. The Church is by her very nature oecumenical, relational, corelational reality. If the Orthodox Church would not have been in dialogue with other Christian Churches and communities, and then with non-Christian religions, secular and religious movements as well as all ideological and spiritual challenges of the modern world, she would automatically shut herself, become self-sufficient, and thus according to such a mentality transform herself into a sect.” On the final day of the Assembly the different religions gathered in different locations to pray for peace, but this put all the Christians together and ecumenical joint-prayers were offered. And a final ceremony brought all the religions together again for readings, singing, flag-waving, a rather infantile ritual of lighting lights from flaming torches, and the signing of a statement. How far this is from the admonition of the holy Apostle of love, John the Theologian in his Second Epistle. How far from the tradition of the Holy Fathers! Should any wonder that Traditionalist Orthodox wall themselves off from the “official” (often erroneously called “canonical”) churches?

RIOT POLICE DEPLOYED AGAINST ATHONITE MONASTERY

THE SACRED MONASTERY of **Esphigmenou on the Holy Mount, Athos**, issued the following posting on 24th September, 2012 – “Today under the leadership of foreign minister Dimitris Avramopoulos, the Greek government deployed armed police in full riot gear to forcibly remove the monks of the Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou from their monastery home. The special riot police MAT and EKAM, which have been used against violent protesters in downtown Athens have now, unbelievably, been deployed to the peaceful monastic community of Mount Athos in northern Greece to assault peaceful and defenceless monks. The government has authorized the use of force to resolve a religious dispute after failing to starve the monks into leaving their monastery during a decade-long blockade. In this time, they have denied the monks

deliveries of food, medicine, heating oil, and access to medical attention while simultaneously subjecting them to a non-stop campaign of official harassment and intimidation. This waste of taxpayers' dollars has continued unabated during the financial crisis that has rocked Greece and the rest of the European Union and crippled social services to the poor in Greece. Under the Greek Constitution, the Greek foreign minister is responsible for the administration of government on Mt. Athos and has ultimate authority on the orders to use armed police there. The monks have repeatedly requested dialogue with the Greek government as well as Patriarch Bartholomew of Istanbul to resolve this dispute. The Patriarch has refused to aid in the peaceful reconciliation of this dispute and has encouraged the government to take action against the monks. The expressed plan of the government is to forcibly remove the peaceful and defenceless monks and their long-standing Abbot Methodios from their monastery, and replace them with those who pray in accordance with the dictates of the Greek government. Mount Athos is the autonomous spiritual centre of the Orthodox Church, where the monks are considered defenders of the faith. The Esphigmenou Monastery established in the first millennium, is where the great St. Gregory Palamas was abbot, and where St. Anthony left for Russia to establish Orthodox monasticism. Its remoteness and rugged natural beauty attracts pilgrims and tourists alike who come to see the art and architecture of the Byzantine Empire. For over a thousand years the monastery has provided a place of prayer and peace for those who chose the monastic life. It is now threatened with extinction." The reason for the dispute between the Monastery and the Patriarchate is essentially that the Fathers of Esphigmenou do not commemorate Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople because of his ecumenism. That would seem to be a matter which should be addressed by dialogue and not by using the secular authorities to employ force. **Compare the last two news items:** Orthodox ecumenists proclaim love and peace with those who do not confess that "the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 5:20), but call in riot police to harass those who strive to "earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

RELICS OF NEW MARTYR FOUND

ARCHPRIEST JOSEPH FRAWLEY has sent us the report: “Earlier this year the holy relics of the New Martyr Saint Aquilina were discovered in northern Greece. St. Aquilina was an eighteen-year-old woman whose father had converted to Islam to avoid prosecution for murder. He promised that his daughter would also become Muslim, but she steadfastly refused, having been firmly brought up as a Christian by her pious mother. She was subsequently tortured and beaten to death. (This was in 1764.) At once her holy relics began to emit a sweet fragrance that filled the streets through which she passed. Although she was buried in a Muslim cemetery, at night a heavenly light would illumine her grave. Seeing this, three young men bravely exhumed her body and buried it secretly in a Christian cemetery, swearing never to reveal the location of her grave. Thus, while her life was well known in the area, and her Feast Day was observed each year, yet no one knew the location of her holy relics until this winter, when they were miraculously discovered. Apparently - and this is the part I have only from an oral source - during a snow storm it was noticed that no snow was falling on a rectangular patch of ground in the cemetery. The snow simply disappeared a few feet about the ground. Further investigation revealed the relics of the saint. In any event, on Tuesday, 22nd May, 2012, the official service of the finding of the relics of the holy New Martyr was celebrated.”

REPOSE OF ARCHIMANDRITE FLOR

ARCHIMANDRITE FLOR, who for many years came to London to celebrate the Passion week and Paschal services at the **Convent of the Annunciation**, reposed in the Lord on Tuesday 22nd August / 4th September at the **Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Monastery, Jordanville, New York**. He was born Vassily Vanko on 9th December, 1926 in the village of Shemetkovtsi in Czechoslovakia, and his parents were named Alexander and Ludmila. He joined the monastery at Lodomirova

at a young age. With the coming of the communists in 1944, he was evacuated together with the brotherhood through Bratislava, Berlin and Geneva. He arrived as a novice at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville in 1946. He was tonsured a rasophore monk together with his close friend the novice Vassily Skurla (the future Metropolitan Lavr) on 15th / 28th March, 1947. The next day, on the feast of the Laudation of the Most Holy Theotokos, they were tonsured readers and subdeacons. In the first week of Great Lent in 1948, they both were tonsured stavrophore monks. Fr. Flor was ordained a hierodeacon on 29th August / 11th September, 1950, the feast of St. John the Baptist. He was ordained a hieromonk on 15th / 28th June, 1954. All his tonsures and ordinations were performed by the abbot of the monastery, **Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko) of blessed memory**. He was raised to the rank of hegoumen (abbot) in 1967, and archimandrite in 1996. In 2007, for his many years of service to the Church, he was given the high honour of wearing two pectoral crosses, but, in keeping with his humility, he never wore them. Fr. Flor selflessly kept his difficult monastic obediences as the monastery electrician and handyman. He could always be found in the fields or the cemetery driving the heavy farm equipment, and he zealously attended the church services. He was a man of great humility, modesty and quietness, and always shunned the spotlight. For his sacrificial love in coming to London each year for Passion Week and Pascha, rather than being with his brother monastics at Holy Trinity, we in England owe him a great debt of gratitude. *May God grant him eternal life in His kingdom and rest with the Saints.*



SIR-UK NEWS

SAINT EDWARD'S DAY

THIS YEAR, the anniversary of the Enshrinement of the Sacred relics at Brookwood fell on a Sunday (3rd / 16th September) and **His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methoni** came to England to be with us.

On the Saturday, the Bishop celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the **Convent of the Annunciation**, and there we were joined by **Archimandrite Ieronymos** from Jordan, a clergyman of the **Patriarchate of Jerusalem**, who prayed within the altar during the service. Fr Ieronymos, as Bishop Ambrose told the faithful at the end of the Liturgy, had known His Grace from childhood. The Bishop remarked in his sermon that the previous day had been the Church New Year, and that the Gospel appointed for the Saturday was about an ending, the Saviour's prophecy concerning the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem. He pointed out that for us everyday should be an ending and a beginning: an ending to our sinful ways and a new beginning in repentance and in Godliness. After the Liturgy, **Mother Vikentia** and her sisters kindly treated all to a breakfast in their main *trapeza*. Bishop Ambrose invited Fr Ieronymos to come with us to Brookwood to see the Brotherhood, though he had to be back in London that evening. En route we called by the **Russian Church of the Dormition on Harvard Road**, where we found **Archpriest Vladimir Vilgerts** talking with some parishioners in the church and so we were able to show our guest from Jordan the church and venerate the holy things there, and on reaching Brookwood we showed Fr Ieronymos our church and the workrooms, etc, here, and offered him some refreshments before taking him to the station to enable him to return to London for his appointment there.

In the evening our congregation at the Vigil was joined by a group of pilgrims from the **Russian Orthodox Cathedral at Ennismore Gardens, London**. His Grace led the prayers at the *liti*, and at the *polyeleos*. At the end of the service, he gave a short address about the significance of St Edward. On Sunday morning, **His Grace, Bishop Sofronie of Suceava** arrived from Romania, and the two hierarchs concelebrated with the Brotherhood clergy. Again we were joined by pilgrims from Ennismore Gardens and other Orthodox churches, and by some Anglicans from Corfe in Dorset, where St Edward had been slain. After the vesting of the Bishop, and the reading of the Hours, Bishop Ambrose tonsured **Borislav Popov from Chatham** a reader and made him a sub-deacon. During the Divine Liturgy, after the Gospel, His Grace preached about the close connection between the love of God and love of one's

neighbour, illustrating his point with an incident from the life of St Basil the Great. He then continued, speaking again about St Edward, his life, his championing of the monastics, and the importance of the monastic life. For this service the church was packed, and apparently many people could not get in. It has been described by one person as a feast for sardines and slim ones at that! At the end of the Divine Liturgy we had the **Lesser Blessing of Waters**, and all those who attended were sprinkled with the holy water and give the antidoron. Through the kindness of our parishioners, a buffet meal was then provided in the Old Mortuary, but the Bishops quickly returned to church where they celebrated the **Baptism of Antonie Costin of Colindale**, the infant son of **Nicolae and Daniela Costin**. His godfather was **Vasile Costin**. After the Baptism and churching, Antonie was imparted the holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of our Saviour. Bishop Sofronie then left us, but Bishop Ambrose stayed some time to meet our parishioners and talk with them individually. Throughout the afternoon individuals and couples, who had attended Divine services in their own parishes in London, came to pray in the church on the Saint's day, including two families from nearby who had just found us on the internet. Doubtless the grace of the Saint drew them on that day. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that never since the sacred relics of St Edward were given to our church twenty-eight years ago, have we had such a feast for his day or so many people attend. The archpastoral love that our hierarchs showed us in leading the celebrations undoubtedly contributed to this, and for this we are truly grateful. *Glory be to our God! And Many Years to the Newly-Illumined Antonie, his sponsor Vasile, and to our new Subdeacon Borislav, his wife, Marina, and their family!* Please keep them all in your prayers.

CHURCH RENOVATION

THE RENOVATION of the exterior of Saint Edward's Church is, at the time of preparing this magazine, nearing completion. It has taken rather longer than we anticipated, but we found the original rendering was not what we had assumed it to be, and changes of plan had to be made.

In this we were kindly helped by our own architect, **Irina Aldersley**, and by the architect of the **Surrey Churches Preservation Trust, Andrew Plumridge**, who has always shown a keen interest in our church. At the moment, a little more has to be done on painting the rendering, and some finishing touches have to be put to the restored west doors of the church, but we suspect that this work might well be done before this magazine reaches you.

NEW CATECHUMEN

ON THE SUNDAY that fell between the Great Feasts of the Transfiguration and the Dormition, 13th / 26th August, **Androniki Handover of Knaphill, Woking**, was made a catechumen at Saint Edward's Church. Miss Handover, a former Roman Catholic, was given the name **Macrina**, after the **Venerable Macrina, the sister of St Basil the Great**, - a name that was drawn by lot by **Fr Stephen Fretwell**. Please remember her in your prayers as she prepares herself for Holy Baptism.

FUNERAL AT SAINT EDWARD'S

INGRID CLAPHAM, an artist who had painted numerous icons for the **Romanian parish of St George the Great Martyr, London**, where she worshipped years ago, was laid to rest in our cemetery at Brookwood on Wednesday, 19th September. As **Fr Archpriest Silviu-Petre Pufulete** was away on holiday, he arranged that the funeral be led by **Fr Eugene Darie** of the Romanian Patriarchal Church. In the last years of her life, Ingrid, a friend of **Robin and Mary Haigh**, at whose home we bless the waters at Theophany every year, had herself settled at Chertsey. She had given us several of her icons and some older icons which she had collected over the years. The Haighs very kindly made every effort to ensure that Ingrid was given an Orthodox funeral service and burial. After the burial, mourners were offered light refreshments in our Old Mortuary building. *May Ingrid find mercy and rest with the saints.*

MOSQUE VISIT

ON THE SAME DAY, we were invited to attend an Open Day and Fair at the **Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking**, the oldest mosque in the country, built in 1889 by **Dr Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner**, who is buried very near our church and was, oddly enough, a German Jew and an orientalist, not a Moslem. Frs Alexis and Niphon, accompanied by two of our guests that weekend, **Dr Nick Needham of Highland Theological College in Dingwall**, and **Andrei Henderson-Stewart**, went from Brookwood. We were given a short talk on Islam, and shown the mosque and other aspects of the complex there, and treated with great courtesy and hospitality. The gentleman giving the talk several times remarked with great approval that we were Christians and yet had beards, wore robes and had our heads covered!

LORD-LIEUTENANT'S JUBILEE GARDEN PARTY

IN HONOUR of the Diamond Jubilee of **Her Majesty The Queen**, the **Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, Dame Sarah Goad DCVO, JP**, held a Garden Party at her home near Bletchingley on Sunday 2nd September. The Lord-Lieutenant is appointed by the Monarch to be her personal representative in the county and is supported by the Vice Lord-Lieutenant and 49 Deputy Lieutenants. In fact, Dame Sarah greeted H.M. The Queen and H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, when Her Majesty marked the start of her Diamond Jubilee weekend celebrations on 2nd June by driving onto the racecourse at Epsom for the Derby meeting. Frs Alexis and Niphon from our Brotherhood were invited to attend the Garden Party, at which there was a demonstration of equestrian tent-pegging (google it!), and at which the day was brought to a close by a marching military band. Perhaps the most up-lifting impression of the occasion was the opportunity to meet so many people, who, mostly unknown to the public at large, are working for the good of the people of the county in so many spheres of life.

VOLUNTEERS

THIS MONTH we should mention **Andrei Henderson-Stewart** who stayed with us a few days and was given “back-breaking,” but much appreciated, work to do in house and garden, and **Yordanka Kalnakova**, who came and cleaned up the Mortuary building in readiness for the celebration of Saint Edward’s Day and the visit of the Bishops. God bless them both and others who have helped us.

VISITORS

PETER KEAT of Gosport, Hants, brought a group of eight members of the **Guild of the Servants of the Sanctuary** to see the church on Saturday, 25th August. They were given an explanation of the church, shown the exhibition room and provided with refreshments. Mr Keat is a railway enthusiast, and so had visited the cemetery previously, being interested in the old London Necropolis line.

CHEVALIER JOHN HARCOURT brought about eighteen members of the **Grand Priory of the Knights Templar of England and Wales** to visit the church on Saturday 15th September, the day before St Edward’s feast. They spent over an hour in the church and asked many questions, and showed a great interest in Orthodox belief and worship. The knights and dames were attending a retreat that weekend at **Saint Columba’s Convent in Woking**.

HALF A DOZEN members of the **Farnborough Walking Group** visited the church on 17th September, a Monday, and spent about 45 minutes with us.

MEDSTEAD WOMEN’S INSTITUTE visited us on Thursday 20th September, and spent about half an hour asking about the church and our Brotherhood.



PRACTICAL TIP

IN SPORT it is often in order to take the ball and run with it, but do not do this with temptations. Often, in any community, you will find people not dealing with their temptations about community life properly, and moaning or gossiping about whatever upsets them. If they do this, let it drop, or gently admonish them to deal with the temptation properly: by confessing it, by addressing the people responsible directly, or by realizing that the apparent misdemeanours of others only palely reflect greater wrongs committed by ourselves. But, in no circumstances, take up their complaint and spread it, because it is indeed a *complaint* - a sickness - and can be infectious.

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HALLOWEEN

THOSE OF YOU who have children should make sure that they do not take part in any way in Halloween celebrations. Nor, of course, should you do so yourselves. Even if such participation is regarded merely as fun, you should be aware that it is not wise to play with the evil powers. They can, and will, use any pretext to gain influence over us.

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“THE ONE THING is, brothers, we must be attentive and keep ourselves from sin in every one of our actions. For, as I have said many times before, every sinful action we take puts us once again under the power of the enemy, since of our own free will we cast ourselves down [before him] and enslave ourselves [to him]. For is it not a shameful thing and a great misery, if - after Christ has delivered us from hell through His Blood and after we have known this to be true - we go back again and cast ourselves into hell?”

ABBA DOROTHEOS OF GAZA, SIXTH CENTURY