

The Shepherd

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FROM THE FATHERS

"SATAN has three kinds of power which precede all sin. The first is error, and the second is neglect or laxity, and the third is lust."

Abba Pœmen the Great of Egypt, fourth century

"THESE THREE GIANTS are the vices already mentioned: ignorance, the source of all evils; forgetfulness, its close relation and helper; and laziness, which weaves the dark shroud enveloping the soul in murk. This third vice supports and strengthens the other two, consolidating them so that evil becomes deep-rooted and persistent in the negligent soul. Laziness, forgetfulness and ignorance in their turn support and strengthen the other passions."

Venerable Mark the Ascetic, early fifth century

"I THINK, in my poverty, that if a man does not guard his heart well, he forgets and neglects all that he has heard. And so the enemy finds a place in him and casts him down. It is like a lamp made ready and shining. If one neglects to provide it with oil, it is quenched little by little and the darkness gains power over it. Not only this, but sometimes a mouse will come near it and try to gnaw the wick. It cannot do this before the lamp is completely quenched; but if it sees that wick has not only no light but no heat of fire either, it snatches it out to eat it, knocks it down and causes the lamp to be shattered. If the lamp is earthenware, it is broken; but if it is brazen, it is found by the master of the house who fixes it up again. Likewise, when a soul is neglected, the Holy Spirit withdraws from it little by little until it is completely quenched of its heat. Then the enemy eats up the zeal of the soul and also destroys the body through wickedness. And if that man is well disposed toward God and has simply been overcome through negligence, the merciful God puts into him His fear and the memory of the punishments; then the man will be vigilant in the future, guarding himself with great caution until the day of his visitation."

Abba Orsiesius of Egypt, fourth century

GUIDANCE FOR CONFESSION

From Hieroschemamonk* Ambrose's Book,
"On the Grace-filled Activity of the Prayer of Jesus"

WITH GOD'S HELP, I came to Kiev. My first and most important desire was to prepare, confess and commune of the Holy Mysteries of Christ in that grace-filled place, and so I settled as near as possible to the God-pleasers [*i.e. the saints whose sacred relics repose in the Caves Monastery - transl.*], the better to be able to go to God's house. A good, elderly Cossack took me into his hut, and as he lived alone, it was peaceful and quiet for me there. Throughout the week during which I was preparing

for confession, I often thought how best to confess. I began to remember things from my youth and to examine all my sins in detail, so as not to forget anything. I started to write everything that I remembered down even the most trifling things, and I wrote out a huge list. I heard that seven versts [*a verst is about two-thirds of a mile - ed.*] from Kiev in the Kitaev Hermitage there was a spiritual father who lived an ascetic life and was very wise and prudent. Whoever visited him for his soul's profit, came away with a feeling of tenderness, restored by his spiritual instruction, and with a feeling of lightness in his heart. This delighted me and without delay I went to see him. Having asked his advice and talked with him, I gave him my list to look through. When he had read it, he told me: "You, beloved friend, have written down much that is useless. Now, listen: 1) you must not say in confession those sins which you have formerly confessed and which have been absolved and which you have not repeated, for to do otherwise would be to be untrusting of the efficacy of the mystery of confession; 2) you must not mention other people who were involved in the circumstances of your sins, but must only judge yourself; 3) the Holy Fathers forbid us to tell our sins in every detail, but to identify them in general terms, lest by our particular fastidiousness we cause a temptation for ourselves and for the spiritual father; 4) you came to repent, but haven't repented of that which you did not think to repent of, that is how coldly and carelessly you are offering your repentance; 5) you have catalogued all the slight things, but have lost sight of the most important thing, you have not revealed the most grievous sins; you have not even recognized them or written down that *you do not love God, that you hate your neighbour; that you do not believe the word of God and that you are overflowing with pride and self-esteem.* In these four sins there is mixed all the abyss of evil and all our spiritual depravity. They are the main roots, from which spring all branches of our falls into sin."

Hearing this, I was amazed, and I began to speak: "Be merciful, venerable father, but how can I not love God, our Creator and Protector? How not believe in the word of God itself? - in it everything is true and holy. And I wish well to each of my neighbours; yes, and why would I hate them? In no way can I be proud; except for my innumerable sins, I have nothing at all to boast of. And in my state of poverty and illness, in what way can I enjoy sensual pleasures and lasciviousness? Of course, if I had been educated and rich, then without a doubt, I would have been guilty of the things you have said."

"It is a pity, beloved, that you have understood so little of what I have explained to you. So as to make you understand more quickly, I will give you the crib-sheet that I always use myself when I confess. Read it through and you will see clearly all that I have just told you, set out precisely."

The spiritual father handed me his list, and I began to read it.

THE CONFESSION OF THE INNER MAN, WHICH LEADS TO HUMILITY

"Having attentively turned my gaze upon myself, and observing my inner disposition, I am convinced by the experience that I do not love God, that I have no love for my neighbour, that I do not believe anything religious and that I am full of pride and sensual love. I have actually found all this in myself through this detailed examination of my feelings and actions, thus:

1) I do not love God. For if I loved God, then I would unceasingly think about Him with heartfelt satisfaction; every thought of God would then bring me a delightful sweetness. On the contrary, I much more often and much more readily entertain worldly thoughts, and reflections on God seem to me heavy and dry. If I loved God, then conversation with Him in prayer would nourish me; it would delight me and draw me to uninterrupted communion with Him; but, on the contrary, not only am I not delighted by prayer, but even when occupied by it I feel it to be a labour, I have to fight against reluctance, I become enfeebled by laziness, and am always ready to turn my attention to something else of little importance, just so that I can shorten my prayers or even give them up. When I am engaged in empty occupations time flies by for me unnoticed; but when occupying myself with God, when placing myself in His presence, every hour seems to me like a whole year. But if someone loves another, then he thinks of him throughout the whole day, he represents him to himself, he is concerned about him, and in whatever he may be occupied the beloved friend does not leave his thoughts; but for the course of a whole day, I hardly set aside even one hour, that I might immerse myself deeply in thoughts of God and that I might ignite the love of Him within me, but the twenty-three hours I readily offer as a willing sacrifice to the idols which are my passions. When conversing about worldly, vain things, and about subjects which are demeaning for the soul, I am full of spirits and I feel satisfaction, but when conversation turns to the things of God I dry up, becoming bored and indolent. If, moreover, I am involuntarily drawn into a conversation with others about sacred things, I try to turn the conversation quickly to something which will flatter my passions. I am insatiably curious about the news, about events in the world, about political developments; I greedily feed my obsession for knowing about the worldly sciences and about the arts, and that for acquisitions, but the study of God's Law [*catechism*], of the knowledge of God, and of religion, make no impression upon me at all; it does not feed my soul, and I study it not as the only indispensable study for the Christian but as a side-issue and accessory subject, to which I have to apply myself if perhaps I have some spare time or am at leisure. To put it succinctly, if love for God is manifest in the fulfilment of His commandments - and the Lord Jesus Christ says, "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments," - and I not only do not keep them but even do not try much to do so, then according to the plain truth itself it follows that I do not love God. Saint Basil the Great confirms this, saying: "If anyone does not keep His commandments, it is proof that he does not love God and His Christ" (*the Morals: Rule 3, cap 1*).

2) I do not love my neighbour. Because I not only do not lay down my soul (as the Gospel says) for the good of my neighbour, but I do not even sacrifice my honour, my benefit or my peace for the good of my neighbour. If I loved him, according to the Evangelical precept, as myself, then his misfortune would affect me as well, and his good fortune would bring me delight. But, on the contrary, I listen with great curiosity to unhappy news about my neighbour, and I am not distressed by it, but I remain indifferent to it, or, what is even more criminal, I find a certain satisfaction in this. And I do not cover the evil actions of my brother in love, but I noise them abroad, adding judgment thereto. His good standing, honour and happiness do not delight me, as should be the case, and what is even worse, they do not evoke in me a feeling of joy, but they very subtly arouse in me as kind of envy or of disdain.

3) I do not believe in anything religious. Neither immortality, nor the Gospel. If I were firmly convinced and undoubtingly believed that beyond the grave there was life eternal with requital for deeds committed on earth, then I would reflect on this constantly; the very thought of immortality would horrify me and I would spend my life like a traveller preparing to return to his homeland. On the contrary, I do not even think about eternity, and I consider the end of this present life as but the limit of my existence. The secret thought nestles in me: who knows what will be after death? If I say that I believe in immortality, then I say this only according to the intellect, but my heart is a long way from being firmly convinced of this, as my deeds make manifest and as does my continual concern for the good arrangement of the things of this perceptible life. If the Holy Gospel, being the word of God, were received in faith by my heart, I would be continually studying it, I would learn it, I would be satisfied by it and I would look upon it with the deepest reverence. Wisdom, goodness and love, which are hidden therein, would lead me to delight; I would be sustained by instruction in God's Law day and night, I would be nourished thereby, as it were by daily bread, and I would be heartfully drawn to fulfil its precepts. Nothing earthly would be strong enough to draw me away from it. But, on the contrary, when occasionally I read or hear the word of God, whether it be of necessity or through a desire to learn, even then I do not pay it the greatest attention, I feel dryness, inattentiveness and, as if it were just routine reading, I leave it without any particular benefit, and I readily rush on to turn to reading worldly things in which I find more satisfaction, and more new subjects to engross me.

4) I am full of pride and sensual self-love. All my actions make clear that, seeing good in myself, I desire to make a show of it, either by getting praise from others thereby or by an inner love of self; and even though I manifest an apparent humility, yet I attribute everything to my own powers, and I consider myself superior to others, or, at the very least, in no way worse than they. If I notice some defect in myself, I try to excuse it, to cover it, as if it were some personal necessity or were harmless; being irritated by those who are disrespectful towards me, I consider them people unworthy of consideration; I am vainglorious of my talents; I consider my failures in undertakings as affronts; I gossip about and rejoice at the misfortunes of my enemies; and if I do attempt something good, then I have some purpose or praise, or some spiritual self-interests or worldly comfort in view. In a word, I constantly make an idol of myself, to which I offer unremitting service, always seeking sensual gratification and food for the satisfaction of my passions and vices.

From all that I have enumerated, I see that I am proud, adulterous, faithless, one who does not love God and hates his neighbour. What situation could be more sinful? The state of the spirits of darkness is better than my situation; although they do not love God and hate man, although they live by and are nourished by pride, yet at the very least they believe and, because of that belief, they tremble. But what of me? Surely it can only be a calamitous fate that awaits me? And how much severer and more punishing will be the sentence of the judgment in view of the inattentiveness and foolhardiness of life, which I have recognized in myself!"

Having read the confession that the spiritual father had given me, I was horrified and thought to myself, "My God, how dreadfully sin has eaten into me, and until now I had not even noticed!" And so the desire to be cleansed of it forced me to

ask guidance from this great spiritual father, in what way, as he had recognized the causes of all the evils, I could find the means of correction. This is how he began to explain:

"Do you not see, beloved brother, that the cause of not loving God is not believing, the cause of not believing is lack of conviction, and the cause of lack of conviction is failure to seek out the radiant truths of knowledge, negligence regarding the illumination of the soul. In a word, one can say: if you don't believe, it is impossible to love; if you are not convinced, it is impossible to believe. And in order to be convinced, it is imperative to gain a full and thorough understanding of the subject in hand; and it follows that it is absolutely necessary by means of reflection, of study of the word of God and of experimental observation, to inspire in the soul a thirst and a longing, or to explain it another way, a 'wonder' which will produce an unquenchable desire to comprehend things, and more deeply to penetrate matters in their essence.

"One spiritual writer formulated it thus: 'Love,' said he, 'usually develops from understanding, and the greater the depth and breadth of the understanding, so much the greater will be the love, and so much more opportunely will the soul be softened and conformed to the Divine love, while diligently looking towards the most praeter-perfect and most exquisite being of God and His unexcelled love for man.'

"Well, now you see that the cause of the sins which you read out is slothfulness of mind with regard to spiritual matters, which quenches the very feeling of their usefulness. If you wish to know the way of escaping from this evil, then in every possible way strive for spiritual illumination, achieve it with diligent study of the word of God, with study of the Holy Fathers, with reflection, with spiritual counsel, and with conversing with those who are wise in Christ."

*Translated from a photo-lithograph of the
Los Angeles Vicariate of the Russian Church Abroad.*

*Footnote: * A hieroschemamonk is a monk of the Great Schema or Habit, who is also ordained as a priest; a monk of the Little Schema or Habit, often called a Stavrophor, is called a Hieromonk or Priestmonk if he is ordained to the priesthood, a Hierodeacon if he is ordained to the diaconate.*

From the Writings of SAINT JOHN OF SHANGHAI THE WONDERWORKER

A Rule for Altar-Servers
Composed by Archbishop John

1. To serve in the sanctuary, it is necessary to take the blessing of the priest, or at an hierarchical service, the Hierarch.
2. One must come to church before the beginning of the service.
3. On entering the sanctuary, one must face the Holy Table and, on weekdays, make three full prostrations to the ground, or, on Sundays and the feasts of the Lord, three profound bows from the waist.
4. Those persons who are not serving are not permitted to enter the sanctuary.

5. Only those who have gathered to serve may enter the sanctuary.
6. When vesting in their stikharions [*servers' robes*], servers should remove their ties [*Ties, or neckties as the Americans call them, are considered to be an unnecessary adornment. One often finds in Russian parishes that even laymen in the congregation do not wear them - ed.*]
7. When taking off the stikharion, it must be neatly folded or hung in its place.
8. In the sanctuary one should not engage in conversations, nor laugh, nor should one walk about the church, and particularly is this so during the Divine service itself.
9. All readers and altar-servers must be in stikharions. One must also obtain a blessing from the priest, or in an hierarchical service the Hierarch, to take off one's stikharion.
10. For communion of the Holy Mysteries, the servers, with the exception of the readers, take off their stikharions.
11. They should not touch the Holy Table nor the Table of Oblation (proskomidi).
12. They should not walk about in church during the reading of the
13. Gospel, the Apostle or between the exclamations "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ..." and "And the mercies of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ be with you all."
14. 1 3) Even before putting on the stikharion, their hands must be clean.
15. In the sanctuary and sacristy, nothing should be brought that is not used in the Divine services.
16. Sitting down, while wearing the stikharion, is not permitted.
17. Before taking candles or the liturgical fans out, the server should cross himself before the icon in the High Place and bow to the Hierarch or priest, who stands before the Holy Table. On returning, they should repeat this.
18. One must bear in mind that the sanctuary is the most holy place, and that it is required that one stand therein with the utmost reverence; in passing the High Place one must cross oneself, and one must always follow the service with attention.
19. During the "I believe" and the "Our Father, " all the servers go out onto the ambon to join in the general singing. [*In the Russian practice, the creed and the Lord's Prayer are sung and not recited*].
20. At the time when the clergy are receiving Holy Communion, the servers should stand reverently within the sanctuary; and during the sermon they should leave to stand on the ambon to listen to it.
21. Those who break the Church Rule for Servers, should stand on the left kliros [choir place] until the end of the service.

N.B. These disciplines are not kept in exactly this way in every church, but they do indicate the seriousness with which such a great saint of our times as St John took the duties of the altar-servers, and should remind us of the importance of this ministry, and the good order which should be observed.

FROM THE SACRED CANONS

“FROM NOW ON, nobody, whether a clergyman or a layman, is permitted to gamble (or to play dice). In case anyone be apprehended doing this, if he be a clergyman, let him be deposed from office, but if he be a layman, let him be excommunicated.”

Canon 50 of the 102 Canons
of the Holy and Œcumenical Sixth Council

show it to be the most fruitful of all spiritual activities. Power and worth are granted it by the all-powerful, all-holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ -*Blessed Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov*.

He who constantly and reverently applies himself to the Prayer, pronouncing its words aloud or silently, heeding what is necessary, and confining his mind within the words; he who during his prayerful struggle rejects all thoughts and dreams, not only the sinful and vain ones, but also the apparently good ones, to such an one the Kind-hearted Lord will in time grant mental prayer, prayer of the heart and spiritual prayer *Ibid*.

Brother! *It is not profitable for you to receive grace-filled prayer of the heart before the time!* It is unprofitable to you to taste spiritual sweetness before the time! If you receive them before the time, you will not gain the preliminary experience regarding the reverence and carefulness with which you must safeguard the gift of the Grace of God, you might then use this gift for evil, unto the hurt and destruction of your soul - *Ibid*.

The Scripture says: *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation* (Luke 17:20), with waiting. Those, who struggle with these spiritual problems, undergo various ups and downs. But we must establish the heart in the works of *repentance*, in that dwelling-place which is pleasing unto God. The gifts of the Lord come of themselves if the temple of the heart is clean and undefiled. Those who with observation seek the exalted gifts of God are, I say, rejected by the Church of God. Before receiving it, we must undergo the ups and downs. This is not a sign that one loves God but of the *sickness of the soul*. And thus we are instructed about the exalted gifts of God, when the Divine Paul boasts in his afflictions and recognises as the highest gift of God his participation in the sufferings of Christ - *Ibid*.

Just as disordered activity of the mind leads to self-aggrandizement and delusion; so in exactly the same way disorderly activity of the heart leads to the same. The mind, while full of the desire of imprudent pride and the striving to see spiritual visions, is not cleansed of the passions, is not renewed and is not established by the right hand of the Holy Spirit; filled with like pride and foolhardy desire and striving, the

heart would taste of holy sensations, of spiritual, Divine ones, when as yet it is completely unprepared for such consolations. So the impure mind, which

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 B. Merritt of Brookwood, Surrey

Continuation from the last issue

3. On the Prayer of Jesus

*Praying at every time... in the Spirit (Eph. 6:18)
Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you (John 16:23)
I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also (1 Cor. 14:15)*

Properly speaking, the holy Fathers call the prayer, which goes thus: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me the sinner*, the Prayer of Jesus. Saint John of the Ladder says of the hesychasts, that "one of them chants, and devotes the greater part of his time to this chanting, and the others continue in prayer." By chanting here we must understand the prayerful recitation of the psalms (for in those days they did not have the other forms of prayer used now), and by prayer we must understand the prayer of Jesus. *[This practice is continued to this day in the reading of the cathismata in church - ed.]* The Prayer of Jesus comes in two forms, oral and mental. The ascetic changes from oral prayer to mental himself according to the circumstance, when oral prayer is attentive. The essential requirements for this prayer are: attention, holding the mind within the words of the prayer, being extremely unhurried in pronouncing it and contrition of spirit. Although these things are necessary for every prayer, they are more easily safeguarded and are more necessary in the practice of the Prayer of Jesus. In the Prayer of Jesus, the mind is concentrated on one thought: the thought of the sinner being forgiven by Jesus. This activity appears to be the driest of all, but practice therein will desires to behold Divine visions and is not able to see them, conjures up visions from within for itself, and is deluded by them and puffed up; so too the heart emboldened to taste of Divine sweetness and other Divine feelings, and not finding these within itself, conjures them up for itself, and deceives itself with them, is elated, deluded, and ruins itself, moving into the domain of falsehood, into contact with demons and falling under their influence, being enslaved to their authority - *Ibid.*

Nothing will so instruct him who has the zeal to pray as the practice of prayer itself. The labour of praying itself, practised with patience, will lead him to the very highest degrees of prayer - *Blessed Bishop Theophan the Recluse.*

But what are the weak and indolent people to do, and especially those who, before they have understood the true nature of prayer, have become hardened by outward routine, and cooled by their formal reading of the appointed prayers? As a refuge and source of strength they can still use the art of mental prayer, of prayer to

the Lord. And is it not chiefly for them that the art of the activity, or rather, technique was introduced, so as to bring the mental prayer of Jesus into their hearts? - *Ibid.*

... *to be continued*

THE COMING MONTH

JUNE ends with two feastdays (Sts Peter and Paul, and the Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles) which were immediately preceded by a fast, and 1st August marks the start of the Dormition fast, and so July falls neatly between the two fasts, although, except for the normal Wednesday and Friday fastdays there are no special fasting periods in the month. Nor are there any Great Feasts. There are, however, a number of beloved saints' days, among them:-

Saint Hedda of Wessex (7th/20th) was a monk and abbot before becoming a Bishop, but the records do not tell us where. He first comes to our notice when, in 676 A.D., he succeeded Lothaire as Bishop of Wessex. He was consecrated by St Theodore of Tarsus, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Wessex was an extensive diocese at the time and it had been resolved to divide it into smaller dioceses, but such was St Theodore's regard for Hedda that he refused to do so during the saint's lifetime. However, the centre of the diocese was moved. It had been at Dorchester-on-Thames, but with the permission of Pope Agatho, St Hedda moved it to Winchester, and in transferring the cathedra he also translated the sacred relics of St Birinus, the Apostle of Wessex, to his new cathedral city. The King Ina of Wessex also held Hedda in great esteem and had him as one of his foremost counsellors. St Hedda is also recorded as being a benefactor of the Monastery at Malmesbury in Wiltshire. He ended his earthly course, after a thirty year episcopate in 705 A.D., and miracles were recorded at his tomb.

The New Martyr Nicodemus the Albanian (11th/24th July) was born to pious and God-fearing parents in the Albanian town of Elbasan. When he grew up, he married and was the father of several children. However, in his associations with the Turks he was persuaded by them to become a Moslem, denying his Orthodox Faith. So zealous did he become for his adopted faith that he forced his children to become Moslems as well. One of them, however, was abducted by Christians who wished to deliver him from this spiritual slavery and was taken to the Holy Mountain to be raised safely as a Christian. When the father discovered what had happened, he set off for Athos to bring the child back and convert him to Islam, but in this way he was brought to his senses by the Merciful Lord. He did not find his son, but he did hear again the word of truth and saw the witness of the fathers struggling in asceticism. He was brought to repentance, received back into the Church and took up the monastic life himself, being renamed Nicodemus at his tonsure. Hearing the Lord's teaching that whosoever denied Him before men would be denied before the Angels of God, Father Nicodemus was inflamed with a desire for martyrdom and he sought out the renowned Elder Acacius of Kapsokalyvia to ask his blessing and instruction. When he arrived, he fell at the Elder's feet and wept. The Elder raised him up and addressed him by name, even though he had not previously heard his name. The Elder blessed him, giving him his staff and saying: "Take this rod and go to the pasha. By the power of God you will complete the martyrdom well." The saint was ready to set out, but being weakened by fasting, thought it advisable to lessen his fast somewhat to give him

strength for the journey, but the Elder, when asked, did not permit this, reminding him that he needed the fast more than ever as he was entering into the contest, and that he would proceed in the Lord's strength. He returned to his homeland, where earlier he had denied Christ, and was recognized by the local Turks, who seized him and brought him to the pasha. When the latter could not persuade him to return to Islam, he ordered that he be pushed off a precipice, but miraculously the saint landed lightly, unharmed, on his feet. He returned to the pasha, who was terrified, seeing him, as he supposed, returned from the dead and he was minded simply to let him go, but the mob snatched him away and for three days tortured him. In the end they beheaded him and he received the crown of martyrdom in the year 1722.

Venerable Stephen the Sabbaite (13th/26th) was, as his surname implies, a monk of the renowned Lavra of St Sabbas the Sanctified in Palestine. He was one of the assembly of the saints who, throughout the generations, have shone forth from that ancient monastery, and was the kinsman of one of the most illustrious of those Sabbaite Saints, John of Damascus. Such was the measure of purification and illumination that he achieved, that he was granted the gift of clairvoyance and of healing. He died in 794 A.D., having known beforehand the time of his repose. There is a second St Stephen the Sabbaite who was a near contemporary of this one, and who is known from the hymns that have been composed in his honour, but his feastday falls on 28th October.

The New Martyrs Lydia, Cyril and Alexis (20th July/2nd August) are among the best beloved of the New Martyrs of Russia. Lydia was the daughter of a priest in Ufa, but when her father joined the Renovationist schism in 1922, she could not in conscience follow him, and so she prostrated before him, saying: "Bless me, father, to leave you, so that I will not bind you in the salvation of your soul." The old man, who knew the uprightness of his daughter's soul, and that the course he had taken he had done so out of weakness, blessed her and foretold that she would gain the crown of martyrdom. She left him and found employment in the Forestry Department. She did not go to the churches legalized by the Bolsheviks, but secretly attended Catacomb services. Eventually she was arrested in 1928. She had been distributing hand-typed texts to the workers in her department for their spiritual edification. The "k" in these tracts was broken and thus her type-writer was traced. For ten days she was interrogated but refused to say anything or betray her fellow believers. On 20th July, the interrogator became infuriated with her steadfastness and ordered that she be taken to a cellar room for "special command" treatment. As Private Cyril Ataev was escorting her to "special command," he noticed her extreme weakness and helped her down the steps. She thanked him with the words, "May Christ save you," and these words touched his heart. She was tortured for over an hour and a half, and then they thought of a new plan of attack: sexual assault. Private Ataev was called in again, but when he understood what was required of him, instead of abusing the martyr, he turned his revolver on her torturers and shot two of them. He was felled by two others and shot. As he died, he looked to the martyr and prayed; "Saint, take me with you." "I will take you," she assured him. Then a madness overcame the interrogators and they shot at their victims until their revolvers were empty. Of the two GPU men who emerged from that terrible scene, one became completely insane, and the other died shortly afterwards of nervous shock. The latter told his friend, Sergeant Alexis

Ikonnikov, who was brought to God by this witness and told the story to the believers. For his zealous propagation of the truth concerning the martyrs, he himself suffered a martyr's death. The feastday of the three martyrs falls on the commemoration of the holy Prophet Elias the Thesbite, whose day we keep with a Vigil.

In July (28th July/10th August) we also have the festival of the Smolensk Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. There is a tendency, because the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke was the first iconographer and depicted the Theotokos in several icons, to attribute almost any ancient, wonder-working icon of the Mother of God to his hand. However, in the case of the Smolensk icon (as with a few others that still survive) this attribution is in all probability correct. The Mother of God is depicted as the "Directress," or the one who indicates the Way. It is so called because she is shown holding the Christ Child and pointing towards Him, Who is the Way. The icon was given by St Luke to Theophilus a citizen of Antioch, the same who is mentioned in the first verse of St Luke's "Acts of the Apostles." After Theophilus' death, the icon was kept by the Church in Antioch, but was later transferred to Jerusalem, and was presented by the Church there to the Empress Evdokia in the fifth century. She, in turn, sent it to St Pulcheria to be placed in the newly erected Church of the Mother of God at Blachernae in Constantinople. Tradition tells us that the icon was often taken with the Imperial retinue on their progresses through the Empire, and it seems that for a period it reposed in the Monastery of the Directress on the coast of the Sea of Marmara. Here it was a comfort to seafarers, who turned to the Mother of God for protection and direction. In 1046, the daughter of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos, Anna, was given in marriage to the Russian Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavich, and the icon was sent with her into Russia as a blessing. On the death of her spouse, Anna blessed her son, Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomach, with the icon and in 1097 he was made Prince of Smolensk, and thus the icon was taken to the city from which it is now named. For our English readers an interesting link is forged here with our own history, because Vladimir Monomach married Gytha, the daughter of the last Saxon (and perhaps last Orthodox) King of England, Harold II, who had been slain at Hastings in 1066. The icon was enshrined in the cathedral at Smolensk which was built in 1103. In the fifteenth century as Smolensk was threatened by the Lithuanians, the icon was taken to Moscow and placed in the Cathedral of the Annunciation, but in 1455 it was returned to Smolensk. The Muscovites were saddened to lose the icon, and at the place where it left their environs, they founded the Novodevichy Monastery. The people in Smolensk for their part built a church dedicated to the icon. The icon was taken to Moscow again in 1609, when Smolensk was taken by the Poles, and when Moscow fell, it was taken on to Yaroslavl. When Smolensk was reunited to Russia, the Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich returned the icon to Smolensk, where in 1658, when the Cathedral had been rebuilt, it was placed there. During the Napoleonic invasion of Russia in 1812, the icon was again taken to Moscow and then on to Yaroslavl for safe-keeping. Throughout its history many miracles have been attributed to the Mother of God through her icon. In Smolensk itself, a second feast of the icon was celebrated on 5th November to commemorate the deliverance of the city in 1812 from the Napoleonic forces.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

'IN THE NEWS ITEM about the glorification of the New Martyrs by the Serbian Orthodox Church (The Shepherd, June 2000), you mention the Ustasa. What is or was this?' - M.P., London S.E.12

The Ustasa (or Ustashi) was a Croatian nationalist terrorist organization. Its roots derive from the nineteenth century Croatian leader, Ante Starcevic, who promulgated his own virulent hatred of the Serbs and their Church. His leadership of the movement was assumed, on his death, by Josef Frank, and for that reason the movement was often referred to as the Frankist party. After the Great War, with the foundation of Yugoslavia, this party, which had relied on Hapsburg Vienna for support, went out of existence, but its ideas did not die. An adherent of their racist doctrine, Ante Pavelic, fled to Italy in 1929, and there resurrected the party in the form of a terrorist organisation known as the Ustashi. During the Second World War, in 1941, Ante Pavelic, with the aid of the Fascist and Nazi powers, became head of the puppet state of Croatia. They unleashed a reign of terror against the Serbs, and tried to force conversion from Holy Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism upon them. Over 700,000 Orthodox Serbs were tortured, beheaded, executed or subjected to the most sadistically cruel deaths for their faithfulness to Orthodoxy. To their shame, Roman Catholic clergymen of the highest rank collaborated in this massacre. Their leader, Archbishop Stepinac, was made a Cardinal by Pope Pius XII and has now been beatified by Pope John Paul II. Ante Pavelic himself was never brought to justice for any "crimes against humanity," and died in 1959 in a Franciscan house in Madrid.

ŒCUMENICAL PATRIARCH CELEBRATES IN CAPPADOCIA

HIS ALL-HOLINESS PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEOS celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the open air, on Sunday 5th March, at Avanos, Turkey, in the region of Cappadocia, which was once famed as a centre of Orthodox monasticism and the homeland of many of the greatest Saints. The event was welcomed by the Mayor of Avanos, *Selhan Dourou*, who stated that he hoped it would become an annual event. The Patriarch was also due to visit Izmir, the ancient city of Smyrna. These visits have been made possible by a recent improvement in Greek-Turkish relations. His All-Holiness is also due to visit the Holy Mountain Athos in July and, rather oddly, hopes to make a broadcast to the Orthodox peoples of the world from its summit.

EPISTLE OF THE SERBIAN ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS

THE SESSION of the Holy Assembly of Hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church, held from 16th to 17th May, and presided over by *His Holiness Patriarch Pavle*, has issued a statement, first announcing the glorification of the *New Hieromartyrs and Martyrs of Serbia* (see last issue), and then detailing the work of their assembly. Special attention was given to the need for missionary and educational work, and consideration was given to co-operation with sister Orthodox Churches, as well as relations with the non-Orthodox denominations. The Assembly expressed its concern over the crimes and violence being perpetrated against the non-Albanian peoples of Kosovo, and the destruction of the churches and monasteries there. A special board was set up to observe the situation there and render efficacious help.

The hierarchs also expressed concern over separatist movements, following the troubles in Yugoslavia, which were dividing the faithful from the Church. The Assembly appealed to all citizens to withhold from activities which would lead to conflict or civil war. At the expiry of their two-year mandate, the Right Reverend Bishops Amfilohije and Hrizostom were replaced by Bishops Vasilije of Zvornik-Tuzia and Justin of Timok as members of the Synod. [*Usually Local (i.e. national) Orthodox Churches have a small committee of hierarchs, the Synod, to attend to the administration of the Church, which is responsible to the whole Assembly [Sobor] of the Hierarchs, which meets less frequently than the Synod - ed.*].

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION IN ATHENS

SOBORNOST (22:1) carries a report on an *International Consultation on Orthodox Theological Educational and Ecumenical Themes* held in Athens between 2nd and 9th February this year, although it does not state who the participants in this consultation were. A footnote explains that the consultation was convened by the WCC and attended by forty delegates, these were from the Orthodox Churches and the Non-Chalcedonian Churches. It should not surprise us therefore that erroneously both the Orthodox and the Non-Chalcedonians are assumed to be Orthodox and "members of a deeply-rooted faith community," and that the delegates were particularly concerned that the division between the Orthodox and the Non-Chalcedonians continues. The report as presented, and perhaps it is a poor translation of something better, is concerned with numbers of fashionable issues (communicating, gender issues, ecumenism), is replete with catchy jargon phrases, non sequiturs, woolly arguments and sheer nonsense (e.g. "Holy people from marginalised groups can serve to comfort and instruct today's faithful"! Can holy people from other groups not do so? Where are these holy people from marginalised groups? What are marginalised groups in any case?). As might have been expected too, the only "marginalised group" that comes in for any opprobrium is that of the "Orthodox fundamentalists," who, it seems, are the people, here cruelly caricatured, who actually believe the Orthodox Faith and try to live according to its precepts.

MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE TO GLORIFY ROYAL MARTYRS

IN BOTH THE SECULAR and Church press, reports of the forthcoming glorification of the *Tsar-Martyr Nicolas II* and his family by the impending Assembly of the Moscow Patriarchate hierarchs have been current. *Father Maxim Maximov*, the secretary of their Canonization Commission, sees no obstacles to the glorification, which has been popularly and erroneously referred to as "making them saints." Oddly, the Patriarchate is declining to refer to the Royal Family as martyrs, calling them Passion-bearers, as though there were some strict distinction between the two. The distinction they imply is that they did not have to choose to reject their Faith, but this applies to many saints whom the Church happily hymns as Martyrs, preeminent among them St John the Baptist. And again rather oddly the servants slain with the Imperial Family will not be included, because, it is said, they were simply faithfully fulfilling their duty. Again the Church hymns many such martyrs from all ages and societies. More fruitfully, spokesmen for the Patriarchate have pointed out that the glorification of Saints does imply that those persons were sinless. Many people have been confused about this issue, knowing of the manifest faults and failings of members

of the Imperial Family and having been subjected to a propaganda campaign which for eight decades sought to defile their memory, and they have failed to understand the blood of martyrdom washes away all personal sins or the significance of their martyrdom.

QUEEN MOTHER HONOURED BY RUSSIAN CITY

HER MAJESTY, *Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother*, received the Ambassador of the Russian Federation and the Mayor of Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad) on 12th April, and accepted *Honorary Citizenship of Volgograd*. This honour was bestowed to mark her forthcoming 100th birthday and to recognize her wartime efforts on behalf of the people of Stalingrad. It is an honour which has never before been bestowed on a non-Russian. *King George VI* presented a ceremonial sword to Stalingrad as a tribute to the citizens' heroic resistance in the face of their siege by Nazi troops.

GREEK ORTHODOX PRIMARY SCHOOL

HIS EMINENCE, *ARCHBISHOP GREGORIOS OF THYATEIRA* has announced the establishment of *St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Voluntary-Aided Primary School* in the London Borough of Croydon. The school is situated on Springfield Road, Thornton Heath, in the former Ingram High School for Boys, and will begin functioning in September this year. The Archbishop himself will be the foundation governor, and the head teacher will be *Mrs Beverley-Helen Christy*. Further details about this excellent scheme are available from the Chairman of the Board of Governors, *Dr Andreas Andreou*, 44 Virginia Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8EJ; telephone 202 7281 4461 (office hours) or 020 8764 9885 (at other times).

ENGLISHMAN ORDAINED ON SINAI

FATHER NILUS (Webber), a monk of the ancient Monastery of Saint Catherine on Sinai has been ordained to the sacred diaconate. Fr Nilus, a Westcountryman, has several times visited our Brotherhood at Brookwood, and we hope that the Lord will bless his ministry and grant him Many Years.

OLDEST ICON TO BE EXHIBITED

AN ICON, reputed to be the oldest image of the Saviour, will be exhibited at Expo 2000, in Hanover. Normally it is kept in the Vatican where it has been kept enshrined within an ornate 17th century reliquary since 1870. Press reports have described this icon as the *Holy Mandilion*, the icon not made by hands sent by the Saviour Himself to Abgar, Prince of Edessa. This seems unlikely and untrue, unless it has been over-painted. The workmanship resembles that of Syrian art of the third century, and parts scientifically tested apparently date from the sixth century. The original Mandilion (feastday: 16th/29th August) was taken to Constantinople in 944 A.D., and was subsequently lost in the sack of the Imperial City by the Crusaders in 1204. The present icon was not recorded as being in Rome until 1587. Nonetheless it is assuredly one of the earliest icons of the Saviour still in existence. The sacred icon will be displayed in Hanover for five months.

LANCASHIRE LADY'S TRANSLATION PUBLISHED

MRS THEODOSIA TOMKINSON, a parishioner of the St Werburgh Mission in Congleton, who lives in Ribbleton, Lancashire, has just had her translation of *St Ambrose of Milan's work "On Abraham"* published by the *Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies* (Etna, California). The soft-cover booklet, whose text runs to just over a hundred pages, is divided into two "books," and completed with a thorough index. Mrs Tomkinson has already translated St Ambrose's exposition on St Luke's Gospel with Fragments on the Prophecy of Esaias, and Saint Gregory the Great's Homilies on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, both of which were also published by CTOS. The present translation (ISBN 0-911165-42-8) was made from *De Abraham, Vol 2/11 of Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis Opera Milan: Bibliotheca Ambrosiana, 1984*).

BROOKWOOD NEWS

KITCHEN REFURBISHMENT: This work is now well under way, thanks to the good offices of *Silver Tower Services*, and since we asked in a previous Shepherd for contributions to the work we have received *donations totalling £2,730.50* from our readers. For this we are extremely grateful, and we are particularly grateful to those of you who have given under the *Gift Aid scheme* so that in due course we will be able to claim back the tax. May God bless all of you who have helped us in this way. Please continue to help if you can. Donations should be made payable to *King Edward Orthodox Trust Co Ltd*, the registered charity which administers our property.

MONK REGULARIZED: *Father Ephraim*, who left our community on 18th September/1st October 1992, and has been living independently since, started attending church here again at Pascha. The advice of Archbishop Mark was sought and a blessing received for him to be regularized. On the day before Pentecost, he went to confession and received absolution, prior to being blessed to approach Holy Communion again. On the festival of Pentecost, Father Peter Bauk read the prayers for his reconciliation, and imparted to him the Holy Mysteries during the Divine Liturgy at Brookwood.

BABY NAMED: The infant son of parishioners, *fames and Valentina Merritt*, was born on 6th/19th June, Holy Spirit Day, at St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey. He was named *Nicolas*, in honour of St Nicolas the Wonder-worker of Myra in Lycia, on Monday 13th/26th June at Saint Edward's. May the great Wonder-worker take him under his special protection, and, through his intercessions, grant blessings to the whole family.

HIEROMONK AIDAN of the Western Rite Monastery in Austin, Texas, visited our Brotherhood for a few days at the end of June and beginning of July, and stayed amidst the builders' rumble. He kindly presented us with two enamelled crosses, one a gift from their Monastery and one from a parishioner, who is named after St Edward the Martyr.

FREEWILL OFFERINGS in church yielded *weekly averages* as follows for each month up to March this year September 1999 - £185.19; October 1999 - £181.11; November 1999 - £210.97; December 1999 -£210.99; January 2000 - £241.25;

February 2000 - £256.68; March 2000 - £293.24. May God bless all who have helped to support our mission by contributing in this way.

PRACTICAL TIP

IN THIS ISSUE, we have as our main article an extract giving guidance for confession. As a practical tip, we would advise that it be used with discretion. There is a very similar piece of advice in the classic "Way of a Pilgrim," and I remember someone using that as their confession. Similar misuse could be made of Father Ambrose's work. It is presented to help lead one to a deeper understanding of one's sinfulness, and not that one should simply take it to confession and read it to the priest, or even just paraphrase it and then pride (!) oneself on making a good confession. Learn from it, and not only from the spiritual father's confession, but also from the way the writer himself carefully approached his own confession, the way in which he took the rebuke of the spiritual father and accepted his instruction, but do not avoid actually confessing by simply repeating it when you go to confession. At a different level this same advice applies to those lists of sins which are published to help one prepare for confession - they are not meant simply to be read out at confession without thought, and perhaps should not be used there at all. They are intended to be, and are useful as, a rough-and-ready check-list to help one in preparing for confession. You will find things on them that you have not been guilty of, and sins you have committed may not be listed. Use every aid you can to prepare your confession, but do not think that you can confess without a careful review of your life. One would not expect to get a great deal of benefit from a physician if you failed to take note of and clearly tell him your symptoms. Confession is essentially part of a healing process and should be approached as such, not as a settling of accounts or a form to be run through before Communion.