

The Shepherd

An Orthodox Christian Pastoral Magazine

VOLUME XXII NUMBER 8

APRIL 2002

FROM THE FATHERS

"THE ANGEL RAPHAEL bears witness to the same, and exhorts us to give alms freely and generously, saying to us: *Prayer is good with fasting and almsdeeds; for alms delivereth from death, and the same purgeth away sins* (Tob. 12:8-9). He shows us that prayer and fasting are not enough, and that they are to be assisted by almsdeeds; that supplication avails little to obtain what we ask, unless joined to good works and acts of mercy. The Angel reveals, and makes clear to us, and confirms to us, that our requests become efficacious through almsgiving, that our life shall be delivered from dangers by almsgiving, that our soul shall be delivered from death through almsgiving."

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

"THE TRUTH bids us long for our Heavenly home, and to tread under foot the desires of the body, to turn from the glory of this world, not to desire what is another's, to be generous with what is ours. Let each one then reflect within himself whether this voice of God has become loud in the ear of his own heart, and then he will know if he belongs to God. For there are some who do not trouble to listen to the commands of God even with their bodily ears. And some who do listen to God's words, but do not lay hold of them with any desire of the soul. And there are some who freely receive God's words, and are even moved to tears by them, but when their tears are dry they go back again to their evil ways. They do not in truth hear the words who take no thought to put them into practice."

Saint Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, 540 - 604 A.D.

THE SPIRITUAL FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

"As in Adam all die, so in Christ all live" These Apostolic words speak not only about the physical resurrection of people, but more particularly about their spiritual rebirth. As there is a two-fold death, both spiritual and physical, so also the resurrection is twofold: spiritual and physical. The spiritual death of Adam, which consisted in the loss of his communion with God, occurred before his physical death. As a result of the moral injury it caused, from Adam death descended upon all peoples. The Resurrection of Christ is the beginning of our spiritual resurrection, the arousing within us of spiritual aspirations and thus of a moral rebirth. The Lord said of this spiritual resurrection of the faithful: *"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live"* This is the "first" resurrection, which is spoken of in the book of the Apocalypse [*Revelation*], It consists in this: that people, coming to believe in the Son of God, are born again unto the spiritual life in the Mystery of Baptism, and they begin according to their abilities to live for higher interests and to experience more exalted feelings. The Grace of God

helps the Christian towards perfection in the virtues, and to grow spiritually. For this reason, the Apostles comforted the Christians with the assurance that, unlike the unbelieving pagans, they were already "risen with Christ."

The spiritual resurrection in this life serves as the foundation for our physical resurrection, which through the power of Almighty God will follow on the last day of the existence of this world. Then, the souls of all the dead will rise with their bodies, and all people will live, regardless of where and how they died. Their interior state will be impressed in the appearance of the resurrected; some will look radiant and joyous, others dreadful, like walking cadavers. The Lord foretold the general resurrection in these words: *"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God (sic), and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

At the same time, we must distinguish the general resurrection of the dead which is coming from the temporary resurrection of some dead people, which the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples effected as recorded in the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. For instance, the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, of the son of the widow of Nain, of Lazarus who had laid in the grave four days, and others. These were temporary arisings from death, because those who had been resurrected died again at an appointed time, as do all people. But the general resurrection from the dead will be an everlasting resurrection, and therein people's souls will be forever united to their incorrupt bodies. In the general resurrection, the righteous will arise transfigured, spiritualised and immortal. The First to rise with such a renewed and spiritualised body was the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom the Apostle therefore calls, *"The Firstborn from the dead."* *"Then (at the general resurrection) shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."*

The Christian festival of Pascha is greeted by Orthodox Christians with such joy, because more than in the rest of the year, during the paschal days, they experience the power of rebirth of Christ's Resurrection, the power that has laid low the rule of darkness, has freed souls from hades, which has opened the doors to Paradise, which has conquered the bonds of death, and poured life and light into the souls of the believers. Further we observe that then in various measures paschal joy is spread among a greater number of people, not only among those who are deeply religious, but even among the lukewarm and those who are far from God. At Pascha the whole world and, it is evident, even soulless nature rejoices in the victory of life over death.

Translated from "Voskresenie"

*A magazine for Orthodox Youth of the Community of the
Kasperov Icon of the Mother of God (No 2,2000).*

Adapted from

"THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THE CHURCH SERVICES"

By the Priest N. R. Antonov

Continuation

§ 34. The Holy Symbolic Depictions in the Catacombs. In the first ages, the Christians did not usually depict holy persons directly, that is not in their own form, but rather they did so in a hidden, allegorical or symbolical way. Thus it is that, in studying the sacred depictions we find in the catacombs, the first ones are depicted symbolically.

These symbolic depictions in the catacombs include: a) the anchor, as a symbol or image of Christian hope. Just as in a storm at sea, the anchor is a safeguard for a ship, so Christian hope safeguards the soul in life; b) the dove, a symbol of the Holy Spirit and of innocence, and the guilelessness of the Christian soul; c) the phoenix, which was, according an ancient belief, a bird which did not die, is symbol of the resurrection; d) the peacock, the symbol of immortality, because according to the ancients, its body did not undergo corruption; e) the rooster, a symbol of the resurrection, because the cockerel wakes us from sleep, and this awakening is a reminder of the Dread Judgment and the resurrection of the dead; f) the lamb symbolises Jesus Christ, Who is called the Lamb, "Which taketh away the sins of the world" in the Gospels; g) the lion is a symbol of strength and power; h) the olive branch, a symbol of eternal peace; j) the lily, a symbol of purity; k) the fish, in the first place, represents that the Christians were caught as in a net for God's Kingdom through the preachers of Christianity. But it also has a significance because of the way in which the word is spelt in Greek, *icquz*, (*ichthys*) the letters of which spell out the initials of the words: I - Jesus, Ch - Christ, Th - God's (Theou), Y - Son (Yios), S - Saviour (Soter); l) the grapevine reminds us of the Mystery of Communion; m) the basket of loaves reminds us of the same Mystery.

To the number of these symbols we must also add the figure of the pagan poet Orpheus with his lyre in his hands. The message of this symbol is that just as Orpheus with his lyre charmed even the wild beasts, so the Saviour, through His teachings, draws even wild hearts to Himself.

There were two main reasons why Christian artists had recourse to these symbols: a) it was a common practice among the ancients, both the Jews and the Greeks, to express things through visible symbols or orally through parables; b) in times which were extremely difficult for the Christians, they could both use the symbols as expressions of their Faith and protect themselves from the imputation of being Christians. The Christian symbols were understood only by the Christians and were not clear to the pagans.

§ 35. The Depiction of Parables and Holy Events in the Catacombs. Besides the separate sacred subjects, one finds in the catacombs depictions of the parables and of whole events. There are depictions of the Sower, the ten virgins, and the Good Shepherd, which recall the parables of the Saviour, and from among the events shown, we could mention: 1) Noah in the ark, sometimes as a bearded man, and sometimes depicted as a young man without a beard. He stands in the ark which has the shape of a smallish box, roofed over, and in his hand he holds a bird with a branch in its beak; 2) the Prophet Jonas - depicted at various points in his story, with these sometimes depicted together; 3) the Prophet Daniel among the lions; 4) the Prophet Moses - again depicted at various events in his life, for instance, his calling, the bringing forth of water from the rock in the wilderness, his receiving the tablets of the Law; 5) the adoration of the Magi; 6) the resurrection of Lazarus.

To be continued with "The Depictions of the Saviour and the Mother of God in the Catacombs"

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF FATHER GEORGE CHEREMETIEFF

Thoughts on a Journey Passion Week

Passion Week (*Strastnaya Nedelya* in Russian) is approaching, "Dread Week" (*Strastnaya Nedelya*) as it is called by the simple folk, the Week of the Passion, the suffering of Christ. What significance does this week have for us? It is a commemoration, and for those who sincerely believe a living through, of the decisive moments of the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ; the very time of His victory over hades and death; the very time of the redemption and salvation of the race of mankind.

But, I feel, many will reflect on these words and will ask: "But what is this redemption that is spoken of here? Who is sitting in a prison-cell, or in a concentration camp, or in slavery? Who is in dangerous circumstances, and needs to be redeemed? Why do we need any kind of salvation, when we are living well?"

Of course, if you think only this earthly life exists, if you think that man consists only of brain and body, that everything just mysteriously runs in the blood, that the blood is life just as it is with the animals, then of course the concept of salvation is incomprehensible. Salvation from what?

But in general how are the men distinguished from the animals? Maybe, because their brain is more developed? Yes, of course this is partly it. But, we may suppose, that through a long course of training, perhaps through many generations, one might be able to develop the brains even of the animals. If such were the case, then we could all live like the animals, without Christian love, without honour, without pity, without compassion, - in a word, a life drily practical, without beauty, without any aspiration to the heights, without any spiritual joy.

But in man there is as it were a spiritual particle of the Divine, his spirit, a spark from God, something which does not die, our true, inward I. The person who keeps his soul with proper regard to those things which pertain to and govern his situation; the person who from infancy has nourished his soul with the heavenly food, who has done the works of God, and has drunk of living water from the Eternal Source through prayer and through the Holy Mysteries, such a person and only such a person lives a human life.

Others smother their souls, and it is given little opportunity to express itself, but this completely dehumanises man. But there are some (and alas, now there are many of them) who completely stifle their soul, and it is subjected to complete slavery to their pride, their dirty mind and to their coarse body. These people, having a mind, sometimes even being quite well educated, live their whole life in an animal fashion, or rather not simply like an animal, for the animals often manifest love and devotion, but these people are "beastlike" in the apocalyptic sense - in that they hate people, and concerned only about themselves. Such are servants prepared for the Antichrist. Thus

we can see that in a short time his dark reign will draw nigh, because such human-beasts at this very time rule over more than a sixth of the earth. [*Fr. George is referring to the Soviet powers, who had power when he wrote these words; their time is now over, but one would be completely spiritually blind not to perceive that new world-rulers of darkness are now perhaps controlling an even greater part of the world - ed.*].

But we pray to God, the Father of lights: "Thy Kingdom come." And if at the same time as this, we conduct our lives in accordance with the prayer, then we are working for the coming of the kingdom of Christ. And the more people submit their lives to Christ's law, the more readily His radiant kingdom will come. Now all is still dark. But we must not fear, for we have been given the precept that "everyone, who calls upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

In the life beyond the grave, human souls will clearly see all their deeds on earth, which will then be manifest to all. And if the good will therefore be glad, then those that are found bound in the netherworld will only then begin to comprehend that they might have passed their life on earth joyously and honourably; finally they will begin to comprehend how empty and pointless all that they considered valuable then really was. But at that juncture, they are not granted to correct their lives. Constantly to observe their defilement, their arrogance, their meanness, which they have endeavoured to hide from people, and being unable to put it right - this will really be a dreadful torment.

During the Great Lent, we gradually prepare ourselves for a spiritual change of life, we temper our mind, we humble its pridefulness and impurity, and we deprive the body of its accustomed good things and of nourishment, we weary it with long standing in church, so as to curb earthly thoughts and fantasies. We pass through this annual spiritual cleansing of our earthly tabernacle. We have to pass on to the holiness of Christ's suffering with a soul which is renewed, with an enlightened mind and with a body which is cleansed of earthly passions.

This is our task in Great Lent: the fast for the body - cutting off eating to satiety, drunkenness, laziness, and filthiness; the honourable fulfilment of our customary work and submissively bearing of the weariness of standing in prayer.

The fast for the soul: the bringing down of its pride and self-love, the casting out of unclean thoughts and fantasies, the renunciation of all self-interest, irritation, and judging; reading exclusively from the word of God and from the writings of the Holy Fathers.

Passion Week is the culmination of the fast, the crown of this struggle. Just as immediately before sunrise, the sky is still dark and the night cold very intense, so in Passion Week the prayerful struggle of the fast is intensified, with spiritual vigil and complete self-restraint. The hymns in church are wondrous in their simplicity and inspiring; they have come down to us through centuries of prayer from antiquity; we have the sombre vestments and, finally, the direct and powerful Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian - all of this gradually informs the soul and prepares it for the important thing....

Great Thursday. Night time. Standing holding candles and the prolonged readings on the Great Friday mattins of the twelve Gospel readings on the Passion of Christ. After the ninth Gospel, the chanting of the verse "To the Good Thief." The spirit is elevated and suffers with Christ. The mind is purified through listening, and by the prayerful disposition of those surrounding one. The body is wearied, it is weakened, but nonetheless maintains the struggle of standing so that the lowliness of its physicality might serve the soul and that it might be raised up through its prayer.

The burning candles even give us an image of our standing in prayer: the light, from the burning wick, is fed by the wax, and the flame stretches up to heaven. Prayer, which burns up the dreaming of the mind and the desires of the body, and which is nourished by acts of love and by kind-heartedness, reaches up towards God. The flame of the candles, hearing the purifying reading of Christ's sufferings, is sanctified thereby. And then we attempt to take it *[the fire from the candle - it is a custom after the reading of the Twelfth Gospel not to extinguish our candles, but to keep the fire from it, and light a lantern from that, so that from it we can light the vigil lamps at home or bless our lintels and ceilings with crosses "sooted" from these flames - ed.]* home, where its mystical presence illumines the spiritual atmosphere of the dwelling-place in which we pass our lives, just as an open window clears a stuffy room after a night's sleep there.

Great Friday. We assemble at night. With the candles burning we go up to the Winding Sheet, the image of the entombment of our Saviour. The marvellous prayers and the ancient chants - "To Thee, Who clothest Thyself in light as in a garment," "The Noble Joseph," "Weep not for Me, O Mother." The reading of the Apostle: *"The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written [in the Prophet Esaias]: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent"* And the Apostle asks: *"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this age?"* And he confirms: *"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God"* (1 Cor. 1:18-20,23-24). The comprehension of the Divine wisdom is something above this world, and the knowledge of earthly things is as nothing.

Great Saturday. The sacrifice is accomplished. And in this period, when we, like the Ointment-bearing Women, are left at rest, Christ descends into hades, and victoriously delivers the souls of the righteous. Before the Divine Liturgy, there are many [15] readings from the Old Testament and the Prophets, then, instead of the usual Cheribicon, we chant a song used only once in the year, which shakes the soul: "Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and stand with fear and trembling; and let it take no thought for any earthly thing...."

The Liturgy is the last of the lenten services, but it is already filled with joy, for we await the event, on whose account, after the reading of the Apostle, we change the sombre lenten vestments into bright ones.

And finally: "When the Sabbath was past...," that is, on the first day after the Sabbath, the Great Feast fell. We come to church on the Saturday, late in the evening.

In the church, there is darkness. Laymen read the Acts of the Holy Apostles. For the last time, the faithful prostrate before the holy Winding Sheet. The Paschal Midnight service begins. The priest carries the Winding Sheet into the sanctuary. The vestments are already joyous, beautiful and paschal ones. They bring out the holy cross, and take the banners and icons. Everyone gets ready for the procession. Those who have come to pray light their candles [*in the Greek practice, there is a special ceremony for taking the light from the candles which the priest brings out from the sanctuary -ed.*]. But the church itself is still in darkness. A quiet waiting.

Midnight. The first stroke of the bell. In Moscow in earlier days, the peeling of the bells began with the Ivan the Great bell, taken up by the various peels from the "forty times forty" churches of Moscow. And now, from the sanctuary the clergy quietly chant the hymn: "Angels in the Heavens, O Christ our Saviour, praise Thy resurrection with hymns; deem us also who are on earth worthy to glorify Thee with a pure heart." The veil is withdrawn from the Royal Gates, and the hymn is repeated in full voice. It is taken up by the choir [*the Greek usage is somewhat different here*], and the procession leaves the church, processes three times around it, and comes to stand before the West doors. The doors are closed. The chanting falls silent. We stand, as if we were before the sealed tomb of the Saviour.

And then, for the first time, like the Ointment Bearers proclaiming the Good News, the priest chants: "Christ is risen from the dead, by death hath he trampled down death, and on those in the graves hath he bestowed life." The choir joyously take it up. The *Trezvon* (joyous peel) sounds from all the bell towers, and chanting the procession re-enters the church which is now full of light. "Ye who fast and ye who fast not... ye rich and ye poor, come ye all... let us all enjoy the banquet of Faith ... For Risen is Christ, and there is none dead in the tomb" (Homily of Saint John Chrysostom, read before the Paschal Liturgy).

A Divine light in the soul, a gripping joyfulness in the heart, an awakening in nature and in the soul of man, victory over death, life, love ... This is the culmination of the fast, and this is paschal joy. Christ is Risen!

THE COMING MONTH

ACCORDING TO THE CHURCH CALENDAR, Pascha falls on Sunday, 22nd April (5th May n.s.) this year, and so in the month of April we have some of the most important days of the whole Church year. The month opens on the fourth Sunday of the fast, which is dedicated to Saint John of the Ladder. St John, a sixth century Abbot of the sacred Monastery on Mount Sinai, is one of the great ascetic fathers of the Church and a teacher of asceticism. Nowadays, even nominally Orthodox Christians often dismiss the ascetic teaching of the Church, saying that it is simply something that need not concern the laity and is the preserve of the monks. Nothing could be further from the Church's own understanding. Christian life without asceticism is Christian life without the Cross! Certainly such an idea flies in the face of Saint John's own teaching. In Step 26 of his "Ladder," he writes: "Angels are a light for monks, and the monastic life is a light for all men." So important is the taking up of one's cross (asceticism) in the Christian life that, in His loving kindness and His desire that we should be saved, the

Lord has thus ordered a hierarchy of examples to help us. Of course, this fact lays a responsibility on the monastics, which we cannot escape. St John continues: "therefore let monks strive to become a good example in everything, giving no occasion for stumbling in anything in all their works and words. For if the light becomes darkness, how much darker will be that darkness, that is, those living in the world." Undoubtedly the world is such a dark place now because of the weakness of the monastic witness, but even though its light is dim and flickering, we have the teaching of the ascetics and these can be a light to us.

On the Wednesday that follows, in the evening we have Saint Andrew's Standing, a service (actually it is the Mattins for the following day) during which we read the whole canon of repentance of St Andrew of Crete, and the life of St Mary of Egypt. This service, as it were, inaugurates the last lap of the Great Fast. We are reminded of the start we made in the first week, when we read St Andrew's canon to move us to repentance, and we are given the beautiful example of St Mary's life, wherein we see how the repentance of sinners is accepted.

The last Sunday of the fast (8th/21st) is dedicated to St Mary of Egypt that we might end our course with hope.

Often people think that Lent leads right up to Easter, but properly it ends on the Friday before Palm Sunday, and the remaining days, although kept as fast days, form another period variously called Great or Passion Week. We will not attempt to cover that period or Pascha itself in the brief notes here. There are other articles in this issue which touch upon various aspects of this the apex of the Christian year, and we would also recommend readers to the introduction to the English translation of "The Lenten Triodion" published by Faber and Faber. This introduction was written by the then Archimandrite Kallistos (now Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia) in 1977 and gives a marvellous overview of Lent. Better still read the divine services appointed for that period and attend as many of the services as you possibly can.

NEWS SECTION

DESECRATION AT SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN BIRMINGHAM

PROTOPRESBYTER-STAVROPHORE MILENKO ZEBIC and his Matushka Olga report that over the first weekend in March the Serbian Orthodox Church of the Holy Prince Lazar in Birmingham was forcibly broken into by vandals, who smashed many of the icons and the sacred vessels, overthrew the tabernacle and spilled the Holy Gifts on the floor, and deliberately desecrated and dirtied the church. They report that for sometime now they have had individuals trying to disrupt the Divine services by shouting abusive words, but do not know if these two things are connected. We ask the prayers of the faithful for Fr Milenko, his matushka and their flock at this time of severe trial. If any readers would like to send donations towards the restoration of this, one of the most beautiful Orthodox churches in the country, please send them to:

Serbian Orthodox Parish of St Prince Lazar,
131 Cob Lane, Birmingham B30 1QE.

AUTONOMY SOUGHT FOR GREEK CHURCH IN AMERICA

A RESOLUTION has been published by the Orthodox Christian laity which it is hoped will be endorsed by the delegates of the 36th Clergy Laity Congress of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in July this year. The resolution calls upon the delegates "wholeheartedly and enthusiastically" to support autonomy (self governance) for the Archdiocese. Such a proposal was made by the Eparchial Synod of the Archdiocese in December 2000, and it appears that the present proposed resolution aims to add more weight to that proposal and persuade the Œcumenical Patriarchate to permit the Archdiocese this measure of self-rule.

ATTACKS ON SERBIAN CHURCHES CONTINUE

THE CHURCH of the Translation of the Relics of St Sava in Southern Mitrovica appears to be the 109th church in Kosovo and Metohija subjected to desecration since the Peacekeeping forces were deployed there. In mid-February, the church, which since the evacuation of the Serbian population in 1999 now stands in an area entirely populated by Albanians, was set on fire. The narthex and the western side of the building were destroyed before Greek KFOR forces who had been protecting the church were able to halt the fire. Local officials have claimed that in this instance faults in the electrical wiring system were the cause of the destruction, and they are ruling out an arson attack, because they say the church was guarded 24 hours a day.

The St Peter of Cetinje Seminary was attacked on 16th February in the evening, and one student was injured by people throwing stones at the Christian institution. The police responded quickly and fortunately brought the incident to an end, but none of its perpetrators were apprehended.

GERMAN CARDINAL PINPOINTS CRISIS IN ECUMENISM

CARDINAL WALTER KASPER, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has drawn attention to various crises facing the ecumenical movement. Turning to Rome's relationship with Orthodoxy, he says: "We are increasingly conscious of the fact that an Orthodox Church does not really exist. At the present stage, it does not seem that Constantinople is yet capable of integrating the different autocephalous Orthodox Churches; there are doubts about its primacy of honour, especially in Moscow." The Cardinal is right to have noticed the independence of the various Orthodox churches, although his assumption that all the Orthodox should form a monolithic structure under Constantinople should deeply perturb Orthodox Christians. The assumption is a perfectly natural for the Cardinal to make. Obviously, if he hopes to see progress towards "unity of the Churches," he realizes also that like can only be joined to like, and so, before that unity can come about, from his point of view, the Orthodox must become like the Roman Catholics. Orthodox Christians should be at least as intelligent as Cardinal Kaspar and realize that this would mean the loss of their Orthodoxy. The Cardinal is undoubtedly mistaken about Constantinople's position among the Orthodox churches. No one seriously challenges her primacy of honour - what Orthodoxy denies is that Constantinople is somehow an Eastern Papacy.

The Cardinal also commented that dialogue with Moscow was difficult, but that "the situation is improving with Greece; "and "in the Middle East, in the territory of the ancient See of Antioch, the situation is completely different and there already is almost

full communion." De facto the Antiochian Patriarchate also enjoys a wide measure of inter-communion with the non-Chalcedonians. In both Antioch's links with Rome and with the Monophysites, there has been no agreement on matters of faith, and neither has the consent of the other Orthodox Churches been sought or obtained, and one can only assume that these irregular "unions" are political rather than ecclesial in nature.

GREEK ORTHODOX CELEBRATION IN LONDON

THREE SERVICES were held at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom (Moscow Road, London W2) on Sunday 10th March to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the cathedral. These services were led by His Eminence Archbishop Gregarious of Thyatira and Great Britain and included Mattins, the Divine Liturgy and a Memorial Service for the founders, donors and clergy of the cathedral. In conjunction with this celebration, an exhibition opened at the Hellenic Centre in Paddington Street, London W1. The exhibition, titled "Treasured Offerings" was opened in the presence of Professor Evangelos Venizelos, the Minister of Culture of Greece, on Thursday 7th March and continued till Monday 25th March.

CHURCH FOR ANTARTICA

PLANS ARE UNDERWAY to build an Orthodox Church in Antarctica, the first on that continent. The church will be built in the style of the northern Russian wooden churches, but will use modern technologies. The first Russian naval expedition to Antarctica was led, a hundred and eighty years ago, by Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen. The new church, which will be dedicated to St Nicolas, will also serve as a memorial to 47 Russian explorers who have perished in Antarctica over the decades. Hegoumen Georgy Ilyin (MP) led a group and blessed the site at the end of January this year. There they erected a cross and deposited soil from Jerusalem, pouring in water from the Jordan.

BELFAST MISSION

"LAUS PERENNIS," the newsletter of the Holy Trinity Orthodox Mission in Belfast, announces that the mission has found a new place of worship, after troubles with vandalism at the former location. They have acquired an open plan office of more than 1,400 square feet, which they are converting to provide a church and parish facilities. The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated there on Sunday 10th March by Father Peter Bauk. The address of the new mission centre is 16a Castlereagh Road, East Belfast, but correspondence should be addressed to Fr Deacon Geoffrey Ready at 18, Ardkeen Avenue, Carnalea, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 1ER.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

VISIT OF KURSK ROOT ICON: When the Wonderworking Icon was brought to Brookwood for the Divine Liturgy on Saturday 9th March, our usual congregation was happily swelled by many Orthodox from other churches and by other friends of the community. His Grace Archbishop Mark celebrated, assisted by Fr Alexis, Fr Vadim Zakrevsky and Fr Paul Elliott, with Hierodeacon Sabbas and Fr Deacon Sergei Zashchitin. After the Liturgy, the Little Supplicatory Canon was chanted before the

wonder-working icon. The icon is to be in the British Isles until the end of March, and in our next issue we hope to give a fuller report on its visits to the various parishes and missions.

TONSURE AT SAINT EDWARD'S: On the first Friday in Lent, before the Akathist Service, Brother Theodore was tonsured a rasophor monk. On that day we were celebrating both the Miracle of the Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit (his name-saint in Baptism) and the festival of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, the day on which twenty-years ago we started regular daily services at Brookwood. Brother Theodore joined our community when on 22nd December/4th January 1997, he was baptized at St Edward's. He was clothed as a novice on St Theodore Saturday in 1998. At his tonsure his God-father, Reader Gabriel Lawani, drew the lot for his monastic name and he was thus named for the Holy Apostle Thomas (feastday 6th/19th October). We ask the prayers of the faithful for the newly-tonsured Father Thomas, that he may complete well that which he has begun.

GIFTS TO SAINT EDWARDS: The Brotherhood has been given a large and beautiful icon of the Russian Imperial Martyrs (feastday: 4th/17th July), painted by Sigrid Spencer of Whitstable in Kent. At the moment the icon is being professionally framed and will then be blessed and hung in the church. Our thanks to Mrs Spencer for this splendid gift. May the prayers of the Martyrs ever call God's blessing upon her. Our thanks are also due to John and Ekaterina Harwood and to Ekaterina's mother, Lydia, for the completion of the chalice set, which has been sent from Russia, and will be used on festal days.

BROTHERHOOD LEAPS INTO TWENTIETH CENTURY!: We now have an e-mail address for Saint Edward Brotherhood. We are not yet wholly proficient in the use of this cunning devise, but the address is: theshepherd@mac.com.

NEW HEATING SYSTEM: The mains gas has now been laid on to the Brotherhood property and a new heating system has been installed in the church. The mains gas line was laid by Transco and the new boiler installation done by F.M.S. of Horsell.

TALK: On Saturday 23rd March, at the invitation of Father Richard Blythen, priest of the R.C. parish of St Hugh of Lincoln in Knaphill, Fr Alexis gave a talk on the Orthodox observance of Holy Week for the St Hugh's parishioners, who were holding a study day at Brook Place near Chobham as a prelude to their Holy Week. The talk was followed by questions and answers, and then a buffet lunch, where the St Hugh's parishioners had considerably prepared foods in accordance with the Orthodox fasting observances.

PRACTICAL TIP

AT PASCHA, do not blow all that you have gained in the fast. Even among us, sometimes people make some small steps in the right direction during in the Great Lent, but the majority of us, thinking that the celebration of Pascha consists primarily in partying, very often lose everything within a few minutes after the end of the paschal Midnight Service: eating, drinking, making merry and forgetting all that we have learned in the fast. We are not Puritans, and do not look askance on people enjoying themselves; but there is nothing to be gained by keeping the fast only to binge thereafter. Our Easter celebration, though it should include the physical, should

primarily be a spiritual celebration. Often, as church attendance figures in the weeks after the festival indicate, its celebration seems for many to be a spiritual death rather than resurrection.