

# *The Shepherd*

## *An Orthodox Christian Pastoral Magazine*

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### FROM THE FATHERS

"MY BAPTISM was the beginning of my life, and that day of my rebirth the first of all days, then, plainly, the word I spoke on the day of my adoption is the one most of all to be honoured. Can I then, misled by the deceptions of such teachers as these, deny that tradition which brought me to the Light, guided me to the knowledge of my God, and made me a son of God, who before was His enemy through sin? For myself I pray that I may depart to the Lord holding fast to this profession; and I exhort them also, to preserve the Faith inviolate till the Day of Christ, to maintain the Spirit undivided from the Father, and from the Son, and observe the Faith of their Baptism, both in the profession of Faith and in giving praise to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom be praise and glory, unto the ages of ages."

*Saint Basil the Great, + 379 A.D.*

"HOLY BAPTISM is important, important for the things perceptible to the mind of those who receive it with fear; for the rich and ungrudging Spirit is always flowing into those accepting grace, filled with which the holy Apostles reaped a full harvest for the churches of Christ"

*Saint Gregory of Nyssa, + c. 394 A.D.*

"WE WHO RISE in the morning to meet we know not what, who pass the day in the midst of snares, who endure the vicissitudes of the hours, the changes brought by single minutes, the slips of words, and the dangers of deeds, why are we so unwilling to enter church in the morning? Why do we lack the will to beg protection for the whole day by our morning prayers? Why do we find pleasure with a man all day, but find none in presence with God for even a moment?"

*Saint Peter Chrysologus, Archbishop of Ravenna, + c. 450 A.D.*

### AN ENGLISH LADY'S TRAVELS

A Visit to Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, September 1999

FIRST IMPRESSIONS - wonderful golden cupolas shining on even a dull, rainy day, and even more resplendent when the sun came out. The darkness of the first night's Compline and the next morning's Liturgy, just broken by the lamps and candles. Walking - hurrying to the Liturgy at 5.45 a.m., and hearing the cocks crowing in the darkness. The Liturgy all in Slavonic with wonderful singing, and the sun gradually illuminating the murals and icons and the congregation, who had been black figures until then. The joy when I recognized some of the service. The feeling of unity, in spite of the language barrier, going up for the antidoron, and the impressive long line of monks and seminarians and laity venerating the icons in the darkness at the end of Compline.

I was really overjoyed to see the Reader Sergius who visited us two years ago. He seems to have settled in well though I think that he's going to find the cold Winter a trial - he was feeling the cold already and it's only like our autumn. [Reader Sergius is from Perth, Western Australia].

The monks and seminarists have quite a tight schedule each day, so, although they are willing to chat for a short while, they always seem to have another job to attend to. I suppose this doesn't allow the devil to find work for idle hands. I did enjoy a long chat under the apple trees in the orchard with Father Gabriel. I gradually realized that everyone needs a sprinkling of Russian to really enter into the good fellowship of the monastery and its inhabitants. Talking of which, there are some really magnificent cats there, very well fed specimens.

It's difficult to realise that a modern monastery has to have such extensive buildings to house the monks and the seminarists, and the printing and binding rooms, and the offices for mailing all the books which people order from them.

Surrounding the yellow brick buildings are fir trees and farmland, some of which has been abandoned and left to the encroaching Golden Rod. Strange to think that's it's a weed here in America. There's a constant sound of geese calling, which reminds me of St Werburgh.

I climbed the little hill to the cemetery to find Brother Jose's grave. Although I'd been told I would find it on the left, I didn't realize that so many graves would be on the left. Eventually a monk, with a purple hat on, took me there and said a prayer over the grave. It was a quite impressive grave with a substantial headstone with a little photograph of Brother Jose and the icon. In front were masses of red begonias in the form of a cross, candles and two tall red lamps with flames burning inside. I was very moved by it. The rest of the graves were well kept, many planted with flowers and containing a lamp.

Meals were substantial and were eaten in a large hall for men and a smaller adjoining room for women. We could see and hear the monks singing Grace and the Reader also. Most of the ladies and families of the seminarists were Russians or Central Europeans, but people did try to talk to me. I could usually see Sergius at the end of the meal when the seminarists had an hour or so of free time.

On Friday night after Compline, I met Sergius and Father Averky, who wanted to take us out for a drive on the Saturday afternoon. I really seem to be getting into the way of things here now. Yesterday I went for a walk away from the guest house and looked at the wild flowers and the poor pasture -lots of lakes and ponds, and generally poorly drained land with Golden Rod, Michaelmas daisies, bulrushes and lots of other plants and wild flowers. Walking back, I was met by one of the nuns from the Convent, where I had left some of Fr X's incense on Saturday morning. We walked together and I talked about our church. I was glad to see her - she was called Elizabeth and had seen me in church.

In the morning Sergius and I were given the key to the Baptistry. It was a lovely room decorated with wall paintings which seemed as fresh as if they had just been painted. The font stood up about three feet, and had an hexagonal surround, but inside it was really deep and painted a beautiful blue. I suppose the lake Spiridon was

baptized in was one of the many here. Sergius tells me that a group of seminarists are going in the lake at Theophany, but they are acclimatizing themselves first by having a dip in cold water each day for weeks beforehand! (There doesn't seem to be any hot water here in any case - I'm looking forward to seeing the Ladies' Room at the airport on Monday!).

I've just realized that I've done my last early morning dash (hardly) up to the monastery in the dark for the Liturgy. Sunday Liturgy is at 9 a.m. and I'll miss the service on Monday. I came back to the guest house with Sergius and we sat outside and chatted for ages. It was nice to talk to him after all the interrupted chats we had had.

This afternoon Fr Averky called with Sergius and Christian, and went for a drive to see the countryside. It was lovely, leaves just turning gold, lots of pretty lakes and white painted wooden houses. We stopped for some pictures, and Fr Averky kept stopping in little towns for more items of shopping. He bought me some of his favourite tea, Czar Nicholas II, - it's very nice. We eventually stopped for a meal in a cafe - it was good. Then we dashed back to the monastery for the Vigil. The church was crowded and all in darkness. I was worried about making my confession. There didn't seem to be many people queuing up on the right for English confession. Eventually I plucked up courage and got into the confessional corner in a little dark alcove. I looked in and couldn't see anyone and was just going away when Father Luke spoke to me in the darkness. Anyway, all was well. I made my confession and I realized that most people wanted to make their confession the next day so that they could receive Communion on the Feast day, Monday. I wandered back to my place in a daze. At the end a monk, presumably Father Luke came to me and said St Barbara's icon was just near where I had been standing. So I felt blessed that she was there. I saw Sergius for a minute, then I went back to the guest house in the car - it was 10.45 p.m!

Sunday 26th September: A late start today because the Liturgy starts at nine instead of 6 a.m. I waited a bit for Ludmilla, the Argentinean lady who has a room opposite. She only speaks Spanish and Russian, and I only speak English, so we converse in sign language. I'd just got out of the drive when a car pipped at me and I went across and an elderly man, who spoke English, offered me a lift. The car was full of Russians. This place is like a bit of Russia surrounded by the U.S.A. - most conversations that you hear are in Russian. Anyway I was so pleased that I was early for church, and I bought some candles and put them in the candle stands. The service was lovely although I didn't understand it, but I did recognize where we were much of the time. As usual I began worrying about the Argentinean lady with whom I should have walked up the road, but I needn't have done - she smiled at me in a very friendly fashion. Fr Averky says that all these worries are left behind here because of the holiness of the place. By the same token, he said that a visiting Archbishop had said it was a very holy place as when he approached here every tree was covered with demons. Anyway the service was lovely, and I did go up and receive Communion. The wine afterwards was hot and served by two boy servers. The children here are very reverent and quiet. There were lots of mothers with babies. Some of them gave the children to their husbands who are seminarists, and they went up earlier to receive. After the service I wandered over to the dining hall - I was amazed - it was packed with people waiting for their lunch. I found a place eventually. There were crowds of young

girls, and mothers with children. They were all very quiet while the reading and the meal went on.

Afterwards I met Fr John again; he is a big man, half English, half Russian, from Canada, with a long brown beard. He took me to see the church, and spoke about the icons and all the lovely things. We went outside and saw the tombs of the Archbishops and the hierarchy in a space under the altar, and he showed me the graves of the two monks who had founded the monastery in the 1920's (?). The first church they built burnt to the ground the day it was consecrated, so they had to go back to work in a factory to earn more money and build it again. They were philosophical about the fire. They said the wooden building wasn't worthy of God, so they must build in brick. The present underground church must have been the foundations for today's church. We went down some stairs into the underground church which they use in winter. On Sundays and feastdays they use the big church as all the people couldn't fit into the underground church. We looked round the icons, especially St Job of Pochaev who had set up a printing press in Russia, and their printing house is dedicated to St Job. Then he talked about the Russian Royal Family and the exhibition of their memorabilia which had come to the U.S.A. two years ago. He was very interesting. Then we went up and he walked with me to the guest house. He told me the monastery owns a mile square of land with farms on it, which the two founders had bought very cheaply when there was a depression in farming, hence all the poor pasture. The monastery had used to farm the land and had a big herd of cows in the 1970's, but they had found that they could make more money out of printing than they did out of farming and not so many monks wanted to do the farming. There are 30 monks now and 50 seminarists. There used to be 47 monks but they are gradually dying as they get older. This dwindling monastic work force makes working the monastery harder all the time. The seminarists work every afternoon, and have lectures in the morning. As we walked along, Fr John pointed out the big cross on a hill at the corner of the property.

I went back to the guest house and had a little sleep, then Fr Averky called for me in a car and we went for a drive to Cooperstown. This is a very pretty little place with beautiful white wooden houses in wooded grounds. We stopped at a refurbished Protestant church, and saw the grave of a man called Clark, who provided the money and the backing for Singer of Singer sewing machines. We also stopped at an antique shop and then went to a cafe for a fruit pie and coffee. Then it was time to dash back for the evening meal before the Vigil. I received a blessing from Bishop Michael of Toronto when I met him by chance outside the dining hall. Then Fr John took me round the printing rooms. The icon of St Job of Pochaev was there. This was because they'd had a monk who had cut off a finger with the big guillotine which they use for binding books. The abbot said that it was more important to have this icon of St Job in the printing room, and have a copy in the church. Then it was time for the Vigil.

People were there early. All the hangings were dark red for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. The music was fantastic - there were two choirs who answered each other especially when they did the "Lord, have mercies." A Russian lady pushed me to the front so that I could see better. I saw the Archbishop robed standing on a low dais in the middle of the church. Towards the end of the Vigil, the Archbishop came into the centre and there was a table with wine and oil and holy water close by. The Cross with a piece of the True Cross, was surrounded by red flowers on a large

base which the Archbishop lifted up, facing the East, while the choirs stood round singing 100 "Lord, have mercies." He lifted the Cross up above his head and gradually lowered it to the ground, while the choir sang, and the servers poured rose water over the flowers round the Cross. Then he turned to the West and did the same, and to the North and the South, and back to the East again. Then the clergy and the monks and seminarists venerated the Cross and were anointed by the Archbishop, and then the laity venerated the Cross. I followed along and was anointed and given some blessed bread, soaked in wine, and a flower, a marigold. I was pretty overcome by all this, so I was having a private cry. I went back to the Cross towards the end, and said the "Thy Cross do we worship," etc, which I couldn't think of when it was all happening. Then, after the service, with the bells all ringing, we went back to Fr Averky's room, and he gave me some relics for our church, and I sat with Sergius, Fr John and Christian until it got to 11.40 p.m. and they took me back to the guest house for my early morning flight home.

Sergius comes from Perth, Western Australia and will be at Holy Trinity for five years. Father Averky is the guest master and Father John is a monk.

Barbara Worth

*MRS BARBARA WORTH is one of the parishioners at the St Werburgh Mission, Congleton, Cheshire, and it is in her garden that their chapel is situated. Although she has not tried to impart anything deep in the diary of her visit, we feel that in many ways the piece is instructive. First for the leaders of churches, because, as we learn in so many other ways, it brings home to us that others do not see us exactly as we think they might or should. And secondly for the Orthodox laity, because it gives them a glimpse of the fact that monks are not always what they think they are. How many, like the writer of this piece, for instance, think that they are rather scenic people, waiting around to engage in conversation! Our writer found that they often seemed to have other things to do, and certainly most monks would not first think of their vocation as being conversationalists. Thirdly for us in Britain particularly, who very often know only a very Anglicanised Orthodoxy, almost completely severed from its monastic bearings: to hear of making the effort to get to church for Liturgies at six in the morning, training children to be quiet and attentive, taking blessings on meeting clergymen, listening attentively at meals to spiritual reading rather than chatting, of people trying to help each other to get to church, to see and understand what is happening, of people showing kindness to strangers - all these are things that we, here in a colder spiritual climate, can and must learn from in our church life. Here, admittedly in the Surrey deadlands, for instance, I often have to remind our people after church to take a newccomer or stranger over to the other house for the coffee and breakfast, most of our regulars are all too ready to join their own little gossip-groups and ignore the stranger who might need help, direction or reassurance. How good to hear of a place where such kindness and consideration comes as a natural result of their Christian confession., even when there is a language barrier.*

# CONCERNING PRAYER

## Its Inner Qualities and Outer Effects

*Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)*

*According to the Teaching of the Sacred Scriptures,  
the Holy Fathers, and the Teachers and Writers of the Church*

*A Translation from a Booklet Published by the  
Russian Skete of the Prophet Elias on Mount Athos.*

*Translation by Mrs Valentina Merritt of Brookwood, Surrey*

### FOREWORD

EACH ONE of us prays, but not everyone knows what true, God-pleasing and saving prayer is. The present collection of thoughts from the Sacred Scriptures, the Holy Fathers and the Church teachers and writers, has in view to explain what prayer is requisite and to encourage the reader to its diligent practice. The ideas are explained under three chapter headings, with more particular sub-divisions in each, not so much to maintain a strict order, which is of little use with regard to these spiritually edifying subjects, but rather so as to make them clear by a comparison of the similarities in their exercise. Although primarily, we had in view to describe the spirit of prayer\*, we have not left without attention the outward aspects of prayerful activity, with its rules and orders, because these are closely connected with interior prayerful dispositions.

*Footnote:* \* Just as "Concerning Prayer and Sobriety," the great collection of Bishop Theophan, has.

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION ON PRAYER

### 1. *The Concept and Definition of Prayer*

*Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)*

*When thou prayest, dost thou not converse with God? (Chrysostom).*

WHAT IS PRAYER? *The lifting up of the mind and the heart to God, manifest in the reverential words of a man to God - Catechism of Philaret*

Prayer, by reason of its nature, is the converse and union of man with God, and by reason of its action upholds the world and brings about reconciliation with God; it is the mother and also the daughter of tears, the propitiation for sins, a bridge over temptations, a wall against afflictions, a crushing of conflicts, a work of angels, the food of all the bodiless spirits, future gladness, unending activity, a source of virtues, a means of obtaining graces, invisible progress, food of the soul, enlightenment of the mind, an axe against despair, a demonstration of hope, a cure for sorrow, the wealth of monks, the treasure of hesychasts, the reduction of anger, the mirror of progress, the disclosure of stature, an indication of one's condition, a revelation of future things, and a sign of glory. For him who truly prays, prayer is the court, the judgment hall and the tribunal of the Lord before the judgment to come. - *The Ladder of Divine Ascent of St John Climacus.*

Prayer is a great weapon, the treasure that will never grow scarce, riches that never will be expended, a undisturbed refuge, imperturbable peace; and of innumerable blessings the root, the source and the mother is prayer. It is more effectual than the authority of kings. - *Chrysostom*.

Prayer is the rise of the man who has fallen, and is repenting, to God. Prayer is the lament of the man who has fallen, and is repenting, before God. Prayer is the pouring forth of the heart's desires, the supplication, the sighing before God of a man slain by sin. - *Blessed Bishop Ignatius [Brianchaninov]*.

Prayer is the constant feeling of one's spiritual poverty and weakness, contemplation within oneself, in people and in nature, of the works of the wisdom, the goodness and the almighty power of God; prayer is a constant disposition of thanksgiving. - *Saint John of Cronstadt*

## 2. The Content or Subject-Matter of Prayer

*We know not what we should pray for (Romans 8:26)  
After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father ... (Matt. 6:9)  
That supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made  
(I Timothy 2:1)*

Before all else, let us list sincere thanksgiving first on the scroll of our prayer. On the second line, we should put confession and heartfelt contrition of soul. Then let us present our petition to the King of all. This is the best way of prayer, as it was shown to one of the brethren by an angel of the Lord. - *The Ladder*.

Firstly, pray that you might be cleansed from the passions, then that you might be delivered from ignorance and forgetfulness, and thirdly that you might be delivered from every temptation and from abandonment - *St Nilus of Sinai*.

It is right not only to pray for one's own purification, but also for the purification of every one of one's fellows, imitating the example of the Angel's prayer. - *ibid*.

What should we ask of our Kind-hearted Heavenly Father? We should ask everything that has regard to His glory and to our profit, both corporal and temporal, as well as spiritual and eternal, that which is commanded and promised in His holy Word, and that which His holy Will, revealed in the Sacred Scriptures, desires. Spiritual profit covers those good things which are necessary for salvation and the inheritance of eternal life, such as: faith, remission of sins, His grace, renewal of the heart, constancy in faith, patience in affliction and in oppression, and the rest Corporeal benefits cover everything that is necessary for our body, for the maintenance of its life, such as: blooming health, intelligence, a sufficiency of necessities, food, clothing, repose, and the rest Spiritual good things should be requested in a fitting manner and awaited without any doubting, as being indispensable necessities for our true blessedness. For God Himself, making no exceptions, promised to grant them to us, when we ask for them appropriately: *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Roman 10:13)*; and He confirmed with an oath, that He has *no pleasure in the death of the sinner (Ezek. 33:11)*. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father Which is in heaven give the*

Holy Spirit *unto them that ask Him* (see Matt 7:11), said Christ, *Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth* (I Tim. 2:4). So, it is not right to say: "O Lord, if Thou desirest what is profitable for me, forgive my sins, grant me Thy grace, and so on," because it is known that without any doubt God desires what is profitable for me, such as the remission of sins, essential for salvation, and all the rest. However when asking for the temporal good things, like health, continuation of life, prosperity and the rest one must not ask directly but must add: "if this is well-pleasing to His holy will and is unto the profit of us who ask," because the Apostle says, *we know not what we should pray for as we ought* (Rom. 8:12). -*Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk.*

... *to be continued.*

## FROM THE SACRED CANONS

PERSONS who receive illumination [i.e. are baptized] while they are in a state of illness, and afterwards recover, must learn the Faith thoroughly and realize that they have been vouchsafed a Divine gift.

*Canon 47 of the Sixty Canons of the Holy Council of Laodicea, 4.0. 364*

## THE COMING MONTH

JANUARY is the first month of the civil, but not of the ecclesiastical year. However this fact pin-points the day of its most important celebration, that of the *Theophany*. In the Early Church, this was a festival celebrating all the events in Our Saviour's earthly life from His Nativity until and including the beginning of His teaching ministry and His first miracles. The feast was therefore appointed on the sixth day of the New Year, because the Lord completed His work of creation in the beginning in six days and the crown of that work was man. Christ is the New Man, and so His Theophany, His Divine revelation, was appointed on the sixth day of the New Year.

Later in both the East and the West, two festivals were inaugurated, the Nativity and the Theophany or Epiphany, as it is more generally known in the West, but the division between them was rather different in East and West. In the West, Christmas celebrated only the Nativity itself, and the manifestation of Christ beginning with the Adoration of the Wise Men was reserved for Epiphany. In the East, the coming of the Magi is included within the Nativity festival, and in the Theophany we see Christ, now a full-grown Man, at His Baptism.

This earlier identification of the two festivals is still evident by the liturgical structure of the celebrations. The Vigil Service for these festivals, begins not as is usual with Vespers, which has been chanted earlier in the day with the Liturgy, but with Great Compline. Great Compline is used only on the eves of these two Great feasts, that of the Annunciation (which in any case falls within Great Lent) and on weekdays within Great Lent. This service has the beautiful antiphon, "God is with us," which is so appropriate to both the Annunciation and the Nativity, and is confirmed by the revelation of the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity at the Saviour's Baptism. In our Lenten struggles it is also a comfort and encouragement to us.



There are two very clear differences between the Nativity and Theophany services in the liturgy as it is now celebrated. The first is minor, that in the Vespers for the feast on its eve, there are appointed eight Old Testament readings for Christmas, whereas for the Saviour's Baptism there are thirteen. This number is only exceeded by the fifteen at Pascha. And secondly, at the end of the Liturgies on the eve of the Theophany and on the day itself, the Greater Blessing of Waters is celebrated. Usually, the one on the eve is performed in church, and the faithful take of the blessed waters to sanctify their homes, to have a supply to drink at home, etc. Properly, although sadly this is often now neglected, the Blessing on the day of the feast is performed at a lake, pond, river or stream, and at the end of the Liturgy a procession is made with the Cross, icons, banners and lamps, to the waterside from the church. This is called the Procession to *Jordan* and parallels an actual procession to the River Jordan in Palestine, made every year on this day by the Bishops, clergy, laity and pilgrims in the Holy Land. There the exact same rite is celebrated. But for those of us, who are unable to join the celebration in the Holy Land, everywhere where waters are blessed on this day, becomes Jordan for us, and the blessing that we receive is one and the same, just as the rite is identical.

With the Theophany waters, the clergy bless the homes of their parishioners. In Orthodox lands, this is done on the day of the feast. Here in the diaspora, the flock is scattered and therefore the priest might have to travel miles to the homes of his parishioners and so usually it is done as soon as can be arranged in January. The faithful themselves may also bless their homes with the water: in preparation for family celebrations, in times of illness or distress, when the home has been the site of some quarrel or distressing occurrence. Very often too, when not able to attend church and receive the Holy Mysteries, the faithful take a sip of Theophany water every morning on rising from bed as a blessing for the day and to break their night's fast.

One thing about the celebration of the Lord's Baptism, we should make abundantly clear, as do the services and the Fathers in their teachings: we are baptized so that we might be cleansed, spiritually reborn and sanctified. The Lord, of course, was not baptized for these reasons. He was baptized so that He might purify the waters for our baptism, and that He might inaugurate our baptism.

Among the Saints we celebrate in January, are:

*Venerable Mother Domnica* (8th/21st) was from Carthage in North Africa. During the reign of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, she moved to Constantinople, and there she was baptized by the Patriarch, Saint Nectarius. Desiring to live wholly for Christ, she took up the monastic life and became a nun. So much did she increase in virtue that she was granted the gift of healing and of prophesy. She died in the year 474.

*Saint Brithwold, Archbishop of Canterbury* (9th/22nd): This righteous one succeeded the great Saint Theodore of Tarsus as Archbishop of Canterbury. Although he was less learned than St Theodore, he was well versed in the Holy Scriptures and did much to build upon the foundations that his predecessor had laid. Until his election as Archbishop, he had been abbot of the monastery at Reculver on the northern Kent coast, and when elected to succeed St Theodore he went to France, where he was

consecrated to the episcopate by Archbishop Godwin of Lyons. He served as Archbishop for thirty-seven years, and many Bishops were consecrated at his hands. At first he was opposed to St Wilfrid, but later became his friend and helper. He died (A.D. 731), worn out by his labours, in deep old age, and was laid to rest near St Theodore in the Monastery Church of Sts Peter and Paul in Canterbury.

On the same day as *Saint Antony the Great*, 17th/30th January, we celebrate the *Holy New Martyr George of Ioannina*, of whom we are blessed to have a relic in our church at Brookwood. Saint George was born in a village then called Tsurhly, but now renamed St George after him. His parents were poor farmers, and both died when he was only eight years old. Eventually he found employment as a groom in the household of Hatzi Abdullah, one of the officers of Imin Pasha. He was given the name "Giaour Hasan" (the infidel Hasan) by his masters, who would not call him by his Christian name. Thus it came to be thought that he had become a Muslim, and when he was betrothed to a Christian girl, one of the hodjas in Ioannina, where the Saint was now stationed, denounced him for doing so. The whole situation escalated, and although George denied being a Muslim and had a Turkish speaking friend who spoke up for him, he was sent to the Vizier. His employer even bore witness for him, and he was released from custody. Soon after this incident he married, and his situation changed. Imin Pasha was posted to Prusa, and George went with him at first, but later returned to Ioannina and found other employment there. Here George's wife bore him a son, baptized on the day after the Theophany. Soon thereafter, he seems to have been given some intimation of his impending martyrdom. He was again apprehended by the hodja who had first caused trouble for him; the man repeated his accusations. The saint's brother-in-law, Alexis, who happened to be passing, sprang to his defence and a scuffle ensued. So George was brought before the judge again and thrown into prison. He was put in stocks and a 140 lb stone slab was placed on his chest. In spite of this he fell asleep, when he woke and was asked how he could sleep he assured them that he felt no pain. He said that in his sleep he had seen a youth dressed in white, who spoke to him in Turkish, and encouraged him. He was thrice brought out and interrogated, but as he would not deny the Saviour, he was at last sentenced to death. Prominent Christians, including Metropolitan Joachim of Chios, who was later to become Patriarch of Constantinople, appealed for him, pointing out that he was uncircumcised, but the sentence had to stand. One prison guard suggested that he become a Muslim, be reprieved, escape and then, if he wished, go to Greece (now an independent state) and revert to Christianity. The Saint refused even to deny the Saviour for a moment. When on St Antony's day they came to take him to the place of execution, he embraced all the other Christians with him in gaol and went joyfully with his executioners. When they came to the place of execution, the saint asked them to loosen his hands, and he made the sign of the Cross and professed his Christian faith. He then asked the forgiveness and granted forgiveness to his executioners. They then placed a noose around his neck and drew him up, thus hanging him. He thus gave up his soul at the age of twenty-eight in the year 1838. The body of the saint was ordered to remain hanging for three days, but it was seen to be clothed in a divine light and from it a fragrance emitted. On the third day, Metropolitan Joachim was permitted to take the sacred relics and they were laid to rest in the Metropolitan Church of St Athanasius. Miracles of healing were worked through portions of the saint's clothing or portions of the rope with which he was hanged.

The *Venerable Zeno* (30th January/12th February) was born in Pontus, the son of wealthy parents. As a youth he served in the army. Later he took up the ascetic life and settled in a cave, which had been used in ancient times as a tomb, near Antioch. There he spent forty years, living in great austerity. In his cave he had no bed, no light, and hardly any possessions, just some necessary vessels, and even these he left to the Patriarch of Antioch after his death, to be given to the poor. He was clothed in a rough tunic, and ate only dried bread, left for him by those who asked his prayers, and water, which he obtained from a spring. He left his cave every week to go to church and receive the Holy Mysteries, and thus he spent the whole of his life. He died at the beginning of the fifth century.

## POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

*"I enclose a press cutting of the statue of Princess Diana portrayed as the Virgin Mary, which is being exhibited by the Tate in Liverpool. Don't you think that this is blasphemous? - A.Q., Kingston upon Hull.*

Having read the piece and looked at the picture, I am not quite sure why it is billed as being cast as the Virgin Mary. Is this a media gloss? Certainly it is quite clear that it is cast as a Roman Catholic religious statue, but unless there is an ascription to the Virgin, I do not quite see why the parallel is drawn. In fact in many ways it is quite unlike the portrayal of the Virgin in R.C. statuary: the head is uncovered, the "traditional" pale blue and white colouring of the robes is not used, there are no religious symbols (crown, stars, roses, rosaries and the like). In fact I would say that it neither appears to be the Virgin nor, being rather fleshy and heavy, does justice to the late Princess. So, although it is undoubtedly in poor taste (as many R.C. devotional statues are in any case), I think that we need not get too excited about it. Sadly there seem to be many more things in the world today which are designed, executed and promoted specifically to demean Christ and the Faith. Many of them are not only in poor taste, but are wholly degrading, shameless and sick. Another correspondent sent us a cutting regarding a play being staged in North London, wherein the Saviour and the Apostles are portrayed as being subject to sexual depravity. This is surely much more worrying. More worrying still is the fact that the Christians, ourselves as Orthodox included, remain so silently acquiescent in the face of such attacks against our Saviour and the things that we claim to hold holy. In the case of the play, and, I believe, of a "Spitting Image" mockery of Christ a few years ago, the loudest protests came not from the Christians but from the Muslims who revere Christ as a prophet. This should shame us.

*"I know there are various different opinions about when the third millennium actually starts, and I suppose that it is different again for you being on the Old Calendar, but don't you think that it gives us a wonderful opportunity to make a new start?" - M.T., Kettering.*

I can only answer this: yes and no. Yes, in the sense that every day is a wonderful opportunity to make a new start, and that is how we should greet each day. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein" (Ps 117:24), we can say with the Psalmist every day. Indeed, Saint Herman of Alaska urges

us "from this very minute," that is from every and any minute, to strive to love God, to make a good start.

Because of our human weakness, feasts and commemorations do give us a special impetus to make new starts, but all these starts are only our own turnings to repentance and they must be sustained - often a much harder task. If we so desire, we can make the beginning of the third millennium such a new starting point, but we can and indeed should do that today, and we should do it every day after the new millennium starts.

If we are thinking not of the individual but universally, then surely there is only one new start that is of any real significance in the whole of human history, and that cannot be measured to a particular day (or even as we now see in trying to date the millennium) to any particular year, but is the new start made over a thirty-three year period, which now cannot be precisely dated, of the Incarnate Dispensation of our Saviour and culminating with the last, the great day of the feast (John 7:37), with the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. That is the new start which we celebrate every year in the annual cycle of fasts and festivals, and which perpetually calls us, again and again, to make our own new starts. It seems to me, a much more compelling call than the mammon motivated celebration that the world around us is now exciting itself about.

## TOMB OF THE ALL-HOLY MOTHER OF GOD FLOODED

AS REPORTED in the secular press, sudden rains in Jerusalem in mid-December caused the Tomb of the Mother of God to be flooded. The tomb, which is in a Church in the Kedron Valley, below the Garden of Gethsemane, is 16 metres underground. The church was flooded with rain water and effluent from a failure of the drainage systems to cope with the unaccustomed amount of water. *Abbess Elizabeth of the Gethsemane Russian Orthodox Convent of St Mary Magdalene* informed us by fax that everything in the holy place was covered with a black, smelly mud. The sisters of her Convent were helping to clean the vestments that had been soiled, and the lamps and other things in the church.

## PATRIARCHS AND PRESIDENTS TO FATHER AT BETHLEHEM FOR THE NATIVITY

THE DAILY NEWS SERVICE of the Ecumenical News International reports that, on the Orthodox celebration of the Saviour's Nativity (7th, January, 2000 n.s.), *His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomeos I, the Œcumenical Patriarch* will lead about twelve other Patriarchs and Metropolitans, the leaders of the National Orthodox Churches, at a celebration in the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The Presidents of the nations which are traditionally Orthodox: Greece, Cyprus, Georgia, Ukraine, Romania, and Moldova, are also expected to attend although it is expected that ill-health will prevent Russia's President Boris Yeltsin from being there, and Slobodan Milosevic will be unlikely to attend and risk arrest. The celebration will be hosted by the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, but the Orthodox Patriarchs and the Presidents will also attend a reception by the Israeli President, Ezer Weizman and the Mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert. Patriarch Alexei II of Moscow will leave immediately after the Nativity

celebrations to preside on the following day at the first major service at the newly rebuilt Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.

## PATRIARCH BARRED FROM CHURCH

PATRIARCH DIODOROS I of Jerusalem was barred from participating in the dedication festival services at the *Church of St Nicolas in Beit Jala* on 6th/19th December. Of the various denominations, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has the largest number of Palestinian Christians, and the vast majority of the faithful within the Patriarchate are Palestinian, although the administration is still largely in the hands of Greeks. This has been causing growing resentment for a number of years. The incident at Beit Jala was provoked because the Palestinian congregation accused the Patriarchate of selling huge areas of Church land to the Israelis, including the area which now houses the Knesset and the Yad Veshem Holocaust Memorial. Within the Church at Beit Jala there is a cave in which St Nicolas lived as an ascetic, and the Church is the principle shrine of the saint in the Holy Land.

## KOSOVO AFTERMATH

HIS GRACE *Bishop Artemije of Kosovo and Metohia* addressed a letter to President Clinton at the end of November, outlining the present plight of his flock there and asking for greater protection for the non-Albanian population in the province. He said that the international community should now make clear to the Kosovo Albanian leaders that "they cannot create an ethnically cleansed state under the protectorate of the Western democratic governments." He called for the militants to be disarmed and that an impartial investigation into all criminal acts committed by Serbs and Albanians should be launched.

THE CHARITY, *Anglo-Yugoslav Medical Aid*, warns in its newsletter of a looming disaster in Yugoslavia, a country which has suffered huge damage to essential services and its economic infrastructure. Their appeal particularly mentions the fact that before the Nato bombing the health services in the country were treating 500,000 patients a month, whereas now they are scarcely able to cope with 50,000. Hospitals now have minimal stocks of drugs and surgical supplies, and patients have to bring their own sheets, do their own laundry, and be taken home for a bath or a shower. Of the £52million collected by the major international charities to provide relief after the Kosovo war, only £400,000 has been earmarked for Yugoslavia. The charity, which was founded during the bombing as a response to the need, aims to provide humanitarian aid to help people of all ethnic origins in Yugoslavia. As part of its fund-raising efforts it is putting on a concert at the Royal Academy of *Music* for the "Orthodox New Year" on Friday 14th January at 7.30 p.m. The concert will feature light classical, folk and jazz music from Serbia, Greece, Russia, Romania, and tickets (£15) are available from the charity at P.O. Box 20088, London NW2 6FH. Donations for AYMA can also be sent to this address.

## MISSIONARY WORK IN RUSSIA

SYNDESMOS News, the newsletter of the *World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth* (Vol. XIII/3 - XIV/1) reports a missionary journey made between 2nd and 15th August last year by forty young people, headed by *Father Arkady Chatov and Father Artemy*

*Skripkin* (MP). They went to the Nagorskiy district of the Viatka Eparchy, a region which until 1999 had no open church. In the village of Sinegorje, they erected a tent church in which two Divine Liturgies were celebrated during the visit; at the first 150 people received Holy Communion, and at the second over 200. During the missionary journey, 400 people were baptized (273 in Sinegorje, 80 in the village of Crutoy Log, and 97 in Pervomaisk). On 7th August, 186 people were baptised at one time in the Kobra River. "During the Baptism the wind suddenly blew away the clouds and the sun began to shine. When the procession from the river returned to the tent church, it began to rain. It was the first rain after a long period of drought." A children's choir was organised, and every evening there were talks and discussions about the Orthodox Faith.

## GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN ALBANIA

ALBANIA was declared the world's first official atheistic state in 1967 and religious organisations were strictly forbidden. The Orthodox Church was only re-established there in the early 1990's, when *Archbishop Anastasios* was appointed Archbishop by the Œcumenical Patriarchate. At that time there were only five elderly priests in the country. Now, according ENI Bulletin 99-0458, the Church has 110 priests and a seminary with 100 students. 65 old churches have been restored, 135 repaired, and 72 new ones built. This progress has been made despite the fact that there was some resentment about the appointment of a Greek, rather than an Albanian national, as Archbishop. The Archbishop's energy and skills have overcome that resentment, and the Church there is now a multi-ethnic community comprising Albanians and Greeks, Montenegrins and Vlachs. In November, the Œcumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos I visited Albania for a week, saying that "We want to assist people to find and develop their faith, and cultivate virtue, especially through the means of their own language and culture." At a reception hosted in the Patriarch's honour by the Archbishop, the President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament and most of the MPs were present. That most of these civil dignitaries were Muslims is a mark of the respect which the Orthodox Church has gained in less than a decade in Albania. In part this regard was fostered by the way that the Church helped Albanian refugees from Kosovo during the Nato assault on Yugoslavia.

## LIBERAL INTERPRETATION OF RUSSIAN LAW

RUSSIA'S highest legal authority, the Constitutional Court, has issued a liberal interpretation of the discriminatory law, passed in 1997, that governs religious activity in the country. This interpretation was made in November in response to pleas made by the Jehovah Witnesses and by a Pentecostal group in Abakan. The 1997 law had created two classes of religious organisation, and the activities and rights of those in the second group were strictly limited. It remains to be seen how this interpretation will be applied in fact, but it is to be hoped that it also will ease the situation of those groups, who, although Orthodox, cannot in conscience accept the administration of the Patriarchate and therefore fell into the second class of religious bodies.

## MOSCOW PATRIARCH HOSTS INTER-CHURCH CONFERENCE

THE CHRISTIAN Inter-Confessional Consultative Committee, a forum for 33 Christian communities in Russia, held a three-day conference which opened in Moscow on 23rd November. The venue was the "St Daniel Hotel," part of the complex of the ancient Danielovsky Monastery, which now houses the official offices of the Patriarchate. From the ENI bulletin (99-0457), it seems that the conference was not essentially ecumenical, but was a platform to discuss common interests and concerns, yet inevitably the Patriarchate was drawn into some ecumenical compromise, and a statement issued by the conference declared: "the voice of the martyrs is stronger than the voice of divisions [among Christians]. The witness of martyrs, who belonged to different confessions, is our inheritance." One can rejoice that the Patriarchate is becoming less reluctant to speak of the witness of the martyrs of the Communist tyranny, something which hitherto they strenuously denied, but the thought expressed in this statement is not one that would have found favour with the Fathers of the Church.

## FELIXSTOWE MISSION

THE ORTHODOX MISSION of Sts Felix and Edmund in Felixstowe reports that they are about to sign an agreement permitting them to move to new, hopefully permanent, premises in the Spring. Fr *Andrew Phillips*, writes: "The premises, a redundant brick-built Anglican church of 1951, are currently dedicated to St Philip and news of the agreement in principle was received on the eve of St Philip's day, according to the Church calendar." He continues: "Older readers of 'The Shepherd' may recall that the old Russian Church in London, now long demolished, was also dedicated to St Philip." Actually it was dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God, as the London Russian Orthodox Parish still is, but it was located at the former Anglican church of St Philip on Buckingham Palace Road. The Felixstowe church is situated on a housing estate near the town centre, and besides the 800 square foot church, there are a hall, a kitchen, telephone and toilets. The parish hope that it can be a centre of missionary outreach. Already they have a Saturday afternoon playgroup for young mothers and children, and catechism classes after the Sunday Liturgy.

## GRAVE OF KING ALFRED FOUND

A NEWS FEATURE in "The Daily Telegraph" of 28th October, reports that archaeologists are convinced that they have found the grave of *King Alfred the Great* between a terrace of Victorian houses and a car park in Winchester. The monastery in which his relics had been laid to rest was dissolved in 1538, and in 1788 a prison was built on the site. There are reports that a great stone coffin was found at that time; the lead was sold and the contents scattered. Some fragments of bone have now been found in the area, most significant among them a large piece of a woman's pelvis, which it is believed might be that of Alfred's consort, Ealhswith, who is commemorated as a Saint. King Alfred was undoubtedly one of the greatest Christian kings in this country, and was himself locally venerated as a Saint. He and Saint Ealhswith are the great-great-grandparents of our Saint Edward the Martyr.

## BROOKWOOD NEWS

A PRAYER BOOK, once belonging to *Saint John of Cronstadt the Wonderworker* (1829-1908), and signed by the Saint, has been given to Saint Edward's Church at Brookwood. The book, which belonged to three priests subsequent to Saint John, was signed by each of them, and the donor is the widowed presbytera (priest's wife) of the last of these, *Matushka Iraida Svidich*, a lady now approaching a hundred years of age.

*ORTHODOX AID FUND*: For the (new) Calendar Year 1999, we were able, through the kindness of our readers and parishioners, to give a total of £4,941.90 in sterling to various church and humanitarian charities, and an additional \$3,005 in American dollars. Although, as exchange rates vary throughout the year, it is impossible to calculate this exactly in sterling, this makes a total of approx. £6,850, (just over £ 130 per week for a small congregation teetering at about the thirty mark). The total for 1997 was £4,185; that for 1998 was £5,850, and so this represents a rise of approximately 17% over last year's figure, and we would sincerely like to thank our readers for their generosity. These figures do not include donations which we were asked to pass on to various good causes, but which did not pass through the Brotherhood account. At the time of going to press, we have some monies in hand to distribute, but please keep sending your donations in, so that we can continue this important witness of our mission. We believe that a church or parish which ceases to give, will also cease to live. The late Father Lazarus (Moore) is reported as saying that if water is not drawn off from a pipe, then that in the pipe stagnates. We certainly see this happen with parishes that become obsessed only with their own concerns. Cheques should be made payable to *Saint Edward Brotherhood* and you may either allocate the sum to be sent to a specific cause, or leave it to our discretion to send the monies on as needs arise.

WITH THE HELP of *Michael and Margaret Woodrow*, the perfumers and fragrance specialists, we have now managed to produce a *Lily of the Valley incense*, which, when we have a quantity in stock and have been able to price it, we will offer with our other fragrances. Reverting to our original idea of naming our incenses after the holy places of England, we have named the new fragrance, *Evesham Lily*. From Saxon times, there was a monastery at Evesham and a shrine of the Mother of God.

WOOL FOR *RUSSIA*: With the demise of *Ursula Atkins*, who was industriously knitting clothes for children in Russia, we have an immense supply of wool. If any of our readers would like to knit for Russia, or for the poor anywhere, we can supply them with wool, and we would welcome volunteers.

*THEOPHANY PROCESSION TO JORDAN*: *Dr George and Mrs Elisabeth Hobbs* have again kindly extended the hospitality of their home for a warm drink and refreshments after the Blessing of the Waters at Chertsey on Theophany. Also again members of the congregations of *St Peter's Shared Church* and *St Anne's Roman Catholic Church* in the town have expressed their desire to join our small congregation on that occasion, as they did last year.



## PRACTICAL TIP

PROVIDE yourself with a good and suitable bottle for your Theophany Water, preferable with tinted or coloured glass, and one with a firm stopper or screw-top. From Greece, one may now obtain specially made Holy Water bottles with icons on. Even if you cannot obtain one of these, do provide yourself with something appropriate to the holy use to which it is to be put. Even here in Britain, there are numerous shops where one can buy attractive bottles of this type (and boxes and containers which could be used for other holy things: - antidoron, Thomas bread, and the like), rather than just using an old spirits or wine bottle. I have seen people come to collect their blessed water in bottles still bearing their proprietary labels! We should not treat holy things in this way. For a special guest, we make an effort to lay the table nicely, and it is an indication of our regard for him. It is the same with holy things. Oftentimes people who never dream of putting brand bottles and jars on their meal tables, nonetheless happily keep their holy things in them. We should show the greatest and first care for the holy things. Of itself this is a witness to our faith.