



FROM THE FATHERS

“IF WE ALSO, beloved brethren, are in Christ; if we put Him on, if He is the way of our salvation who follow Christ in the footsteps of salvation, let us walk by the example of Christ, as the Apostle John instructs us, saying, *He who saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself also to walk even as He walked*” (1 Jn 2:6).

HOLY Hieromartyr Cyprian of Carthage, +258 A.D.

“ACCORDINGLY as each here on earth purifies his eye for Him, so does he become more able to behold His incomparable glory; accordingly as each here on earth opens his ear to Him, so does he become more able to grasp His wisdom; accordingly as each here on earth prepares a receptacle for Him, so is he enabled to carry a small portion of His riches.”

VEN. Ephraim the Syrian, +373 A.D.

“LET US FLEE from the deceit of life and its supposed happiness and run to Christ alone, Who is the Saviour of souls. Him let us endeavour to find Who is everywhere present, and when we have found Him let us hold Him fast and fall at His feet, and embrace them in the fervour of our souls.”

VEN. Symeon the New Theologian, +1022 A.D.

THE ENTRY OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE

PROTOPRESBYTER PANAGIOTES CARRAS

A PRIEST OF THE METROPOLIS OF TORONTO
OF THE TRUE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GREECE

THE *oikonomia* of our salvation began with the very creation of the world. It is not by chance that the fourth Gospel does not commence with a genealogy of our Lord but takes us back to the very beginning. All things from the beginning to the end, from the alpha to the omega are part of God's *oikonomia* for our salvation, God's providential ordering of our salvation. Man was created that he may participate in the Divinity of his Creator by first participating in his own perfection. We are taught by the Fathers that man was created for perfection. Adam was offered perfection but fell victim to the guile of the serpent. God's plan could not be frustrated and the Lord prepared the world for another Adam who would rescue the offspring of the first Adam.

St. Paul tells us that Adam is *a type of the future Adam* (Rom. 5:14). All Christians are descendants of both the first Adam and the *last Adam*. From the first we inherited death, from the last we inherited life. (1 Cor. 15:45-50). It is this Apostolic teaching of the two Adams which was developed by the Fathers and formed the nucleus of the Church's teaching on the salvation of mankind.

Mankind, which had its beginning in the first Adam, had to be given a new beginning. A new Adam was needed to become the Head of the New Humanity, *the Head of the body, the Church, which is His body* (Eph. 1:22-23). However, just as in the creation of the old humanity, mankind was given the freedom to choose sonship; similarly in the creation of the New Humanity, mankind was granted the opportunity to choose. The first Adam *was from*

the earth, a man of dust, the second is from Heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). The first could choose sin because he was not yet perfect, the second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, being God by nature, was totally alien to sin. It is because God's *oikonomia* required a member of the human race who was able to prove himself free from every sin that *the time had fully come* (Gal. 4:4) for God to send forth His Son, since mankind was able to bring forth the All-Holy Virgin.

This is precisely why *Theotokos* is the key-word of the Christological teaching of the Fourth Œcumenical Council or as St. John of Damascus says, *This name contains the whole mystery of the Oikonomia* (On the Orthodox Faith, 3, 12). It is for this reason that the traditional Orthodox icon of the Mother of God is an icon of the Incarnation: the Virgin is always with the Child.

The Church's teaching of the Theotokos is an extension of what is believed concerning the person of Christ. The Son of God was born of a woman and in this case the Mother is not just a mere physical instrument but an active participant who has *found favour with God* (Luke 1:30). The faith of the Church is aptly expressed in the words of Nicholas Cabasilas in his *Homily on the Annunciation: The incarnation was not only the work of the Father and of His Power and His Spirit, it was also the work of the will and the faith of the Virgin* (On the Annunciation, 4).

It is the teaching of the Church, attested to from the earliest date, that the Virgin Mother of the Incarnate Lord had *found favour with God* (Luke 1:30) and that she was chosen and ordained to participate in the Mystery of the Incarnation, in the *Oikonomia* of Salvation. The ancient Church understood the typological relationship between the first Adam and the last Adam, and by extension it was able to see that the first Eve prefigured the second Eve. We find that as early as the Second Century St. Justin and St. Irenaeus had a developed teaching of the Theotokos as the second Eve who through her obedience remedied the disobedience of the first Eve. *And so the knot of Eve's disobedience received its unloosing through the obedience of Mary; for what Eve, a*

virgin, bound by unbelief, that, Mary, a Virgin, unloosed by faith (Against Heresies, III, 22, 4). *Mary... by yielding obedience, became the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race.* (Against Heresies, III, 22, 4); *Mary alone cooperating with the economy* (Against Heresies, III, 21, 7).

The Church has proclaimed this great Mystery of our salvation not only through the teaching of the Fathers but also through the festal celebration of the acts which worked our salvation, chief of which is the Holy Resurrection of our Lord. On the 21st of November the Church celebrates the *Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple*. It is at this time that the faithful chant, *Today is the prelude of God's good-will and the heralding of the salvation of mankind.* (Dismissal Hymn).

Throughout the whole service the hymns proclaim the exalted place which the *Entry* has in the history of Salvation. The *Entry* marks the closing of the Old Covenant, whereas the Annunciation marks the beginning of the New. With the *Entry* the most Holy Virgin is passing from the Old Covenant to the New, and this transition in the person of the Mother of God shows us how the New Covenant is the fulfilment of the Old.

Like other human beings, the Holy Virgin was born under the law of original sin but the sinful heritage of the fall had no mastery over her. She was without sin under the universal sovereignty of sin, pure from every seduction and yet part of a humanity enslaved by the devil. This is the victory which the *Feast of the Entry* joyfully celebrates. St. Photius praises the Holy Virgin as the *great and God-carved ornament of humankind who made her whole soul a holy shrine of meekness... never allowing any of her wares as much as to touch for a moment the brine of evil* (On the Annunciation, 4). This theme constantly appears in the hymns of the *Feast of the Entry*. *Thy Miracle, O pure Theotokos, transcendeth the power of words; for I comprehend that thine is a body transcending description, not receptive to the flow of sin* (Third Magnification of the Ninth Ode). Nicholas Cabasilas ex-

panded this teaching and dealt with it extensively in his *Homily on the Birth of the Theotokos*, where we read: *The Virgin remained from the beginning to the end free from every evil because of her vigilant attention, firm will, and magnitude of wisdom.* (Ch. 15).

The sinlessness and purity of the Theotokos along with the fact that the Lord was preparing Her to become His chamber overshadowed the sanctity of the Old Testament temple. The All-Pure Virgin is allowed to enter the Holy of Holies precisely because she is to become the living temple of God. St. Tarasios in his *Homily of the Entry* has Saint Anne exclaiming: *Receive Zacharias, the pure tabernacle; receive, O priest, the immaculate chamber of the Word ... have her dwell in the temple made by hands, she who has become a living temple of the Word* (Migne, 98:1489). Zacharias in turn speaks to the Virgin, *Thou art the loosing of the curse of Adam, thou art the payment of the debt of Eve*, and he continues to recall all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament which refer to the Theotokos (Migne, 98:1492-93).

In the *Minea* of St. Dimitry of Rostov we read, *Thus with the honour and glory not only of men, but also of angels, the most Immaculate Maiden was led into the Temple of the Lord. And it was meet: for if the ark of the Old Testament, bearing manna in itself, which served only as a prototype of the Most Holy Virgin, was carried into the Temple with great honour, with the assembling of all Israel, then with how much greater honour, with the assembling of angels and men, had to take place the entry into the Temple of that same living ark, which had manna - Christ - in it, the Most Blessed Virgin, foreordained to be the Mother of God.*

The *Feast of the Entry* celebrates the sanctity of the All-Holy Virgin and glorifies the Lord who placed her *in the inaccessible Holies like some treasure of God's, to be used in due time (even as came to pass) for the enrichment of, and as an ornament transcending, as well as common to, all the world* (St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily on the Entry*, IX).

Taken from the orthodoxyinfo.org website.

A SIMPLE & EDIFYING EXTRACT

FROM THE SYNODAL INSTRUCTION: “THE ECCLESIASTICAL UNION OF THE ORTHODOX COMMUNITY IN RESISTANCE WITH THE CHURCH OF THE TRUE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS OF GREECE: OBJECTIONS, CONCERNS, & THEIR RESOLUTION”

... A STRIKING and Grace-filled contemporary discourse by a now deceased Presbyterian, from among our Matthewite brethren, renders more accessible the view that we have been articulating:

“When I was younger and lived abroad, some modernist ecumenists asked the following question in order to ensnare me:

“Do we have Mysteries or not?”

“I replied: ‘Are you literate?’

“Yes, we are literate.’

“Do you know the Canons and the Tradition of the Church?”

“Yes, we do know them.’

“Then this is what I have to say to you: Although I am a sinner, since the Grace of God has safeguarded me from becoming separated from the Truth of Christ and from deviating to the right or to the left, I know that I have Mysteries. As for you who have changed course, since you are literate, read what the Canons and the Tradition of the Church say about your case and draw your own conclusions.’

“I am of the opinion that it is neither expedient nor prudent for True Orthodox Christians to quarrel among themselves and to be concerned about the Mysteries or non-Mysteries of the New Calendarists. The Apostle says: ‘For what have I to do with judging them that are without?... Them that are without God judgeth’ (1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

“Since we have commended them to the mercy of God, He knows whether He will show them forbearance, how He will show them forbearance, and to what extent He will forbear with them. We are not dispensers of God’s mercy. We have an obligation, since we regard every innovation as a suggestion of the Devil, not to violate the ‘Faith handed down to us’ in even one jot or tittle.

“Our priority, therefore, is that we continue the good beginning that we have made, that all of us True Orthodox Christians in general be united under a single Orthodox Confession, with which we will be consistent, following a common course, and that thereafter we convene a Pan-Orthodox Synod, which will be the official mouthpiece of the Church and will issue official determinations concerning those who have deviated and have become estranged from the Faith of the Fathers.

“Until such a time, however, we cannot have any communion in the Mysteries or in prayer with them, thereby becoming ‘sharers in the sins of others,’ but must confess that we reject and abhor their calendar innovation, their ecumenism, and their new-fangled form of Baptism, or rather, affusion.

“From the little that I know, I think that this is how the Fathers acted toward heretics. They immediately broke communion with heretics, awaited the convocation of a competent body, namely an Œcumenical Synod, not in order to learn and decide whether the misbelief was a heresy, but in order—through the official mouthpiece of the Church—that formal clarifications and formulations concerning correct doctrine might be made and the formal condemnation of heretics be pronounced.

“It should be known that such a Synod consists only of Orthodox.”



“BECAUSE we put ourselves outside of the sight of God, we are led captive by the bodily passions.” - ABBA THEONAS

Teaching on the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church

BY ARCHPRIEST ALEXANDER RUDAKOV

PUBLISHED IN 1890 IN SAINT PETERSBURG

Continuation on the Great Litany

For this city (or sacred Monastery), for every city and land, and the faithful that dwell therein.... We pray not only for our own town or the community in which we live, but also for all other towns and places from a feeling of Christian love.

For seasonable weather, abundance of the fruits of the earth, and peaceful times.... We pray for each of these things as necessary for our earthly prosperity, recognising that they are all gifts from God.

For them that journey by sea, land and air, for the sick, the suffering, for captives (this means those under judgment, in prisons, or somehow held by some other impediment) ***and their salvation....*** So that the Lord, Who knows the need of each and the petition of everyone, will stretch out to them His hand as an aid.

For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger and necessity.... That the Lord will deliver us from all evil and all distress. [The Slavonic texts generally omit “danger”].

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace. We pray that the Lord will help us and protect us in all our doings, and we recognise that this is granted solely through His mercy.

Finally on behalf of all those participating, the deacon intones: ***Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed, glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin***

Mary with all the Saints, (that is those who are our intercessors before God), **let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life** (that is all our needs, all the innumerable things for which we pray, and our very life itself) **unto Christ our God**, for He alone well knows what is really necessary for us. The choir responds to the earlier petitions, **Lord, have mercy**. To the **Help us, save us** petition, they respond **Amen**, as it is a complete prayer and not a simply a call to prayer. And now they chant, **To Thee, O Lord**, indicating that we commend ourselves to the Lord.

All these requests are brought to a conclusion with giving glory to the Most Holy Trinity, by the priest exclaiming: **For unto Thee is due all glory, honour and worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages**. These words signify that we turn in prayer to God and we hope to receive the good things we ask for from Him, solely on account of His unending perfections, which inspire us to render Him all glory, honour and worship. After this exclamation by the priest, the choir responds with the word, **Amen**, which means, **Truly, so be it**.

After the Great Litany, we either read the appointed Kathisma from the Psalter (the First Kathisma [Pss. 1 - 8] for Sunday) or chant selected verses from the first three psalms: **Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the pestilent. - Serve ye the Lord with fear, and rejoice in Him with trembling. - Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God**. To each of the verses there is appended a triple **Alleluia**, and at the end we have the Little Litany.

The **Little Litany** is a shortened form of the Great Litany. It begins with the words, **Again and again** (that is, more and more) **let us pray to the Lord**. It has only one petition, **Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace**. And the deacon's part ends with the usual commen-

dition of those joining us in prayer to the will of God: ***Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed, glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the Saints....***

[In this instance, the priest's exclamation is: ***For Thine is the dominion, and Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.]***

.... to be continued with "Lord, I have cried."



THE COMING MONTH

IN NOVEMBER we turn our hearts and minds to the **Great Feast of the Nativity of our Saviour** (Christmas). In the church calendar, this is emphasised by two things. Firstly, we begin the forty-day **Nativity Fast** in preparation for the feast. And secondly we celebrate the **Great Feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple** on 21st November / 4th December. In this feast we see the closure of the Old Testament dispensation. The Temple in Jerusalem at that time was in one respect incomplete, because it lacked the Ark of the Covenant, which had been lost. The holy Virgin, who was to become the Ark that contained not simply the law of God inscribed on stone tablets, but God the Word Himself incarnate in her womb, as it were completes the consecration of that Temple. The Temple now contained an Ark and one supremely more holy and exalted than that lost of old. The Temple is ready for the coming of the Lord. That readiness also, of course, foreshadowed the day when its veil would be rent in twain, signifying that grace was departing from a people who, rather than the King of Peace and Saviour of our souls, had proclaimed that they had no king but Cæsar.

The **Nativity Fast** lasts forty days, and so begins annually on 15th / 28th November. It ends after the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day, when we will either have partaken of the Holy Mysteries or, if we are unable to do that, at least received the blessed antidoron from the celebrant. During this period we keep an almost vegan diet every day, although until St Spiridon's Day (12th/25th December) we are permitted fish, wine (alcohol) and oil on Saturdays and Sundays and on the Great Feast of the Entry itself. On Tuesdays and Thursdays we relax the strictness of the fast a little to have wine and oil. Naturally, these dietary disciplines should be accompanied with other bodily and spiritual exercises, otherwise the fast simply becomes a diet. Married couples abstain from marital intercourse during this fast as they do on other fast days throughout the year. We should try to restrict our travelling engagements (except to church!), and social engagements, so that we find a certain quietness in our daily lives. That quietness we should then utilise to pay more attention to spiritual reading and prayer, and to prepare ourselves for confession. And as all the Fathers tell us, during the fasts we should be particularly assiduous in almsgiving. If we conscientiously try to keep the fast in this way, we will find that it brings us spiritual benefit, and will impart to our celebration of the Lord's Nativity a deeper and truer joy, rather than simply being a time for "merry-making," which is always a disappointing and tiring exercise!

On 8th / 21st November, we celebrate the **Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Michael and all the Bodiless Powers of Heaven**. St Michael whose name in Hebrew means "Who is like unto God" is the leader of the Heavenly Hosts (Jesus of Navi [Joshua] 5:14) and thus properly called an Archistrategus, although in English he is usually referred to as an Archangel. Along with him we celebrate all the Angelic Powers on this day, a feast day which was inaugurated in the fourth century. The feast, which celebrates the Nine Ranks of the Heavenly Hosts, was appointed for the month of November, because it was the ninth month from March, which was originally the beginning of the year and which is

also why, of course, November is named for the Latin word for Nine: *novem*. The nine ranks are divided into three hierarchies. The highest are the **Seraphim** (Es. 6:2), the **Cherubim** (Gen. 3:24) and **Thrones** (Col. 1:16). In the second hierarchy, there are the **Dominions** (Col. 1:16), the **Virtues** (1 Ptr. 3:22) and the **Powers** (Col. 1:16), and in the third hierarchy, **Principalities** (1 Ptr. 3:22, Col. 1:16), **Archangels** (1 Thess. 4:16) and **Angels** (1 Ptr. 3:22). Of course, among these ranks there is also included the Guardian Angel of each and every Orthodox Christian, and so this festival should be one which we observe with particular reverence and joy, knowing that it is the feast of our protector and guide.

Among the saints celebrated in November, we have:

The **Venerable Martyr Clarus** (4th / 17th) was born in Kent, most probably in Rochester, of a noble family and his parents wished him to marry a rich heiress who lived in those parts. The saint, however, had already set his heart on the ascetic life, and this woman, being aware of his austere and celibate life, used all her feminine charms to try to seduce him. She failed miserably. Being rich and accustomed to getting her own way, her love turned to hatred. She swore revenge. The saint's only recourse was to seek refuge on the Continent. He landed in Neustria (now known as Normandy) where he lived as a hermit. For his ascetic labour and love of our Saviour, he was granted the gift of healing. His fame as a healer began to attract attention and, although he attempted to avoid the praise of men by moving his hut from place to place within the forest, people sought him out and found him. However his abrupt departure from England had also further inflamed the rich heiress who sent her agents to France with instructions to find and kill him. On the 4th November, in the year of our Lord 884, they found Clarus in his simple hut on the edge of the River Epte. One of the agents beheaded Clarus whilst he knelt in prayer. For this reason in medieval Western art he is frequently depicted holding his head in his hands. The blood flowed copiously from his neck but a new spring came out of the

ground and washed away all signs of it. The martyrdom of the holy hermit increased his renown, and the simple hut in which he had been slain was transformed into a chapel. In later years a church was built on the spot in honour of a saint who is a martyr for the Christian virtue of chastity, an ascetic and a healer.

On 23rd November / 6th December, we celebrate a company of renowned and beloved saints, **St Amphilochius of Iconium**, a contemporary of St Basil the Great, **St Alexander Nevsky**, and **St Mitrophan of Voronezh**. In this company one seems to be rather overlooked in the cognizance of the faithful, though his service is combined with that of St Amphilochius. This is our **Holy Father Gregory, Bishop of Agrigentum**, who was born on the island of Sicily, in the village of Pretorium, not far from the city of Agrigentum. His parents, Chariton and Theodote, were God-fearing, and as an infant Gregory was baptized by the Bishop Pataimonus. When he was twelve years of age St Gregory was put under the spiritual guidance of the archdeacon Donatus. St Gregory spent the next ten years in the Agrigentum church. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to the holy youth, who had a fervent desire to visit Jerusalem, and said that God had blessed his intention. In the holy city, St Gregory was presented to Patriarch Macarius, who retained him for service in his own cathedral church, ordaining him deacon. The soul of St Gregory thirsted for monastic labours, and the Patriarch gave his blessing, allowing him go to a monastery on the Mount of Olives. After a year St Gregory departed from this monastery for a desert Elder, who for four years taught him spiritual wisdom, humility and the principles of monastic life. The ascetic, foreseeing in St Gregory a future great luminary of the Church, gave him a blessing to return to Jerusalem, and he later went to Constantinople, where he was received with love by the brethren of the monastery of the holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus. The ascetic efforts of St Gregory were noticed by Patriarch Eutychius of Constantinople, at whose insistence the saint participated in the Fifth Œcumenical Council. Thereafter St Gregory set off for Rome, to venerate the graves of the holy Apostles Peter and

Paul. Just at this time the bishop of Agrigentum died. The elder clergy and illustrious citizens of Agrigentum journeyed to Rome with a request for the Pope to determine a successor for their late hierarch from among a list of candidates they had drawn up. The Pope, however, declined their proposal through divine inspiration, and instead summoned St Gregory, a native of their city, to serve them as bishop. St Gregory peacefully guided the flock entrusted to him by God. He was a defender of the downtrodden, a wise preacher, and was granted the gift of healing. As archbishop, St Gregory led the life of an ascetic monk, fervently observing monastic vows. The flock loved their hierarch and trusted in him. But there were also malicious people who resolved to be rid of him. They bribed a harlot, and introduced her into his chambers, and then accused St Gregory of the deadly sin of fornication. They placed the holy bishop under guard. The people attempted to defend their bishop, but were unsuccessful. At the trial the harlot, as instructed, gave false testimony against St Gregory. Just as she pronounced the words of slander, she went into a fit of frenzied rage. Rather than seeing this as God's judgment upon her, the judges accused the Bishop of sorcery. St Gregory was sent for judgment to Rome. The Pope, after reading the charges, did not want to see the accused, and gave orders that he be detained. The saint endured his humiliation humbly, dwelling in constant prayer. His prayerful struggles and wonderworking gifts quickly became known through the city and the surrounding region. Pious Romans began to gather at his cell, whom the imprisoned saint taught about the righteous life, and he implored the Lord to heal the sick. After two years, a clairvoyant Elder named Mark, who had known St Gregory since youth, came to the Pope. The Elder did not believe the charges and he persuaded the Pope to convene a Council to decide Gregory's case. At the invitation of the Pope, many clergy from the city of Agrigentum came to the Council, together with all those making accusations against the saint, including the harlot. From Constantinople three bishops and the

imperial dignitary Marcian came to Rome. Along the way Marcian had fallen grievously ill. On the advice of many people who had received healing through the prayers of St Gregory, servants carried the dying man to the prison where the wonderworking saint languished. Through the prayers of St Gregory the Lord granted healing to Marcian. The slanderers attempted to renew their accusations, and as their chief proof they presented the possessed harlot to the judge, declaring that Gregory had bewitched her. But the saint prayed over her and cast out the demon. The woman, restored to her right mind, told the Council the whole truth. The slanderers were shamed and judged. Marcian demanded they be executed, but St Gregory implored forgiveness for them. St Gregory returned in honour to his own cathedral and, surrounded by the love of his flock, he guided the Church until his own peaceful repose at the end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century.



POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

“ONE MATTER I really would like to seek your guidance on is the cultural shift a Westerner would have to make to join the Orthodox Church. ... I think I know the answer to the question about having to change to a new culture. I can see that it is not about culture but about truth that is over and above any cultural differences. However, most Orthodox churches seem deeply entwined with the culture of the nation to which they are linked. I am pretty English really, with English tastes, prejudices and values. I love the beauty of the Gothic and the Prayer Book. Despite this I am becoming more and more led to understand that Orthodoxy is the Apostolic Church. Really what I wanted to ask is how easy is it for someone brought up in a very English way to make the transition to Orthodoxy and how much of one’s own cultural heritage has to be left behind? - M.G., by email.

I DON'T THINK you need worry unduly about culture, though it does depend a little on which parish you might join if you became Orthodox. Sadly in some you would not be welcomed if you were not of the ethnic origin of the majority there. This is not a fault of Orthodoxy, but because of the sins and short-sightedness of the people.

In the fifty-odd years that I have been Orthodox, I have come across several converts who throw themselves into a "foreign" culture. This is fine if they do it intelligently, by learning Greek or Russian for instance, so that they have better access to original sources, or so that they can become spiritual children of experienced spiritual fathers. Sadly many seem not to do this, but to take on the trappings of some foreign culture in a way which does nothing to bring them to compunction of heart or to the knowledge of God. Thus they will turn up in church wearing Russian shirts and boots, learn to play the balalaika, learn Greek cuisine (a wiser choice in my view!), or throw themselves into the historical and political contests or prejudices (sometimes hardly Christian) of their adopted "nationality." Usually this is superficial and really just a manifestation of hobbyism. Perhaps if the people who engage in this sort of thing themselves realise this, it is not too dangerous, but it is not the essential point of Orthodoxy and far from it.

Having said that, I think it is important to remember that the cultures of peoples who have been Orthodox for centuries have been shaped and moulded by Orthodoxy, and therefore we should not reject their cultural expressions, even folk customs and folk beliefs, out of hand. Much they have is beautiful and edifying, but one has to exercise a certain critical faculty. One must remember that even these things can be distorted and become soul destroying. As an instance I would mention the week before Great Lent. It is a week during which, according to authentic church teaching, we are permitted to eat all foods, even on the usual fasting days of Wednesday and Friday, with the sole exception of meat products. It is called Cheesefare Week. It is a preparation for the stricter fast of Lent itself. The beginning of Lent starts with a commemoration of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, so that it leads to the Thief on the cross entering again into Paradise at its culmination. So Cheesefare Week, with the prohibition of meat-eating, reminds us of the Paradise we lost, in which there were no carnal delights. All this is churchly and spiritually edifying. But it becomes abused. Among

the Russians (and perhaps other peoples), it became a custom to have pancakes in that week - just the same as the western Shrove Tuesday practice, and for much the same reason. However, there have grown up customs which are certainly not edifying; contests in trying to eat more of these pancakes than anyone else, drunkenness, gorging and excess. None of these things prepare us for the lenten fast or reminds us of the Paradise we are seeking. No sane person resents a little relaxation and enjoyment, but abuse and excess are not things which help us be saved.

There are of course things about “Englishness” which are inimical to Orthodoxy. “Englishness” after all is something that was formed by a Protestant mindset. I am not sure if much of it still exists in our times, because it has been overtaken by materialism, superficiality and many worse things. But Englishness has a certain self-righteousness, which is Protestant rather than Christian, a certain self-containedness and perhaps even smugness, which can shut out love of one’s neighbour, hospitality, and be judgmental. Such things have to be relinquished, of course, but they are not things that you have to be completely clear of before you can contemplate becoming Orthodox. They are things which by being Orthodox, by being in the Church and receiving her Graces and by striving to live according to her teachings, you will try to eradicate within yourself. One danger is to excuse yourself from this because you are English. Recently I had a rather light-minded Russian lady write to me excusing certain aspects of her conduct because she was Russian. I am sure Orthodox of other nations do the same. We should not fall into the same trap. All of us whether we are Russian, Greek, Serbian, Romanian, Ukrainian, Georgian, Arab, American, Japanese, Polish or even English, should be striving to become true citizens of that One Nation named after Christ, the Christian Nation, and therefore God-like.



“The sign of undissembled love is forgiveness of offences, - so the Lord loved the world.”

VEN. MARK THE ASCETIC

News Section

GLORIFICATION OF THE VENERABLE IERONYMOS OF ÆGINA

THE CHURCH of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece celebrated the glorification of the **Venerable Ieronymos of Ægina** on 3rd /16th October, this year. The celebration was held at the Church of the Holy Unmercenaries, which was built by Saint Ieronymos himself on the Island of Ægina (which is already renowned among Orthodox Christians because of the great wonderworker, St Nectarios). Saint Ieronymos was born Basil Apostolides in Karvali, Cappadocia in 1883. He was ordained in his native land and served as a deacon at the Church of Saint George in Constantinople. With the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, arranged at the Treaty of Lausanne in the 1920s, he found himself in Greece as a refugee, eventually ending up, after his ordination as a hieromonk in 1923, on the island of Ægina. He became known as a gifted confessor, a healer, serving as a hospital chaplain, and he was granted the gift of clairvoyance. In 1940, he returned to the Church (Old) Calendar, stating: “The Church of Greece, by changing the festal calendar, has become diseased, a change that was the beginning and cause of many evil things.” Without condemning anyone, and avoiding factionalism, he lived out the rest of his life as a monastic hermit, considered by all, Old and New Calendarists alike, to be a Saint. He reposed in 1966, and his funeral was served by **Metropolitan Akakios of Attica and Diavleia**, the oldest living Bishop of the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece. The celebration was presided over by **His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens**, with many of the Synod’s Hierarchs present, and it came the day after the celebration of the patronal festival of the **Sacred Monastery of Sts Cyprian and Justina at Fili**, in which celebration His Beatitude also participated as the proto-celebrant. At the monastery festival he had concelebrated with Their Eminences,

Metropolitans Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, Gerontios of Piræus and Salamis, Chrysostomos of Attica and Boiotia, Archbishop Sofroniy of St Petersburg and Northern Russia, and Their Graces, Bishops Sofronie of Suceava and Dionisie of Galați from Romania, Gregory of Christianoupolis, Photios of Marathon, Ambrose of Methone, Michael of Nora (from Italy), Klemes of Gardikion, and Auxentios of Photike (from the U.S.A.) and almost fifty priests and ten deacons.

EXPANIONIST IDEAS OR AN ANTI-MOSCOW SCAM?

THE OCP **Media Network** website carried the following article on 11th October: “At a press conference in Moscow on 24 September, His Holiness Patriarch Kyrill answered questions from journalists about the Church. Particular attention was paid to the historical development of the Patriarchate itself. It was noted that when the Patriarchate was created in 1589 by all the Eastern Patriarchs, the title granted to the Russian Patriarch was ‘Archbishop of Moscow and Patriarch of all the Northern Lands’. Indeed, this was the title used until the uncanonical abolition of the Patriarchate by Peter I. His Holiness explained that the word ‘Patriarchate’ does not signify some mono-national entity, jurisdiction over one ethnic group (as in the modern corruption of the term), but canonical jurisdiction over a part of the world. This was, for example, the meaning of the usage in the old Roman Patriarchate in multinational Western Europe, which lasted until 1054. It is also the meaning of the usage for the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which had jurisdiction over the now non-existent Byzantine Empire, the Pope (Patriarch) of Alexandria, whose Patriarchate has jurisdiction over lands to the south of the Byzantine Empire (Africa) and the Patriarch of Antioch, whose Patriarchate has jurisdiction over lands to the east of the Byzantine Empire. Patriarch Kyrill explained that after the Patriarch (Pope) of Rome fell away from the Orthodox Christian Faith, so the ‘Patriarch of Moscow, All the Russias and All the Northern Lands’ was chosen to replace him as Patriarch of all Christendom to the north of the Byzantine Empire. Since this title has never been cancelled, it remains in

force today. As the Patriarch commented, this means that the Patriarch has to take into account the interests of all the peoples who are in his jurisdiction. To imagine that he is Patriarch of only the peoples of the contemporary Russian Federation is quite unfounded.”

Comment: It is well known that there has been a certain jockeying for power between the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow in recent times, which has intensified in view of the upcoming Holy and Great Council (of World Orthodoxy) to be held in 2016. Constantinople naturally has precedence, but Moscow is by far the largest and richest of the Local Orthodox Churches. The present writer is reminded of an argument between two parishioners in the former Russian parish in Nottingham in the 1960s. A man was arguing with his mother-in-law about which of the Patriarchates was the senior one. Unable to resolve the matter they turned to me, because, as a convert, I would know! I said Constantinople was the first among the Patriarchates. Babushka, who had been backing Moscow, thought for a moment, and then grudgingly conceded, “But Moscow always had the money!”

More seriously, from the article it would appear that the Moscow Patriarchate is attempting to use its money, prestige and power to gain preferment. But, - and it is a very big BUT!, - nowhere is the reported press conference at which the Patriarch is supposed to have given these answers posted on the website of the Moscow Patriarchate or its Department of External Church Relations. These sites post information about the activities of the Patriarchal administration almost daily, so are we to believe that the information perhaps innocently picked up by the OCP Media Network site was posted by someone who wished to bring the Moscow Patriarchate into further disrepute? I do not know the answer, but this discrepancy should serve as a warning to all to show a healthy distrust of what they see on the web. In religion and in politics one often finds that people are all too ready either to believe that my enemies’ foes are my friends (not necessarily!) or to grasp any piece of information, however unreliable, which appears to back up their own preconceived ideas. This is folly and dangerous.

NEWS from the communities in the *U.K.*
of the *True Orthodox Church of Greece*,

THE LINCOLN COURT CASE

MOST OF OUR READERS will know that we were taken to court: a dispute regarding a grave reservation. Unfortunately we spent months negotiating through solicitors, but the matter came to court and those negotiations only cost us money. In the event, the case was heard at **Lincoln County Court** on Wednesday, 1st October, and the judge found for the claimant. We feel that we were very badly let down by our barrister, but there is little point in pursuing that. The court required us to pay a sum of **£28,412.47** by 12th November, and we are endeavouring to raise that money. At the time of going to press, through the mercies of our Saviour and the generosity of our parishioners and supporters **we have raised £19,388**. We should perhaps note that with the solicitors' fees the total cost to us will be in the region of **£45,000**. However, there were blessings in all of this. First and foremost we are thankful to our Saviour, Who clearly administered a chastening to us. We have already mentioned the generosity of supporters; we are also thankful for the advice and help given us throughout the process by **James Merritt**. We are grateful that the whole matter is now mostly behind us, and that we managed to make the necessary journey to Lincoln a time of pilgrimage.

En route we visited **Ryhall in Rutland**, where St Tibba lived as a hermitess in the seventh century, and **Grantham**, where in the Middle Ages the sacred relics of St Wulfram, a seventh century Archbishop of Sens in France, were enshrined. The crypt altar still shows the place where they were venerated. We also visited **the site of Bardney Abbey**, now but just a few exposed stoneworks and grassy humps in a field of rather bemused cows. However, the local parish church has a beautiful exhibition of artefacts from the Medieval Abbey which succeeded the Saxon

one, founded in the seventh century and which for a period enshrined the relics of the holy King and Martyr Oswald of Northumbria. The Saxon altar slab in the parish church is thought to have been the cover of St Oswald's tomb. We then visited **Stow-in-Lindsey**, where there is a magnificent late Saxon church, dating from about the time of the Schism, but an earlier church on the site is believed to have been founded by St Etheldreda of Ely. Here we met an elderly parishioner who delighted in telling us about the church and his love of it. About two miles from Stow, there is a tiny Norman church in the hamlet of **Coates**. We went there because it may be dedicated to St Edith of Wilton, the half-sister of our St Edward, although it is more likely to have been dedicated to St Edith of Polesworth. However, tiny though it is, it was well worth a visit, having been largely left unharmed by the Reformation and containing features from nearly every period of English church history. Then we made for our overnight accommodation as darkness was setting in. We arrived in Lincoln early in the morning, and were able to visit the Cathedral before the tourists poured in and have it largely to ourselves. It is superb and the architecture stunning, but convinced us how different "Western Christianity" is from Orthodoxy. Even given that in the Middle Ages it would have been frescoed, the whole emphasis is on architectural adornment. Orthodox churches are architecturally quite basic, but what you see inside are depictions of the Saints and feasts - teaching rather than vanity. That short visit was followed by the court case, but as this ended in the early afternoon, before journeying back home, we made a detour to visit **Caistor**, the town where St Simon the Zealot, one of the twelve Apostles and the only one to have visited Britain, may have been martyred. We were unable to enter the parish church, but the churchyard is partly surrounded by the wall of an earlier Roman fort. Then later in the afternoon we began our return journey to Surrey. Three members of the brotherhood made this impromptu pilgrimage. Fathers Alexis and Niphon were required to give evidence in court, and Fr Sabbas came to drive as Fr Alexis was still unable to do so because of his recent operation for a detached retina. It was because the three of us were together

(sadly Fr Thomas, who was still far from well, had to hold the fort at home), and the fact that we are unlikely to have the opportunity to reach those far Northern parts again, that we made this a two day journey and took time to visit the holy places, and to ask the prayers of the saints whose lives and witness sanctified them.

BAPTISM AT BROOKWOOD

ELISEA, the infant daughter of **Daniel and Daniela Vraciu of Welwyn Garden City** was baptised and chrismated on the feast of Saint Symeon the New Theologian, Saturday 12th/25th October at Saint Edward's Church. Ioan and Georgetta Turcu stood as her godparents. **Fr Stephen Fretwell** served with the two Brotherhood clergy. The next day **Elisea** received the holy Mysteries for the first time. May she receive the crown of her calling. **Many Years** to her, her godparents and family.

CONVENT AGM

THE **Annual General Meeting** of the trustees of the **Convent of the Annunciation** was held there on Tuesday, 7th October n.s. With the exception of **His Grace, Bishop Ambrose**, all the trustees were present, along with the accountant, **Darren Harding**. The accounts will shortly be available on the **Charity Commissioners' website**, registered charity number 1120545.

CROSS-BLESSING

THE FAMILY of the late **Constantine Davis** came to the Brotherhood on Saturday, 4th October, choosing the first rainy day for weeks, for the blessing of the wooden Russian-style Cross which had been erected on his grave. Some had travelled from Gloucestershire and others from Shropshire for the short service. After the blessing and a liti for Constantine's repose, the family were offered refreshments in the Old Mortuary, and they gave us some of his religious items and some fresh

eggs from their own hens. The Cross had been made by **Peter Woodrow**, the son of our parishioners, **Michael and Margaret Woodrow**.

VISITORS

ON Saturday, 18th October, **Father Evfimy** and **Mother Evfrosinia** from the **Lesna Icon Convent in Normandy, France**, paid us another visit on their way to their parish in Guildford. As usual they kindly brought us a plentiful supply of provisions. In return we were able to hand over to them medical supplies for the elderly nuns at the convent, kindly donated by parishioner **Oleg Myslov**.

PRACTICAL TIP

BEFORE Great Lent, the fast which precedes Pascha, the Church sets aside a 22-day period of preparation. Before the Nativity Fast, which lasts for 40 days, from 15th / 28th November until and including Christmas Eve, 24th December / 6th January, there is no such preparatory period appointed, perhaps because the fasting disciplines during this fast are not quite so strict. However, we should prepare for the fast, rather than just blunder into it. There are some very down-to-earth practical things that one can do: make sure that you keep your diaries as free as possible from social engagements; as in all the fasts avoid making plans for journeys away from home; simply clear your freezers and fridges of non-lenten foods. Then plan to set aside more time for church attendance, for prayer at home and spiritual reading. Obtain books to read during this period which will instruct you about our Faith and the Christian life. Make a conscious and generous assessment of what you intend to give away in alms during the fast, and stick to it. Perhaps volunteer to help in charitable work over the “Western Christmas” freeing someone else up to celebrate their feast. And perhaps what we so often fail to do: resolve from the very start to keep this fast to the very best of your ability and never give up trying to do so. Remember the fast is not something inflicted upon us as a rule. It is a weapon given us to aid us in our spiritual battle. A soldier who holds a sword in his hand during battle and does not use it is not likely to come through that battle a well man.