

The Shepherd

An Orthodox Christian Pastoral Magazine

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FROM THE FATHERS

"O FATHER ALMIGHTY, the Word, and the Spirit, one Nature in three Hypostases united, transcending essence and supremely Divine! In Thee have we been baptized, and Thee will we bless unto all the ages."

From the Paschal Canon, composed by St John of Damascus

"THAT GOD IS ONE, and that we are to confess, worship, praise, exalt, honour, sanctify, and glorify His majesty, we do indeed acknowledge through Jesus, His Son, our Saviour, Who chose us and drew us near to Him; and through Whom we acknowledge Him and become His adorers and a people and a church and an assembly that is holy. Glory and honour be to the Father and to His Son, and to His living and Holy Spirit, from the mouths of all who praise Him, whether above or below. Forever in eternity, so be it and so be it."

Ven. Aphraat the Persian Sage, third-fourth centuries

"THE SUBSTANCE of the distinct, incomprehensible and unutterable Trinity is somehow indistinct. For we accept that there is a distinction and not a confusion of Father and of Son and of Holy Spirit; a distinction, but not a separation; a distinction, but not a plurality. In the divine and amazing mystery we accept that there is an everlastingly permanent Father, an everlastingly permanent Son, an everlastingly permanent Holy Spirit; not two Fathers, not two Sons, not two Spirits. The distinction we know, the secrets we do not know; the causes we do not discuss, the mystery we preserve."

Saint Ambrose of Milan, fourth century

"THAT EVEN UNTIL NOW we may teach very plainly that the Holy Spirit is one Divinity with the Father and the Son is proved by the testimony of John the Evangelist. For he says; 'There are Three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are One (1 John 5:7).' Does he ever say that there is a qualitative difference in the Three that are mutually joined, or that they are divided by any kind of degrees of difference in a deep gulf of separation? No, what he says is that there are Three, and that these Three are One."

Bishop Victor of Vita, fifth century

WHY GO TO CHURCH, IF I HAVE GOD IN MY HEART?"

EACH ONE OF US has some acquaintances, or even relatives, who regard our gathering in church with puzzlement. Profound lack of understanding is written on their faces, even at times disturbance. Sometimes this pours out in words such as these: "Well, alright, you've committed yourself to the Faith, be that as it may. But why go to church, and waste all that time and effort in doing so? Look at me, for instance; I also believe. But I believe in the heart [*literally: soul*]. I have God in my heart, and do

not need any outward ritualisation. Just remember how, not long ago, the satirist Michael Zadornov remarked: No intermediaries are necessary for me to have communion with God!"

How can we explain our behaviour to such people? As always, there are two ways: that of the fall and that of defence. It is not hard to counter this type of worldly "philosophy." When all is said and done, a little healthy thought is sufficient to understand that the society in which these clowns (or, in present-day parlance, these satirists) flourish as experts in the sphere of theology and regarding the spiritual life, is completely sick. At the very least, it has fallen sick through a loss of a sense of balance; it cannot even laugh at itself, when it sees that now the joke has usurped a place even in preaching from the episcopal cathedra.... Contemporary society is such that it thinks those things are serious, which our forebears used to have only as Carnival Week amusements.

There is no seriousness in the position and contention of our critics that "God is in our hearts!" Of course, there is such a condition in the most exalted paradigm of the spiritual life. And this the Apostle Paul desired for us, when he said: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4.19), "to be strengthened with the might of His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:16-17).

If the words, "God is within me," had been spoken by the Venerable Seraphim of Sarov, these words would have had some weight, for they would honestly bear witness to the fruit of his spiritual struggle. If a desert-dweller had said that he had trained himself in continual interior prayer, and for that reason he did not perceive [any loss] by his absenting himself from church, which he only rarely attended, then those words, coming from those lips, might be justified.

But when we hear these words from the man on the street, then it is right for us to inquire: As a result of which particular spiritual struggles have you achieved such progress? God is in your soul, you say? Then, explain, what course of prayer you took? How frequently do you recite the Lord's prayer? What? The "Our Father"? You can't remember it clearly?! Alright, then tell us exactly, how is it that you abide with the continual presence of God in your heart? What fruits of the gift of the Spirit have you become aware of in yourself? Here, I'll prompt you: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23). Do you have these feelings? No, they are not personal characteristics; they are gifts. A gift is that which we formerly did not possess, but which through spiritual regeneration has come into our life, imparting to it renewal. Do you have any understanding of any such renewal?

Can you distinguish in your spiritual experience what is the "presence of God," and what is simply a manifestation of various human characteristics: an awareness of beauty, harmony, a pang of conscience, and human fellowship? You cannot? This surely means that you haven't noticed the moment that God, the Creator of the universe, came into your life and into your soul? How could it not be noticed? Maybe, this means it didn't happen?

Maybe, again, you have become confused in distinguishing between faith in God and the presence of God Himself? And, wait a moment, - do you have such faith in

you? Faith is not simply a passive assent - "Well, okay, I agree that there must be Something...." Faith is a striving towards that which appears right, to that which the soul has resolved to love. Faith is not just a passive acquiescence to some distant authorities or lines of argument; faith is an active thirst - "I want what is necessary for me, that it should be so."

Faith: this is active. It is a striving towards something already perceived but not yet self-evident. A striving towards something which already touches upon our lives, and throws its sheen across them, but which has not yet entered them fully. Faith: this is a desire for new experience. But it is hard to trust those who repeat, "I have my faith, and it is in the heart," and who say this with lacklustre eyes, or believe that then or at any time they have really experienced a striving towards God.

It is impossible to love, without that love showing, without making any kind of advance towards the person whom one loves. Likewise, it is impossible to believe, and not somehow manifest that belief in our outward activities. The rose that one gives to one's beloved is in itself something she does not need. This flower is not dear to her because of its exceptional beauty, but because it has been given a certain lustre on account of the love of the one who gave it to her. The way in which a bought flower stays in one's room is completely different from the way in which one which has been given us does! If a man professes that he loves someone, but doesn't do anything in the name of this love, if he does seek to meet, if he makes no gifts, if he doesn't devote some time for the beloved's company, if he makes no sacrifices - all this means that he must simply be boasting in front of those of his friends who are close to him: "You see, I lack nothing, I've got a sweetheart too!"

So now, you who affirm that "God is in the heart," what have you done to cleanse your heart for this wondrous Presence? How do you address Him, and what do you call Him? How do you keep Him within? How has this Acquaintance changed you? Do you love that One, Whom you have met? And what do you do for the sake of this love? If these questions throw you into a bewildered silence, how is it so when you consider yourselves so exalted above all that you abide with God? Perpetually standing still, you are not looking where you are going, or even noticing if you are stumbling!

One can pose such questions to those people who excuse their laziness by some imaginary "spirituality."

Nonetheless it is also important for us to establish why we go to church. To listen to the sermon? But these days you can get that from a radio presenter. To pray? But you can pray everywhere and at any time. Furthermore, this is the very advice of the Apostle: "Pray without ceasing!" Then, to make an offering? But these days there are numerous collections on the streets. To make a note of the announcements? But you can get that from an acquaintance. To put up a candle? But you can put up a candle in front of your icons at home. And so, why do we go to church?

Furthermore, some people say that if they want to go and pray, they go off to a wood, or to a stream or the seaside, and there in a "Church Erected by God" it is easier for them to be aware of the Creator and to send up glory to Him. Why, they say, do we leave the boundless temple *[of creation]* to place ourselves under the narrow vaults of a church that is man-made? *[This is, of course, the argument of the so-called Blue Domers - ed.]*

Just as the pagans speak of the sacrifices people ought to offer their god, so the Gospel tells us what sacrifice people must needs offer God: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28); "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The biblical offerings of sacrifice were not necessary to God, but for the people. People simply must learn to be thankful. People must be instructed that they must deny themselves albeit a portion of their life, of their possessions and of their time (remember the teaching on the Sabbath), and give it over to the Person of the Lord. This is not because God needs this portion which is dedicated to Him, but because thereby people are instructed in sacrificial love.

Only a tenth or hundredth part of religion subsists in what people contribute. The principal part in religion is what God contributes therein. The most important part is not what people do for God's sake, but what God does for the sake of the people. The most important part is not what people bring as an offering in church, but that which they take away from the church!

That which we offer God, we can offer Him in any place. All that is in the world can thus be laid before Him. But there is that small portion of existence in which God is well pleased to reign, not in Himself but in another. That is my soul. This is that chamber within the limitless edifice of the universe, wherein the Builder thereof will not enter without an invitation. And it depends upon us at whose disposal we lay that freedom of ours, which was given us by God. Will we serve God, or will we serve ourselves, our caprices and our lusts? The only way we can augment the limitless power of the Lord is if we offer Him our own free will. For this reason, "a sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit" (Ps. 50:17). And this sacrifice we can offer everywhere. And in this sense, each one of us is a priest. This is the meaning that underlies the words of the Apostle Peter, that the Christians are a people comprised of priests (1 Peter 2:9). No one can, in my place, offer God in sacrifice my will. I alone have power over it, and only I can offer it at the Throne of God. Swear an oath of faithfulness and say, "Lord, Thy will and not mine be done! I thank Thee for all that Thou dost desire to bring into my life. Grant me the ability to serve Thee with my every breath!" And this can be done in any place!

So the possibility of offering sacrifice to God is always with us. And we can always say to our ego, the very words which the philosopher Diogenes once used to reply to the world ruler Alexander of Macedonia, who wanted to fulfil some request of the wise out of his love for him: "Make off, and do not block out the sun for me!"

Thus, that a Christian might offer sacrifice to God, it is not necessary for him to be in church. But religion is not only concerned with what we give. More importantly, it is concerned with what we receive. It is not so important why we seek God. It is more important why He seeks us.

Why we often go to church and turn to God with our petitions is well enough known. We turn to God, seeing Him as some kind of generator of humanitarian aid: "Give us, O Lord, better health, greater success and an increase in our wages!" Too often we seek the Lord, according to the saying of the hierarch Dimitry of Rostov, "not

for the sake of Jesus, but for a crust of bread." But why does God seek us? Does He require something from us? Or does He wish to give us something?

Why does His Word invite: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" (Matt. 11:28)? This invitation has no such corollary as "and ye shall give Me so and so..." Rather this invitation ends with another promise; it tells of that which God does for those who respond: "And I will give you rest ... and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Thus God calls us to Himself, so that he might present us with something. Learning - "Learn of Me" (Matt. 11:29); Spirit - "Receive ye of My Spirit;" Love, peace, joy - "Abide in My love" (John 15:10); "My peace I give unto you;" "That My joy might remain in you." But Christ grants us something further which the mind cannot comprehend.

"Abide in Me, and I in you.... Receive ye this, this is My Blood, which is shed for you...." Christ entrusts His whole Being to the people; both His Divinity and His manhood. In contemporary medicine there is a certain procedure: the patient is given a transfusion of his own blood. Blood is taken from his body, it is cleansed of various harmful contaminations, or alternatively enriched with certain components, which the sick man's organism cannot itself produce in the required quantities. And this purified or enriched blood is reintroduced into the patient's system. Something of the kind occurs in our relationship with Christ. God became man. He took on Himself our nature, which had fallen into corruption, and in Himself healed it and saturated it with Divinity, Eternalness, and Immortality; and it is His human Body, which has now already passed through death and resurrection, that He returns to us. His human Blood, vitalized by the Divine currents, He pours into us, that we might bear the seed of Resurrection and be communicants of Eternity.

And so, we come to church, so that we might receive something therein. The church - it's just walls; but walls built around the *Mysterion [sacrament]* of Communion The *Mysterion* consists in this: that to the people a hand is extended with the Gifts. Therefore to visit church is not an onerous obligation, but a wondrous privilege. To us there is granted the right to stand as participants in the Mystical Supper. To us there is given the possibility of becoming "partakers of the divine nature." To us there is granted to possibility of contacting an Energy, such that not one of the power stations of the world could produce.

God sought us. And has found us. We simply need to go to that place, where closer than anywhere else God approaches the people, to that place where in an unprecedented way, through the Gifts themselves, He is distributed to the people. If Christ presents us with the Cup with Communion through the Royal Gates, does it behove us to turn up our noses and affirm that "I have God in my heart"?

Christ has said where He awaits us and what He desires to give us. He, the Eternal One, desires to meet us and be united with us in this life, so that in our future, everlasting life, we might not be irreparably alone.

Would it be good manners for us, if we had received a message to meet someone on Pushkin Square, to take a walk on Leo Tolstoy Street at the time

appointed? If the meeting was thus missed, who would be guilty? Well, quite obviously, not me, - Pushkin would be!!

Those, who declare that they do not need mediators in their relationship with God, do not begin to understand that in church there awaits them the Mediator, Who once offered sacrifice for them and freed people from the necessity of destroying those fruits which feed the idols of this world. Surely it is not so unbearably difficult to open your hand, so that the Gifts may be placed therein?

Deacon Andrei Kuraev.

Translated from "VOSKRESENIIE," the magazine of the Community of the Kasperov Icon of the Mother of God in Kherson. A note mentions that it has been published in a shortened version and that the full text of the article is available, in Russian, on <http://Zkuraev.vinchi.ru>.

FROM THE MIRACLES OF SAINT JOHN OF SHANGHAI THE WONDERWORKER

THIS MONTH, we celebrate the festival day of the new wonder-worker, Saint John of Shanghai (+ 1966), whose incorrupt relics are venerated in the Cathedral of the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow, in San Francisco. One of our parishioners at Saint Edward's has recorded the two following miracles, attributed to the saint's intercessions.

1) Several years ago, my daughter was diagnosed as having an early ectopic pregnancy. She was admitted to St Thomas Hospital, London. Prayers were said for her and the baby, and during the night I had a dream. I was in a large church. At the far end, from the left there emerged a clergyman in full Bishop's robe, golden with a golden head-piece. His hair was straggly and he was smallish. I thought at first he was Metropolitan Philaret, but it was St John. He looked towards me and then walked through the Royal doors. I knew that all would be well and slept. My daughter was sent home that night. There was no longer anything wrong. Her baby is now 4 and a half, and healthy, and Orthodox.

2) A phone call from Guildford Hospital in July informed me that a tiny lump under my arm was malignant, grade 3. Within a few days, my husband and I were to spend five hours in the oncology department of the hospital. The news was poor. The lump was apparently a secondary tumour, and the specialist and his team informed us that there would be primary tumours elsewhere to be traced by various means. Also a mammogram showed up sinister appearances, and the specialist took ten biopsy probes. The breast, he said, would probably be surgically removed. The outlook was bad. Prayers were said particularly to Saint John Maximovitch, whose relic was lent us by a nun from Lesna. The hospital visit was on a Tuesday afternoon. On the Thursday afternoon, a phone call from the nurse told me that things were not so serious as at first suspected. There had been a reassessment. The tumour was a primary one, and the breast was clear of cancer. After an exilary breast cancer operation, 19 lymph nodes were removed, the relic of St John Maximovitch was taken into the operation, bandaged to my right arm. The lymph nodes were clear; the surrounding tissue of the cancer was removed and the all clear given after a biopsy of the nodes. No more cancer, Glory be to God and thanks to the intercessions of Saint John Maximovitch.

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

2. Reverent Attention

Watch [keep vigil] and pray, that ye enter not into temptation (Matt. 26:41)

I will pray with the understanding (1 Cor. 14:15)

Watch unto prayer (1 Peter 4:7).

He who prays attentively scorches the demons, but he who prays absent-mindedly is mocked by them - *Ven. Ephraim the Syrian.*

Let us love reverence: let them scoff at us, let them give us blows, we will not abandon it. *For it is a treasury, filled with good things.* It inclines God to regard the one who has chosen it, according to the scripture: *Upon whom shall I look? Even upon him that is meek, and quiet and trembleth at My words (Es. 66:2).* And blessed is he who disdains everything for the sake of reverence - *Ibid.*

How can one achieve the state of not being distracted? Without any doubt by being convinced that God is before our very eyes. If someone sees his superior or boss before him and engages him in conversation, he does not turn his attention away from him; so much the more so is it with him who prays to God (with manifest conviction); He will possess his mind, without inclining away from the One Who Searches the heart and inward parts, thus fulfilling the scripture: *lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dispersion (1 Tim. 2:8)* - *St Basil the Great.*

Is it possible to achieve undistractedness all the time and at every time, and how can one achieve this? That this is possible is shown by him who said: *Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord (Ps. 24:15),* and: *I beheld the Lord ever before me, for He is at my right hand, that I might not be shaken (Ps. 15:8).* And how this, which is spoken of above, is possible is precisely thus: that to achieve it *one not grant the soul time to be empty of thoughts of God* and of the Divine acts and gifts, nor to refrain from confessing and giving thanks for all - *Ibid.*

Before all else, we must by every means *hold fast the thoughts,* and establish over them the mind's attentive supervision, so as not to permit the soul to give itself over to the unrestrained urges of the body's inclinations. Just as physical sight is in the eye, so the eye of the soul is in its own innate mind - *Ibid.*

Since we are human beings, it is not in our nature to pursue birds through the air or to fly as they do. Similarly, without watchful and frequent prayer we cannot prevail over bodiless, demonic thoughts, or fix the eye of the intellect fully and intently

upon God. Without such prayer, we merely hunt after earthly things - *Venerable Hesychius the Presbyter*.

As long as a man lives, he has need of attentiveness, carefulness and vigilance in order to safeguard his treasury. And one must not only work for this temporarily until one sees some fruit; but it is essential to labour until one's very end. For not infrequently the fruit which was perceived perishes in a sudden storm - *Venerable Isaac the Syrian*.

When your mind is distracted, rather than prayer *occupy yourself with reading*. But not every writing is profitable. If possible, preface your standing [*in prayer*] with reading, for reading is a source of pure prayer - *Ibid*.

Continuous watchfulness along with reading, accompanied by frequent prostrations, will not be slow to vouchsafe the zealous the blessing of spiritual prosperity (which is sweetness of heart) - *Ibid*.

The soul of prayer is attention. As a body without a soul is dead, so is prayer without attention dead. Without attention the prayer that is offered becomes empty words, and he who prays thus is numbered among those who take *the name of the Lord in vain* (Proverbs 30:9) - *Blessed Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov*.

Pronounce the words of the prayer unhurriedly; do not permit the mind to wander everywhere *but enclose it in the words of the prayer*. For the mind, which is inclined to wander freely about the universe, this path is narrow and afflicted, but it is the path to attentiveness. He who tastes the great blessing of attentiveness, will love to confine his mind to the path which leads to blessed attentiveness - *Ibid*.

At the time of prayer, struggle to make your mind *deaf and dumb*, and you will possess the possibility of praying (as you should) - *Venerable Neil of Sora*.

The whole unremitting warfare waged between us and the unclean demons consists in nothing else but in *spiritual prayer*: for it greatly fights against them and without let, and towards us it is saving and favourable - *Ibid*.

If you really wish to cover your evil thoughts with shame, to be still and calm and *watch over your heart without hindrance*, let the *Jesus Prayer* cleave to your breath, and in a few days you will find that this is possible - *Venerable Hesychius the Presbyter*.

Letters cannot be written on air; they have to be inscribed on some material if they are to have any permanence. Similarly, we should weld our hard-won watchfulness to the *Jesus prayer*, so that this watchfulness may always be attached to Him and may through Him remain with us for ever - *Ibid*.

Attentiveness is the heart's stillness, *unbroken by any thought*. In this stillness the heart breathes and invokes, endlessly and without ceasing, only Jesus Christ, Who is the Son of God and Himself God. It confesses Him, Who alone has power to forgive our sins, and with His aid it courageously faces its enemies. Through this invocation enfolded continually in Christ, Who secretly divines all hearts, the *soul does everything it can to keep its sweetness and its inner struggle hidden from men*, so that the devil, coming upon it surreptitiously, does not lead it into evil and destroy its precious work - *Ibid*.

The intellect cannot conquer a demonic fantasy by its own unaided powers, and *should never attempt to do so*. The demons are a sly lot: they pretend to be overcome and then trip us up by filling us with self-esteem. But *when we call upon Jesus Christ*, they do not dare to play their tricks with us even for a second - *Ibid*.

Be watchful as you travel each day the narrow but joyous and sweet road of the mind, keeping your attention *humbly in your heart*, reproaching yourself, *ready to rebut* your thoughts, thinking of your death and *invoking Jesus Christ*. You will then attain a vision of the Holy of Holies and be illumined by Christ with deep mysteries. For in Christ "the *treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" are hidden (Col. 2:3), and in Him "the *fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily*" (Col. 2:9) - *Ibid*.

Watchfulness and the Jesus prayer, as I have said, mutually reinforce one another; for close attentiveness goes with constant prayer, while prayer goes with close watchfulness and attentiveness of intellect - *Ibid*.

... to be continued with "On the Prayer of Jesus"

THE COMING MONTH

IN JUNE, this year there are four commemorations that are of primary importance: the *Great Feast of Pentecost-Trinity*, the beginning of the *Apostles' Fast* on Monday 13th/26th, the feast of the *Birth of the Forerunner* and that of the *Holy Apostles Peter and Paul* which ends the fast.

Pentecost-Trinity is of course a movable feast because its date depends on that of Easter. It is the culmination of a series of commemorations which began ten weeks before Pascha, reached their apogee with the Passion and Resurrection of our Saviour, and now culminate fifty days later with the "last and great day of the feast," Pentecost. It was ten days after the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into the heavens, that at the third hour of the day (nine in the morning according to our reckoning) the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, and the New Testament Church was inaugurated, when thus empowered they began their preaching and "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47), a process which continues to this day.

Three particular liturgical practices distinguish the festival. First, our churches are decorated with branches of greenery, and sometimes the floor is strewn with grasses and herbs. This represents the freshness of the new life in the Church. Secondly, for the first time since Pascha, in the Vespers of the feast we use the prayer, "Heavenly King," which throughout most of the year begins nearly all our services and our private prayers. This is a prayer to the Holy Spirit, without Whom we cannot pray, and from Pentecost it is again recited in church and in our prayers at home. Thirdly, at Vespers on Sunday afternoon, there are three long prayers read by the celebrant. These are called the *Kneeling Prayers* because we prostrate on the ground to participate in them by listening. This is again the first time since Pascha that there has been kneeling in church. These prayers ask the blessing of the Holy Spirit upon our lives and upon our loved ones, both the living and the faithful departed.

The feast is kept for seven days, and during that period, because of the importance of this celebration, no fasting is enjoined. On the eighth day, the Sunday after Pentecost, we have the *festival of All Saints*. And the day after that, we begin *the Apostles' Fast*. This prepares us for the celebration of the martyrdoms of Sts Peter and Paul at the end of June, and this fast varies in length from year to year. This year it is only 16 days in duration - (it is never less than eight days). The fast is not simply a preparation for the Apostles' feast, but we also keep it following the example of the Apostles themselves who began their ministry with prayer and fasting. We have a commission and ministry too, not perhaps to convert the whole world, but to convert our minds and hearts, our lives, to Christ. We begin that ministry, as the Apostles did theirs, with fasting (Acts 13:2; 10:23; 27:9; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5; 11:27).

The *Birth of St John the Baptist* (24th June/7th July) falls liturgically six months before that of the Saviour, as happened in actuality, it comes at the height of Summer, when the days are longest, and thus we are reminded of his own words, "He (the Saviour) must increase, but I must decrease." The days decrease after the birth of the Forerunner, the nights becoming longer and longer; and after the Birth of the Saviour the days increase for a Light has come into the world. Although the Birth of the Baptist is not numbered among the Twelve Great Feasts, it is usually celebrated with a Vigil Service in Orthodox parishes.

The feast of the *Apostles Peter and Paul* commemorates their martyrdom in Rome. St Peter was crucified upside down and St Paul was beheaded. Their day is followed by a Synaxis of all the Twelve Apostles. In fact often thirteen are included, because St Paul (who was not one of the twelve) is usually included as a recognition of his singular ministry and the grace he received, and St Matthias (who replaced the apostate Judas Iscariot) is also often included. This day brings the month of June to an end.

FROM THE SACRED CANONS

SINCE WE HAVE LEARNED that in the Church of the Romans it is regarded as tantamount to a canon that ordains to the diaconry or presbytery must solemnly promise to have no further intercourse with their wives. Continuing, however, in conformity with the ancient custom of Apostolic rigorism and orderliness, we desire that hence forward the lawful marriage ties of sacred men [*i.e. clergymen*] become stronger, and we are nowise dissolving their intercourse with their wives, nor depriving them of their mutual relationship and companionship when properly maintained in due season, so that if anyone is found to be worthy to be ordained a Subdeacon, or a Deacon, or a Presbyter, let him in nowise be prevented from being elevated to such a rank while cohabiting with a lawful wife. Nor must he be required at the time of ordination to refrain from lawful intercourse with his own wife, lest we be forced to be downright scornful of marriage, which was instituted by God and blessed by His presence, as attested by the unequivocal declaration of the Gospel utterance: "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6), and the Apostolic teaching: "Marriage is honourable, and the bed undefiled" (Heb. 13:4), and "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be freed" (1 Cor. 7:27). We are cognizant, though, that those who met in Carthage and made provision of decency in the life of

ministers declared that Subdeacons and Deacons and Presbyters, busying themselves as they do with the Sacred Mysteries, according to their rules are obliged to practice temperance in connection with their helpmates, in order that we may likewise keep the injunction handed down through the Apostles, and continued from ancient times in force, well knowing that there is a proper time for everything, and especially for fasting and praying. For those who assist in the ceremonies at the sacrificial altar have to be temperate in all things at the time when they are handling holy things, so that they may be able to gain whatever they ask of God. If, therefore, anyone acting contrary to the Apostolic Canons require any person who is in sacred orders -any Presbyter, we mean, or Deacon or Subdeacon - to abstain from intercourse and association with his lawful wife, let him be deposed from office. Likewise, if any Presbyter or Deacon expel his own wife on the pretext of reverence, let him be excommunicated [*i.e., taken off Communion for a period - ed.*]; and if he persist, let him be deposed from office.

Canon 13 of the 101 Canons of the Holy and Œcumenical Sixth Council

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

"How should you celebrate your name-day?" J.F., Chatham.

IF IT IS AT ALL POSSIBLE, you should attend the church services on that day, prepare yourself and receive the Holy Mysteries at the Divine Liturgy. To large numbers of people, living in the Orthodox diaspora, this is of course well nigh impossible nowadays, either because they live so far from a church or because their church does not have services on the day when their name saint is celebrated. But if it is possible, do try. If it is not possible, make a particular effort to attend church, and, if you are able, receive on the nearest Sunday. On the day of the saint itself, read his/her life and the service to them. Try to reflect on the significance of their witness in your life, and to draw lessons from it. And of course, you can have a celebration by having some kind of "party" (as is appropriate to your circumstances), a family gathering, or an open house, so that people who greet you can be offered hospitality. This last thing is probably quite important for younger children, so that they see their name-day as a day of joy. There is no reason at all why everything enjoyable (birthdays, holidays, outings, &c) in a child's life should be "worldly" and divorced from Church, and everything concerning the Church an "obligation;" and there is every reason why you should try to arrange things so that the opposite is true - celebrating name-days can contribute to their receiving enjoyment from their church commitment and can come to know and love their saint.

TWELVE THOUSAND HONOURED BY POPE

POPE JOHN PAUL II honoured 12,692 members of the various Christian denominations who had endured suffering for their faith at a ceremony at the Coliseum in Rome, where many of the early martyrs had borne witness. The complete list of their names is yet to be published. The ceremony was seen as significant by ecumenists because for the first time, non- Roman Catholics were included in the tributes. Nineteen denominations and ecumenical organisations were represented at

the ceremony, held on 7th May, and the 12,000 honoured included Saints such as the Holy New Martyr Tikhon of Moscow, other heroic sufferers, but also others whose suffering does not seem to have been particularly related to their faith. Furthermore the list contains many whom Roman Catholics would formerly have thought of as schismatic or heretical. Sadly, contrary to the dictates of our Faith, representatives of the Œcumenical Patriarchate and of other (unspecified) Orthodox Churches participated in this extraordinary event, and the Gospel was read both by a Roman Catholic deacon and an Orthodox clergyman. [Source ENI bulletin 00-0173]

JERUSALEM ICON VISITS BELGRADE AND GLORIFICATION OF SAINTS THERE

HIS BEATITUDE, *Patriarch Diodoros I of Jerusalem* gave his blessing that the Wonderworking Jerusalem Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God should visit Belgrade, and the sacred icon was taken there on 20th May. In sending the icon, at the request of the *Patriarch of Serbia, Pavle*, Patriarch Diodoros expressed the hope that her presence in Belgrade would "elevate the souls of the Orthodox faithful overcoming the consequences of the last war." The icon was accompanied from Jerusalem to Belgrade by the *Right Reverend Metropolitan Amvrosios of Neapolis* and two Archimandrites from the Jerusalem Patriarchate, and was to be met by the whole Assembly of the Hierarchs of the Serbian Church, whose Synod in the capital city was in session.

During this same session of the Assembly of the Serbian Orthodox Hierarchs, on Sunday 21st May, at St Sava's Memorial Church, *the new Hieromartyrs of Serbia* were synodically glorified as Saints. [Source: Novosti] The newly glorified martyrs included the *New Hieromartyrs Petar* who suffered in 1941, *Joanikije of Montenegro* who was killed by the communists, *Dosithej of Zagreb* slain at the out-break of WWII, *Sava of Upper Kariovac* slain by the Ustasa, *Piston of Banfa* also slain by the Ustasa, *Rafail, the Abbot of Sisatovac*, and *Hieromartyrs Branko, Djordje, and the Martyr Vukasin*, all of whom were slain by the Ustasa. During his homily, Patriarch Pavle said: "Thus glorifying now and forever the holy martyrs and confessors, we pray to their and our Lord: If we must suffer, let it be on the path of righteousness and Thy truth. Do not allow it to be because of our unrighteousness or hatred towards anyone!" Through the holy prayers of the newly glorified martyrs, may the Lord have mercy upon us and upon the suffering Serbian Church and people.

NEW CZECH & SLOVAKIAN METROPOLITAN

IN OUR LAST ISSUE, we reported the enthronement of *Archbishop Krystof* as the new Archbishop of Prague. In the event, he was not elected as Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. That post has been filled by the 72 year-old *Archbishop Nikolai (Kocvar) of Michalovce-Slovakia*, who was elected on 17th April. The new Metropolitan, enthroned on 17th May, was ordained in 1950 and from 1955-1959 studied at Zagorsk in Russia. The Church, which comprises only four dioceses and 180 parishes, was granted autocephalous status by the Patriarchate of Moscow in 1951, but this was only endorsed by the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1998.

BISHOP CONSECRATED FOR SWEDEN

BISHOP IOANNIS (Duerloo), a Dutch convert to Holy Orthodoxy, born in 1930, was consecrated Bishop on 28th February this year. The consecration took place at the *Sacred Monastery of Sts Cyprian and Justina, Fili, Attica, Greece*, and the celebrants were Metropolitan Cyprian, Archbishop Chrysostom of Etna, Bishop Michael of Nora, Bishop Angelos of Ailonos, Bishop Chrysostom of Chriatianoupolis, Bishop Auxentius of Fotiki, Bishop Ambrose of Methoni and Bishop Simeon of Lampsacus. The newly consecrated Bishop briefly visited Brookwood some years ago, when he was serving as a married priest in Sweden. His presbytera Monica reposed in 1999, after receiving the monastic tonsure and being renamed Parthenia, nun. Thereafter, Fr Ioannis received the monastic tonsure himself and four days later was raised to the rank of Archimandrite on 23rd April, 1999.

RC THEOLOGIAN CALLS FOR RETHINK ON UNIATISM

PROFESSOR WACLAW HRYNIEWICZ, of the *Catholic University of Lublin*, Poland, and a member of the *Catholic-Orthodox International Commission*, has urged the Greek Catholic (Uniat) churches to begin a sincere dialogue with the Orthodox. The professor stated that the 1596 Union of Brest, to which various Uniat churches trace their origin, had "degraded" Orthodoxy. He was defending comments made by the *Œcumenical Patriarch* during a visit to Poland earlier this year, which have been taken out of context and distorted. "The Greek Catholics would have been delighted," he said, "if I too had condemned the patriarch, but I have tried to explain the Orthodox position. What he meant was that Uniatism had assumed a historical form which belongs and should belong to the past." He further pointed out that the Pope has been inconsistent in that, although the Vatican had accepted the Balamand Agreement in 1993, which says that Uniatism should be rejected as a method of seeking unity, the Pope had subsequently, in 1996, praised the Union of Brest. The professor's words, which are surely true and perceptive, have naturally called forth a very critical response from many Uniats and Latin-rite Roman Catholics.

KOSOVO UPDATE

FATHER SAVA of the *Decani Monastery* has issued a record of terrorist crimes recorded in Kosovo since the arrival of KFOR and UNMIK, the total number being 3,688 of which 3,491 were committed against Serbs and Montenegrins, 87 against Albanians and 110 against Roma, Muslims, Goranci, Turks and members of other nationalities. 688 people have been abducted and are missing, of which 630 are Serbs and Montenegrins, 36 Albanians and 22 others. 793 have been killed, of whom 705 are Serbs and Montenegrins, 63 Albanians, and 25 others. He lists other brutal crimes including the rape of an 11 year old Albanian girl by a KFOR member, and that 32 towns, villages and neighbourhoods have been ethnically cleansed of Serbs, Roma, Goranci, Muslims and other non-Albanians. He reports that about 80 churches, monasteries and other cultural monuments have been burned, demolished or seriously damaged, that clergy and monastics have been terrorized or prosecuted, more than 150 parish houses destroyed or damaged, and over 10,000 icons and other sacred objects, most of which are cultural monuments under the special protection of the

state, have been stolen or destroyed. 50,000 homes of non-Albanians have been burned down, and over 200,000 foreign-nationals have entered the country - these persons "are international terrorists, criminals, drug dealers, mafia members, women and children traders, organizers of bordellos and other forms of international crime." The list of atrocities and violations fills seven pages. This horror and destruction of a province has been opened up by the Nato bombardment of Yugoslavia.

CANADIAN PROTEST AGAINST CHURCH LEADERS' ECUMENISM

ORTHODOXOS TYPOS, a prominent new calendarist Greek Orthodox newspaper, (5th March, 1999) published the text of a leaflet distributed at a *Pan-Orthodox Vespers on the Sunday of Orthodoxy at the Serbian Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity In Montreal*. The pamphlet was distributed in Greek, English, and French, and the English version has now come to our notice through the periodical, "Orthodox Christian Witness." Entitled "Voice of the Orthodox", the leaflet stated:

Today, on this day of Orthodoxy, we are found in this holy temple in order to celebrate together the triumph of Orthodoxy over heresies. With one accord [let us proclaim]: "Behold now, what is so good or so joyous as for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 132:1). With one accord: Let us remember the blood shed by the saints of our Faith so that "the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints" (Jude 3) might be preserved inviolate eternally.

With one accord: Clergy and laity, let us declare that we preserve our Orthodoxy, "even as they which were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered it unto us" (Cf. Luke 1:2).

But Your Eminence, reverend fathers, what Orthodoxy do we celebrate today? The Orthodoxy of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of the Symbol of our Faith [the Creed], or the "Orthodoxy" which you have introduced into the Canadian Council of "Churches" as a member on equal terms with heterodoxy - i.e. the Branch Theory?

Do we celebrate today the Orthodoxy of the Seven holy Œcumenical Councils, or the "Orthodoxy" of Balamand (June 17-24, 1993), of the "Sister Churches," in which the heretical Papal "Church" is considered equal with the Orthodox Church?

Do we celebrate today the Orthodoxy of the Fourth Œcumenical Council, or the "Orthodoxy" of Chambesy - Geneva (Agreed Statement, November 1990), wherein the Orthodox and the Monophysites, after fifteen centuries, have discovered that there is no difference between Orthodoxy and Monophysitism?

As a result of all this, we the faithful people of the Lord, condemn the mistaken path taken by our Orthodox shepherds, and we proclaim our faith in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. With sacred emotion we proclaim that we shall keep our most holy Church of Christ unshaken and our Orthodox Faith inviolate, even as our Lord and the Apostles delivered it unto us. Even unto death, we shall remain steadfast in the Church of Christ, against which "the gates of Hades shall not prevail" (Matt. 16:18). We will not permit Orthodoxy to be profaned by accursed Ecumenism.

CATHEDRAL FOR SITE OF THE TSAR'S MARTYRDOM

THE TASS News Agency has reported that preparatory work has already begun for the building of a Cathedral in the city of Yekaterinburg on the site of the martyrdom in 1918 of the *Russian Imperial Family and their servants*. Work on the building is expected to begin in mid-Summer. Chief engineer *Vladimir Grachev* is quoted as saying that a five-domed cathedral is being erected which would contain a replica of the room in which the Tsar Martyr and his family were killed. The Ipatiev House, in which the martyrs were held captive and in which they were killed, was demolished in the 1970's on the orders of the Soviet authorities, lest it become a place of pilgrimage. The enemies of God usually make fools of themselves, and it seems that all they achieved was the clearance of the site for the new Cathedral. Although the Imperial Family were included in the Assembly of the New Martyrs of Russia, glorified by the hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad in 1981, the administration of the Moscow Patriarchate has so far hesitated to recognize their sanctity, although there has been considerable pressure from the faithful for them to do so

SECOND FIRE IN MONTREAL

THE CANADIAN ORTHODOX HERALD, Number 11 May 2000, reports as a "Stop Press" that a second fire has occurred at the *Cathedral of St Nicolas in Montreal* (ROCA). The church was almost burned to the ground in a fire some months ago, and the rebuilding was nearing completion when, on 19th April this year, a second fire broke out. Forty firemen were needed to contend with the blaze. The windows were broken, and within the newly-erected building there was extensive water damage. The piece points out that this was a sore trial for the parishioners just as they were approaching Holy Week and Easter, and COH asks its readers to remember the clergy and parishioners in their hour of trial. The cause of the second fire is as yet unknown.

PARISH RE-INAUGURATED IN DUBLIN

HIS GRACE, *Archbishop Mark* visited Ireland for the patronal festival of *St Colman's Church, Stradbally*, where on Saturday 14th/27th May he served at the Vigil Service, and on the saint's day itself, the Sunday, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy assisted by the priest, *Fr Peter Baulk* and *Fr Deacon Geoffrey Ready*. Earlier on the Saturday, with the kind permission of the Greek Church, the Archbishop had celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Greek *Orthodox Church of the Annunciation* in Dublin for the growing number of Russians settling in the city. He was assisted by *Father Vadim Zakrevsky*, who has been serving Liturgies for this growing congregation for some months. In the post-war period, right up to the mid-eighties, there was a Russian parish in Dublin, comprising a number of elderly émigrés. With their deaths, the parish, dedicated to the *Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God*, ceased to function, but at a meeting after the Archbishop's Liturgy, the parish was re-inaugurated. It is hoped to find permanent premises for the parish and arrange regular Sunday Liturgies.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

ON HOLY AND GREAT SATURDAY (16th/29th April), before the Divine Liturgy, the catechumen *James Cooper* was baptized and chrismated at Saint Edward's Church, and received the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ at the Divine Liturgy for the first time on that day. James, who is named for the Holy Apostle James the son of Alphæus (feastday: 9th/22nd October), stayed with us through Bright Week, while he wore his chrim robe and received the Holy Mysteries each day. On the Friday, he came with us to the Convent where *Archimandrite Flor* and Fr Alexis served together, and on his eighth day, which was also Saint George's day, his baptismal robe was removed at the end of the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the St Boniface Mission in Ryde, IoW. May the Lord grant him to preserve the purity of his confession all the days of his life and win the prize of his high calling as an Orthodox Christian.

THE BRIGHT WEEK celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the *St Boniface Mission in Ryde*, on Saint George's day, was attended by about a dozen "extras" from Brookwood and from the London parish, and after the Liturgy a celebratory meal was shared, during which the new Orthodox there were introduced to pascha and kulich. The Divine Liturgy was again celebrated at Ryde on Sunday, 28th May; and we hope that *the next celebration of a Liturgy at Ryde will be on Saturday 24th June*.

FATHER JOACHIM (PARR) of *Mercy House, New York City*, visited England between 10th and 17th May (n.s.) and stayed at the Brotherhood, where on the Sunday, he concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with Fr Peter Baulk. While here, he made a pilgrimage to some of the holy places in Eastern Kent and visited members of his flock who happened to be in London. He even managed to squeeze in a visit to the Chelsea Flower Show. Very generously, Fr Joachim brought us a new Gospel Book, an Apostle Book, Service books and four new volumes of the Book of Needs as well as a plentiful supply of rather imposing monastic hats. Our thanks to him for his thoughtfulness.

OUR THANKS are also due to *Father Paul Elliott*, pastor of the St Elizabeth Mission in Birkenhead and St Werburgh Mission in Congleton, who volunteered to travel down to Brookwood for the last weekend in May, to celebrate the Sunday services here, so that Fr Alexis was free to serve at Ryde.

OUR ECCLESARCH, *Fr Niphon and Hierodeacon Sabbas*, attended the AGM and Day Conference of the *Friends of Mount Athos* at Oxford on Tuesday 30th May, representing our Brotherhood.

PRACTICAL TIP

IF YOU WISH to pay better attention to the divine services in church, stand nearer the front. This is especially the case in long, narrow churches, such as ours at Brookwood. Perhaps people think that in the darker recesses of the church, they will be able to pay better attention, but this is often not the case. At the back you can see everyone coming and going, and are more likely to be distracted by this. Late-comers invariably congregate around the doors at the back, and their settling in will cause disturbance. Those less interested and less motivated also seem to congregate at the back - another source of distraction. Nearer the front, one will only be able to see the

icon screen and the sacred rites of the Liturgy, and this will help you to concentrate on these things, which are there to raise our minds to Christ. Nearer the front, you will be more likely to hear the words of the clergy and the choir more distinctly, and therefore to follow the prayers of the service, rather than just catching some bits and otherwise day-dreaming. I know we have the example of the Publican, who was "standing afar off" (Luke 18:13), but one can stand afar off spiritually through one's awareness of one's own unworthiness without necessarily doing so in actuality. And it is probably better to do so. Furthermore, striking religious poses or play-piety is of no great help to us, and can turn us into pharisees. A better course is to do what will bring you the greatest benefit - undoubtedly that is to stand where you can best concentrate on the prayers and sacred rites of the Liturgy.