

The Shepherd

An Orthodox Christian Pastoral Magazine

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FROM THE FATHERS

"THE LORD promised to send us the Paraclete, Who would make us ready for God. Just as dry wheat without moisture cannot become dough or one loaf, so also, we who are many cannot be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven. Just as dry earth cannot bring forth fruit unless it receive moisture, so also we, being at first a dry tree, can never bring forth fruit unto life without the voluntary rain from above. Our bodies achieve unity through the washing which leads to incorruption; our souls, however; through the Spirit. Both, then are necessary, for both lead us on to the life of God."

Holy Hieromartyr Irenæus of Lyons, c. 140 - c.202 A.D.

"YOU HAVE ASKED also, dearest son, what I thought about those who obtain the grace of God while they are weakened by illness, whether or not they are to be reckoned as legitimate Christians who have not been bathed with saving water, but have had it poured over them. On this point, my modesty and reservation prejudices no one. Let each consider what he thinks best; and what he thinks best, let him do. In so far as my poor ability conceives it, I think that the Divine benefits can in no way be weakened or mutilated; nor can anything less take place in that case, where that which is drawn from the Divine gifts is accepted with full and entire faith both on the part of the giver and of the receiver... In the saving mysteries, when necessity compels and when God bestows His pardon, Divine benefits are bestowed fully upon believers; nor ought anyone be disturbed because the sick are poured upon or sprinkled when they receive the Lord's grace."

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

"YOU HAVE READ, therefore, that the three witnesses in Baptism are one: water; blood and the Spirit (see I John 5:8); and if you withdraw any one of these, there is no mystery of Baptism. For what is water without the Cross of Christ? A common element with no sacramental effect. Nor on the other hand is there any mystery of regeneration without water, for unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God' (John 3:5). Even a catechumen believes in the cross of the Lord Jesus, by which also he is signed; but unless he be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, he cannot receive the remission of sins nor be recipient of the gift of spiritual grace."

Saint Ambrose of Milan, + 397 A.D.

"EVERYONE BAPTIZED in the Orthodox manner has received mystically the fullness of Grace; but he becomes conscious of this Grace only to the extent that he actively observes the commandments."

Venerable Mark the Ascetic, fifth century

A SERMON
BY THE BLESSED AND EVER-MEMORABLE
METROPOLITAN PHILARET OF NEW YORK,
given at the
Convent of the Annunciation, Willesden
on 20th June/3rd July, 1971

IN THE NAME of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

In the Lives of the Saints we read how once several believers came to the great ascetic, the Elder Agathon. He was outstanding not only as a great ascetic and man of prayer, but he also possessed a special gift of wisdom and spiritual understanding. These people came to him in order to try him, and find out whether he was indeed the humble monk he was said to be. They came to him and said: "Father Agathon, we have been told that you are a very great sinner!" The humble hermit answered: "They have told you the truth - I am a great sinner" "And we have been told, you are perjurer." "Guilty, pray for my sins," answered the Elder. "We have been told that you are a thief." "Guilty pray for me." "We have been told that you are a drunkard." "Guilty!" "They said you are a lecher" "Guilty" "They said you are a heretic." "NO, I am not a heretic," the Elder answered brusquely. "Why have you answered in this manner, Father; you have taken upon yourself all these sins which were attributed to you, you accepted them humbly why then did you give such an answer when told you were guilty of heresy?" The Elder said: "Because, my children, I consider myself capable of any of the sins you named. I may not have committed a given sin in actual fact, God in His mercy led me away from temptation, but I feel in my soul that I could commit it and for this reason feel guilty, yet do not despair; because I know that God accepts repentant sinners with love, and so I repent of my sins and hope that God will not turn away from me, for He will never turn away a sinner that repents. But as for heresy, it separates one from God, and I do not want to be separated from God." And so they went away, having received a useful lesson from the great Elder.

Remember that two sins in particular separate man from God. As St Agathon indicated, first and foremost is heresy, and secondly schism within the Church. He who is the cause of schism, he who is responsible for the falling off of one or two people, or even of a whole part of the Church - in the words of St John Chrysostom - this man commits a great sin, such that even the blood of martyrdom cannot wash it away.

Why am I talking about this now? Because the temptation of so-called Ecumenism is spreading like a flood everywhere in the world. It is said that one can combine all religions, all faiths into one, and then complete Christianity will come about. The people who think thus affirm that each religion has a particle of truth in it, and so let us unite all religions, thrown aside everything that is not true in them, and let us merge together into one that particle of truth which exists in them and then we shall have perfect truth. It seems an attractive thought! But just imagine; an Orthodox believer is invited to such an ecumenical gathering, and he is told that such and such a part of his Faith he must bring into the common treasury whereas this and that he must throw away, as it is not truth. Think, how will an Orthodox conscience consider such an invitation? What of this Faith with the help of which our fathers found their salvation, which the Apostles embraced, in which the great

ascetics believed and, in more recent centuries, the hermit saint Feofan [the Recluse] and Father John of Cronstadt and many others; what of this Faith when it is said that in this Faith there is only a particle of truth and another part is untrue? Will the Orthodox conscience agree with this? If you and I now see that many do agree, are led astray and fall into the trap, this all testifies to the fact that Christ's truth is no longer dear to people. Christ said to Pontius Pilate: "I have come into this world to bear witness to the truth and anyone who has turned away from truth, let him hear My voice." The wretched Pilate did not understand that Truth Himself was standing arrayed before him, and answered sceptically: "What is Truth?" and himself departed from truth.

Remember how in the early centuries the Holy Fathers, who have done so much for the foundation of our Church, looked upon heresy, upon other ways of thinking. No! They feared any incorrect idea; they did not consider that one could unite all heretics, all those who think differently, with marvellous and extraordinary results achieving something new. No, they did not send out a call to unite with those who thought differently from themselves, rather they invited them to repent, to give up their delusions, or they excommunicated them. In those days there could be no question of Ecumenism! The Holy Fathers did not look at things like that. They treasured truth as something pure and inviolate, and it was dearer to them than their own life.

And now they say - "Well! All religions are good; God is one." One constantly hears such things. "God is one. One can pray to Him in different ways." One sees that in fact truth is no longer dear to man. If it were dear to him, he would not tolerate any accretion to it, any kind of error. And now they say that one must unite all religions and then a new religion will be born. They will not build a new religion. They might indeed build a "hut on hens' legs"* or a twentieth century tower of Babel, but not a new religion, for Truth came long ago, has long been given; bow to it, accept it. And to search for some new truths, some new religions, is a sign that for man there has never been any real faith.

"See, therefore, that ye walk circumspectly," children of the Orthodox Church! We walk amid temptations all the time. But amid the temptation of depravity and shamelessness, temptations of religious errors everywhere, temptations both moral and spiritual await the faithful soul. I repeat, "See, therefore, that ye walk circumspectly." Thank the Lord that you belong to the Church in Exile,** which has not once betrayed itself and which follows the path it trod from the beginning and shall continue evermore. This is the path where truth is preserved, where these holy traditions, religious and traditional are kept, by which at one time our great country, our great people, lived and were enhanced. Keep to the Truth. In the Apocalypse, God says to the man who was living in very difficult conditions: "I shall not burden you with any new burden, keep what you have." And you too, keep what you have and keep your Church, which alone goes its own pure way, uncompromising and free, and freely speak up about the evil which is spreading all over the world.

The path of the Church in Exile is fraught with difficulties. It is the way of the Cross, as though every step is marked with blood, but the Church remains faithful to itself and will be faithful until the time comes when at last, as we all hope, our Mother the Russian Church will be freed and the Church in Exile will be united with its Mother Church in complete unity. Amen.

*Translation kindly supplied by
the Sisters of the Convent of the Annunciation*

* This is a reference to a character in Russian folklore, an evil witch, Baba Yaga, who lived in a hut which moved around on chicken legs - ed..

** Church in Exile - this refers to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. Until the late sixties / early seventies it was generally known as the "Russian Orthodox Church in Exile." Seemingly because this was thought to have a political connotation, it then became known either as the "Russian Orthodox Church Abroad," or the more cumbersome "Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia "(or in America, even "Outside of Russia"!). Sometimes, distinguishing it from the Patriarchal administration of Moscow, it is referred to as the "Synodal Church." One will find all these titles in various documents, but they refer to the same body.

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

III. THE OUTER ACTION OF PRAYER

*Therefore glorify God (in prayer) in your body,
and in your spirit (1 Cor. 6:20).
I will therefore that men pray everywhere,
lifting up holy hands (1 Tim. 2:8).*

I. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN OUTER AND INNER PRAYER

DOES NOT inward prayer alone suffice without the outward? This question is as if one should ask, whether the soul alone might suffice for man without the body It is idle to ask this, seeing that God has been pleased to make man consist of soul and body; likewise it is idle to ask, whether inward prayer alone may not suffice without outward. Since we have both soul and body, we ought to *glorify God in our bodies, and in our souls, which are God's*, and this is only natural, *that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth should speak.* Our Lord Jesus Christ was spiritual in the highest degree, but even He expressed His spiritual prayer both by words and by devout gestures of the body: sometimes, for instance, lifting up His eyes to heaven, sometimes kneeling, or falling on His face to the ground. See I Cor 6:20; Matthew 12:34; John 17:1; Luke 22:41; Matt. 26:39 - *Catechism of (Saint) Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow.*

THE BODY, which has *itself struggled* in prayer; will on the day of Resurrection be taken up into the air, and without any shame will look upon its Lord; with Him it will enter into the bridal chamber of light, there to delight with Angels and with those men who have also struggled in vigil and in prayer - *Venerable Ephraim the Syrian.*

FROM a certain Elder; I heard: "Every prayer, in which the body did not struggle and for which the heart was not afflicted, can be considered to be the same as the aborted fruit of the womb, because such prayer has no soul in itself" - *Venerable Isaac the Syrian*.

IF WE are alone at the time of standing (i.e. the appointed hour of prayer), then interiorly, in our soul itself, let us imprint the image of one who prays. And if the ministers of praise are not with us, then outwardly, with the body we should take up a prayerful disposition, for with the imperfect, the mind often conforms (models itself) on the disposition of the body - *The Ladder of St John Climacus*.

MAN LOOKETH upon the outward appearance, but God looketh upon the heart (1 Kings [1 Samuel] 16:7); but in man the disposition of the heart largely corresponds with the expression on his face, his looks. That is why we should maintain the most reverent disposition of the body during prayer. Stand, like one condemned, with your head bowed, not daring to look up to heaven, with your hands hanging down or clasped behind you - *[this is a practice which is not approved of in Russian churches today, as it can appear too casual-ed.]* - as if they were bound with thongs, just as those who are apprehended at the very site of their crime are bound. Let the sound of your voice be the pitiful sound of weeping, the moaning of the man who has been mortally wounded with a weapon, or is suffering some dreadful illness - *Blessed Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov*.

IN correct spiritual activity, even the struggles of the body have an *enormous significance*, because repentance and humility are expressed by the actions of the body. *Behold my lowliness and my toil, and forgive all my sins* (Ps. 24:18), the holy David prayerfully chants to God, combining his bodily labours with deep repentance and with abject humble-mindedness in his pious struggles - *Ibid*.

ONE CAN PRAY standing, sitting, waking, lying down, doing something with one's hands, on your own or in the assembly For always, in every place, and during all our activities, when eating or drinking, or in God-pleasing conversations, we can lift up our hearts and minds to God, we can bring our needs before Him with humility and faith, we can beg of Him mercy and say the "Lord, have mercy" Thus Moses, in the midst of a countless people, which he had led up from Egypt, when he saw them in danger, cried out to God in his mind and his heart; and although it says nothing in Scripture about the words of his prayer, yet God asked him: *Wherefore chest thou unto me?* (Ex. 14:15). The pious king Hezekiah prayed, lying on his bed, and God heard him. Jonas prayed in the belly of the sea-monster, and was heard by God. The Three Children prayed in the burning furnace and were saved. For God does not regard external appearances and the disposition of the body as such, but He has regard for the heart, for humility, faith and the desires of the heart. For which reason it is written: *The desire of the poor* (that is, the humble) *hast Thou heard, O Lord; to the preparation of their heart hath Thine ear been attentive* (Ps. 9:37) - *Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk*.

THE FOLLOWING external signs of prayer are mentioned in the Holy Scriptures: the bowing of the knee (3 Kgs 8:54), the raising of the hands (Ex. 9:22), the lifting of the eyes to heaven (John I 1:41). But all these signs *are completely useless, without an inner true knowledge of God and striving*, because God has regard for the heart, and not outward appearances, and He hearkens not to the outer but to the inner voice - *Ibid*.

WHETHER you pray with the brethren or alone, try to stand at prayer not only to fulfil the general rule, but so that you can pray with feeling - *Venerable Nilus of Sinai*.

THEY OFTEN call prayer what is not prayer at all. One goes to church, stands there, looks at the icons or at the people, at their faces or their dress, and says: I prayed to God! One stood at home before the icons, bowed one's head, pronounced the prescribed words without any understanding or feeling, and says: I prayed to God, even though with the thoughts and the heart one did not pray at all, but was as if in some other place, with other people, and other things, but not with God - *Saint John of Cronstadt*.

... to be continued with "*Particular Prayerful Activities*"

THOU art our God, Who createst and fillest all things with wisdom;
Thou, O Christ, hast sent prophets to prophesy Thy coming,
and Apostles to proclaim Thy greatness.
The former foretold Thine advent,
while the latter enlightened the nations with Baptism,
and the Martyrs found that which they desired.
Together with her who gave Thee birth,
their choirs pray unto Thee;
Give rest, O Lord, to the souls Thou hast taken unto Thyself,
and make us worthy of Thy Kingdom,
O Thou Who hast endured for our sakes
the condemnation of the Cross,
O our Redeemer and our God.

*From the Lauds of Saturday
Plagal of the second tone*

PILGRIMAGE TO BEDE'S WORLD

By Mrs Barbara worth of Congleton

OUR JOURNEY began at Keele University, and we headed north towards Durham on a rainy day, setting aside our worries about the petrol crisis. The Cathedral at Durham was reached by a steep windswept cobbled street, up to the Cathedral green. After wondering at the nave with its massive Norman pillars, we eventually reached Saint Cuthbert's tomb at the east end. It is a very plain tomb behind the high altar with only the name of the saint inscribed on it. Somehow its plainness makes it awe-inspiring.

St Cuthbert died in A.D. 687 at Lindisfarne. Many miracles took place at his tomb, and in 698 his body was exhumed and found to be incorrupt.

His relics were taken by the monks of Lindisfarne in 875 to escape the Viking raids. After a period in Chester-le-Street, they were moved to Durham in 995 and have been there ever since. A Saxon church was built over the shrine containing the relics, which were examined in 1104, and were found still to be incorrupt, and again after the Reformation, when the Commissioners found that they were extraordinarily lifelike. After writing to London for instructions, the Commissioners had the relics buried at the original site. The tomb was excavated in 1827 and found to contain the original coffin, decorated with carvings of the Twelve Apostles, the Virgin and Child, and Seven Archangels; inside were his garnet pectoral cross, his portable altar; an ivory comb, and pieces of embroidered vestments, probably presented by King Athelstan on his pilgrimage in A.D. 934.

After lighting a candle at Saint Cuthbert's tomb, we went to the Galilee Chapel at the western end, to the Venerable Bede's tomb, which was similarly plain. Saint Bede was born near Wearmouth about 673, and entered the monastery there when he was seven. He became a monk and later a deacon, and a priest in 703. He spent most of his life in the monastery at Jarrow, which was the twin foundation of Wearmouth. He was greatly assisted in his work as a historian by the library of books, which St Benedict Biscop had brought from Rome on his numerous visits. He died at Jarrow in 735, singing the Psalms and working on his translation into Old English of the Gospel of St John.

We went to the monks' dormitory which is a museum and library. I was very impressed by a plastic (?) / artificial stone copy of the Ruthwell Cross. It must have been 20ft high and the carvings were wonderfully clear. I wondered if our own Sandbach crosses [*a few miles from Congleton* - ed.] would have stood as tall as this originally, as there are quite a lot of stones missing today. They must have been very impressive when they were first erected.

In the treasury, we saw St Cuthbert's coffin with all the carvings on its sides and the garnet pectoral cross. This was very beautiful though only very small, with very intricate workmanship. It was wonderful to think that it had actually been worn by Saint Cuthbert all those years ago.

The next day was bright and sunny, and we went to Jarrow, to St Paul's monastery and the Bede's World Museum. The museum is in a modern "Roman" building with fountains, open halls, atrium, etc. - a bit confusing when one is thinking of St Bede and the early medieval period, but I suppose it was to be in sympathy with the many Roman remains in that area. There was a "medieval" farm with wattle and daub huts with thatched roofs and whitewashed walls. There we saw pigs, goats, sheep and Dexter cattle, and the crops of spelt, a kind of wheat, etc., which would have been grown by the monks. The animals had become pets and all answered to their names. Today they never slaughter them; they just die of old age! It must have been different in Bede's day. The crops looked very poor, but the animals looked in good condition.

One of the unusual features of the monastery farm was that it was surrounded by giant oil storage tanks from the refinery nearby and the air smelt of oil.

Further down the hill, surrounded by trees, lay St Paul's Church and the site of the monastery, which St Bede had lived and worked in. Quite a lot of the foundations of the monastery could still be seen, and the Church of St Paul is well used today. It is a Saxon building of local stone, characterized by a tall narrow nave and very few windows. There was a great feeling of holiness in this old building.

St Peter's, the sister foundation at Monkwearmouth, lies about ten miles away, a day's walk. It is surrounded by lawns, the local university campus and the oil refinery. The Saxon church was of a similar construction to St Paul's, and had a high square tower at the west end. There was nothing left of the monastery, as the whole area had been a site of workshops and refuse tips, though the church, standing in the midst, had remained unscathed.

On Sunday the rain returned on our journey to Hexham, one of St Wilfrid's many church foundations. This is a tall imposing building, rather large for a small market town. The

main focus, after the now familiar fairly narrow nave, was the crypt which many medieval writers had mentioned.

The entrance steps are just to the west of the crossing and are quite steep. The crypt is empty apart from a stone slab at the eastern end and niches in the walls for lamps. Relics would have been kept here. Quite a lot of the stone was re-used masonry from the Roman walls nearby. There was a sense of holiness in the crypt. On the way out I noticed a pillar to St Acca, a bishop of Hexham who had been a companion of Wilfrid. I had always been interested in St Acca and was quite pleased to read that he had been St Wilfrid's faithful companion in his exiles, and had been noted for his pleasant cheerful character. He was younger than Wilfrid, and was Bishop of Hexham for many years.

We visited the churches of St Andrew and St Peter at the little village of Bywell. These are both Saxon, with high narrow naves, and have high towers with arches at the belfry. There seemed to be no explanation why two churches should be so close together. On the way back to Durham, we visited the Saxon church of St Mary's at Ovingham. This was like the others with a tall narrow nave and a high tower with arches at the belfry. As with St Andrew's at Bywell, it stood in a circular church yard.

The period of the 6th and 7th centuries when Sts Bede, Cuthbert and Wilfrid were living in Northumbria was a time of great missionary activity in a relatively small population. Priests and bishops were very few in number and travelled immense distances to visit their people. The sturdy churches still standing after more than a thousand years are a tribute to the strength of the Faith and teaching of their founders.

THE COMING MONTH

THE GREAT FEAST of Theophany falls in January, on the 6th/19th. The feast's name means the manifestation or showing forth of God, and it celebrates the Lord's Baptism by John in the River Jordan. It is one of the foremost of the Twelve Great Feasts in the year, because the Lord's Baptism, of course, inaugurates our own, and as the Saviour and Lover of mankind Himself said: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The feast is, therefore, of fundamental importance for us.

The record of the Lord's Baptism in Jordan is contained in three of the four Gospels (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; and Luke 3:21-22), and it is also one of the clearest manifestations of the mystery of the Most-holy Trinity, for the Three Divine Persons were revealed there. The Father was heard to speak from heaven; the Son was present in the river waters, and the Spirit was seen in the form of a dove. Doubtless this is the primary reason that the feast is called the Theophany for previously the mystery of the Triune Godhead had only been hinted at in prophecies and revealed through enigmatic signs. Now, with the coming of the Saviour; it is revealed more clearly.

The feast is also called the festival of illumination. This is because God is light and the Lord was revealed, a Great Light, as the prophets had foretold, to the "people which sat in darkness" and "in the shadow of death" (Matt. 4:16). The knowledge of the Three Divine Persons is itself participation in that light. Also, anciently on the eve of the festival catechumens were often baptized, and so themselves "illumined."

The feast is one of the most ancient of those in the Church calendar. In the second century, Clement of Alexandria mentions it, and in the third century it seems already to have been quite well established.

Baptism is a washing, and the question must be asked why, if He were sinless, as we confess, the Lord was baptized? The Fathers are unanimously in asserting that this was not because He had any need of cleansing. Rather it was so that He might crush the head of the serpent, that He might bury sin in the waters and all the old Adam (i.e. all that pertains to the fallenness of our nature), that He might fulfil the Law, that He might reveal the mystery of the Trinity and that He might sanctify and cleanse the waters' so that they might become the medium for our cleansing and Baptism.

The second most important event in January this year is the beginning of the Lenten Triodion, which falls on Sunday 22nd January/4th February. The Lenten Triodion is a service book which is used through three preparatory periods which lead up to Pascha (Easter). The first of these periods consists of four Sundays, and the intervening days, and so lasts 22 days in all. The Gospels appointed for the four Sundays prepare us for the struggle of the Fast itself, and teach us how to approach Lent. The second period is the longest of the three and lasts for exactly forty days. It is Great Lent itself; it always begins on a Monday (this year on 13th/26th February), and ends on the Friday before Palm Sunday. The third period, beginning Lazarus Saturday, lasts for exactly a week, and is Passion Week or Great Week, and it takes us up to the midnight celebration of the Lord's triumph over death, the Resurrection.

As Easter is a movable feast, the exact time when we start using the Lenten Triodion also varies from year to year. This year the first two of the four preparatory Sundays fall within the month of January; they are the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14), and that of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). The message of the first is to warn us that, although we are about to enter upon a course of at least moderate asceticism, we should not hope to be justified by our struggles or our own righteousness, and that we must therefore always guard ourselves with the humble-mindedness of the publican. To rub this point home, and stop us boasting about our struggles, the week following this Sunday is kept as a fast-free week. The parable of the Prodigal Son both shows us how we need to resolve to arise from our state of sinfulness and take steps to return to our Father's home, and also how willingly the Father Himself will come to meet us and receive us when we make attempts to do so. It assures us of His ready and complete forgiveness.

Among the Saints we celebrate in January, we have a host of the greatest ascetics. Their feasts and lives remind us that, after His Baptism, our Saviour went out into the desert, where He fasted and prayed and contested with Satan. They also give us encouragement as we turn with our hearts and minds towards Great Lent, and to the extent that each one of us is able, begin our own desert experience.

We also have:

The Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles (4th/17th January). In St Luke's Gospel (10:1-5) it is recorded that the Lord appointed seventy disciples and sent them out in pairs to preach His coming. Some of these original seventy later fell away, but just as the betrayer Judas was replaced in the number of the Twelve by St Matthias, so those who left the company of the seventy were replaced by others who took up their apostolic labours. One sees the same thing happening in church-life today - people come, labour for a while and

then fall away, and the Lord sends others as "labourers into His harvest." After the day of Pentecost, the seventy also continued their preaching ministry travelling, some individually and some as helpers of the Twelve, throughout the known world. Many of them became the first bishops in the Church, and later consecrated others to continue their ministry thus inaugurating the church hierarchy that we have to this day. Many of them died as martyrs. These seventy have their own feasts throughout the year; but the present festival was appointed so that they might be celebrated together and so that it would be clear that they are all honoured equally by the faithful.

The holy Martyr Tatiana (12th/25th) is so popular among the Russians, among whom her name or its shortened form, Tanya, is often given to girls, that it is hard not to think that she must have been a Russian. In fact she was an Italian, from Rome, and lived centuries before Russia existed. She was from an eminent and rich Roman family and was brought up as a Christian. She was ordained as a deaconess and, as such, served by visiting the sick and the imprisoned. At that time the Emperor Alexander Severus reigned. His mother had been a Christian, and it is said that he dallied with the idea of Christianity, even having statues of Christ and Abraham put among those of his pagan gods. Nonetheless, his advisors instituted a persecution of the Christians, and Tatiana was apprehended and put to torture. During her tortures, eight of those engaged in this gruesome work were deemed worthy to see four Angels guarding her. They were converted and were themselves beheaded, dying as Christian martyrs. After the cruellest torments, in the year 225, Saint Tatiana was executed by beheading, and her father went to the scaffold with her.

The Venerable Albinus of Canterbury (14th/27th) was a disciple of St Adrian, the Abbot of the Monastery of Sts Peter and Paul in Canterbury, which had been founded by St Augustine, and is more commonly known as St Augustine's. On the death of St Deseeded, the Archbishop of Canterbury, a priest named Wighard was chosen to succeed him and sent to Rome to receive consecration as a Bishop. However; he died on arrival in the city, and Pope Vitalian choose the Abbot Adrian to be Archbishop. This Adrian had been born in Africa but was leading the monastic life in a house near Naples. He declined to be consecrated but suggested St Theodore of Tarsus. In the end, the Pope agreed to this on condition that Adrian should accompany Theodore to England and be his advisor. St Theodore became one of the greatest Archbishops of Canterbury, and Adrian was appointed abbot of the monastery in the city. Adrian was extremely learned, and fluent in Latin and Greek, and St Albinus learned from him. On Adrian's death in 710 AD, he succeeded him as abbot, a position he held for twenty-two years. It was mainly at his prompting that St Bede undertook to write his Ecclesiastical History. On his death, he was laid to rest next to his abba, St Adrian, in the Church of the Mother of God. Later with other Canterbury Saints, his relics were taken up and enshrined near the altar of St Gregory in the monastery.

The holy Martyrs Spevsippus, Elevsippus Melevsippus and their grandmother Leonilla (16th/29th). The names of the first three here look particularly odd to us. I have spelled them with a V rather than the usual "u" because it will help you to pronounce them. The "ippus" at the end of each name is the same as the second part of the more common name Philip, and means horses. The three young martyrs are portrayed on their icons riding horses, and are perhaps best known because they feature on a very well-known icon of Sts Florus and Laurus, where as usual they are shown riding spirited horses. They were three brothers and were triplets, and were brought up as pagans. Their grandmother; Leonilla, became a Christian, and under her influence the three youths were also converted. Having

been baptized, in their youthful fervour they went around and smashed all the pagan idols in their district. They were accused and brought before the judge, and openly confessed their new found Faith. Leonilla was sent into the prison to counsel them to save their lives by denying Christ. Of course, she took the opportunity to do just opposite. They were nailed to trees and tortured, eventually burned, and thus perfected in martyrdom. A woman called Jovilla was so impressed by their steadfastness that she cried out, "I am a Christian," and was immediately sentenced to death. Leonilla was also martyred, and one Neon recorded these facts and gave his written account to Turbo before handing himself in and confessing he was a Christian. He was beaten until he died. Turbo was also later martyred and is numbered among the company whom we celebrate today. These martyrdoms occurred during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161 - 180), although where they occurred is less clear. Some lives say that the saints came from Galatia or Cappadocia, both provinces in what is now Turkey. The Hellenistic names of the saints would suggest this is so, but other sources say they were from Gaul (present-day France) and we have records of a Greek-speaking communities in that country. France's claim to be their homeland is given a boost in the life of the English saint, the Venerable Ceolfrid. He desired to end his days near the tombs of the Apostles, and handing on the governance of his monasteries at Wearmouth and Jarrow, he set out for Rome. Illness overcame him as he travelled through France, and near Langres he sought refuge in a monastery dedicated to our three martyred brothers, where in 716 on 25th September; he gave up his soul. Of course, the fact that there was a monastery dedicated to the martyrs near Langres does not necessarily mean they were from that region. It may be that that foundation had obtained relics of the martyrs and for this reason was dedicated to them. However; whatever their earthly homeland, Asia Minor or France, their abode now is with the Angels and saints in heaven.

From The Sacred Canons

"If a Bishop or Presbyter baptize anew anyone that has had true Baptism, or fail to baptize anyone who has been polluted by the impious, let him be deposed, on the ground that he is mocking the Cross and death of the Lord and failing to distinguish priests from pseudo-priests.

Canon 47 of the 85 Apostolic canons

DEATH OF PATRIARCH DIODOROS OF JERUSALEM

The Church in Holy Land is currently not only being tried by sufferings in the hostilities between the Israelis and the Palestinians, but has also been bereaved of its Archpastor His Beatitude Patriarch Diodoros I of Jerusalem died on the feast day of St Nicolas the Wonderworker, 6th/19th December this year. Born Damianos G. Karivalis on 14th August, 1923, on the Greek island of Chios, he was tonsured a monk in March 1944, and later that year, on 22nd September, was ordained hierodeacon by Archbishop Basileos of Ascalon at the Tomb of the Saviour in Jerusalem. He was then appointed to the Basilica of the Nativity of the Lord in Bethlehem. On 5th October; 1947, he was ordained presbyter by Archbishop Eirenarchos at Golgotha. Having been consecrated Bishop in 1962, he served for a period as the representative of the Patriarch of Jerusalem in Amman. On the death of

Patriarch Benediktos, he was elected Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1981 and was enthroned on 16th February/1st March that year in the Church of the Resurrection (the Holy Sepulchre). Of all the contemporary patriarchs, Diodoros was the staunchest in his support of the Orthodox traditionalists and he is greatly mourned by them. He responded less well to the demands of his Arab-speaking flock within the Patriarchate, and this failure was exploited by other local churches who, wishing to undermine his reputation because of his traditionalist stance, tried to discredit him. For many months he had been infirm, often able only to attend church in a wheelchair. His death on the feast of the great zealot of Orthodoxy and lover of the needy St Nicolas, doubtless shows his affinity with that great saint. May he be granted to stand near him in the kingdom of Heaven and may his memory be eternal!

INTER-FAITH FARRAGO

MEMBERS of eleven "major faiths" held a meeting in mid-November in Kathmandu, Nepal. Representatives of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Shinto, Taoist and Zoroastrian faiths met there to discuss environment challenges and "to unveil their 'Sacred Gifts for a Living Planet.'" His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomeos of Constantinople, the Œcumenical Patriarch, participated in this demonstration, unveiling as his "sacred gift" a "River of Life" network - a scheme to tackle pollution and promote conservation along the River Danube. Presumably his earlier idea of dedicating the Holy Mountain Athos (as reported in an earlier issue) did not meet with the approval of the Athonite fathers. The official ceremony in Kathmandu was followed by a multi-faith celebration honouring the "sacred gifts" which featured music, dance and sacred rituals from around the world. Any conscientious Christian is naturally concerned about the environment, but these rather puerile junketings, which seem to have become something of a fashion lately surely do little to help the situation other than bring it to public notice, and even their propaganda value must be diminishing given there are now so many such occasions. Furthermore, and of fundamental importance, it is deeply distressing to learn of the Œcumenical Patriarch participating in such a syncretistic celebration, whose rituals not only involved joining with those who do not worship the Lord Jesus Christ as true God, but also so obviously gave expression to an unChristian belief-system.

TENSION OVER ESTONIA

IN OCTOBER, Patriarch Bartholomeos of Constantinople visited Estonia for four days. His visit has caused a further stand-off between his Patriarchate and that of Moscow, because Kyr Bartholomeos called for there to be one Archbishop of All-Estonia, obviously referring to Archbishop Stephanos of Tallinn and All Estonia, whom he appointed in March 1999. A sizable section of the believers in Estonia do not accept Stephanos as their canonical head, and are under the jurisdiction of Archbishop Kornily, who heads the Estonian parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate. Both Patriarchate claim that the Estonian church should be within their fold. The Holy Synod of the Moscow church has expressed "immense pain" at what it sees as Constantinople's interference in Estonia, and relations between the two Patriarchates have cooled. On 6th November, Moscow's Archbishop Kornily was raised to the rank of Metropolitan, an implicit challenge to Constantinople's claims.

BILL TO LEGALIZE ABORTION IN MOLDOVA OPPOSED

THE MOLDOVAN Orthodox Church has addressed a letter to their parliament stating that any representatives who vote in support of a bill to legalize abortion will be excommunicated by the Church. In complete accord with the sacred canons, the letter, sent with the blessing of Metropolitan Vladimir the head of the Church, states that "legalizing abortion means legalizing the killing of children, and those who decide to end the life of a child ... can be qualified as killers."

SAVAGE ATTACK ON ORTHODOX PRIEST BY NEO-NAZIS

HIEROMONK NECTARIUS (Varga), a 41 year-old Hungarian convert to Holy Orthodoxy, who is serving in Sweden in the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili and Oropos, under the omophorion of Bishop Iohannes, was brutally attacked by teenage neo-Nazi thugs on 8th December. They knocked him to the ground, and while repeatedly shouting, "Heil Hitler," they kicked him in the head and stamped on his head. Father Nectarius received horrific injuries to his head and face, and for several days it was thought that he would die. News reaches us that he is slowly making a recovery but it seems that some of his injuries, including the loss of an eye, will be permanent. The press in Sweden carried reports that the youths were arrested shortly after the attack, still shouting their offensive slogan and splattered with the priest's blood. In the early eighties, Fr Nectarius briefly visited England. We ask the faithful to remember him in their prayers and to pray that those who so viciously attacked him will come to repentance.

FATHER SAVA RETURNS TO DECHANI

FR SAVA (JANJIC), the Serbian Orthodox monk, who was nicknamed "Cybermonk" for his efforts during the Kosovo troubles to make the plight of the people there known to the world, has returned to the Sacred Monastery of High Dechani, his place of repentance. His work in informing the world of the situation in Kosovo was a monastic assignment given him by Bishop Artemije of Raska and Prizren. The bishop has now issued a statement, saying: "Because of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, Father Sava was outside the monastery of High Dechani and in accordance with his monastic vow of obedience during the past year and a half he has assisted me in numerous responsibilities. Now that the state has assumed chief responsibility for the Kosovo Serbs, he has withdrawn to Dechani to resume the life of a monk."

CANA CONFERENCE

CANA, Christians Against Nato Aggression is joining forces with CJPY the Campaign for Justice for the Peoples of Yugoslavia, to organise a day conference entitled "A day of Truth on Yugoslavia." The conference will be held at the Friends' Meeting House, Euston Road, London, on 24th February, 2001, between 10 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. The organizers ask that those attending contribute £10 towards costs; there will be concessions for students, Serbian victims, and priests (and, we hope, monks). Light refreshments will be available. Further details are available from William Spring, telephone 020 8802 2144; Email: cana.london@ic24.net.

INDONESIAN CHRISTIANS FORCIBLY CIRCUMCISED

THE "BARNABAS FUND," which helps Christians living in Islamic countries, issued a press release on 15th December; 2000, stating that on the Indonesian island of Keswui 700 Christians are being held captive in mosques and forced either to convert to Islam or die. 93 have already been put to death according to the release, and at least 20 have been forcibly circumcised as a sign of their "conversion." In "another recent incident," over 1,150 Christian men and boys were forcibly circumcised in the town of Bacan and their minister was tortured and killed. Elsewhere, Christian women have been forced to marry Muslim men. The troubles for the people of Keswui began on 28th November, when four Christian villages came under attack by Islamic extremists. Eight villagers were killed and 3,000 people fled into the jungle to hide, however the 700 were captured and held captive.

In the Ivory Coast too, Christians are facing persecution by Islamic extremist aggressors. 50 people have been killed and Christians have been singled out for horrific personal attacks.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

BABY NAMED: On Friday 1st December, the eight-day-old infant daughter of Kostas and Theodora Griparis was named Christina, at their home in Ottershaw. We ask the prayers of the faithful for her; her parents and her sisters, Maria and Polyxenia, who have recently settled in England after coming from Greece, where they were spiritual children of His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methoni.

NEW CATECHUMEN: On Sunday 4th/17th December the festival of the Great Martyr Barbara, David Jepson of Thorpe Green, Egham, was enrolled as a catechumen at Saint Edward's Church at the end of the Divine Liturgy He was named after the holy Prophet, King and Psalmist David, whose feast day falls on the Sunday within the feast of the Nativity (or, this year; on the second day of the feast, the Monday). Through the prayers of the holy Prophet David, may he be granted to sing unto the Lord throughout his life, and chant unto our God for as long as he has his being.

PRACTICAL TIP

OFTEN older people, nursing mothers, those who are infirm, not feeling well, or are pregnant, have to sit down during the Divine Services, and this is perfectly natural and acceptable. But those of us who are fit and well, and are simply feeling a little tired should not take this as a signal that they should also sit. Our faith is an ascetic one, and one of the ascetic struggles that we undertake in church and at prayer is to stand attentively - (see section above; "Concerning Prayer"). Furthermore, our sitting might embarrass or hurt those who genuinely need to sit. They probably try to stand longer than they should fearing lest they give the impression that "everyone can sit now." They might well feel embarrassed that when they simply have to sit down, half a dozen other people follow suit, leaving them, through no fault of their own, feeling that they have set a bad example.

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FROM THE FATHERS

"WHO ARE the "two or three" who begin gathering together in the name of Christ, and in whose midst the Lord is (Matt. 18:20)? Are not the three: man, wife and child, since a wife is joined to a man by God?"

Saint Clement of Alexandria, + c 215 A.D.

"THE LAWS* are unequal and irregular. Why did they restrain the woman but indulge the man? A woman who practises evil against her husband's bed is guilty of adultery, and for this the legal penalties are very severe, but a husband committing fornication against his wife, has he no account to give? I do not accept this legislation, nor do I approve this custom. They who made the law were men, and their legislation is hard on women.... This is not how God acts. He says: 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' - the first time there is a commandment to which a promise is joined, 'that it may be well with thee.' See the equality of the legislation. There is one Maker of man and woman; one and the same debt is owed by children to both parents."

Saint Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople, + 389 AD.

** This evidently refers to the secular laws of St Gregory's time.*

"IF MARRIAGE itself needs to be sanctified by the priestly veil and blessing, how is it possible to speak of a marriage where there is no agreement in faith?"

Saint Ambrose of Milan, +397 A.D.

"SOME of the things which we do for the sake of God are done in obedience to the commandments; others are done not in obedience to the commandments but, so to speak, as a voluntary offering. For example, we are required by the commandments to love God and our neighbour, to love our enemies, not to commit adultery or murder and so on. And when we transgress these commandments, we are condemned. But we are not commanded to live as virgins, to abstain from marriage, to renounce possessions, to withdraw into solitude and so forth. These are of the nature of gifts, so that if through weakness we are unable to fulfil some of the commandments, we may by these free gifts propitiate our blessed Master."

Venerable Maximus the Confessor, + 662 A.D.

ON CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE; ON THE FAMILY

Bishop Mitrophan of Boston

FOR GENERAL INSTRUCTION, and particularly for the instruction of the young, I would like to draw your attention to one of the most serious questions of our times, to the distortion of the understanding of marriage and of the family in Christian society.

In contemporary society, a certain evil power has radically twisted our understanding of marriage and of marital chastity. Television programmes, films at the cinema, cynical advertising, teachers in schools and colleges - all these are moral murderers, transgressors with their preaching of "free love" and their voiding of the fifth commandment ("Honour thy father and thy mother, that it might be well with thee, and that thy days may be long upon the earth"), premarital relations among the young - all these things make it almost impossible for a man to maintain a reverent and pure attitude towards his wife as towards a future mother. In this respect, it is not only our Christian youth, but the majority of their parents as well, who do not have a correct understanding of Christian marriage.

MARRIAGE IS NOT CO-HABITATION; IT IS NOT simply THE MEANS OF PRESERVING A PERSON FROM SINNING, from sexual immorality.

MARRIAGE is a Divine institution, as is clear both from the Bible (Gen. 1:27; 2:24) and from the Saviour's words: *He said unto them (the Pharisees): "Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh"* (Matt. 19:4-5). Through the mysterion [sacrament] of marriage, husband and wife reach the fullness of mankind, sacramentally "two in one flesh." *"This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and His Church"* (read Ephesians 5:24-33).

MARRIAGE, this great mysterion [sacrament] (this great mystery) is the union of two lives in the image of the union of Christ with the Church. In the mysterion of marriage, in the marital union, there is depicted the Divine UNION BETWEEN THE LORD, Who sacrificed Himself for His Church, AND THE CHURCH, which constitutes His Body and lives through His Grace. MARRIAGE, the family itself, is a house church (Col. 4:15); it is a living cell within the Church organism, the Body of Christ; it is the first school of Love; it is an ascesis of great Christian activity. *"Husbands, love your wives, even as ~ Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her"*

The PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE is not simply personal, but is the CHURCH'S PURPOSE. Those who enter marriage do not so for themselves but for the Church, and that they might serve her unto the edification of the Church of God, that thereby they might co-operate in the increase of Christ's ideal upon earth. MARRIAGE is a union in mutual sanctification. The Apostle Paul himself shows this when he says that the unbelieving husband is sanctified, led to salvation, by the believing wife. Marriage has as its aim the mutual perfection of the two: husband and wife, who morally influence each other, help each other in developing within themselves moral strength and spiritual power.

WHEN ENTERING INTO MARRIAGE, in God's presence a person takes on himself responsibility for another life. This responsibility follows him everywhere and he cannot

escape it anywhere; to flee from this responsibility means to flee from God Himself. The religious growth of husband and wife in their subsequent family life consists only in following the course of deepening and broadening their mutual responsibility for each other and for other lives, for the lives of their children. In Christian marriage an individual lays down his soul for ANOTHER, he promises to live his life for the OTHER, he renounces all personal self-love. Who is this OTHER? It is, at the beginning, the husband or wife, and thereafter, the children. The husband and wife want (and indeed must) devote their life, as that of the best of servants, to the persons of their children, so that they may instil in the children the sacred task of serving the Church, it being the Body of Christ.

As a reflection of Christ's union with the Church, marriage manifests itself in the husband's and wife's mutual denial of themselves for the future benefit of the child, who must become one of the future builders of the Church on earth. The father and mother, the husband and wife, carry the enormous responsibility to guard themselves with even greater vigilance than they did before marriage, so that they "walk purely and blamelessly in their children's eyes." The husband and wife, the father and mother are morally obliged to remember that every one of their bad words, every one of their bad actions will be repeated by the souls of those same people, whom, in future, they should dedicate to the world and the Church.

Thus, MARRIAGE is the union of two lives, NOT JUST FOR THE SAKE of co-habitation, but for the highest moral purposes and aims. Grounded in a mutual, moral self-restraint, a certain unity of will is established in marriage, which grants family life a grace-filled harmony, peace and concord. We have already emphasized that marriage is a school of Love. And what is this Love? It is self-denial. The Love which is nurtured within the marriage thereafter necessarily goes out beyond the family circle and touches all. And that marriage is such a school and concerning the reality of the self-denial, we hear in the words of the Order of the Crowning [*the Marriage Service -ed.*] itself: "O holy Martyrs, who have fought the good fight and received your crowns, entreat the Lord that He have mercy on our souls." The marriage crowns are wreaths of victory over sensuality, for a normal marriage is perfected in chaste mindedness.

It is grievous and painful to observe the perversion of the holy mystery of marriage among those for whom its purpose is fleshly gratification and the mirage of pleasure. This results in a pitiful picture of life: an enormous percentage of divorces, coming to blows over the ongoing misunderstandings in the family, a family life spiritually empty, children emotionally malformed, and parents suffering.

One often hears complaints about how stressful life is. But who is at fault in this respect? Isn't it the people themselves? A failure to think things through, light-mindedness, and a failure with regard to one's sense of duty, one's sense of honour and one's sense of responsibility - these things are the normal companions both of the parents and of the "fruit of their sowing," their children.

Rather let our children and grandchildren be our joy and the vindication of our life. May Christ, the True Light, Which enlighteneth every one that draweth nigh unto Him, help us all in this.

Translated from the Russian

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: His Grace Bishop Mitrophan himself is no stranger to family life. He was born in Brest, the fifteenth of a family of sixteen children. He later married and had two daughters and six grandchildren. He was ordained priest in 1935. In the war his hometown was taken by the Germans and in 1944 Fr Mitrophan left his native-land, travelling to Poland, Austria, Germany, Africa and eventually the United States. His wife of 55 years, Alexandra Semeonovna died in 1989, and in 1992 Fr Mitrophan received the monastic tonsure and was consecrated as Bishop of Boston, a vicar bishop to the Metropolitan See of New York. Although now in deep old age, Bishop Mitrophan continues his pastoral work, and a collection of his writings (in English) has recently been published by Troitsa Press, under the title "Path to a Meaningful and Fruitful life."

BRIEF MISSIONARY NEWS FROM MADAGASCAR AND MAURITIUS

HIS GRACE, Bishop Nectarios of Madagascar recently sent us the following news release about the missionary work of his diocese:-

WITH THE HELP of our Lord Jesus Christ, the year 2000 was a fruitful one for our Mission in Madagascar. Over 1500 Malagasy people were baptized into our Holy Orthodox Faith in our various parishes throughout Madagascar. In addition to this, many schools and churches have been built within the last year. Our philanthropic work continued throughout the year 2000 with the distribution of food, clothing, and medicines to many poor Orthodox families. We also offered ongoing support to our many orphans for whom we provide food as well as educational and medical assistance.

Most importantly however, we were blessed in the year 2000, with the establishment of the first Orthodox parish in the island of Mauritius. On the 9th of October, 2000, the Orthodox Church of Mauritius was registered and officially recognised by the government of Mauritius. Mauritius belongs to the Diocese of Madagascar and in previous years there was never any formal Orthodox presence on the island.

With the blessing of *Patriarch Petros of Alexandria*, Bishop Nectarios of Madagascar made his first official visit to Mauritius during the period, 15-22 December, 2000. Whilst in Mauritius, the Bishop met all the members of our new Orthodox Parish (of which there are over fifty), visited the various ministers and members of parliament and performed the first Baptisms and Divine Liturgy. These are all truly historical and significant events for our Church, for they occurred for the first time ever in Mauritius.

We hope that in the future, suitable donors will be found to help us purchase land and build the first Orthodox church in Mauritius.

We wish you all a blessed New Year 2001, and ask that you pray for us and for our mission work in Madagascar and Mauritius.

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. Particular Prayful Activities

The Sign of the Cross

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
looking unto Jesus ,Who ... endured the Cross,
despising the shame (Hebrews 12:1-2).

THE SIGN of the Cross, made with faith by a movement of the hand or in any other way, is the same as the name of Jesus Christ the Crucified pronounced with a movement of the mouth - *The Catechism of St Philaret of Moscow*.

INSTEAD of a shield, defend yourself with the sign of the Cross, sealing your members and the heart. Make the sign of the Cross upon yourself not only with the hand but in every activity impress it upon your thoughts, both in your coming in and your going out, at every time, in sitting down, and in arising, upon your bed, and in undertaking any service, before all else seal yourself (with the sign of the Cross) in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit - *Venerable Ephraim the Syrian*.

NO ONE should be ashamed of the honourable sign, the source of good, the means by which we live and have existence; rather like a crown we should bear the cross of Christ. For all our mysteries (sacraments) are effected thereby - *Saint John Chrysostom*.

IT SAYS in the ancient Prologue: "For many people are unaware of the fact that, when making the Cross, they are simply waving about in front of their faces and labouring in vain because they do not make the sign of the Cross properly over their persons, and the demons rejoice observing them waving about thus. When one crosses himself properly, he places his hand on his forehead and on the stomach, on the right shoulder and then on the left, and the Angels then rejoice seeing the Cross truly signed upon these persons."

MAKING the sign of the Cross carelessly can never be justified. For with the sign of the Cross we confess our Faith in the crucified Lord Jesus Christ and we commemorate His passion upon the Cross. For this reason making the sign of the Cross is the Lord's work, and in the Sacred Scriptures it is said: "*Cursed is the man that doeth the work of the Lord carelessly*" (Jer. 48:10). One cannot confess his Faith through incoherent, inattentive reading and mumbling. Then how can one confess Christ's sufferings waving his hand about? Indeed, is it right that we do this, that we make the Cross carelessly, and at the same time want to demonstrate that we are confessing the Cross of Christ? Can slovenliness be permitted in

confessing the sufferings of Christ? We confess Christ's sufferings and at the very same time are too lazy to raise our hand and delineate the Cross of Christ properly!

THE SIGN of the Cross, made in the accepted way, represents the whole essence of the Christian Faith: the tri-unity of the Divine Being, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the unconfused and indivisible union within Him of the two Natures, the Divine and the human, His redemption of us from sin by the Cross, the gift to us in Christ of the blessing and all the power necessary for life and piety, and of all the good things that we beseech of God; for it is said: "He *that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things*' (Romans 8:32). Wherefore with what attention, understanding and feeling we should make the sign of the Cross! - *Saint John of Cronstadt*.

[The Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity are confessed by our holding the thumb, index finger and middle finger of the right hand together at their tips, and the Two Natures of Christ are confessed by our folding the ring and little finger into the palm, as we make the sign of the Cross -ed.]

Standing in Prayer

'When ye stand praying, forgive...' (Mark 11:25).

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE of the practice of praying while in a standing position is this: Jesus Christ said to the disciples, "Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Luke 22:46) - *Saint John of Cronstadt*.

THE CUSTOM of standing signifies that we stand before the King of kings as His servants, ready to fulfil His will; the custom of sitting signifies the mercy of the Lord towards those His servants who keep vigil and wait upon Him, their Lord, and it also reminds us of the following words of His from the parable: "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that He will gird Himself and make them to sit down and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37). And from the word of God the basis of our making prostrations is Jesus Christ, Who "kneeled down and prayed" (Luke 22:41). - *Saint John of Cronstadt*.

AS A BABY, Saint Nicolas remained standing in the font for three hours to the glory of the All-Holy Trinity, and yet grown men cannot stand with the fear of God, with reverence and with attention, for one hour in church. And if they do stand, they do it like insensitive statues; they have ears but they do not listen to what is read or chanted, and if they do happen to hear they pay no attention - *Saint Dimitri of Rostov*.

Prostrations

(Jesus Christ) kneeled down and prayed (Luke 22:41).

CONSTANT VIGIL together with reading, and followed by frequent prostrations, will swiftly bring progress in spiritual good things - (sweetness of the heart) - to the zealous - *Venerable Isaac the Syrian*.

FROM MAKING PROSTRATIONS the body will be somewhat relieved and warmed, and the heart will come to a state of contrition; in such a condition the ascetic is able to pray more sincerely, warmly and attentively. One will experience a completely different taste in praying, when they are read after prostrations - *Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov*.