



FROM THE FATHERS

“TO MEN that are just and upright, temptations become helps. Job, a man of discernment, was victorious in temptations. Sickness came upon him and he complained not; disease afflicted him and he murmured not; his body failed and his strength departed, but his will was not weakened. He proved perfect in all by sufferings, for as much as temptations crushed him not.”

VEN. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN, + 373 A.D.

“YOU may not be annoyed by insults or injuries or by trials and afflictions, but it is quite a different matter to be able to think well of it all, and another matter again to pray for all those who do such things to you.”

VEN. SIMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, + 1022 A.D.

“NOTHING, no temptation caused by men or spirits, or arising from fallen nature, should disturb him [the struggler for salvation]. Let faith in God Who is almighty, and to Whom he has surrendered himself for service, be the source of his poise and power. Cowardice and agitation are born of unbelief; but as soon as the ascetic has recourse to faith, cowardice and agitation vanish, like the darkness of night before the rising sun.”

SAINT IGNATIUS OF THE CAUCASUS, + 1867 A.D.

“LET us lift up our hearts - our soul and our mind strive upwards towards the Lord, but thoughts, temptations, and vanity surround us like wild beasts, and the wings which our spirit has raised drop.”

VEN. BARSANUPHIUS OF OPTINA, + 1913 A.D.



Don't Sell your Birthright for a Mess of Pottage!

ARCHBISHOP AVERKY
OF SYRACUSE AND HOLY TRINITY MONASTERY

*Ye are bought with a price;
be ye not made bondslaves of men*

(1 Cor. 7:23)

THE most great, and unprecedented in history, miracle of the Resurrection of Christ is, as we know, the foundation of the Christian faith, the head cornerstone of all Christianity. Regarding this, the great Apostle of the Nations, Paul, most resolutely bears witness: *If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain* (1 Cor. 15:14-17). For this reason it cannot but be regarded as supremely significant, and thus our Orthodox Church commemorates this glorious, important event, granting it alone the central place in the annual cycle of Divine services, and celebrating it as *the feast of feasts and festival of festivals*. All

those others, who still call themselves Christians, have long ago to a greater or lesser extent blurred the meaning of this feast. And there are some who through a kind of lack of reason or thoughtlessness still consider themselves Christians, but who have gone so far as to completely reject faith in the Resurrection of Christ, as having been an actual event with its place in history, and they put forward the concept that it is only allegorical.

For us, Orthodox Christians, who believe in the great truth of the Resurrection of Christ, and even to this day celebrate it festively, its celebration in the days that we are living through is especially beneficial, and it is indispensable that we remember that this greatest of events, which is manifestly the foundation of Christianity, was by means of bribery initially defamed by the Jews. See how this is recorded in the Gospel: *Some of the watch* (who had been stationed at the grave of Christ the Saviour) *came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day* (Matt. 28:11-15). And even though this calumny is ridiculous, it not only had currency in the time of the holy Apostle, who wrote this, but it lives on even in our days. And nowadays it is not only the Jews, but even others among the company of those who do not believe, who will, if you talk with them about Christ's Resurrection, repeat this thoughtless distortion of the truth. Such indeed is the power and the activity of corruption.

Ever since, as once Esau in the Old Testament sold his birthright to Jacob for the mess of pottage (Genesis 25:29-34), this shameful "trade" has not ceased in the world. Some with impure, vile purposes buy, and others sell their birthright, their honour and worthiness, their conscience, their convictions, for money or

for a fair share of earthly good things. In the history of mankind the most fearful example of this disgusting buying and selling was Judas's betrayal, his selling of his own Divine Teacher, the Son of God Himself, Who had come into the world for the salvation of man, - for thirty pieces of silver, selling Him to the chief priests and elders of the Jewish people, who were then possessed by pride, jealousy and malice.

History repeats itself, and many follow after these gloomy examples from the past, betraying, as did Judas, if not Christ the Lord Himself (for this is now impossible) then faith in Him, in His immaculate Bride, the Holy Church, and all that is holy and exalted by being linked to the true, Christian, Orthodox Faith. They surrender, either for money or for every kind of other corruptible worldly good, renouncing, just like Esau, their birthright, the high calling of being an Orthodox Christian so that they might satisfy the three fundamental sinful passions: *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life* (1 John 2:16). These people are genuinely the most unfortunate of the unfortunate and pathetic mercenary traders; they forget the Lord's fearful words of caution: *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* (Matt. 16:26).

Truly this is madness - for temporary good things, for the corruptible, to sell the good things that are eternal, incorruptible and heavenly.

But as the world sinks deeper and deeper into the abyss of the "apostasy," which was foretold in the word of God (2 Thess. 2:3), so less and less do people comprehend this or take it into consideration intelligently.

And, in particular, many Orthodox Russian people became as it were blinded in this regard, actually selling for a mess of pottage to the enemies of their Faith and their homeland their own birthright, and then found themselves, as a consequence of this, in exile with many sufferings, far from the borders of their native

country. And even here - alas, - not all, nor fully, did they recover their insight. Here some consciously and some unconsciously continued to trade with their Orthodox Christian inheritance, with their conscience, and with the spiritual riches common to us.

And here [in exile] how many emigré people constantly engaged in dirty deals with the misfortunate and displaced within the mass of Russians people of their own race! There were, of course, and we do not deny it, responsible and good people, who sincerely desired to help the deprived and those without a refuge, those who were often even starving among the Russian emigrants, but how many there were even in their midst who were fierce enemies of our Faith and homeland, enemies manifest and hidden, hypocritically hiding under the guise of kindheartedness and by way of showing outward aid to the oppressed only serving their own dark purposes.

Among such were representatives of the so-called heterodox, starting with the Roman Catholics and ending with the most extreme bearers of Protestant ideology; they were apparently all-powerful; the sectarians were many, among whom many had almost lost any link with Christianity and only through misunderstanding or, perhaps, even only by ill-intentioned design would call themselves Christians. We are not speaking of those pleasing occasions, which were not a few, when the heterodox were sincerely drawn to Orthodoxy, which now can be found everywhere; we are not speaking of the genuine friends of Orthodoxy, who unfortunately were often few (for it is necessary to ascend great spiritual heights to become in reality a friend of Orthodoxy, and naturally not many were capable of that), but we are speaking of the fearful spiritual dangers, which threatened the Orthodox Russian people from pretended "friends of Orthodoxy," who aspired, by showing material help and every kind of earthly good thing, to purchase the conscience of the people and thus to take them captive. In particular the evil enemies of Christ's faith, with a more or less apparent envy of that with which they were dealing, tried to win over the

pastors of our Church and those of the church activists who were more conspicuous and influential, so as to divert them from the service of Christ our Saviour and the work of the salvation of the people to themselves and to their own aims. And those aims were manifest.

The person who conducts a stubborn and age-long war with the True Faith and the Church of Christ, both openly and secretly trying to deflect the ministers of the true Church onto the path of apostasy from the Truth, and thereby put obstacles to the work of the salvation of the people, how is he not a *bona fide* enemy of God and of the salvation of man?

It is high time that we began to regard things soberly and not delude ourselves with things so contrary to the teaching of the word of God, with impossible daydreams of some sort of “progress,” with hopes of a radiant future for mankind here on earth. But it is necessary that we close our eyes to that which is going on in the world nowadays, and it is necessary that we believe and keenly attend to the definitive prophecies of the Word of God. Then it will become clear that an intensive work of preparation is going on in the world right now towards the necessary conditions for the reign of the Antichrist. And they who, in one way or another, are all enemies of Orthodoxy are taking an active part in this intensive work, whether they call themselves Christian, or even Orthodox, insofar as they only bear that name and are not responsive to its real inner disposition.

All the great pillars of our Church of Russia, - Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, Bishop Ignatius (Brianchaninov), Bishop Theophan the Recluse of Vyshen, the glorious Elders of Optina, and the Ever-Memorable Father John of Cronstadt, - often warned beforehand of all this. They repeatedly said: “We live in fearful times, apparently the last times,” and they indicated the fulfilling of the signs of the imminence of the Second Coming of Christ and of the last Dread Judgment of God.

Those serving the coming Antichrist, preparing for his temporary triumph in the world, are hastening, if possible, to acquire for themselves more souls of men, striving, *if it were possible, to deceive the very elect* (Matt. 24:24). And these, their efforts, as we have just seen, are not without success. Their work has been made easier on account of the fact that, as the remarkable prophecy of Saint Niphon of Constantinople puts it, “they occupy the priestly thrones throughout the whole world.” In this last epoch of the world’s existence, people will generally be lacking expertise and will not know the art of being virtuous ... all will be thrown down by satisfying their bellies and by vainglory ... love of money will reign then ... and many will fall into the abyss, having travelled in the expanses of the broad and spacious way (see Saints Barsanouphius the Great and John: *Guidance to the Spiritual Life*).

Therefore we need take greater care in every circumstance, when we are offered, whether openly or not, any material aid. We must maintain strict vigilance, and decisively reject any such help which might compromise us, deprive us of our spiritual freedom or make us captive to the enemies of Holy Orthodoxy. We should bear in mind that nowadays it is rare for anyone to offer aid completely disinterestedly, without proposing certain conditions, whether they be manifest or hidden. And even if any such conditions are not set out formally, they inevitably nearly always involve some interior commitment. The person who receives the help feels himself beholden to his benefactor, and then he is no longer completely free: he is bound by the natural psychological feeling of gratitude to him, who has shown him help.

The sorrowful actualities of such a spiritual enslavement are evident: there are our church schisms, engineered to suit the purported “friends of Orthodoxy,” the constant disorders here and there, disagreements in individual parishes, individual people going off, bartering Orthodoxy, with some transferring to the Roman Catholic “Eastern Rite,” others to the Baptists or to some other sect, and so on. The error is to assume that all this only results

from opinions concerning basic assumptions, or from arguments and convictions about basic assumptions. To a remarkable degree all this is in no way connected with ideological inducements, but only to the “filthy lucre,” which in circumstances of need is given out generously by the “unmercenary benefactors.”

If we seriously consider and weigh everything up, observing this we conclude that these are the last days, which itself leads to the conclusion that the most prudent and safest course for us, the Orthodox, is, of course, to build up, both personally and in our life as communities, our church life, through our own strengths and means, relying not on the help of man, represented by the various heterodox and other sorts of organizations, which are dubious on account of their spiritual affiliations, but rather to rely only on God’s help, which is never late in coming in such cases. Our most important sin is that we now place too much trust in people and too little in God, if we trust in Him at all. Therefore we do not deserve God’s help.

And we may always have recourse to this all-powerful aid from God, if rather than setting material aims and the satisfaction of the passions of pleasure and love of money as of paramount importance in our life, we have only faithfulness to the true Church of Christ, guarding ourselves from the enticements of the servants of the Antichrist. There lies upon every one of the faithful a holy yet joyous responsibility, morally and materially to support and further the survival of their church, and they must only with the greatest caution turn for help to those outside. And that we are for the most part poor, and our abilities limited, is not something to fear. It is better to achieve something modest and small, with the pennies that we have ourselves laboured for, than to expose ourselves to the risk of betraying the true Church, by employing aid that binds us to organizations spiritually inimical to us.

Therefore, brethren, prize your spiritual freedom, and do not sell your birthright for the “mess of pottage” of corruptible earthly good things.

Translator's Note: *This piece was published in the nineteen-fifties, a period when, after the Second World War, tens of thousands of Russians were displaced persons and migrants, in much the same situation as peoples (of other faiths) find themselves in today. It appears primarily to be addressed to church organizations, and the pitfalls that they then faced and often fell into. However, it has relevance for each and every individual Orthodox Christian. How many have set their hearts on worldly advancement and gain and lost their Faith, or have involved themselves in personal relationships which alienate them from the one "personal relationship" which is of paramount importance, not only in this life but also in the next, - that with Christ, which can only be maintained in His Holy Church? Many who call themselves Orthodox Christians live as if they have no concept at all that the Orthodox are the New Israel, the Chosen People of the Lord; as if they had no idea that they have a birthright which is more precious than anything that the world can offer. And thus, they lightly forfeit it. One cannot altogether blame them, - many have never been properly instructed in the Faith, or they have been taught that their Faith is one of numerous "denominations," or that it is simply part of an ethnic heritage, and they have no concept that those who have received the One Baptism proclaimed in the Creed, the Baptism imparted only within the Orthodox Church, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, have "put on Christ" and are His.*



“THE GRACE of the Holy Spirit is given to everyone with the understanding that there is to be an augmenting and increase of what is received. It is necessary for the soul that has been born again [baptized] by the power of God to be nurtured by the Spirit in proportion to its age or intelligibility, refreshed by the water of virtue and the abundance of Grace.”

SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA, + 394 A.D.

The Holy New Hieromartyr Joseph of Desphina

(† July 22, 1944, Old Style)

FOLLOWING a decision, in September of 2014, by the Synod of Bishops of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece to enter his name into the catalogue of Saints, the official Proclamation of the sanctity of the Holy New Hieromartyr Joseph of Desphina, as well as the first liturgical commemoration in his honour, took place on Monday, 3rd August, and Tuesday, 4th August, 2015 (according to the Civil or New Calendar), at the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Daphne (Athens), Greece. Presiding at the Vespers Service, on Monday, and the Matins and Divine Liturgy, on Tuesday, was His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens, President of the Holy Synod, with four Hierarchs, with four Presbyters, and with two Deacons concelebrating. A large number of clergy, monastics, and faithful were also present for the historic event.

St Joseph the New Martyr was born Ioannes (John) Antoniou, in 1900, in the small town of Desphina in central Greece, where he was reared by pious parents in a traditional Orthodox manner. At a young age, he was tonsured a monk, and in 1925 was ordained to the Priesthood. In 1935, having rejected the calendar reform in the State Church of Greece, he joined the Old Calendar struggle. In the same year, he was deposed by the New Calendarist State Church for “Old Calendarism,” and a year later he organized a huge public celebration of the Blessing of the Waters, at the central port of Karystos on the island of Euboea, gathering the Old Calendarist communities in his region that had rejected the calendar innovation. At this celebration, he strongly condemned the calendar innovation and the departure of the State Church of Greece from Holy Tradition.

Eventually, in 1938, in retaliation for his faithful protest, he was arrested and jailed, stripped of his clerical dress, and forcibly shaved by the police authorities at the behest of the State Church. This sort of barbaric and technically illegal action was taken against the Old Calendarist clergy throughout Greece, much to the shame of the ecclesiastical administration of the “official” Church and the secular agencies at its disposal as a branch of the civil structure.

Father Joseph was highly regarded among the Greek clergy and faithful as a man of strict fasting, high moral accomplishment, and self-sacrifice. He was a tireless celebrant of the Divine services and was constantly available to the faithful and to all who needed his spiritual counsel and guidance. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, when a large part of Greece either belonged to Old Calendarist communities or sympathized with their commitment to Church tradition, there was deep public respect for the traditionalist heroes, and thus St. Joseph was held in high esteem for his spiritual virtues and prophetic gifts. Indeed, during the occupation of Greece by Nazi Germany, when he was serving in the mountain villages near Corinth, he shared what food and basics of life he had with his fellow citizens, many of whom were close to starvation in the last two years of the occupation.

In 1944, with the defeat of the Axis Powers and the growth of the communist insurgency, St Joseph, who had remained silent about the Communists and their ideology, as long as they were helping to defend the Greek nation against the Nazi invaders, began to speak openly against the communist insurgents. Their violent actions against their fellow Greeks, including clergy, teachers, and innocent civilians who opposed their ideology, he openly condemned. He also condemned and abhorred their militant atheism. Indeed, he boldly called the communists to repentance for their crimes and for their faithlessness. As a result, the communists, in their anger, sentenced him to death. They subsequently arrested him, tortured him, and slaughtered him, as they did many Priests during the Greek Civil War. After his murder, they hastily buried his remains in Panariti, a small village in the region of Corinth. It

was said that a light was seen from afar for a number of nights over the area where he was martyred.

The precise location of the holy Martyr Joseph's Relics was discovered in a very curious way, after the liberation, when his donkey, in the company of those seeking his burial place, stopped at a certain point and began scratching with his front hooves in the earth. Indeed, when the place where the animal indicated was excavated, the remains of the Martyr were found. They were identified by his monastic belt. The Relics also gave off a fragrant scent. Those fragrant Relics, along with the Saint's Icon, painted at the Holy Monastery of Sts Cyprian and Justina in Fili, Greece, were available for veneration by those present at the Proclamation of the Martyr's sanctity by the Holy Synod of our Church.

May the Holy Hieromartyr Joseph, pray for us.

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Teaching on the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church

BY ARCHPRIEST ALEXANDER RUDAKOV

PUBLISHED IN 1890 IN SAINT PETERSBURG

Note: In what follows we have substantially expanded on Fr Alexander's original text to make things clearer for contemporary readers.

The Liturgy of the Faithful

§ 64. Teaching on the Liturgy of the Faithful and the principal rites in it. The third part of the Liturgy is called the Liturgy of the Faithful, because, during its celebration **only the faithful** - that is the baptized, those who have not apostatized from the Church or have been separated from communion, - are permitted to attend.

It consists of: 1) the completion of the preparation of Gifts and of the faithful for the Mystical Sacrifice; 2) the celebration of the Mystery itself and the commemoration during it of the members of the Church; 3) the preparation of the faithful for Communion, and their partaking thereof; 4) thanksgiving for Communion, distribution of the *antidoron* and the blessing to leave the church.

§ 65. The completion of the preparation of Gifts and of the faithful for the Mystical Sacrifice. This section of the service begins with two Little Litanies, the first of which begins: *As many as are of the faithful: again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord*, and before the final exclamation by the priest on both litanies, the deacon exclaims, *Wisdom!*, to draw our attention to the importance of the ensuing sacred rites.

During these litanies, if it has not already been done, the *antimension* is opened, so that the prepared gifts may be placed upon it when they are transferred from the table of preparation to the Holy Table. The priest also reads a prayer silently during each litany, that the Lord will deem him worthy to offer the prayers and the bloodless sacrifice, and that the faithful be deemed worthy to partake of the Holy Mysteries without condemnation. After these litanies, the Royal Gates are opened, and the chanters chant the Cherubim Hymn, which was introduced into the service by the Byzantine Emperor Justin II. It runs: *Let us who mystically portray the Cherubim, and chant the thrice-holy hymn unto the life-creating Trinity, lay aside all earthly care, that we may receive the King of all, escorted invisibly by the angelic orders. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.*

On Great Thursday, at the Liturgy of St Basil the Great, in place of this the following hymn is chanted: *Of Thy Mystic Supper, O Son of God, receive me today as a communicant; for I will not speak of the Mystery to Thine enemies; nor will I give Thee a kiss as did Judas; but like the thief do I confess Thee: Remember me, O Lord, in Thy kingdom.*

On the Great Sabbath, we have: *Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and stand with fear and trembling; and let it take no thought for anything earthly. For the King of kings and Lord of lords draweth nigh to be sacrificed and given as food for the faithful. Before Him go choirs of Angels with all the Principalities and Powers, the many-eyed Cherubim and six-winged Seraphim, which cover their faces as they sing: Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.*

During the chanting, the priest reads the secret prayer, asking that he be permitted to offer the prepared gifts, and the deacon censures the church; they then approach the table of preparation. There the priest takes the *aer* from the gifts and places it on the shoulders of the deacon. He also gives him the diskos (paten) which the deacon holds above his head. The priest himself takes the chalice, and preceded by a candle-bearer, they leave the sanctuary by the north door, and process into the middle of the church (or in some usages, only to the centre of the ambon), before returning to the sanctuary through the Royal Gates so that the gifts may be placed upon the Holy Table, for it is only there that the sacrifice may be offered unto God.

The hymn which the chanters are singing is in fact broken off at the half-way point, as the priest and deacon make this procession, and they make intercessions for the Bishops, for those who are struggling and contesting for the Holy Faith, for those who are particularly celebrating that day, for the faithful departed, for the founders and benefactors of the church, and for all the faithful. Each petition in this prayer ends with the words, ... *may the Lord God remember in His Kingdom, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.* To which the chanters respond with the *Amen*. These petitions manifest for whom the Liturgy is being offered, and show that it is indeed offered for *all of us, pious and Orthodox Christians*.

Seeing the King of all, represented by the small Lamb borne on the diskos and, as it were, solemnly carried as a sacrifice

unto God, the thoughts of the Christians always turn to that time in the earthly life of Jesus Christ, when He went up to Jerusalem, anticipating the Passion and death, amid loud exclamations, *Hosanna to the Son of David!* When also, the multitude of people escorting Him strewed the path before Him with their clothes and with branches of dates and palms.

When they reach the Holy Table, the priest places the diskos and chalice on the opened *antimension*, and takes the *aer*, and with it covers them both. Then he censes the gifts that have been offered. It is during this that the chanters sing the second part of the Cherubim Hymn, which had been interrupted by the solemn procession of the sacred ministers. After the Great Entrance, as this procession is called, the Church begins to prepare the faithful to offer the bloodless sacrifice.

.... to be continued in the next issue.



THE COMING MONTH

ON the first day of the month we have the feast of the **Protection of the Mother of God**, but along with it we also commemorate the **Holy Apostle Ananias** who baptized St Paul (Acts 9:10-19) and two of the Church's most renowned chanters.

St Romanos the Melodist or Sweet-Singer was born in Syria in the fifth century. His parents were neither rich nor renowned, but they were good Christians and loving parents. Romanos grew up with love for God in his heart. He wanted to serve God to the best of his ability, prayed a great deal; and was assiduous in attending Divine services. He lit the vigil lights with great reverence for he loved the saints before whose icons they burned. Most of all he loved the church choir and always rejoiced when blessed to chant. At some point he moved to the Imperial City and the Patri-

arch saw how devoted he was to his service in church. In time he made Romanos one of the official readers and singers of the Great Church in Constantinople. The more senior singers were disturbed by this, being proud of their voices and of their ability to compose hymns, and they resented that an inexperienced newcomer like Romanos was chanting with them. The services for the Saviour's Nativity were celebrated very solemnly, for the Emperor and his court attended, and the Patriarch officiated. When the time came for a singer to come out and chant his Christmas hymn, the jealous readers suddenly pushed Romanos to the centre of the Cathedral. "If you are good enough to be a chanter," they said teasingly, "Go out now and do as we do - sing a composition of your own." Romanos was too inexperienced to try, and hid himself. At the end of the service, he remained alone and prayed to the Mother of God for help. Late that night he fell asleep and the All-holy Theotokos appeared to him. She held in her hand a small scroll and said very gently, "Open your lips." She then placed the scroll in his mouth and told Romanos to swallow it. Romanos obeyed and immediately awoke, full of great joy with his mind full of the beautiful and sacred words, miraculously revealed to him. At the morning service, no longer afraid, he stepped out to chant and thus gave us the Contakion for the Nativity that we sing in our churches to this day: *Today the Virgin giveth birth to Him Who is transcendent in essence; and the earth offereth a cave to Him Who is unapproachable. Angels with shepherds give glory; with a star, the Magi do journey; for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.* Saint Romanos is usually depicted on the icon of the Protection, vested as a deacon and holding a scroll with this hymn on it. He used his gift gratefully the rest of his life, and developed his God-given talent composing many beautiful hymns, and many of his compositions are used to this day in our services.

Another Saint for chanters celebrates on the same day: **St John Kukuzelis** was born in Dyrrachium and orphaned in his youth. Possessing a very beautiful voice, he entered the palace

school in Constantinople, where because of his gifts, he gained the favour of Emperor John Comnenus, and became the principal singer at the court. However, the delights of the imperial court weighed heavily upon this youth, whose love was for God. Not wanting to remain among its pleasures and excesses, and wanting to avoid the marriage which was being arranged for him by the Emperor, John began to seek out means to flee and serve the Heavenly King. He met an Athonite elder and received his blessing to return with him to the Holy Mountain. There he was received, tonsured, and given the obedience of shepherding the monastery's flocks. Departing with the flocks to the remote deserts of the Holy Mountain, the youth was able unhindered to give himself over to prayer, to contemplation of God, and to chanting of divine hymns. The angelic beauty of his voice even enchanted the animals, who gathered around their shepherd and, as if entranced, stood listening to him. In his humility and modesty, the young singer had not revealed his gift to his monastic brethren. However, in time his gift was noticed. John admitted that he had been a singer at the court and had fled, and tearfully implored his abbot to allow him to remain in his obedience as a shepherd. Fearing that this might come to the ears of the Emperor and gain his disfavour. The abbot petitioned the Emperor not to impede the young monk from following the salvific path which he had chosen. Thereafter the Saint was able to chant in the monastery catholicon on all the Sundays and other festal days. Because of his chanting, the saint was made worthy to receive the great grace of the Mother of God herself. Once, when after an akathist before the icon of the Theotokos, St. John had fallen asleep, the Mother of God herself appeared to him, and said "Chant, and do not ever stop chanting; in return, I will never leave thee." At these words, she placed a gold coin into John's hand, and then disappeared. That coin was suspended before the icon, and since then, miracles have been worked through the icon with the coin, which remains in the Great Lavra. The Mother of God appeared again to St John, and healed him of an ailment of the legs which had been

brought on by his prolonged standing in church. St. John spent the remainder of his days in ascetic struggles. Foreseeing his end, he bade farewell to the brethren, and directed that he be buried in the Church of the Archangels which he had founded. St John Kukuze-
lis, like St Romanos, is venerated by those who chant in church as their special protector.



POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

“I READ in one of the editions of “The Shepherd” that Orthodox should not pray with non-Orthodox. This was rather distressing for me to note as I attend a church which would be considered as Anglo Catholic and therefore part of the mainstream Christian Church.

The second point is that I was rather upset to find that when X and I last attended Brookwood, he was, albeit very kindly by Fr Niphon, directed that he could not receive Holy Communion with you. This appeared to be due to matters related to his normally attended Orthodox church being “out of communion” with Brookwood. He accepted this with good grace even though this did seem to be a rather potentially splitting or schismatic move.

I would very much appreciate it if you could enlighten me on these two matters in particular as this may help to sort these issues in my mind.” J.H.S., Surrey.

MANY thanks for your message. I will try and answer. The Orthodox Christians have no concept of mainstream Christianity. For us there is, and always has been, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of the Creed, and those who have separated from her. Lest Church members be led astray, from the earliest days we have been instructed by our Fathers in the Faith not to worship with those who are separated. This is simply the teaching we follow.

With regard to X not being allowed Communion, there is indeed a split within Orthodoxy and sadly one that is growing wider, which is why we have placed ourselves under Traditionalist hierarchs. The split, however, was initiated not by the Traditionalists but by those who have innovated, and allowed such things as joint prayers with non-Orthodox, accepting their sacraments, liturgical innovation, neglect of the fasts and the like. Our position, in the words of the Fathers, is to wall ourselves off from such changes, both to defend ourselves and our people and to bear witness to those who are being led into innovations that this is wrong.

Orthodox Tradition is something like a tapestry; if one starts pulling at the threads, gradually you destroy its beauty. I hope this helps you a little. May God bless it to do so.



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

THREE BAPTISMS AT BROOKWOOD

George, the infant son of **Teodor and Elena Iacob** from Wembley was baptized at Saint Edward's Church on Saturday 30th August / 12th September, the anniversary of the consecration of our church. **His Grace, Bishop Sofronie of Suceava** was the celebrant of the Mysterion, and the Godparents are **Constantin and Roxana Oanea**. The newly illumined is named for the Great Martyr George (feast day: 23rd April / 6th May).

Andrei, the infant son of **Nicolae and Juliana Ursache** of Hemel Hempstead, was baptized on the same day immediate-

ly after George's Baptism. He is named for the Holy First-Called Apostle Andrew (feast day: 30th November / 13th December), and Bishop Sofronie was again the celebrant. **Ecaterina Rogojina** is his Godmother. After the two services, light refreshments were offered to all the participants in the Old Mortuary.

Maria, daughter of **Pavel and Ana Marie Amarie** was born at Hillingdon Hospital and was attended there for the first-day prayers and later at her family home in Hayes, Middlesex, for the eighth-day naming prayers by the Brotherhood clergy. She was baptized at Brookwood on 6th / 19th September, and **Father Ioan Onofrei from Rădășeni** celebrated the Mysterion. **Victor and Mihaela Luca** are Maria's Godparents and she is named for the Theotokos. Again refreshments were offered to all the participants after the service in church.

On the next day, Fr Ioan celebrated the Divine Liturgy with our four clergymen at Saint Edward Brotherhood, and at the end of the service he gave a sermon in Romanian for the many Romanian speakers who attended on that day. We were unable to accommodate everyone in the Old Mortuary for the Parish Breakfast, but the weather was fine and Fr Ioan and his Preoteasa were able to join the parishioners eating outside in the sunshine. On the next day, the Great Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, Fr Ioan volunteered to serve at the Convent, helping to avoid unnecessary journeys for our clergy during the Monday morning traffic.

WEDDING AT BROOKWOOD

ON Sunday, 31st August / 13th September, the feast of the Deposition of the Cincture of the All-Holy Theotokos, **Bishop Sofronie** celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Saint Edward's Church, assisted by **Fr Stephen Fretwell, Fr Borislav Popov** and **Fr Hierodeacon Sabbas**. (Fr Alexis was appointed to serve at the Convent on that day.) Immediately after the service the Bishop celebrated the marriage of **Daniel Isachi** and **Cristina Andrici**.

The Bridegroom's family, who belong to the Traditionalist Church of Romania, had flown in specially from Italy for the celebration. Cristina had been recently baptized, being a convert from Roman Catholicism. After the Mysterion, very appropriately the couple celebrated their Wedding Breakfast in the Old Mortuary. May God grant them *Many Years* and His blessings throughout their married life together.

SAINT EDWARD'S DAY

THIS YEAR, we were blessed to have two Bishops here for Saint Edward's Day. His Grace, **Bishop Ambrose of Methoni** paid a flying visit to the country to be with us on the occasion, and learning that the feast was celebrated a few days after his planned weekend visit to England (see above), **Bishop Sofronie** changed his plans and stayed over for the celebration. At the Vigil for the Saint, our congregation was joined by a number of people from the **Russian Orthodox Cathedral at Ennismore Gardens, London**. On the day of the feast, the two Hierarchs concelebrated assisted by our clergy, and Bishop Ambrose preached the sermon. We were also joined for the occasion by **Mother Vikentia** and **Mother Ioanna** from the **Convent of the Annunciation**. They were kindly chauffeured to us by **Baroness Anne von Bennigsen**. Volunteers provided an ample Parish Breakfast for the unexpectedly large number of people who attended on a weekday. Bishop Sofronie who, along with Bishop Ambrose, had stayed at the Brotherhood overnight, had to leave immediately after the meal, but Bishop Ambrose stayed with us through the day and was taken to Heathrow by the Brotherhood members for a flight to Russia early the next morning. We thank them both for their pastoral love and care for our small community, and we thank all who contributed to the feast by helping with the chanting, reading, preparation of the vestments, cleaning, decorating, providing foods and the less romantic job of clearing up afterwards.

Matushka Sarah Skinner, the wife of **Archpriest Joseph** of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral in London kindly wrote to tell us that the service to Saint Edward had been chanted at the Cathedral along with that of St Anthimus. Our thanks to her and to the parishioners there who show love towards our Saint. May his prayers bring them blessings.

GIFT OF A RELIC

WHEN he visited in September, **His Grace, Bishop Sofronie of Suceava** generously brought us a relic of **Saint Glicherie the New Confessor of Romania**, much of whose life has been published in English in the book, ***Resisting unto Blood***. This book was written by **Constantin Bujor**, and has a preface by **His Eminence Metropolitan Vlasie**, and is published by the **Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies**, Etna, ISBN 0-911165-53-3. We have placed the relic in a specially purchased and engraved casket, and venerate it in our church.

RESTORATION WORK

VISITORS to the church may have recently noticed a rather unpleasant smell in the narthex. Only in the last few days did we discover that it was caused by water leakage from the tank in the ecclesiarch's room. The water had seeped unnoticed under the lino, and rotted part of the floor and damaged the bottom of one wall. We have had the tank replaced, and **Ioan Turcu** and **Teodor Claudiu Ciupercovici** came in at a day's notice to repair the damaged floor and wall, and they also replaced the sink unit there which has been showing signs of wear and tear. Two days later they were joined by **Daniel Ciupercovici**. God bless the three of them for showing their ready help and for their hard work.

NEWLY PAINTED ICONS ARRIVE

THREE ICONS commissioned from the **Convent of Saint Elizabeth in Etna, California**, have now arrived at Saint Edward's. The hand-painted icons are of the **Protection of the All-holy Mother of God**, of the **Forty Martyrs of Sebaste**, and of **Saint Elizabeth of Russia with St Edward the Martyr**. This last we had painted because when our church was consecrated, relics of these two Saints were deposited with those of the **Holy Martyrs of Prevlaka** under the Holy Table. We already have an icon of the Prevlaka Martyrs and so now have one of the other Saints whose relics are deposited there. All three of the new icons have been photographed by **MRM Studios in Aldershot**, and they are presently being framed by **Easels of Chobham**.

VISITORS

ON Monday, 7th September, **Jenny Graveson** brought **Muhammed Habib** to visit the church and exhibition room. Mr Habib attends the **Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking** and has recently been instrumental in raising £5,000 for the migrant crisis in Europe, which will be given to help both Muslim and non-Muslim refugees in need. We gave him a copy of the book on Mount Sinai, but he declined refreshments as he visited us on a Muslim fast day. In this he set an example to many of our people! Later in the week, two other Muslim visitors came; they were railway enthusiasts and had come to see the site of the old South Station, on which our house is now built.

ON Sunday, 13th September, **Dr Robert Finlay** brought a group of about thirty visitors from the **Gay Outdoor Club** to see the church. They had walked from Byfleet along the Basingstoke Canal, and then through the cemetery to the church. They spent some time with us asking about the icons, our Faith and our worship. They later posted a report and photos on their website.

ON Saturday, 19th September, a walking group of about twenty-six people unexpectedly turned up at the Brotherhood, and requested to see the church and be told something about it.

ON Monday, 28th September, two people from Israel who attend the Russian Church in Tel Aviv, **Michael and Lubov**, asked to visit the church, and they chanted hymns before the sacred relics of St Edward. They were making a tour of the holy places in England, and Lubov told us that she was a convert to Orthodoxy from Judaism.



PRACTICAL TIP

REMEMBER, as followers of Christ, to avoid all participation in the celebration of Halloween, and to forbid your children from doing so. Many are duped into thinking that dressing as ghouls and demons is harmless fun, but this is a celebration of the evil powers, and is spiritually far from harmless. Just as anyone with an iota of sense would not play with a tiger or allow their children to do so, so no one should play with those more deadly than any tiger. Our path as Orthodox Christians is to emulate the saints, and not those who are at enmity with our Saviour.



O All-Immaculate Lady, wither and pull up by the roots the thorny deliberations of my heart; and by thy mediation, make it fruitful, O all-blameless Virgin.