



## FROM THE FATHERS

“THE EVIL ONE [the devil] said: Lo! I am ancient of many years, and no infant have I ever rejected. The burden of children have I oft-times borne, so that from the beginning I might make them acquire habits that are not goodly, that their faults might grow with them. But there are foolish fathers, who do not crush the seed that I have sown in their sons; and there are some who, like good husbandmen, root up faults from the minds of the children. As with a chain I have bound men with sloth, and they sat in idleness. I have drawn away their senses from all good things, their eyes from reading, their mouths from singing praise, their understanding from doctrine. For hurtful and vain fables how eager they are; for empty talk how ready!”

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

“HEAR THIS, you fathers and mothers, that your bringing up of children shall not lose its reward. This also he [St Paul] says as he proceeds, *Well reported of for good works, if she hath brought up children* (1 Tim. 5:10). Among other commendations he reckons this one, for it is no light praise to devote to God those children which are given them of God. For if the basis, the foundation which they [the parents] lay be good, great will be their reward; as great, if they neglect it, will be their punishment. It was on account of his children that Eli perished, for he ought to have admonished them, and indeed he did admonish them, but not as he ought; but from his unwillingness to cause them pain he destroyed both himself and them. Hear this, you fathers: bring your children up with great care *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Eph. 6:4).

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, + 407 A.D.

“YOU have sons also ... and yet you are not on this account to be praised, that you have them, but that you are zealous to nurture and educate them piously. For that they were born to you was of fruitfulness; that they are alive is of good providence; that they are so brought up is of your will and disposal.”

SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, + 430 A.D.



On the Occasion of the Commemoration of St Gregory Palamas (14th Nov.)

# The Transformation of the Mind into the Likeness of Christ

by Professor George Mantzarides  
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*“Having purified thy mind by ascetical struggles on Athos,  
O Gregory, thou didst live an Angelic way of life.”<sup>1</sup>*

THE STRUGGLE to purify one’s mind (*nous*) and the effort to ensure its proper orientation usually pass unnoticed in our era, or are regarded as superfluous luxuries that do not concern the simple Christian.

Indeed, those motivated by the spirit of what they suppose to be “practical” Christianity treat such matters as misleading theories that actually divert the believer from his primary task.

Only practical religion, which confines itself to obvious needs and seeks to deal with them immediately, is viewed as authentic Christianity or genuine Orthodoxy.

This is combined, moreover, with man's impatience to see and admire the results of his activities instantaneously, something to which he has been inured by machines, which serve him but which also have such a great influence on his life.

We take great pains to acquire machines, we get around by means of machines, we think with machines, and in the end we become machines ourselves, "in the image and likeness" of the machines that we manufacture. Machines do not have a mind that requires purification and correct orientation.

We forget that we do have to purify our minds and orient them correctly. And machines need our minds purified and correctly oriented, so that they might function properly and not turn against us.

As well, today, when machines dominate our lives more than at any other time, the need to purify and orient our minds correctly is becoming more pressing.

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All of the evil in the world originates from our minds. The mind, furthermore, constitutes the loftiest aspect of our existence. God's creation of man "in His image" is imprinted first and foremost in the mind. The mind is the "mirror" that reflects its Creator.

When the mind of man is directed towards God, it receives Divine Light and itself becomes light. However, when it turns away from God, it loses its light, becomes darkened, and wallows in darkness. It is enslaved to the cares and concerns of this world, is alienated by its tumult and turmoil, and forgets God and itself.

"Be still, and know that I am God,"<sup>2</sup> says the Spirit of God through the mouth of the Psalmist. When we come to know Who God is, then we learn also what a true man is.

Just like God, says St. Gregory Palamas, so also the human mind, created "in the image of God," has essence and energy.

The energy of the mind is thought. When a man's mind is darkened, his thought, which wallows in darkness, is held captive by sensations and passions and becomes bestial or demonic. "For, the mind that withdraws from God becomes either bestial or demonic and, having departed from the principles of its nature..., gives itself over to carnal desires and knows no limit to pleasure."<sup>3</sup>

This is what happened at the fall of man. And it continues to happen with all of Adam's descendants. The fall of the first man dragged all of humanity down with it.

This is why the advent of the New Adam, Christ, was necessary: that He might become the first-fruits of the new creation, the Church. And He gave His commandments, which are the light of the new life that the Faithful are called to live.

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Christ dwells in man through the Mysteries of the Church: Baptism, Chrismation, and the Divine Eucharist. This does not mean that Christ transforms man automatically, in some mechanical way. Man continues to retain his nature.

Christ opens the path of renewal and offers His Grace for man to follow this path of his own free will. If man does not wish to assimilate the Grace of God, if he does not strive to coördinate his will with the will of God and to order his life in accordance with God's commandments, Grace remains infertile.

"We have the mind of Christ,"<sup>4</sup> says the Apostle Paul. The Christian, that is, has the mind and the thoughts of Christ.

Just as a mirror, says St. Gregory Palamas, when it receives a ray of the sun, creates its own ray, so also the mind of man, when it receives the Light of Christ, itself becomes light, and radiates this light also to other people.

But in order for a mirror to radiate the sun's light, it must be clean. If it is muddy or blackened, no matter how much light may fall on it, that light is not reflected.

The same thing happens with the human mind. When it is darkened or muddy, the light of Christ, the mind of Christ, is not reflected in it.

Sin darkens the mind of man and the passions heap up mud on it. Thus, man lives bereft of God and His Grace. He becomes either bestial or demonic: bestial, by rolling in mud himself; and demonic, by luring others into this mud and becoming a breeding-ground of pollution and destruction.

How much we suffer from these diseases, especially today!  
How much we make ourselves victims of these diseases!

If we are to correct this unhealthy spiritual condition, we must cleanse and purify our mind. "Having purified his mind by ascetical struggles," St. Gregory became a recipient and herald of the Light of Grace.

Our first priority is to emulate the Saint as assiduously as we can.

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The amendment of the mind, as St. Gregory Palamas teaches, begins with its return to itself. Unless a man detaches the energy of his mind, that is, his thoughts and reasonings, from the passions and sin, unless he becomes calm and returns in repentance to himself and God, he will be unable to find the true wealth that he has received.

In his interpretation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, St. Gregory says that a man's wealth is his mind. When a man deviates into a sinful life, his mind is dissipated and cleaves to the passions. He becomes spiritually famished, and he cannot be saved unless he repents and returns to God.

The repentance and return of our mind to God does not come about through any movement towards infinity. It does not come about even through any movement directed outside ourselves.

It comes about through a return to ourselves. It comes about through the return of the energy of our mind, thought, and reasonings to “the hidden man of the heart.”<sup>5</sup> It comes about through a personal encounter and union with God, Who abides within us in order to purify our minds and hearts and to make them bright with the light of His Divine glory.

Since we have been baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity and have been incorporated into the Church of Christ, we have Christ Himself within us. For this reason, moreover, we bear His Name and are called Christians.

This, however, entails that we behave in a commensurate manner towards Christ and the icons of Christ who are our fellow men.

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In the Gospel passage about the Last Judgment, it is emphasized that the judgment of men by Christ will be based on the love that they have shown towards Him.

At that time, He will say to those on His right hand: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me food; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.”<sup>6</sup>

And to the puzzlement of the righteous as to when they saw Christ hungry and gave Him food, or thirsty and gave Him to drink, or a stranger and sheltered Him, Christ’s reply will be: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”<sup>7</sup>

We find Christ Himself in the person of our neighbour. For this reason, love for our neighbour, which is love for Christ Himself, is of fundamental importance in Christian life.

But Christ, Who is found in the person of our neighbour, is found also in us—in each one of us. And when we forget Him, He

knocks on the door of our heart, so that we might open the door for Him to enter and dine with us.<sup>8</sup>

Christ's food, His drink, His shelter, His clothing, and His rest are to be found in our heart. They are to be found in the place where our mind is supposed to be concentrated.

When we dissipate our mind in passions and amusements, when we exhaust it in worldly cares and wean it away from its spiritual nourishment, when we let it wander homeless in the misery and confusion of a life of sin, we leave the Christ within us hungry and thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick and imprisoned.

And when we do not show love towards Christ, Who knocks on the door of our heart, we naturally do not show love, either, when He approaches us in the person of our neighbour.

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Man's love for God or his neighbour is born or dies within his own heart: in the "hidden man of the heart," where St. Gregory Palamas, like all of the Saints of our Church, concentrated his purified mind.

When the mind of man is drawn away from the passions and sin, when it becomes calm and returns to the heart in prayer and repentance, it encounters Christ and is illumined by His light.

This is why the prayer that is bound up with the gathering of the mind is restricted to just one phrase, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me," so that the mind might not be distracted, but rather, concentrate on the Name of Christ and on beseeching His mercy.

Thus is the sin within a man obliterated and thus Christian life bears fruit. Thus does one accomplish the "life-giving mortification" of his will and thoughts and their incorporation into the boundless horizons of Divine freedom. Thus can he say, with the Apostle Paul: "We have the mind of Christ."

It was from the darkened mind of man that all of the evils in the world began and continue to find being. For this reason, their eradication is possible only with the illumination of the mind by the Light of Christ—by its transformation into the likeness of Christ.

By his ascetic struggles, St. Gregory Palamas realized this inner transformation in his own life, and he calls everyone to such a transformation on the day of his commemoration.

The Saints, says St. Basil the Great, “are set forth as animate icons of a Godly way of life, so that we might emulate their good deeds.”<sup>9</sup>

If we wish to honour the memory of St. Gregory, we are called to emulate his deeds to the best of our ability.

Let us cleanse our minds as much as we can and allow them—as he, too, allowed his—to be guided to God and to be illumined by His uncreated Light.

St. Gregory was very great; we are utterly insignificant. But when we do even the very least that we can, we will be entitled to approach the Saint and say to him:

“As a mind standing before the Primordial Mind, direct our mind to Him, O Father, that we may cry: Rejoice, O Herald of Grace.”<sup>10</sup>

\* *Source: Orthoxi Martiria (Cyprus), No. 45 (Winter 1995), pp. 21-25. Taken from the website of the former Synod in Resistance. The title and the structural arrangement of the article are theirs.*

## Notes

1. Idiomelon of the Lity.
2. Ps. 45:11.
3. Homily 51, §6 (ed. S. Oikonomou), p. 114.
4. 1 Cor. 2:16.
5. 1 Peter 3:4.
6. Matthew 25:34-36.
7. Matthew 25:40.
8. Revelation 3:20.
9. Epistle 2, §3, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XXXII, col. 228C.
10. Contakion of St Gregory Palamas.





# Joy in Christ:

## THE SURE INDICATOR OF OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION

*“Rejoice evermore”*

*“Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice”*

(I Thessalonians 5:16; Philippians 4:4)

† ***His Eminence, Metropolitan  
Cyprian I of Oropos and Fili***

IT IS, unfortunately, not an uncommon phenomenon for us to see pious Faithful in whose faces joy, good cheer, the peace of the Comforter, and the light of Grace do not blossom forth.

There are many excuses for this: family troubles, difficulties at work, various mishaps, economic misfortunes, health problems, unpleasant developments in national and political life, etc.

Can it be that all of these things constitute substantial obstacles, such that a Christian is thereby deprived of the peace of the Holy Spirit and the joy of Christ?

Certainly not; for the joy of the pious Faithful derives not from the absence of life’s tribulations and afflictions, but from the presence of our Saviour in their hearts.

When a Christian has a humble attitude and laments for his sins; when his pursuit is *“always that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men;”* when he strives to keep God’s commandments; when he continually partakes of the Immaculate Mysteries; when he constantly reflects with gratitude on the love and gifts of God; when he cultivates the unceasing prayer of the heart—then, he lives in Christ and with Christ; that is, he has the Giver of joy and peace in his heart.

The believer who is God-Bearing and Christ-Bearing “rejoices in the Lord always,” and his presence in the world is a testimony to the Resurrection and to Pentecost; it is a revelation of the Kingdom of Heaven and the bliss of the Age to come, of which he already has a foretaste.



TO THOSE who would object that it is impossible for one to rejoice at all times, St Basil the Great wrote a marvellous homily, entitled, “*Concerning Thanksgiving*,” in which he confronts those who dare “*to accuse St. Paul of laying down things that are impossible for us.*”

The blessed joy of Christians is the indicator of their spiritual condition: a lack of joy—and, indeed, of unceasing joy—betokens a deficiency in *communion* with Christ, and also with our brother.

It is especially when there is no love for our neighbour in our hearts, when we malign and hurt him, when we belittle and despise him, and when we cause him distress and upset, that the Lord is *missing* from our *hearts* and we have no *communion* with Him.

The Apostle Paul urges us to “*follow that which is good*,” by which he means:

“*Be intensely and exceedingly eager to do good to each other, that is, to your Christian fellow-believers and to all; that is, [even] to the unbelieving and the godless.*”

The opposite—that is, arrogance and vengeance, coldness, apathy and listlessness, hatred for our brother and ruthlessness - will make us to resemble the bee, as St. John Chrysostomos strikingly notes:

“*Do you not see how the bee dies as soon as it has injured someone with its sting? By that animal, God instructs us not to grieve our neighbour, because it is we who thereby first greet*

*death. For, in striking at them, we may perhaps pain them temporarily; but we ourselves shall not live any longer, just as this animal does not.*

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THE MOST BLESSED Theotokos is the one to whom we address the salutation: *“Rejoice, joy of all generations,”* and in the Paraklesis (Services of Supplication) to her, we chant the very beautiful hymn:

*“Fill my heart with joy, O Virgin, who didst receive the fullness of joy and didst cause the sorrow of sin to disappear.”*

Let us repeat this joyful troparion frequently and sincerely, praying to our All-Holy Mother that she count us worthy to rejoice in the Lord evermore, in the joy of the Resurrection and the Kingdom. Amen!

*Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos  
21st November 2005 (Old Style)*

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“IF AN APPLE TREE brings forth sour apples, we blame the tree not the apples. So, you parents who are the apple tree, do well that the apples [*your children*] also become sweet.”

HOLY HIEROMARTYR & PEER OF THE APOSTLES  
COSMAS OF AITOLIA, + 1779 A.D.

“MANY PARENTS teach their children the arts that serve the temporal life, and spend no small sum on it, but neglect the Christian teaching and are remiss in training their children to live as Christians. Such parents beget their children unto the temporal life, but close the door to the eternal.”

SAINT TIKHON OF ZADONSK, + 1783 A.D.

# Teaching on the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church

BY ARCHPRIEST ALEXANDER RUDAKOV

PUBLISHED IN 1890 IN SAINT PETERSBURG

**The Litany of Oblation; inner peace and love.** First of all the deacon intones the Litany of Oblation, in which before all the usual petitions one is included *for the precious gifts set forth*, so that the Lord will sanctify them by the power of the Holy Spirit at the appropriate time. At the end of this litany and the exclamation, from the sanctuary the priest pronounces the *Peace be unto all*, and the deacon exclaims: *Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess*. The choir completes his thought, chanting: *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence and undivided*.

During this exchange, the clergy bow down three times before the Holy Table, and silently say: *I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my foundation, and my refuge, and my deliverer*. They kiss the covered diskos and chalice and the edge of the Holy Table, and then give each other the threefold kiss, the senior one saying: *Christ is in our midst*; and the next: *He is and shall be*.

This rite is an expression of the mutual love which all those participating in the church have among themselves, and in earlier times all those in church did the same, the men greeting the men and the women the women. In our times this is not done throughout the congregation so as to maintain better order, but nonetheless all those standing in church are obliged to be at peace within their hearts with all who were their enemies, and to love them.

### **The Confession of the Symbol of Faith (the Creed).**

After instilling peace and love, the deacon exclaims: *The doors! The doors! In wisdom let us attend.* As he does so, the veil behind the Royal Gates is drawn back, and the priest removes the aer from the gifts and gently waves it over them as the Creed is recited. [In some churches, the choir chant the Creed]. In earlier times, the words, *The doors! The doors!* were addressed to the church doorkeepers so that they forbid any who were not able to participate in the Mysterion to enter the church, and indeed no one should walk in and out of the church particularly during the most holy part of the service which now follows. Nowadays the words are addressed to all of us, that we should guard the doors of our hearts and minds from distracting thoughts and the concerns of this life. The exclamation, *In wisdom let us attend*, which precedes the recital of the Symbol of Faith, indicates that therein Divine wisdom is to be treasured. The recital of the Creed itself bears witness that those attending and repeating it are indeed those faithful people, who are permitted to participate in the celebration of the great Mysterion. The drawing back of the veil from the Royal Gates and the taking of the aer from the gifts serve as signs that the one Faith reveals unto us things invisible and beyond comprehension, and the waving of the aer over the gifts represents the breeze upon them of the Holy Spirit, Whose descent upon them is imminent.

**The Calling to a Worthy Participation in the Celebration of the Eucharist.** When the Creed is finished, the deacon, bearing in mind the supreme importance of the Mysterion which is about to be accomplished, cries out: *Let us stand well. Let us stand with fear. Let us attend, that we may offer the holy oblation in peace*, that is: Let us stand in an orderly way, with reverent fear; let us be attentive, so that in peacefulness of soul we may offer the holy oblation. The choir completes the thought of the deacon, chanting: *A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise*, meaning that we will offer the gifts with mutual love and as a sacrifice of giving glory.

*.... to be continued with "The Fulfilment of the Mysterion"*

# THE COMING MONTH

IN Mid-November (15th /28th), we begin the fast so that we may prepare ourselves worthily to celebrate the Nativity of our Saviour. This fast is one of the three in the Church Year which is of fixed duration, and it is observed for forty days. Both because it is for a lesser feast than Pascha and because it falls in winter, it is not as strict as Great Lent. We are permitted wine (alcohol) and oil on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and fish on Saturdays and Sundays until we reach the pre-festival period on 20th December / 2nd January, when it does become a little stricter.

As always the fast is not simply limited to dietary measures. During it, married couples also abstain from marital relations; everyone of us should curtail entertainments, diversions, unnecessary travel, so that we become more still, so that we can focus more fully on the things of the soul and the things concerning our salvation. *Be still, and know that I am God*, says the Prophet, King and Psalmist David (Ps. 45:10).

Nor is the fast simply concerned with self-denial; that gives us room to operate within, but is only a basis for more. King David also says: *Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it* (Ps. 33:14). Pursuing implies something much more active than just going without. So in this fast, as in all of the others, we should pay more attention to our spiritual life. We should increase our church attendance, strengthen our family prayer-life at home, engage more in spiritual reading, prepare for confession and the reception of the Holy Mysteries, and generally toughen up our spiritual regime.

But this is not simply akin to New Age self-improvement regimes and concerned only with the self. The Fathers stress the importance of alms-giving in the fasts, showing that love of our neighbour also has an important place in our fasting discipline.

Indeed without it there would be no love of God, and no “self-improvement” (except perhaps as a delusion), but only selfishness. Our almsgiving is not restricted only to giving financial help to the needy, though this is fundamental, but it can also include serving them, helping them, and praying for them. Do not neglect this aspect of the fast either. One of the Fathers tells us that we may think of a spoked wheel: as we draw closer to our neighbours (the spokes) through our love for them, we also draw closer to the hub, which is love of God. If we think that we are loving God and serving Him, without love of our neighbour, then we are deluding ourselves (see 1 John 4:21).

In November we also celebrate the third Great Feast of the Church Year, the **Entry of the All-holy Theotokos into the Temple** (21st November / 4th December), a festival particularly beloved of the monastics. This feast celebrates the bringing of the Virgin into the Temple at Jerusalem as a three-year old child, her reception there and her being led into the Holy of Holies.

The event heralds the end of the Old Testament dispensation, the completion of the Temple of that dispensation. The second Temple at Jerusalem was in some sense incomplete. It did not contain the Ark of the Covenant, which had been lost during the Babylonian Captivity. That Ark contained the tablets of stone on which God had inscribed the ten commandments. On this feast, the Temple is completed in a marvellous way in that the Ark which was to contain the Word of God Himself, and not merely His words inscribed on stone, enters and sanctifies the Holy of Holies.

The feast is beloved of monastics because thereafter until her betrothal the Virgin lived in the Temple environs and so gives the monks and nuns a model for their life of dedication to God. It is also instructive for the lay people of the Church. After her birth the only event recorded of the Virgin’s holy parents, Joachim and Anna, is this one, the dedication of their daughter to the Lord. How parents of every generation, and perhaps more particularly

our own, fuss about nearly every aspect of their children's lives, and not altogether unjustifiably (they have to be fed, clothed and cared for, educated, instructed and corrected, and allowed to develop), but neglect the example of Joachim and Anna, and this one thing absolutely necessary: the dedication of their children to God and their spiritual formation.

Among the Saints celebrated this month, we have:

**Our Venerable Mother Theoctiste of Lesbos** (9th / 22nd) was born in the town of Methymna on that island. At an early age she was orphaned, and was sent to a convent to be raised. Being of a pious disposition, she rejoiced to be removed from the sinful world, and she loved the monastic life, the church services, monastic obedience, the quiet, strict fasting and unceasing prayer. She learned many of the prayers and much of the psalmody by heart. In the year 846, when she was already eighteen years old, she was blessed by the abbess, on the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ, to visit her sister in a neighbouring village and she remained there overnight. While she was there, Arabs invaded and took everyone captive. They were taken to the then desolate island of Paros, where they were valued to be sold in a slave-market. Through God's mercies, the young Theoctiste escaped. From that time St Theoctiste dwelt alone on the island for thirty-five years. A disused church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos became her dwelling, and her food was herbs and seeds. Having learned the hymns and prayers of the Church, she spent her time in prayer and ascetic struggles. Years later, a group of hunters landed upon the island, and one of them came upon her church. He went in to pray to the Lord, and after his prayer he noticed what seemed to be a human form in a dim corner. As he approached it, he heard a voice, "Stay there, and come no closer to shame me, since I am a naked woman." The hunter gave the woman his cloak and she came out of her hiding place. Theoctiste told him her name and informed him of her life devoted to God. Like St Mary of Egypt, the saint asked the hunter, if he happened to visit the island again,



that he should bring her a particle of the Holy Gifts, because for the duration of her time of living on the island she not once was granted to partake of Them. A year later, the hunter again came to Paros and brought a small vessel with a particle of the Holy Mysteries. St Theoctiste fell to the ground and prayed for a long time with tears. Then rising up, she took the vessel and with reverence and in the fear of God she partook of the Body and Blood of Christ. The next day the hunter saw the dead body of Theoctiste in the church. After digging a shallow grave, the hunter laid the venerable body to rest. However, he impudently cut off her hand, so as to take with him part of the relics of a great saint of God. All night his ship was tossed upon tempestuous seas and made no headway, and in the morning found itself at the very place from which it began. The man then perceived that taking the relic was not pleasing to the saint. He returned to the grave and placed the hand with the body. After this the ship sailed off unhindered. On the journey, the hunter told his companions everything that had happened. Listening to him, they all resolved immediately to return to Paros to venerate the relics of the great ascetic, but they could not find her holy body in the grave.

The **Holy New Martyr Constantine of Hydra** (14th /27th) was born and raised on that island. His parents were most pious Orthodox Christians and they nurtured him in the Faith and the love of Christ. Poverty and lack of work on the island forced him to move to Rhodes, to find work so that he might help his family, even though his mother was distressed by this. He was honest and hardworking, and so came to the attention of the Turkish governor, Hassan Kapitan, who employed him as a groom. Sadly during a festivity Constantine got drunk and, while he was unaware of it, Hassan Kapitan ordered that he be circumcised and given the white turban of a convert to Islam. He also bestowed upon him his own name, Hassan. When the youth recovered, he realized what had happened, but was at a loss what to do. His concern grew when, having sent his mother some money, she, hearing that he had apostatised, refused it. He in turn learned of

her inconsolable grief regarding his apostasy. Eventually he managed to return to Hydra to see his mother, but as he approached his home he asked for a drink of water from a woman of the neighbourhood which, out of Christian love, she gave him, but as soon as she stepped away from him she broke the cup that touched his lips. Then arriving at the house he knocked on the door and, to his mother's question as to who it was, he replied, "I am your son Hassan, who has arrived from Rhodes." She replied: "I will not open to you. I do not have a son Hassan. I only have a son Constantine." These things pierced his heart and he straightway returned to Rhodes and directly went to Rodini, where, in a cave, an experienced Elder lived in asceticism. Kneeling at his feet he confessed his sin, and the Elder gave him absolution and spiritual counsel. Constantine cast away the turban and Turkish clothes, and he first went to Crimea and then to Constantinople, where the holy Hieromartyr Patriarch Gregory V advised him to go to the Holy Mountain and remain there. On Athos he entered the Monastery of Iveron, and in time received the monastic schema, living a life of repentance. However, he was always troubled that he had denied Christ, knowing that whoever denies Him before men will be denied before the Father, Which is in heaven (Matt. 10:33). In time, with the blessing of his spiritual father, he returned to Rhodes with the firm resolve to confess Christ before Hassan Kapitan. This he did. With faith and great courage, he said: "Hassan Bey, I am your servant Constantine from Hydra whom you fraudulently made a Muslim. I give your false religion back to you, and tell you that I am a Christian, and a Christian I will die." Seeing Constantine throwing the Muslim turban aside, Hassan Kapitan became beside himself with rage and rushed at Constantine, punching and kicking him. He then had him confined to a dungeon and subjected to tortures. He endured all this with unceasing prayer. One night the cell was illumined with a heavenly light and his feet, which had been shackled, were freed. Nonetheless he was kept there for months, and then again he was brought to judgment. He again confessed the Christian Faith and was returned to prison. On 14th

November, 1800, on the orders of the Sultan he suffered a martyr's death by hanging, which according to some took place at Kolona, and according to others at Mandraki. Before his death he kissed his cross and prayed. Constantine was hanged from a plane tree; he was thirty years of age. Both Turks and Christians relate that that night a great cross of light shone over the tree. The Bishop of Rhodes, Agapios, and the elders retrieved his body and buried him with great honour behind the Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos in Niochori. Three years later the Saint's mother came to Rhodes and, with the blessing of Metropolitan Agapios, took the relics of her son to Hydra, placing them in the Monastery of the Panagia where they remain to this day in a golden reliquary. However the priest of Niochoriou, Papagiannis, kept an arm bone of the Martyr which is preserved in the altar of that church.



## POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

*“I have been told that there are certain days in the year when it is not permitted to have weddings. Is this so? And what is the reason for it? - D.R.A, Reading, PA, USA.*

IT is indeed true, and there are a variety of reasons for this, depending on the days involved. Those administrations of the Church which are essential to our salvation can and are celebrated on any and every day, but one can be saved without getting married, and the Church bears in mind the fasting regulations that she has prescribed for our spiritual development. In most church calendars the days and dates when one is not permitted to marry are usually printed out each year. In brief they are as follows: 1) on any day during the four fasts of the Church Year (Great Lent, the Nativity Fast, the Dormition Fast and the Apostles Fast) - this is because during the fasts married couples abstain from marital relations; 2) on the days before every Sunday in the year (Satur-

days), and before all the Great Feasts - this is because on those days Christians should be abstaining from marital relations because they are preparing to receive the Holy Mysteries at the Liturgy; 3) on every Tuesday and Thursday of the year - because the following night is the approach to a fast day; 4) on every day between Christmas Day and Theophany, and on every day in Bright or New Week (the week from Pascha to Thomas Sunday) - this is because these days are days of spiritual celebration, during which again married couples do not engage in intimacy; 5) during the course of Cheesefare Week, the week before Great Lent during which we do not eat meat products, because this week is an icon of the Paradise we lost of old, during which our Forefathers Adam and Eve did not enjoy conjugal union (Gen. 4:1). All these disciplines are, of course, to raise our hearts and minds to the spiritual, so that they should not be ever engrossed in the carnal. In our sex-obsessed times, such prescriptions no doubt seem rather severe, but they are indeed something to rejoice in - one more reminder to us as Orthodox Christians that we are *not of the world* (John 17:16). That we are *not of the world* is indeed that we might be sanctified by God's truth, for which marriage should be an aid, not a hindrance.



“IN PREPARING your children for life in the world, have you taken care to plant in their hearts faith and the fear of God, which will be their guides in the future? Pray to the Lord that He protect their hearts from the tares which are sown among the wheat by the enemy.”

VEN. MACARIUS OF OPTINA, + 1860 A.D.

“MAY GOD grant that the child will have the character of a little lamb, and not that of a little goat! Lambs are peaceful, quiet and obedient, while little goats are frisky, jumpy, loud, prone to butting, and for this reason they are pleasing to no one.”

VEN. ANTONY OF OPTINA, + 1865 A.D.

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

## ***BISHOP AMBROSE***

HIS GRACE, **Bishop Ambrose of Methoni** tells us that he will be in England for a week over the Orthodox celebration of Christmas, helping with the festal schedule of services. As yet we do not know the services he will celebrate, but we will keep our people informed as soon as we can. If you are not on our emailing list and would like to be kept in touch, please send us your email address. Also, if you would like to make a donation to the soup kitchens run to feed the needy by the **Saint Philaret the Merciful Orthodox Women's Guild in Greece**, or to our **Church's missions in Africa**, which are under the spiritual care of Bishop Ambrose, please send donations to the Brotherhood before the Bishop's visit and we will change them into the appropriate currencies and give them to His Grace when he visits. Please make clear which charity you would like your donation given to.

## ***NEW CATECHUMEN***

ON THE SUNDAY after the Exaltation of the Cross, 21st September / 4th October, **Danuta Antonova**, who is universally known, for reasons we cannot quite fathom, as **Carrottop**, was made a catechumen at the end of the Divine Liturgy. At her own request, Danuta, a former Roman Catholic, was named Xenia in honour of **Saint Xenia the Fool-for-Christ of St Petersburg**. May the prayers of her new name saint guide and sustain her as she prepares herself for Holy Baptism.

## ***CHURCHING AT SAINT EDWARD'S***

ON Sunday, 28th September / 11th October, at the end of Matins, before the Liturgy commenced, **Father Borislav Popov** read the forty-day prayers for **Ana-Maria Amarie**, and brought her infant daughter, **Maria**, into the church, so that for the first time they could participate in the Divine Liturgy together.

## ***GREAT HELP APPRECIATED***

ON HIS NAME DAY, 1st / 14th October, **Ivan Nenov** of Northolt, Middlesex, and his son, **Maxim**, spent the whole day at the Brotherhood, repairing and treating the outside steps into the sanctuary area of the church, and oiling the garden benches, while **Sky** kept our dogs entertained. They volunteered for this work and provided the materials.

THROUGH the generosity of **Vasileos and Evphemia Kalkanteras** and **Nick Kalnakov**, arrangements were made for our ride-on mower to be repaired and serviced. It required a considerable amount of work, which was done by **Ashley Services of Blackhorse Road, Woking**, and the Kalkanteras and Nick Kalnakov not only arranged everything, but insisted on paying for it, telling Ashley Services not even to tell us the cost. We now have a serviceable mower again. Our thanks to those who have helped us in these ways. May God bless them and their families.

## ***NEW ICON CARDS***

THROUGH the good offices of **MRM Studios in Aldershot**, we have now had prints made of the icon of St Edward which was donated to us by **Tchavdar and Tsveta Vulovi** in Bulgaria. The prints are now available from the bookstall at the back of the church, priced 30p each. The icon itself has now been framed by **Easels of Chobham**, and has been blessed and placed on the stand in the centre of the narthex, as one enters the church.

## ***INTERMENT AT BROOKWOOD***

FATHER **Archimandite Aemilianos (Papadakis)** chanted the prayers at the interment of **Michael Demetriou** in our cemetery on Friday 10th / 23rd October. The funeral itself had been held earlier in the day at Fr Aemilianos' church, **St George's, in Kingston-upon Thames**. Fr Aemilianos had been seriously ill for some time, and the last time he visited Brookwood was when the site was blessed for the erection of our new monastic house. Michael was a parishioner at St George's, and he was laid to rest with his late wife, Irene, who died in 1998. May their rest be with the saints and may they find mercy.

## ***VISITORS***

TUESDAY, 6th October: **Sean Bermingham**, a resident of Singapore, visited us. He is an executive editor of **National Geographic Learning, Global ELT**. He was shown the church and the exhibition room and met members of our Brotherhood, staying with us for the evening meal. Earlier in the year he had visited the site of Shaftesbury Abbey, as he is intent on visiting the resting places of all the monarchs in Britain from the time of the legendary King Arthur to the present time.

FRIDAY, 16th October: **Margaret Hobbs** of the **Brookwood Cemetery Society** brought the **Grade 6 Mums of the International School in Woking** to see the church.

THE NEXT DAY, Margaret brought another group to see the church; this time the **Polytechnic Rambling Club**.

WEDNESDAY, 21st October: **Jackie Malyon**, who has been bringing groups of people to visit us for nearly thirty years, brought yet another group, about twenty people in all. They stayed for over an hour, asking questions.

FRIDAY 23rd October: **Malcolm Hitchcock** brought twenty-seven students of the **University of the Third Age** to see Saint Edward's church.

ON THE SAME DAY, the **Rev'd Leon Carberry** of the Anglican Traditional Parish of St James in Beckenham and the **Rev'd David Sutton** from Eccles, Manchester, unexpectedly visited us. They were given a tour of the church and given refreshments in the exhibition room. Both clergymen have known the Brotherhood for many years. After visiting us they toured the cemetery and returned in the evening to attend our Vespers service.

WEDNESDAY, 28th October: A group of six women walkers visited the cemetery and asked to see the church and exhibition room, after which they continued their walk to Woking.



## PRACTICAL TIP

THE NEWS in recent times has been filled with reports of people, probably mentally disturbed people, taking guns and trying to kill as many people as they can. It is a horrific phenomenon and doubtless inspired by the powers of evil. Often, these people have also been schooled to commit these atrocities. However, there is a similar, if less dramatic, thing to be found among us. Often in parishes and communities, one person will, as it were, give a loaded gun to another to shoot, while they themselves stay “innocently” in the background. They have some grudge, some jealousy, some complaint and instead of dealing with it in a proper and orderly way, they persuade another to take up their grievance and “fire the gun,” or, because misery loves company, they persuade a group of people so as to form a clique or party. Avoid such factions at all costs. The holy Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians states unequivocally that those that engage in such factions “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” Such behaviour does not kill the bodies of others, but it can and does destroy souls, both the souls of those drawn into these destructive factions and sometimes those whom they are aiming at.