

The Shepherd

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FROM THE FATHERS

"AS LONG AS THE POT is on the fire, no fly nor any other animal can get near it, but as soon as it is cold, these creatures get inside. So it is for the monk; as long as he lives in spiritual activities, the enemy cannot find a means of overthrowing him."

Abba Pœmen of Egypt, fifth century

"IF SOME UNEXPECTED TRIAL comes upon you, do not blame him through whom it came, but seek the reason for its coming; and you will be corrected. For, whether through this person or another, you had to drink the bitter cup of the judgments of God."

Venerable Maximus the Confessor, + 662 A.D.

"DO NOT LOOK at what other people are doing, but heed what the word of God teaches. Thus we shall avoid the temptations of the world. *Much peace have they that love Thy law, O Lord, and for them there is no stumbling-block* (Ps. 118:165). O Christian, love the Law of God and the temptations of the world shall not harm you."

Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, 1724-1783 A.D.

"THE PRESENT GENERATION has ceased to give thanks to the Lord, and so there is a lack of everything."

Saint Nectarius of Optina, 1853-1928 A.D.

"HUMAN LIFE is not made ugly by the absence of equality, but by the absence of love and spiritual understanding in men."

Saint Nicolas Velimirovic of Ochrid, 1880-1956 A.D.

A PILGRIMAGE TO KIEV

By Mr. John Harwood of Edmonton

MANY YEARS AGO, this writer's spiritual father described to him the terrible events which followed the German occupation of Kiev during the Second World War. In 1941 the ancient Kiev-Caves Lavra, the most sacred Russian monastery, was handed back to the Church. The monks had been expelled in 1925 and the buildings were in an appalling condition. The main cathedral of the monastery, the Dormition Sobor, was lovingly prepared for worship again. As the lighting was switched on, the whole church was blown up. The retreating Bolsheviks had connected the electrical switches to mines which were activated immediately. The most venerated church in Russia, dating from the 11th century, was completely destroyed. Its main icon, that of the Dormition, was lost.

Twenty years later, during the Khrushchev persecution, the last vestiges of monastic life at the Caves Lavra were extinguished. There seemed no hope of a second revival.

My short pilgrimage took place during the Dormition feast and the celebrations of the 950 years from the first monastic foundation associated with the names of Saints Antony, Theodosius and Hilarion. I will attempt to describe church life at the Lavra and other holy places of Kiev as it is today.

Pilgrimages to Kiev are first and foremost pilgrimages to the Caves themselves. These comprise two separate complexes of narrow underground passages - the Near and the Far Caves. Both are found in the lower half of the Lavra (this is entirely monastic property; the Upper Lavra is a state museum with only the churches in it owned by the monastery).

The Near Caves are the more extensive and contain the incorrupt relics of the better-known Kiev fathers: Antony of Kiev, Alipy the iconographer, and Nestor the Chronicler (the first historian of Ancient Rus') are here. Seventy three bodies are here altogether. The passages are unlit and the pilgrim proceeds with a small candle. The saints are displayed in glass-topped coffins, - before the revolution they were exposed, - and above each is a lamp from which a little oil drips. This can be taken after each saint has been venerated. The experience, needless to say, is very moving. Several underground chapels can be found in each of the Caves.

The Far Caves contain the cell (but not the relics) of Saint Theodosius (Feodosy) of Kiev, who reposed in 1074, and the bodies of about 40 saints. These are less celebrated than the Near Caves Fathers and often we know only their names. The ancient collection known as the Kiev-Caves Patericon deals almost entirely with the Near Caves Saints.

Contrary to popular belief, the Caves relics are not only those of the ancient monks of the Lavra. Part of Saint Evphrosinia's relics are there (though most were transferred to Polotsk before the revolution) and the newly discovered body of the martyr-Metropolitan Vladimir (d. 1918) has recently been laid to rest nearby.

At the entrance to both the Near and Far Caves, icons of many of these saints can be bought.

On the morning when I visited the Caves, I received a second blessing as part of the relics of the Apostle Andrew had just been brought from Greece, for a journey through Ukraine and Russia, and they were solemnly met at the Lavra by the monastic community. Immediately large crowds began to gather and for the next few days the relics were venerated by the Orthodox people of Kiev. Many had to queue for hours, and scenes were reminiscent of pre-revolutionary days. Groups from different parishes gathered with their priests to wait, some reading prayers, others singing akathists. Terrible howls came from the possessed who had been brought to the relics to beg for relief.

Here it should be said that, from what this pilgrim observed, church life in Kiev is healthier than it is in some other parts of the Orthodox world, if the large numbers of men, and indeed whole families, are any indication. Services are certainly not the preserve of old ladies.

It would be tedious for the reader, who has no mental picture of the places, to be given a list of the monasteries, churches and icons I visited in these five short days. Two places, however, cannot be passed over in silence.

First there was the Kitayevo Pustyn. This small skete (about 40 monks reside there) is on the edge of the city in a typically wooded and pleasant spot. The main church, with its characteristic green and gold double cupolas, is the parish of the local inhabitants and is served by married clergy. Inside is the shrine with the relics of the recently glorified Feofil the Fool-for-Christ, where akathists are chanted early every morning. Nearby was buried the equally famous Eldress Dorothea, who blessed Saint Seraphim to go to Sarov. She lived her whole monastic life as a recluse, and was believed until her death to be a man.

The spiritual atmosphere of Kitayevo is very tangible and the church singing beautiful even by the impossibly high standards of Kiev.

The second place was the wonderfully peaceful Pokrovsky (Protection) Convent, together with its large new foundation of Saint Panteleimon. The convent, where I had the privilege of eating and resting several times, was founded by Mother Anastasia (formerly Grand Duchess Alexandra Petrovna) at the end of the nineteenth century. It is the largest convent in Russia and Ukraine and one of only four which were not closed during the Khrushchev period.

The main church of Saint Nicolas is huge. I attended Saturday evening Vigil there and can never remember hearing such singing. And not only from the nuns; it is the custom of the whole church to join in the singing of "Let us who have beheld the Resurrection of Christ..." after the Gospel at Mattins. The effect was indescribable - the kindness of the nuns unforgettable.

The last two days of the pilgrimage were even more crowded. Monday 27th August was the feast of the Lavra's own Saint Theodosius of the Caves and was celebrated at the large Trapeza church. Next to this is the tomb of the great Christian statesman Peter Stolypin, which has been properly restored. He was assassinated in Kiev in 1911, in the presence of the Tsar. Fresh flowers covered the grave.

In the evening of the same day, the Vigil of the Great Feast began in the newly rebuilt Dormition Cathedral - now once again the heart of the Lavra. The church was only reopened recently so this must have been the first celebration of its feast-day since the 1920s.

The restored interior is very beautiful. It is as though the events of 1941 had never taken place and that the church had only been cleaned and repainted. Only the ancient Dormition icon is missing.

The Vigil was extremely solemn and at the Polyeleos the Burial Shroud (Plashchanitsa) of the Mother of God was brought into the middle of the church by the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine, accompanied by 50 bishops from various lands.

The following morning, the feast-day itself, even more hierarchs served (over 60!) and the new Cathedral was quite inadequate to hold the vast numbers of believers who had arrived at the Lavra. The Liturgy was served in the open air in front of the church doors. Two choirs sang, Cossacks guarded the Altar, small children watched from the branches of the chestnut trees, swallows dived through the air and

the largest bells of the monastery rang out. It was a celebration which seemed to bring to an end the long night which began for the "Mother of Russian Cities" in 1918, with the slaying of their beloved Metropolitan Vladimir at the Lavra gates.

I at first did not know how to conclude this little account, until I read the ancient forward to the Kiev-Pechersky Patericon which contains words which I make bold to associate myself with: *"I have never gone to the Holy Places, I have not seen Jerusalem or Mount Sinai and thus I cannot add anything to my narrations with which skilful narrators decorate their speech. I shall only constantly praise the Holy Caves Monastery and the holy monks who had been in it... for I too, a sinner, desire and ask for the prayers of these holy fathers."*

A footnote on Church divisions in the Ukraine

It would have been out of place to include a discussion of these matters in an account of a pilgrimage. However, since there is confusion in the West about the Ukrainian Orthodox situation I give my own, entirely personal, impression. My guides in Kiev were an Orthodox family, very familiar with the situation, and they did their best to answer my questions and show me the churches belonging to different groups.

Unfortunately, "Patriarch" Filaret and his autocephalous church have been able to obtain (sometimes by force) a number of ancient and important churches in Kiev, including the recently rebuilt monastery of Saint Michael of the Golden Domes, one of the most beautiful buildings in the city.

Whatever the strength of Filaret's support in the intensely Ukrainian western provinces, it is clear that he has very little in the capital. His monks are few, his churches poorly attended. In fact only one of his churches, Saint Vladimir's Cathedral, has a proper congregation and this only because it is a place much loved by the Orthodox, containing as it does the sacred relics of the Great Martyr Barbara and being the only church which functioned through the Soviet period.

By contrast, all the churches under Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev (the autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church) are crowded for all services and the numbers who attended the Lavra celebration for the Dormition feast must have amounted to tens of thousands.

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" - Hebrews 13:7

IN PRAYERFUL AND GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death in 1976 of His Grace Archbishop Nikodem of Richmond and Great Britain. The following tribute to the hierarch was first published in Russian by Father John Suscenko in *"Pokrovsky Listok,"* and it was later published in a slightly adapted form in *"The Anchor,"* the translation being that of Father Christopher Birchall. We offer it to readers of *"The Shepherd,"* most of whom will probably not have seen the earlier publications, to mark the anniversary of Vladyka

Nikodem's repose and as a thanksgiving for his ministry in this country. Both the Archbishop's name-day and the anniversary of his repose fall in the month of October. To help our readers we have slightly modified the text.

HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP NIKODEM OF RICHMOND AND GREAT BRITAIN

ARCHBISHOP NIKODEM, whose secular name was Nikolai Vasilievitch Nagaieff, was born on 28th April, 1883, in the town of Abo in Finland, which was then part of the Russian Empire. He was born into a large, patriarchal family of the Russian nobility.

As a young man, Nikolai Vasilievitch studied in the First Cadet Corps in Saint Petersburg and in St Paul's Military Academy, from which he graduated with the rank of sergeant major. Then he was promoted to the Second Battalion of the Infantry Guards, which was stationed at that time at Tsarskoe Selo, forming the guard over the residence of the Emperor St Nicolas. Second Lieutenant Nagaieff frequently came into contact with the Emperor in the officers' mess and in later life he would remember these encounters with affection.

In 1910, he graduated from the Academy of the General Staff and was entrusted with the command of a company. With the outbreak of war in 1914, he went into battle with his regiment and was seriously wounded in the leg. He was sent to the rear to recover in the hospital organized by the Empress St Alexandra, where the Empress herself tended his wounds. After recuperating he returned to the front and later received the Saint George's Cross and other medals for distinguished service.

Shortly before the revolution he married his childhood friend, Countess Vera Sollogub. During the Civil War he was an officer on the General Staff of General Wrangel in the south of Russia. After the Civil War, he was evacuated, first to Constantinople and then to Yugoslavia, where he was joined by his wife. Here conditions were very difficult. His wife was stricken with heart disease and became completely incapacitated. He gave music lessons to support himself and his wife, and at the same time looked after her like a child. After she died, he devoted himself totally to the life of the Church and became an active member of the Brotherhood of Saint Seraphim of Sarov (*note 1*).

Vladyka (*note 2*) later recalled this period as follows: "Taking part in the Brotherhood brought me into contact with the most outstanding hierarchs of our time: Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) who ordained me to the first degree of the sacred ministry, that of reader, and blessed me to serve the Church Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, with whom I corresponded and who gave me much valuable advice, and many others who were later to become Archpastors. I also visited the Milkovo Monastery (*note 3*) in Serbia where I became acquainted with the spirit and order of monastic life."

Throughout his years of preparation for monasticism, the future Archbishop was in the spiritual care of the well known and much respected *staretz* (elder) Archimandrite Kyrik, who was a monk from the Monastery of Saint Panteleimon, Mount Athos. [*paragraph taken from "The Old Calendarist"*]

In 1943, Nikolai Vasilievitch was tonsured a monk by Metropolitan Anastassy in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Belgrade, receiving the monastic name of Nikodem [*after the Venerable Nikodem the Prospora-baker of the Kiev Caves Lavra, feast-day: 31st October*]. Later he was ordained hierodeacon and then priestmonk. His sponsor at the tonsure and guide in the first steps of the monastic life was the late Archbishop Averky of Jordanville, who was then an archimandrite.

In 1944 Father Nikodem received an appointment as military chaplain and after the war he left Yugoslavia for Germany, where he worked closely with Archimandrite Job in founding the Monastery of St Job of Pochaev in Munich. He stayed there for three years, was raised to the rank of hegoumen (*note 4*) and became a spiritual father of the monastery and teacher of the Church Typicon. Then he was sent to France, where he served a parish near Paris. Later he served for a while under Bishop Leonty in Geneva. In 1951, he was appointed archimandrite and sent to England as Administrator of the diocese.

After the Second World War, many refugees from the Soviet Union were allowed to settle in England, where they were directed mostly to the industrial towns in the North. Here parishes with house chapels were formed in towns such as Bradford and Manchester. Orthodox people were scattered over a wide area and Archimandrite Nikodem often had to travel around England to serve various Orthodox communities and minister to the individual needs of the faithful. Later new parishes were opened in Leeds and Nottingham.

Father Nikodem tried by all possible means to raise the spiritual level of his flock. He organized weekly meetings at which he gave talks on spiritual matters and organized religious instruction for children at the podvorie (*note 5*).

In 1954, Archimandrite Nikodem was consecrated bishop. He was appointed Bishop of Preston, as a vicar bishop of the West European Diocese. The Diocesan Bishop at that time was Archbishop, now Saint, John Maximovitch. The consecration took place in the Memorial Church in Brussels. Vladyka Nikodem was then 71 years old!

Returning from Brussels, Bishop Nikodem resumed his church work with renewed vigour. During this period, under his guidance, the lease on the Cathedral at Emperor's Gate [*Gloucester Road, London*] was acquired and the building was converted into an Orthodox church, being blessed on 4th January, 1959, by St John and Bishop Nikodem. Despite his limited command of the English language, Vladyka gave his enthusiastic support to missionary endeavours designed to acquaint the English with Holy Orthodoxy. Regular services in the English language were started with his blessing.

A new parish was started in Dublin by Father Nicolas Couriss, a personal friend of Vladyka's from pre-revolutionary days. A parish was opened at a Russian old peoples' home in Barton-on-Sea, which was served by Vladyka personally. *During his episcopate, in 1954 Abbess Elisabeth and her sisters came to England as refugees, and in 1959 they settled in their present house in Willesden. Bishop Nikodem also blessed the foundation of the Brotherhood of Saint Seraphim of Sarov - (perhaps a remembrance of the earlier Brotherhood in Belgrade) - in Little Walsingham and blessed the chapel built into the former railway station there. Although, in troubles that*

followed Vladyka's death, the Brotherhood itself transferred to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, the missionary endeavour still maintained by the ROCA presence in this country undoubtedly owes an immense debt to the foundation of that English-language community.

In 1963, Bishop Nikodem was appointed diocesan Bishop with the title "of Richmond and Great Britain," and in 1968 he was raised to the rank of Archbishop.

Archbishop Nikodem had a great love for the Church Divine services. When not actually serving himself, he often read the Six Psalms at Mattins, and the Old Testament readings at Vespers. He knew the secret prayers of the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom by heart. This became apparent towards the end of his life, when failing eyesight made the service books of little use to him (note 6). He took great pains to impress upon people the sanctity of God's house.

As a preacher, Vladyka Nikodem possessed a rare gift of imparting a feeling for the spiritual profundity of the truths of which he spoke. His sermons, which may not always have been distinguished by great theological originality, spoke directly to the hearts of those listening. *New comers would be struck by the fact that when he preached, rather than sitting down and relaxing, the faithful would move up to the steps of the ambon from which he preached to listen attentively to him.* As he preached before the Winding-Sheet on Good Friday about the sufferings of Christ, there would always be tears in his eyes. He exhorted his flock against false teachings, modernism and ecumenism. He warned with love and meekness against the dangers of the false wisdom of this world, which separates man from God.

Vladyka Nikodem was a great man of prayer. In his sermons, he often taught about prayer, speaking from personal experience. He spoke of the difficulty of true prayer and of how to combat distraction in prayer. He always called upon people to say the Jesus prayer, particularly while travelling, pointing out that it is intended for laymen as well as monks. As a spiritual father he was able to draw on his experience of both the married and monastic states. He always advised with love and meekness and never became angry. Nevertheless he could be strict with those who did not obey the Church and slandered her sacred ministers. Such people were forbidden to receive Holy Communion until the repented.

In general, Vladyka Nikodem, as a true monk, chose his words carefully and was not given to idle talk. But when he did speak, whether in the course of conducting Divine services, preaching or giving individual advice, his words carried with them a power borne of his inner spiritual life. This quality, which Vladyka shared with the late Metropolitan Philaret, was appreciated even by many parishioners who did not understand Russian. Having arrived in England at the age of 68, Vladyka Nikodem never learnt to speak English fluently, although he could manage what he called "Bazaar language" -sufficient to manage his shopping and buying railway tickets in the course of his pastoral journeys which he continued to carry out, often alone, until he was almost ninety.

Naturally, as he grew older, his strength began to fail, but the flock had grown used to having the oldest Bishop of the Russian Church Abroad and began to take it for granted that he would continue serving, - at least for a little while longer.

On 13th/26th September, 1976, Vladyka Nikodem celebrated the Vigil of the Elevation of the Cross together with the Cathedral clergy. With what reverence and love he raised up the Life-giving Cross of the Lord! Many who were present were deeply moved by this service. Who could have thought that Vladyka was touching and venerating the true Wood of the Cross for the last time? The Vigil ended and the clergy came up to Vladyka for his blessing. This was his last blessing. When he returned home, he began to complain of a headache which he had felt during the Vigil. He took to his bed and was not to get up again. Vladyka Nikodem's illness lasted three weeks. During this time he twice confessed and received Holy Communion. A few days before his death, the service of Holy Unction was performed over him. Vladyka heard and understood everything but was too weak to respond.

Archbishop Nikodem died on Sunday 4th/17th October, 1976, at 3 o'clock in the morning at home in the bishop's residence.

The funeral was conducted by Archbishop Antony of Geneva and Western Europe on 8th/21st October with the cathedral clergy and many visiting clergy. Parts of the service were recorded for broadcasting to the Soviet Union. Archbishop Nikodem was buried in Brompton Cemetery in a grave which he had bought long before his death. At the cemetery Father John Suscenko gave a funeral address in English.

And so, our beloved Vladyka Nikodem is departed from us! The diocese of Great Britain mourned the passing of her Bishop for forty days. After a time a stone memorial was erected over his grave in Brompton Cemetery and flowers continually placed on the grave of their beloved Archpastor by members of his orphaned flock. Every year a pannikhida [*memorial service*] is served for Vladyka Nikodem on the anniversary of his death, praying for him, we believe that he is also praying for us before the throne of the Most High.

Eternal be his Memory!

Notes:

- 1) A group in Belgrade consisting mostly of students and young people devoted to the study of Holy Orthodoxy under the guidance and inspiration of Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky).
- 2) *Vladyka* - a Russian word used in addressing or referring to Bishops. It may be translated Master or Lord, but it has acquired a connotation of warmth and affection which are perhaps missing in the English equivalent.
- 3) See "The Young Elder" by Archbishop Antony of San Fransisco, published by Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, for further information about Milkovo Monastery and its elder, Father Ambrose.
- 4) This is usually translated as abbot, but in the modern Russian practice it is a honorific title given to monastic priests who may not in fact be abbots of monastic houses. A monastic priest is first a hieromonk or priest-monk, then an hegoumen, and lastly an archimandrite.
- 5) Podvorie - properly a holding of a monastery, such as a house for the use of the monastery in the city. In this instance it refers to the church house with the All Saints'

Chapel on Saint Dunstan's Road, Baron's Court, London, which for over sixty years was the centre of the ROCA in this country and was always called the podvorie.

6) Vladyka Nikodem was less confident about the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, which has much longer prayers and is celebrated only ten times in the year. Before each celebration of this Liturgy, he would arrange practice sessions at which he recited the prayers while somebody followed the text to make sure he had remembered it correctly.

We are indebted to Mrs Antonina V. Ananin for providing the main text of this tribute, and to Michael and Margaret Woodrow for other materials. The portions in italics are our own.

From

**"THE HOUSE OF GOD
AND THE CHURCH SERVICES"**

By the Priest N.R. Antonov

Continuation

§ 23. Teaching on the Catacombs and the Underground Churches. The Catacombs were underground chambers, in which, during the persecutions of the first three centuries, the Christians buried their dead, in which they hid from the persecutors, and celebrated their Divine services.* In their layout the catacombs consisted of a network of interlacing corridors or galleries, along the extent of which one comes across parts more or less widened to provide rooms. Travelling along one of the corridors, one will meet another corridor, crossing one's path, and then three choices present themselves to the travellers: to go straight on, to turn right or to turn left. But in some directions one can go no further because of the lay-out of the corridors. Some distance along the corridor one might meet another corridor or even a whole room, from which several new ways diverge. Travelling along these corridors takes some time, and one can find that without realizing it one has descended to a lower level. The corridors are narrow and low, but the rooms that one comes across are of different sizes, some small, some medium and some large. The first of these are called cubiculi (chambers), which derives from the Latin word for bed; the medium ones are called crypts, and the large ones chapels. The cubiculi appear to have been burial vaults, and the crypts and chapels underground churches. It was here that, in the times of persecution, the Christians resorted for Divine service. The crypts could usually hold up to seventy or eighty worshippers, and the chapels a far greater number - up to one hundred and fifty.

§ 24. The Crypts and Chapels as Underground Churches. Arranging them for use in Christian worship, the front part of the crypt would be set aside for the clergy, and the rest for the lay people. In the far end of the crypt there would be an apse, divided off by a low lattice. In this apse there would be the tomb of a martyr, used as the Table for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.** To the sides of this altar-tomb, there would be places for the bishop and the presbyters. The main part of the crypt did not have any special arrangement. The chapels were distinguished from the crypts, not only because of their greater size, but also by their inner arrangement. For the most part the crypts

comprised one single area or room, whereas the chapels might be made up of several. The crypts did not have separate altars, whereas in the chapels there were such; in the crypts the women and the men worshipped together, but in the chapels the women had their own separate space. The front part of the floor in both the crypts and the chapels was often somewhat raised above the remaining part in these underground churches. In the walls there were recesses for the burial of the dead, and the walls themselves were adorned with sacred depictions.

From the descriptions of various chapels and crypts it is apparent that they both were rectangular in form and elongated, and that sometimes they had columns for the support of ceiling.

It was the sacred remembrance of these underground churches, of the place on Mount Sion in which Jesus Christ celebrated His Mystical Supper, and of the oikoses which were the very first Christian churches (and were elongated in form), which without a doubt caused the Christians, when they could without fear build, to build their churches in this elongated form, thus also, in the spirit of their Christian faith, avoiding any discord with Christian antiquity. Without doubt the basilica was adopted for the Christian church also because the basilica plan represented the only style acceptable among the ruling classes through until the fifth century; thereafter it was changed into the Byzantine style, but after the fifteenth century the basilica form spread again in the former Greek Empire, although, because they were under Turkish rule, it was not to have the same grandeur and richness as had the ancient Christian basilicas.***

Footnotes:

*) The catacombs were not only found in Rome, but also in other cities of Europe, Asia and Africa. Besides the Roman ones, we know of catacombs in Naples, Gaul, Sicily and Alexandria.

***) It is from the ancient custom of celebrating the Holy Eucharist on the tomb of a martyr that we derive the present custom of placing an antimimension on the Holy Table with holy relics sewn into it. *The antimimension is a doth which not only contains sacred relics, but which is also blessed by the Bishop to be used in a particular church. Without it the Divine Liturgy cannot be celebrated. It is in effect, the hierarch's blessing for the Liturgy, and for that reason many priests begin to open it precisely at the commemoration of their Bishop in the threefold litany.*

****) Christian basilicas made their appearance from the end of the second century. In the third century they were quite numerous, so much so that during the persecution raised by the Emperor Decius (249-251 A.D.), in Rome alone forty were destroyed. After Constantine the Great's cessation of the persecution, basilicas were erected in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nicomedia, Antioch, Byzantium, Ravenna, Verona, in Algiers, Syria and other places.

...to be continued with "Other Forms of Christian Church."

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF FATHER GEORGE CHEREMETIEFF

Thoughts on a Journey

Continuation from last issue

About the Spirituality of Things

Have you ever, while looking at a wonderful view or a beautiful sunset, experienced a feeling of its captivating beauty, quiet comfort and peaceful joy? Some of you will say, "Yes, but that was just because I was fit and the blood in my veins was flowing well. That's why I felt joy."

But haven't you experienced the same quiet joy even when you were tired or didn't feel very well? Or to the contrary, when you were absolutely well and strong, and were looking at that same sunset did you never feel no such quiet joy? I think that this has happened to you as well.

Perhaps you have also noticed that it was on those days when you were thinking and concerned much about yourself and very little about other people that your soul did not feel the beauty of nature and was incapable of experiencing quiet and peaceful joy. And on those days when you forgot about yourselves and cared for others, especially if for the sake of someone else you gave up something without sorrow, something pleasant for yourself, - it was on those days that your soul couldn't help marvelling at the beauty of God's world.

The beauty of nature, the beauty of a canvas, of a scent or of music can attune us to experience beauty. But this feeling can also remain entirely external as only a mental or sensual experience, one that doesn't impart inner warmth and quiet joy to the soul. Let's take a beautiful song. Sing it according to all the rules of rhythm and according to the notes in the musical score. Yet if you don't feel it and if you remain out of tune with the spirit of the piece, thinking only about the rhythm and the notation, your singing will be really tedious. But if you sing the same song even with some mistakes in the rhythm and the notes, but while loving it in your heart, it will pour out and overwhelm many startled hearts with its fire.

When sometimes a man feels close to God, the eternal Fountain of Goodness and Love, - on those days the most common and simple things suddenly bring some kind of inexplicable and joyful comfort. And they are exactly the things which do not normally move us at all. What can we say? Can it be that our mood changes the essence of these things? No! But everything that has a material form, also has an immaterial essence, which is penetrated by a mystical Divine power. "Heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, WHO ART EVERYWHERE PRESENT AND FILLEST ALL THINGS..." So speaks that wonderful prayer to the Holy Spirit. The Divine Spirit fills all things.

How beautifully this mysterious life is depicted by Melnikov-Pechersky: "There isn't a single particle of dust on this earth, which wasn't created for man's profit.... In every herb, in every flower resides the great mercy of the Lord.... The earth is full of His wonder, and of His love for man, of His Light, there is no measure.... Are we not sinful, do we not live with malice and untruth? ... But He, the Kind-hearted One, bears all things, and covers all with His love.... And those who are enlightened by the Lord to

understand His mysterious strength can perceive it in scarlet dawns and in the many coloured rainbow, in the beautiful sun, in the clear moon, in every tree, in every herb, in every pebble... Everywhere the mystical power of God is spread abroad...." (Melnikov-Pechersky: "In the Woods").

But on those days when our thoughts and cares are focused on ourselves, we cannot perceive it or feel it. "Having eyes, we see not, and having ears we cannot hear or understand." But as soon as we lift our thoughts to God and to our neighbours, and have a lively concern for them, as soon as we forget for a while about ourselves and are reconciled with Heaven through holy prayer, our spiritual eyes begin to open, and our ears to hear, and we begin to comprehend holy joy, other worldly beauty and the invincible power of the Divine love, which is spread out around us.

The dark powers want to cast people down, through doubts, to the level of complete thoughtlessness, and transfer then from the spiritual to that which is solely material and dark. But God calls us to the life of the spirit, to love and joy in the Holy Spirit. He desires our voluntary return to Him. He could have constrained us, but He desires loving sons and daughters, and not forced slaves.

So then, brethren, are we going to remain for ever deaf to this calling? God does not tell us to reject all that is necessary, but only to sacrifice a bit for our neighbour; and as a reward for this He gives the heart a quiet joy - a feeble foretaste of that which God has prepared for those that love Him on the other side of eternity's border.

The devil wants to convince us that "only those things are real that can be perceived by the body" (Count A. Tolstoy), and that the brain is the summit of man's capabilities. And what this powerful idea, which rejects God, leads to, we can see from the horror that now reigns in the world.

Only love never dies, because "Love is stronger than death." And with it, its children also do not die; they are Divine beauty and holy joy.

While we are on earth, we need earthly accommodations, but this, when submitted to the spirit, is also beautiful. So it is with things. They radiate comfort and warmth for man. But if man rejects the Divine response in his soul, then he does not feel this luminous radiation. On the contrary, then the sin reigning within him stains with its darkness things which by their nature are warm, and they seem to us soulless, cold and dead. And nature itself suffers on account of our soullessness. Thus the Apostle Paul writes concerning the suffering of creation: "... creation awaits with hope the revelation of the sons of God, for the creature was made subject to vanity not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject in hope. Because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth even until now" (Rom. 8:19-22).

Now, you come out on a nasty day, and nature looks gloomy and cold. But as soon as the sun cuts through the clouds and brightens up the garden, everything comes to life; the colours become brighter, flowers open up, bees, flies, birds, everything joyfully flies to the flowers and the sun. And if the Divine Sun dawns in your heart, then you will see not only the material flowers which have opened, and the

flight of the insects and birds, but you will also perceive a living power, and the accord of your soul with all living nature and even with things that appear to be immovable. You will feel warmth and a moving love towards all things that surround you. You will feel the truth of the poet's words: "There is nothing in nature, that does not breathe with love" (Count A. Tolstoy).

This is real life, and it is worth living for the sake of those moments when I am for everything and everything is for me. But, let us not forget that for everything to be for me, I must make the start by being everything for everyone. For love can only respond to love. When Bishop Antony of Voronezh was asked, how come he had everyone's love, he simply replied: "Through love." Warm yourselves, brothers and sisters, in the Divine Sun, and through love grant a place in the sun to those who voluntarily or involuntarily stay in the shade.

To be continued in the next issue, with "About the Thoughts

FROM THE SACRED CANONS

WHEN AN UNBAPTIZED CHILD DIES owing to negligence on the part of its own parents, the parents are to be excluded from Communion for three years, and obliged to maintain xerophagy [*strictest fasting - literally dry-eating*] for this time and to propitiate the Deity on bended knees with protracted weeping and alms proportionate to their ability, while doing every day forty prostrations.

*Canon 24 of our Holy Father Among the Saints
John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople*

Note, however, that in many handwritten books we find also the following addition inserted in the present canon of the Faster, namely, that if a baby is only seven days old and dies unbaptized, its parents are to be denied Communion for forty days and during these days are to confine their fare to xerophagy, and are to do forty metanies every day. I think that this compromise was allowed them because it was the custom, it would appear, for a child not to be baptised before it was eight days old, pursuant to the reason for circumcision being performed on the eighth day, instead of which baptism is performed nowadays. However, in order to prevent the occurrence of such things, the baby must indispensably be baptized without fail on whatever day it may happen to fall ill, according to Reply 35 of Peter the Chartophylax - *footnote from "The Rudder."*

THE COMING MONTH

IN OCTOBER there are no Great Feasts and no special fasting periods. The principal festival in the month falls on the very first day; it is the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God. Originally the feast commemorated the vision granted to Blessed Andrew the Fool, in which he saw the Theotokos protecting the Imperial City of Constantinople, when it was besieged by enemies. Now it is kept as a thanksgiving by the faithful for all the many occasions on which the Mother of God has protected us from harm and from evil.

Another feast which is kept with great solemnity is that of the Great Martyr Demetrius the Myron-Streaming of Thessalonica (26th October/8th November). He ranks with Saint George in the love of the faithful, and is invoked by the Orthodox as the protector of the youth and as an aid in the contest of carnal warfare.

The feast that undoubtedly comes third is a modern one, that of the Synaxis of the Fourteen Venerable Elders of Optina Monastery, a series of God-bearing Elders who lived in the later part of the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the twentieth century. Perhaps best known among them to English-speaking Orthodox are Saint Ambrose and his humble minded disciple, Saint Joseph. At Brookwood we have a fragment of the sacred relics of one of the last of these Elders, St Nectarius. The Optina elders were glorified by the Church in 1990, and their celebration was appointed on 10th/23rd of the month, because this was the day on which the most illustrious among them, Elder Ambrose, reposed.

Among other saints in October, we have:

The Holy New Hieromartyr Agathangel of Yaroslavl (3rd/16th) was one of the senior hierarchs of the Russian Church at the time when it faced the first great waves of persecution from the Soviets. When, after the death of St Tikhon the Patriarch of Moscow, Metropolitan Sergius usurped rule of the Church and issued his infamous declaration of 1927, Metropolitan Agathangel was one of the foremost of the churchmen who withstood him. In a letter of 1928, Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, seeking a resolution to the problems that Sergius' betrayal had created within the Church of Russia, wrote: "It seems to me that one way out of the situation that has been created would be for you [*i.e. Metropolitan Sergius*] and all the faithful in our land who think in an Orthodox way to direct your gaze to the eldest Hierarch of the Russian Church, His Eminence Agathangel, Metropolitan of Yaroslavl. Go to him with trust and love. Despite his advanced age, he has remained wise and powerful in spirit. His appeal from Perm was an act of zeal for the salvation of the Church. Stretch out your brotherly hands to him, give him a warm, brotherly greeting, ask him to help you out of this terrible and burdensome situation, and hand over to him your rights as Substitute until His Eminence, Metropolitan Peter [*the canonical head of the Russian Church at that time, then in detention - ed.*] should return to power." On many occasions Metropolitan Agathangel in his love tried to call Metropolitan Sergius to repentance, but to no avail. Exhausted by his labours, Metropolitan Agathangel died on 3rd/16th October, 1928 at the age of seventy-four. For his struggle for righteousness' sake, he is numbered among the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia and depicted on their icon.

The Righteous Ywi the Deacon (8th/21st) was the son of a British chieftain, although his mother was English. His father wished him to take up a military career, but the saint desired to serve the heavenly King, and he placed himself under obedience to the great Saint Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, by whom he was ordained to the diaconate. It is recorded that one day, while serving with Saint Cuthbert, he was struck with pity by the sight of a poor man who could hardly support himself because of his pains, and so St Ywi took him by the hand to raise him up and bring him to the Bishop for a blessing. As he touched him, the man was completely healed of his infirmities. Wishing to visit the monasteries in Brittany, he obtained a blessing and set sail. However, they met with bad weather and were nearly wrecked on the way, spending

more than a week at sea. This experience so undermined the health of the deacon, that shortly after they landed he took ill and died. Some versions of his life state that he fled to Brittany because of the fame of the miracle of his healing the infirm man and the other miracles which he was deemed worthy to work to God's glory. His sacred relics were later brought back to England, his homeland, and found rest in the chapel of St Edith at Wilton in Wiltshire. It is thought that they were being taken back to the North to be near those of his Elder, Saint Cuthbert, but that for some reason their progress was interrupted. St Ywi lived in the seventh century.

The holy Martyrs Eulampius and Eulampia of Nicomedia suffered during the persecution raised by the Emperor Maximian (286-305 A.D.). During this period of trial, many of the faithful fled the city of Nicomedia and hid. From their hiding place, the young Eulampius was sent into the city to buy provisions and, seeing an imperial decree against the Christians posted there, he tore it down. He was seen doing this and arrested. Brought before the judge he was ordered to deny Christ and on his refusal put to torture. His sister, Eulampia, hearing what had happened to her brother, did not wish to be separated from him in his martyrdom and left her place of hiding and boldly confessed herself to be a Christian. Both were flogged, thrown into boiling pitch and into fire, but they remained steadfast and, through God's wonders, unharmed. Finally they were sentenced to death by beheading. Eulampius was beheaded, but his sister expired from her sufferings before they could strike off her head. At the same time, some two hundred Christians in the city were put to death and received the crowns of martyrdom. The martyrs are celebrated on the same day as the Optina Elders, 10th/23rd, and at St Edward's we have a portion of St Eulampius' relics.

Saint Nothelm, Archbishop of Canterbury (17th/30th) was one of a long line of saintly Archbishops of that see. Before his consecration as successor to St Tatwine in 736, he had been a priest serving in London. During this period he had visited Rome and with the permission of Pope Gregory III, he studied the archives regarding the life and writings of England's Apostle, St Gregory the Great. He passed on much of what he learned to the Venerable Bede, thus helping him in writing his classic, "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation." St Nothelm may have been consecrated to the episcopate while in Rome, although we have no sure record of this. He did receive the pallium from Pope Gregory III. He was Archbishop for about four years, dying about 739/740 A.D. Besides helping the great Bede, he also corresponded with St Boniface of Crediton, encouraging his mission in Germany and supplying him with necessary materials. Thus, although little is known of his own ministry, he is shown to be a helper and supporter of two of the greatest saints of the Anglo-Saxon period of our history.

NEWS SECTION

MYRON-STREAMING ICONS IN THE HOLY LAND

PRAVOSLAVNAYA RUS' in its 1st/14th August issue carries the following short paragraph "From the editor:" "In "PR" No 7 this year, in the "Short Notices" section, there was a report about the miraculous myron-streaming during Passion Week of the walls, cupola, icons and frescoes in the Monastery of Saint Gerasimus in the Holy Land. Now we can supplement this report. According to the evidence of an eye-witness, who visited the monastery in Bright Week, on Great Saturday icons of the Mother of God

and the Crucifixion started to stream myron. Then tears began to flow from one of the frescoes in the narthex of the church, depicting the Archangel Gabriel. The brethren of the monastery entered the church and noticed that icons of the All-holy Trinity, of the Mother of God and of Saint Gerasimus had begun to stream myron, which gave off a wondrous fragrance. Shortly thereafter it was possible to see the drops of myron."

The same issue of the magazine carries several pages on the Jubilee of Metropolitan Vitaly, with, of particular interest to the faithful in England, pictures of his consecration to the episcopate in St Philip's Church, Buckingham Palace Road, London, in 1951 and his first hierarchal Liturgy there. In the thousand-year history of the Russian Orthodox Church, there are only four recorded instances of a hierarch serving as a Bishop for fifty years: Saint Philaret the Metropolitan of Moscow (1783-1867) did so, as did Metropolitan Isidore of Novgorod (1799-1892), and in the emigration two First Hierarchs of the Church Abroad have done so: Metropolitan Anastassy (1873-1965) and Metropolitan Vitaly (1910-) himself.

ORTHODOX CHURCH DESTROYED IN TWIN TOWERS ATTACK

THE TINY Greek Orthodox Church of St Nicolas was destroyed on 11th September as a result of the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan. The priest of the church, Father John Romas attempted to visit the church on the day of the destruction, but was turned back by police. The next day he found that the church had been buried under the debris. The tiny church has a normal Sunday morning attendance of about 45 to 50 faithful, who are now looking for a place to hold their services until their church can be rebuilt. The parish was established in 1916 by Greek immigrants and until 1993 followed the Church Calendar, but then transferred to the Gregorian reckoning. The building itself predates the parish being built in 1832, and it was first a residence and then a tavern, before being converted into a church. The Tsar Martyr Nicolas II of Russia donated icons which were treasured in the church.

Orthodox Church leaders from around the world have expressed their horror at the savagery and audacity of the terrorist attacks in Washington and New York and their sympathy for the afflicted and bereaved. In a letter addressed to the ROCA faithful in the USA, Archbishop Lavr, the deputy of the First Hierarch, wisely took the matter further. He wrote: "Regrettably, we hear repeated cries for revenge and retribution. To these the Orthodox must respond with the words of the divine scriptures: 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord' (Rom. 12:19). Let us also not forget the words of our Saviour, said of those who were putting Him to death, as He endured the excruciating pain of His brutal crucifixion: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'(Luke 32:34). Beloved children in our Saviour, let us use these sad days for serious introspection. Speaking to His disciples of the fall of another tower, in which lives were likewise lost, Jesus called His followers to examine their lives, and repent....Many search the Scriptures to see if these be the last times which were foretold, and see 'wars, and rumours of wars' as signs that this is so. Be this so or not, let us repent as He urges us and dedicate the remaining time of our lives to the acquisition of the Holy Spirit."

PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW INDICATES POLICY CHANGE

IN AN INTERVIEW to mark the fortieth anniversary of his episcopate, Patriarch Alexei II of Moscow spoke of the cooperation of the Church with the secular authorities. "But in contrast to earlier years," he said, "the government does not regulate the activity of the Church and does not interfere in its internal affairs; our relations are of a partnership nature. We have many common tasks -the moral health of society, strengthening civil peace and harmony, solution of social problems, and preservation of historic monuments." He also indicated that Church and state could help each other in trying to deal with drug addiction and alcoholism. The Patriarch's remarks fall somewhat short of a repudiation of Sergianism, but surely should be welcomed as a step in the right direction.

WORLD'S OLDEST-KNOW SLAVONIC TEXT FOUND

LAST JULY, according to "Time" magazine (4/6/01), archaeological students working in Novgorod unearthed a medieval Psalter. The psalms - (it does not in fact appear to be a complete Psalter) - are etched in wax in a triptych of wooden tablets, and the artefact dates from the first decade of the eleventh century, making it the world's oldest surviving Slavonic text. The tablets measure 14cm by 18cm and the technique is known as tsera, a word which derives from *cera*, the Latin word for wax. Moscow archaeologist Valentin Yanin described the preservation of the holy text as a miracle. The psalter is now being repaired and the restorer, Vladimir Poveikin, is reporting as saying: "In a good week, you put one, maybe two pieces back in place."

PAINFUL MACEDONIAN PILGRIMAGE

ON THE GREAT FEAST of the Dormition of the Mother of God, hundreds of former inhabitants of the Macedonian village of Lesok returned to their home to pray at the ruins of the Monastery of St Atanesi, which had been blown up by rebels a week before their festival. Despite warnings that the route might be landmined and fears of guerrilla attacks, the villagers made their way in convoy to the village from which they had earlier fled when ethnic Albanians of the "National Liberation Army" took control of the area. One man remarked that in his former village "there are 900 houses, three weapons in each - almost 3,000 altogether." He noted wryly that this was close to the total number of weapons that NATO forces had promised to collect from the whole country!

BROOKWOOD NEWS

NEW BROTHERHOOD HOUSE: At about the time of going to press, our architect, Irina Hoble of Hoble Designs Limited, Worcester Park, is finalizing the plans for the new Brotherhood house, which we hope to build on the site of the old South Bar Station alongside our present house. The plans have been approved by the trustees, and we have sent copies to Archbishop Mark for his blessing. At a cost of £1,140(!), we are submitting her plans to Woking Borough Council for planning permission. We ask the prayers of the faithful that God speed this application, help us raise the necessary funds and eventually bring the work to a good completion.

CHURCH HEATING: At a time when we are contemplating raising funds for the new house, we have other calls on our resources. The church heating system seems to

be coming quickly to the end of its natural life, and we have been advised to have it replaced. We are investigating ways of converting to mains gas, which apparently will be cheaper to run, and perhaps combining the provision of a gas supply to the church with one for the new house, thus keeping costs to a minimum.

BLESSINGS FROM KIEV: As readers will have observed from our first article this month, one of our parishioners, John Harwood, made a pilgrimage to Kiev for the feast of the Dormition this year. He brought back for our church an icon of the Synaxis of the Kievan Fathers which contains a portion of stone from the original Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom which was blown up by the Soviets. He also brought us two large icons of Sts Antony and Theodosius of the Caves, and a host of smaller icon prints of the other saints whose relics repose in the Near and Far Caves. In the scroll held by St Antony in his icon, he prays that the blessing of the Holy Mountain Athos (where he was tonsured) might rest upon this place (Kiev); through these gifts from Kiev, may some small portion of the blessing of that holy place also rest upon our own community.

PRACTICAL TIP

BE CAREFUL not to neglect preparing to go to church. Often, even church-going people simply turn up when they feel so inclined or when they are accustomed to, without any prior preparation, just from force of habit or a sense of duty. If one prepares beforehand, this can make the experience so much more beneficial. Preparation can be of two kinds. One deaf lady your present writer remembers well used always to phone her priest to check on the Scriptural readings before coming to church, knowing that there she would not hear them. Then she read them at home before the service. It may be that many of us have to make some sort of practical preparation for the service like this. All of us, however, must make spiritual preparation. Before you set out, on the way, and as you enter the church, remember what you are doing and why you are doing it, so that you enter God's house, with, as the Divine Liturgy says, "faith, reverence and the fear of God," and so that you obtain the blessing that this calls down from God.