

The Shepherd

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FROM THE FATHERS

"ONLY ONCE is forgiveness of sin bestowed by Baptism, yet steadfast and uninterrupted almsgiving bestows upon us again, as in Baptism, the remission of our sins."

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

"IF HE (Jesus Christ) WERE NOT MAN, whom did John baptize? And if He were not God, of whom did the Father from heaven say: This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased (Matt. 3:17)? If He were not man, who fasted and hungered in the desert? And if He were not God, to Whom did the descending Angels minister?"

Venerable Ephraim the Syrian, + 373 A.D.

"WE MUST PROFESS the truth of our Faith in the manner of our own life. For we shall be truly faithful when we fulfil in deed what we profess in word. On the day of our Baptism we promised to renounce all the works and pomps of our ancient enemy. So then, let each one of you turn the eyes of his mind to the examination of himself, and should he find that he observes after his Baptism what he promised before Baptism he may rejoice in the certainty that he believes truly. But if he is far from fulfilling what he promised, if he has fallen back into evil doing, returned to seeking the delights of this world, let us then see whether he knows how to grieve that he has wandered from the right path. For with the Merciful Judge he is not held to be a betrayer who returns to the truth even after he has betrayed it; for the Omnipotent Judge, while He freely accepts our repentance, even in His judgment hides in darkness that we have wandered from the truth" (cf. 1 Cor. 11:31).

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

"REPEAT TO THEM [your children] as often as possible that we are all born and begotten in Baptism, not for this temporal life; not for the sake of obtaining honour, glory and riches in this world; that our very death indicates that we should abide otherwise than forever in this world; but that we are born and begotten for eternal life."

Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, +1783 A.D.

OROS OF THE HOLY GREAT CHURCH OF CHRIST ON THE BAPTISM OF CONVERTS FROM THE WEST 1755/56

MANY ARE THE MEANS by which we attain our salvation. And these, so to speak, in a ladderlike fashion are interlinked and interconnected, all aiming at one and the same end. First of all, then, is the Baptism which God delivered to the sacred

Apostles, such being the case that without it the rest are ineffectual. For it says: "Unless one is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:5). The first manner of generation brought man into this mortal existence. It was therefore imperative, and necessarily so, that another, more mystical manner of generation be found, neither beginning in corruption nor terminating therein, whereby it would be possible for us to imitate the author of our salvation, Jesus Christ. For the baptismal water in the font takes the place of a womb, and there is birth for him who is born, as

Chrysostom says; while the Spirit, Which descends on the water, has the place of God Who fashions the embryo. And just as He was placed in the tomb and on the third day returned to life, so likewise they who believe, going under the water instead of under the earth, in three immersions depict in themselves the grace of the Resurrection on the third day, the water being sanctified by the descent of the All-holy Spirit, so that the body might be illumined by the water which is visible, and the soul might receive sanctification by the Spirit, Which is invisible. For just as water in a cauldron partakes of the heat of the fire, so the water in the font is likewise transmuted, by the action of the Spirit, into Divine power. It cleanses those who are thus baptized and makes them worthy of adoption as sons. Not so, however, with those who are initiated in a different manner. Instead of cleansing and adoption, it renders them impure and sons of darkness.

Just three years ago, the question arose: When heretics come over to us, are their baptisms acceptable, given that they are administered contrary to the tradition of the holy Apostles and divine Fathers, and contrary to the custom and ordinance of the Catholic and Apostolic Church? We, who by divine mercy were raised in the Orthodox Church, and who adhere to the canons of the sacred Apostles and divine Fathers, recognize only one Church, our Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. It is her Mysteries [i.e. sacraments], and consequently her Baptism, that we accept. On the other hand, we abhor, by common resolve, all rites not administered as the Holy Spirit commanded the sacred Apostles, and as the Church of Christ performs to this day. For they are the inventions of corrupt men, and we regard them as strange and foreign to the whole Apostolic tradition. Therefore, we receive those that come over to us from them as unsanctified and unbaptized. In this we follow our Lord Jesus Christ Who commanded His disciples to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19); we follow the sacred and divine Apostles who order us to baptize aspirants with three immersions and emersions, and in each immersion to say one name of the Holy Trinity; we follow the sacred Dionysios, peer of the Apostles, who tells us to "dip the aspirant, stripped of every garment, three times in a font containing sanctified water and oil, having loudly proclaimed the threefold hypostasis of the Divine Blessedness, and straightaway to seal the newly baptized with the most divinely potent myron [i.e. chrism], and thereafter to make him a participant in the super-sacramental Eucharist;" and we follow the Second and Quinisext holy Œcumenical Councils, which order us to receive as unbaptized those aspirants to Orthodoxy who were not baptized with three immersions and emersions, and in each immersions did not loudly invoke one of the divine Hypostases, but were baptized in some other fashion.

We too, therefore, adhere to these divine and sacred decrees, and we reject and abhor baptisms belonging to heretics. For they disagree with, and are foreign to, the divine Apostolic dictate. They are useless waters, as Saints Ambrose and Athanasius the Great said. They give no sanctification to such as receive them, nor avail at all to the washing away of sins. We receive those who come over to the Orthodox Faith, who were baptized without being baptized, as being unbaptized, and without danger we baptize them in accordance with the Apostolic and synodal canons, upon which Christ's holy and Apostolic and Catholic Church, the common Mother of us all, firmly relies.

Together with this joint resolve and declaration of ours, we seal this our Oros [tome], being as it is in agreement with the Apostolic and synodal decrees, and we certify it with our signatures.

In the year of salvation 1755,

Cyril, by God's mercy Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Œcumenical Patriarch

Matthew, by God's mercy Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria, and Judge of the Œcumene

Parthenios, by God's mercy Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and all Palestine.

Note: The Patriarch of Antioch, Sylvester, was not present at the Synod which issued this Oros, but was in agreement with the declaration and expressed his approval.

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

By the Priest N. R. Antonov

Continuation

§ 27. The Artistic Significance and Moral Instruction of the Historic Churches. The principal historic churches of every nation often serve as a first means of assessing the character and the history of the various types of church art. Thereby we can more clearly see and assess both the care which the administration and the populace take with regard to the development of the ecclesiastical arts, and the artistic spirit and creativity of the various church arts: the architects (with regard to the church buildings), the painters (with regard to the iconography) and the spiritual composers (with regard to the chanting).

These [great, historic] churches are actually the original source from which flow artistic taste and expertise to every corner of the kingdom, affecting the hearts of the whole Christian population. The populace and travellers regard with interest and love the exterior and interior lines of the architecture of these main churches, as well as the sacred depictions; they take in the sound and the feel of the compunctionate chanting, and note the solemnity with which the Divine services are performed there

§ 28. The Symbolical Meaning of the various Forms of Christian Church. Over and above the historical causes for the development of the various types of Christian church, each type also has a symbolical significance, referring to some aspect of the invisible sacred side of the

Church or the Christian Faith. Thus, the elongated basilica type church was like a ship, to foster the thought that the world is the sea of life, and the Church is the ship in which, without danger, we can pass over this sea and reach that calm haven, which is the Heavenly Kingdom. The cruciform churches (both the Byzantine and Romanesque ones) manifest that the foundation of the community of Christians was laid by the Cross of Christ. The circular type reminds us that God's Church will exist forever. The dome offers us a visual reminder of Heaven, towards which we must strive noetically, especially at the time of prayer within the church. The crosses on the church remind us that churches are dedicated to the glorification of Jesus Christ, Who was crucified.

§ 29. The Interior Arrangement of Churches. Churches are divided into three parts: 1) The Narthex; 2) The Nave; and 3) The Altar or Sanctuary.

The narthex is the part at the doors. In the early centuries of Christianity, penitents and catechumens (that is, people preparing for Holy Baptism) stood here.

The central part of the church, usually called the nave (referring to the ship) is assigned as the place of prayer for the faithful, that is those who have already received Baptism. There are various features of this part which deserve our attention, the solea, the ambon, the cliros and the iconostasis.

The solea - (from the Greek word solea, and the Latin solium, meaning a seat or a prominence) - is the raised area in front of the iconostasis, which is so arranged so that the liturgical rites will be more visible and more audible to the congregation. In ancient times the solea was very narrow.

The ambon - a semicircular extension of the solea in front of the Royal Gates.* From the ambon the litanies are intoned, the Gospel read and the sermon given.

The cliroses are the lateral ends of the solea, and they are exclusively reserved for the readers and the chanters. *{Fr Antonov rightly designates the proper position for the cliros or choir, but often the choir will be found to chant from a balcony at the back of the church - ed.}* Banners are sometimes attached to the cliros. *[Often the cliros is surrounded, except for an opening for access, by a low waist height wall, to prevent those not supposed to stand there and children from approaching and disturbing the choir members in their ministry. The banners would be attached to these low walls.]*

The partition which separates the Altar from the main body of the church is call the iconostasis or icon screen, and it supports icons which are sometimes mounted in a series of rows. In the Greek and ancient Russian churches they did not have high iconostases. Originally indeed the altar was separated from the central part of the church by a low arcade with a veil. In the course of time, in Russia, the iconostases became higher and higher, and they were then covered with several tiers of rows of icons. On these high iconostases, the icons are arranged in the following order:

In the First Tier, an icon of the Annunciation and ones of the Four Evangelists on the Royal Gates. One the side doors an Archangel or one of the Archdeacons. One each side of the Royal Gates: to the right, the Saviour and then that of the dedication feast or saint of the church, and to the left the Mother of God and a specially revered saint. *[In Russian churches, this is very often St Nicolas the Wonderworker, and in Greek churches more usually St John the Baptist].*

In the second tier, above the Royal Gates one has the Mystical Supper in the centre, with the Twelve Great Feasts each side.

In the third tier, above the Mystical Supper, the Deisis** or Supplication icon, and each side of this icons of the Twelve Apostles.

In the fourth tier, above the Deisis, the Mother of God with the Pre-eternal Child, and on either side of it, the Old Testament Righteous, the holy Prophets and Patriarchs.

In the fifth tier, the Lord of Sabaoth with the New Testament righteous ones on each side.

At the very top of the iconostasis stands the Cross with the Mother of God and Saint John the Theologian on either side of it.

In the iconostasis there are three doorways leading into the altar. The central doors are called the Royal Gates, and the lateral ones, north and south are often referred to as the deacons' doors. The altar itself is usually at the east end of the church to express the thought that those praying are striving towards the "Dayspring [*Dawn or East*] from on High" Which is Christ.

The Altar*** or sanctuary is the most important part of the church, and is reserved only for the clergy and for those persons, who are required there to serve during the Divine services. The altar represents Heaven, the dwelling place of the Lord Himself. In view of the particular sacred significance of the Altar, it must always command a mystical reverence, and when the faithful enter therein they should make prostrations to the ground on the days that these are appointed, or deep bows on other days. The chief features of the altar are the Holy Throne, the Prothesis and the High Place.

Footnotes:

* In ancient Greek and in ancient Russian churches, the word ambon was applied to a structure somewhat like the dais which is now put out for hierarchal services and is called the cathedra. It was found in the central part of the church and was sometimes alongside the wall. Often there were two, constructed of carved marble, and decorated with sculpture or mosaics. It appears that the present day ambon has no links with this earlier type. The earlier ones were used as places to preach from and often a lectern was placed there. [*In many churches to this day, when a deacon reads the Gospel during the Liturgy, he stands in the centre of the church, but particularly in Russian usage churches he stands immediately before the Royal Gates. His standing in the centre of the church harks back to the ancient use of the central ambon.*]

** The Deisis is an icon of the Saviour flanked by the Mother of God and St John the Baptist, and sometimes other saints. The saints on either side of the Lord are depicted as making supplication to Him.

*** The word Altar derives from the Latin words "Altus" (high) and "Ara" (a place of sacrifice).

To be continued with "The Holy Throne and its Appurtenances"

CHRIST is baptized:
He cometh up out of the waters,
and with Him He carrieth up the world.
He seeth the heavens opened
that Adam closed against himself and his posterity.
The Spirit beareth witness to His Divinity,
for He hasteneth towards His Like;
And a Voice from heaven,
for it is from heaven that He hath come down
to Whom this testimony is given,
and He is the Saviour of our souls.

From the Liti of the Vigil Service of the Great Feast of Theophany

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF FATHER GEORGE CHEREMETIEFF

Thoughts on a journey
Continuation from last issue

3. The Christians - The Spiritual Israel

Now let us consider: could it be that the Jewish scribes and Pharisees were not able to recognize Christ the Messiah? Definitely we can say that this would have been an impossibility. I shall be even more daring and assert that they recognized Him but did not wish to accept Him. I am saying this only about the main clique of the scribes and Pharisees, but not about all the people. Of these, Christ said: "They know not what they do." And even among the Pharisees there were individual people, like Gamaliel, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who did recognize Christ and did not deny Him. I repeat: it was impossible that the scribes and Pharisees did not know, for the coming of Christ, His life on earth, His sufferings, His death on the Cross and His resurrection were all foretold in detail in the Prophets and in the psalms of King David. And they knew these books extremely well.

It is not possible to cite all the prophesies here; there are too many of them. We will mention but a few: *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive in the womb and bring forth a Son*" (Es. 7:14). *"And thou, Bethlehem Ephratha, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto Me Him that is to be the Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth have been from the beginning, from days everlasting"* (Michaeas 5:2). *"He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely he had borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened He not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off from the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. They appointed Him a grave among the malefactors, but He was buried with the rich man, because He had done no sin, neither was there any falsehood in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to suffering, and when His soul offered the sacrifice of propitiation, He shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand. He shall look upon the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: through His knowledge shall He, the Righteous One, My Servant, justify many"* (Es. 53:3-11). *"Rejoice from joy, O daughter of Sion, keep festival, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and saveth; lowly, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass"* (Zach. 9:9). *"For many dogs have encircled Me, the congregation of evil doers hath surrounded Me; they have pierced My*

hands and My feet... they themselves have looked and stared upon Me. They have parted My garments amongst themselves, and for My vesture have they cast lots" (Ps. 21:16, 17-18). "So they weighed My price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me: Cast them into the treasury of the Temple - a high price that I was prised at of them!" (Zach. 11:12-13).

Now let us consider whether the Lord made His promises only to the Jewish peoples. As we have already noted here, it was not a large portion of the Jewish people that remained faithful, that revered the True God and Jesus Christ, Whom He had sent, and did not deny Him. But the majority of these people fell away and were not faithful: *"I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his Master's crib. But Israel doth not know; My people doth not consider. Alas, sinful people, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, sons that are perishing! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are gone away backward" (Es. 1:2-4).*

The vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant planting. And He looked for right judgment, but behold the shedding of blood; He looked for righteousness, but behold a cry" (Es. 5:7). "For thou art not sent to a people of strange speech and of an unintelligible language, but to the house of Israel; ... surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee, but the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto Me, for all the house of Israel are of a hard forehead and stubborn of heart" (Ezek. 3:5-7). All the same, the prophets speak all the time about the promises "to Israel" Are the Jewish people this Israel, or should we understand all the believers throughout the whole world under this name? I am sure it is the latter.

On what can we base this conclusion? Let us see what the holy Apostle Paul writes about it; he was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, who had been raised at the feet of the Rabbi Gamaliel. *"Israelites, to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Divine service, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is God over all, blessed unto the ages. Amen" (Rom. 9:4-5). But it is not as if the word of God was not fulfilled. For not all those who are from Israel are Israelites, just as not all are children of Abraham who are of his seed; rather "in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12). That is, "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:8). It is us, whom He has called, not only from among the Jews, but also from among the nations. *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant shall be saved" (Es. 10:22, Rom. 9:27).**

What can we say then? The nations, who had not been seeking for righteousness, received righteousness through faith, but Israel, which was seeking the law of righteousness, did not achieve this law of righteousness. Why? Because they sought not in faith, but through the acts of the law; thus they fell on the stone of stumbling. Thus it is written: *"Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (Es. 28:16; Rom. 9:23). The Israelites, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the*

righteousness of God, for the end of the law is Christ, unto righteousness for everyone that believeth" (Rom. 10:3-4).

To be continued....

THE COMING MONTH

EASTER can never fall later than 25th April, and this year it falls on 22nd according to the Church Calendar. So it falls very late, almost as late as it can. Before the festival itself, we have the period of the Lenten Triodion, which lasts seventy days and comprises a three-part preparation for Pascha. Usually this period of preparation begins soon after the Great Feast of the Theophany or at least within January. But, as Easter is so late in 2002, the Lenten Triodion does not begin until almost halfway through February on Sunday 11th (24th).

This means that in January we only have services according to the Menaion and the Octoechos. The Menaion is a twelve volume set of service books, which provide services for every day of the year. Each volume covers a month, and hence the name: Menaion. The Octoechos provides services for each of the seven days of the week eight times over, one for each of the tones used in chanting.

The month begins (1st January) with the feast of the Lord's Circumcision - it being the eighth day after His Nativity, - and this coincides with the commemoration of Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and so on this day we celebrate St Basil's Liturgy. We then begin the celebration of the Theophany, starting on the 2nd with the forefeast.

The Theophany itself is celebrated on 6th January and is pre-eminently the festival of the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan. For that reason, we have included quotes from the Fathers which touch upon various aspects of Baptism and a "lead article" regarding the Church's teaching on Baptism this month.

On the eve of the festival we have one of the longest services of the Church Year. As at Christmas, we read and chant the Royal Hours. As with the normal Hours, read every day of the year, there are four of these: the First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours, sometimes known by their Latin names; Prime, Terce, Sext and Nones. However, in the Royal Hours, several of the hymns are chanted rather than being read, and in each Hour there is an appointed Old Testament reading, Epistle reading and Gospel reading. For this reason, during the Royal Hours, the Book of the Gospels is placed on a lectern in the centre of the Church, and the clergy stand throughout the service before this written icon of the Saviour, God the Word. During each of these Hours there is also a censuring. At the end of them, the Typica is read. Then we begin Vespers for the feast. It too is extraordinary in that the entrance is made with the Gospel Book rather than with the censer, and after the prokeimenon there are thirteen Old Testament readings, foretelling the Baptism of Christ and its significance. Only at Pascha is this number of Old Testament readings appointed for a Vespers service exceeded. At Pascha there are fifteen. After the third and sixth Old Testament readings, festal hymns are interpolated, and after all the readings we have the Trisagion, an Epistle and a Gospel reading. We then complete the service as the Liturgy of St Basil the Great.

At the end of this Liturgy, we celebrate the Great Blessing of Waters. The waters in this instance are blessed in a font or vessel in the church, so that the faithful can take the holy water for sprinkling their homes, and for drinking or blessing themselves therewith throughout the year. Theophany Water should always be sipped only when one has fasted completely from midnight. We keep a similar fast, of course, before partaking of the Body and Blood of our Saviour in the Holy Eucharist, and thus we show due reverence to the two greatest sacraments of our Church.

There is a second Blessing of the Waters after the Liturgy on the day of the festival, but properly this is performed outside at a special font, at a spring, river, lake, or in the sea. Where possible a procession is made with banners and icons from the church to the place where the waters are to be blessed. Popularly this second blessing is therefore known as the Procession to Jordan.

[Because of the shortage of clergy, and the need to serve at the Convent, we are unable to have the Theophany eve blessing at Brookwood, and so we perform the rite again during the Vigil service, so that the faithful here will also have an opportunity to obtain a supply of holy water for the year. As usual we hope to make the procession to Jordan by a car convoy (!) to the site of the seventh century monastery at Chertsey which was founded by St Erkonwald and which was glorified in the tenth century by the martyrdom of its monks by the Vikings.]

In Orthodox countries, after the blessing of the Waters, the priest takes a vessel of the Theophany Water and, to the chanting of the troparion of the feast, he visits all the homes of the faithful and blesses them. In the diaspora, where people in a parish live many miles apart, this is usually impossible, but those of the faithful who desire a blessing for their home have the priest visit them in the days after the feast, serve a short moleben and sprinkle the house as a cleansing and blessing. In our churches, as in many others, we put a list at the back of the church so that parishioners can indicate when it would be convenient for their homes to be blessed.

Among the saints, we have:

Saint Efstathius of Serbia (4th/17th) was born in A.D. 1230 in Montenegro. He was brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and his education was entrusted to the local priest. Resolving to take up the monastic life, he left home at the age of fourteen and joined the sacred monastery of the Archangel Michael in Prevlac. There he laboured well in asceticism. At the age of 20, he made a pilgrimage to the Holy City of Jerusalem, where he visited the ascetics living in the desert. On his return to Europe, he went to the Holy Mountain and joined the brotherhood of the renowned Serbian Monastery of Hilandar. After several years, seeing his virtue the fathers there elected him as their Abbot. He became renowned as a spiritual counsellor, and for this reason was elected in the year 1270 to be Bishop of Zeta in his native land. Eight years later, on the death of Archbishop Ioannikios, he was elevated to be the Archbishop of Serbia. Now raised to the height of the episcopacy, he nonetheless lived the same austere ascetic life that he had adopted in his early youth. Towards the end of his life he became gravely ill, and the other hierarchs, his monastic brethren and many clergy and lay people gathered to mourn the imminent loss of their Archpastor. The Saint would have none of this, and rose from his bed, repeating the words: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together!" He imparted to them the Holy

Mysteries and gave them his final blessing. Then blessing the Lord, he peacefully gave up his soul on 4th January, 1286, at the age of 56. A sweet fragrance encompassed the funeral procession, and many miracles and cures were worked at his tomb. After some time beautiful flowers miraculously grew out of the marble slab above his head. This and other signs persuaded the faithful to take up his sacred relics, which we found to be totally incorrupt. They were placed in the main church in the monastery at Zhicha. At Brookwood, we have received the blessing of having a small portion of those sacred relics.

Our Venerable Father Paul of Obnora (10th/23rd) was born in Moscow in 1317, and from his earliest years he was distinguished by his love of the church services and his kindness towards the needy. When he was 22, his parents wanted him to marry, but he desired to live a celibate life, and so secretly left home and joined a monastery dedicated to the Nativity that was situated on the banks of the Volga. Here he was tonsured a monk and lived a very strict ascetical life. Later he transferred to the famed monastery of St Sergius at Radonezh, where he became a close disciple of St Sergius, living in the closest obedience to his Elder and thus deriving spiritual profit from the God-bearing Father. He learned to renounce his own will in everything, and when he had made spiritual progress he was blessed by St Sergius to take up the harder struggle of living the eremitical life. He lived thus in seclusion, still under the guidance of St Sergius for fifteen years. He asked St Sergius if he could go further from the monastery so that he might live in even greater solitude, and the Saint blessed him, giving him a copper cross. After a long search he found a suitable place for his hermitage in the forests of Komel, near Vologda, where he lived for three years in a hollow lime tree. Then he transferred to the River Nurma's banks, where he built a little cell hardly bigger than his hollow tree. He also dug a well there. He abstained from all food for the five weekdays and only took a little bread and water on Saturdays and Sundays. Wishing to live under his spiritual direction, disciples began to gather, and with the blessing of Metropolitan Photius, he founded a monastery there with a church dedicated to the Most Holy Trinity. At this time Saint Paul was already 72 years of age, and so he entrusted the direction of the monastery to his disciple, Alexander, and himself went to live as a hermit on a nearby hillside, coming to the monastery to be with his monks only on Saturdays and Sundays. He lived to the age of 112, and ended his earthly course in 1429. His incorrupt relics were discovered in 1546, and the following year he was glorified by the Church.

Saint Paulinus of Nola, the Merciful (23rd January/5th February) was born in Bordeaux in France of a noble, patrician family. He received an excellent education and served as a senator. When he was twenty-five years of age, he was brought to the Christian faith by his wife, and thereafter he distributed his wealth to the poor and needy, and having no children of their own, he and his wife adopted orphans and educated them bringing them up in the fear of the Lord. Conceiving a desire to live a solitary life, Saint Paulinus later withdrew and settled in Spain, near Barcelona. He took up the ascetical life, but his renown was such that he was chosen by the citizens of Barcelona to be their priest and he was ordained in 393 A.D. Probably trying to escape the distractions of this life, he later left from there and settled in Nola in the Italian region of Campania, but here he was consecrated as Bishop. As a hierarch, he was distinguished, as he had always been, by his care for the poor. One incident has come

down to us. The barbarian Vandals invaded that region and took many people into slavery. St Paulinus used the monies of the Church to ransom many of these captives. When those monies were exhausted, he heard that the only son of a poor widow had been enslaved and he had no funds to redeem him. He donned lay clothes and travelled to Africa seeking the boy's master, and agreed with him to serve in the boy's place as a slave that the boy might return and support his mother. Eventually what he had done became known and the people of Nola raised funds enough to redeem him and bring him back to their city as their Bishop. Besides his acts of mercy, from which he derives his title, he was also known as a composer of hymns. He died on 22nd June in the year 431. His relics were subsequently taken to Rome.

The Venerable Martyr Sigebert (25th January/7th February) lived in the seventh century. He was of the royal house of the East Saxons (Essex). It may have been that for a period in his youth he ruled part of the kingdom, but in the disturbances that characterised those times, he was forced into exile. There he was converted to Christianity and when he was restored to his kingdom, he made every effort to bring his people to his new-found Faith. He assisted St Felix the bishop in his mission, and he was instrumental in bringing St Cedd to Essex to further the mission. Having seen peace restored to the area, and the foundations of the Christian mission securely laid there, he resolved to abdicate, handing on the reins of government to his cousin, Swithelm, and take up the monastic life. Shortly after this, the kingdom was invaded by forces under the pagan king of Mercia, Penda. The people of Essex demanded that their well-beloved king be with them when they met the pagan forces in battle. He consented so that they might receive a blessing and encouragement, but having taken up the monastic life, he refused to carry arms, taking only a staff with him. He was slain on the field of battle and is counted among the holy martyrs. He is sometimes called Sigebert the Good.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

"In previous years you have noted that from September onwards the order of reading the Gospels differs in the Russian practice from that among the other Orthodox. This year I notice that they are generally the same, but a few are different. Is there a reason for this?" A.P., Loughborough.

INDEED, there is. In all Orthodox churches, the cycle of Gospel readings begins with the reading of St John's Gospel, chapter one, verses one to seventeen, at the Paschal Liturgy on Easter night. Thus we make the fundamental proclamation of our Faith, that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, the starting point of our series of lections. Throughout the fifty days of the Pentecost, ending on Trinity-Pentecost Sunday, we read sections from St John's Gospel. On the Day of the Holy Spirit, we begin reading through Saint Matthew's Gospel, and so enter what is sometimes called the Period of St Matthew. It is with the ending of this Period that the first of two differences between the Russian practice and that of the other Orthodox occurs. The Russians read through the Gospel of Matthew until they finish its series of lections, before going on to the Period of St Luke. If, because Easter is early, they finish up the Gospel of St Matthew before the Exaltation, they interpolate readings from St Mark's Gospel. The others always begin the Period of St Luke on the Monday after the Sunday after the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (14th September). Thus among the others, the beginning of the period of St Luke is fixed, whereas in the

Russian practice it is variable. This means that the two systems might happen to coincide as they did this year, or they might differ by a week or more.

But there is a second difference between the two usages. That is, that among the 'others' there are about six Sunday Gospel readings which are specially appointed to be read on particular Sundays, and so if they do not happen to fall naturally on those appointed Sundays they are shifted to do so. The Russians do not have this practice. So there are two variables between the two usages.

NEWS SECTION

Patriarch Eirenaios' Work Hindered

THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S refusal to recognize the newly elected Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem Eirenaios is, according to reports, hindering the work of the Patriarchate. The Israelis suspect the Patriarch of being pro-Palestinian and no Israeli representatives attended his inauguration ceremonies in September. The Patriarch has replied: "I am not pro-Palestinian, nor pro-Israeli, nor pro-anything. I am only pro-God." He also challenged the idea that the majority of his followers were Palestinian, pointing out that he was the spiritual leader "not only of Arabs, but of Romanians, Greeks and a number of non-Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, who could number in the hundreds of thousands." Since his elevation to the Patriarchal Throne, an Arabic translation of the life of his name Saint, the holy Hieromartyr Irenaeus of Lyons, has been published in his honour. The publication bears a picture of the new Patriarch and an icon of St Irenaeus.

Patriarch Appears in TV Commercial

Patriarch Aleksii II of Moscow appeared in a TV commercial promoting Russia's leading oil company, LUKoil on 19th November. The Patriarch was shown with officials of the company standing outside a church. He was then shown close-up in front of an iconostasis, where instead of preaching the word of God, he stated: "We are grateful to LUKoil for its support of many Russian Orthodox Church projects aimed at restoring and reviving what was destroyed in the past - in the years of the struggle against God, the years when our historical memory was being destroyed." Then in large letters the legend covered the screen: "Ten years of LUKoil. For the good of Russia." This extraordinary event was widely criticised but was excused by officials of the Patriarchal administration as being the "natural" way to thank the company for its aid to the Church. There are very few clouds without a silver lining, and perhaps we should take some comfort in the fact that His Holiness has so publicly repudiated the Soviet past. (Source ENI Bulletin 01-0384).

Embryo Cloning Condemned

HAPPIER NEWS from Moscow is that the Patriarchate has condemned the practice of embryo cloning. In an unambiguous statement of Orthodox teaching, a spokesman for the Church, Father Antony Ilyin said the "the destruction of embryos is tantamount to abortion, and that means murder" The Church condemned both therapeutic and reproductive cloning and is considering the excommunication of those believers who participate in such techniques.

On 26th November the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece also issued a statement expressing sensitivity regarding the need to protect the eternal moral and spiritual values.

CHURCH ARSONED IN MACEDONIA

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH celebrates one of the feasts of the Great Martyr George on 9th December (26th November on the Church Calendar), and on the eve of this feast, Saturday 8th December, the ancient Monastery of St George in Golema Rechica, Macedonia, was the subject of an arson attack. It is believed that Albanian terrorists were responsible for the desecration, and when police were attempting to investigate the outrage, they were prevented from doing so because snipers were firing shots across the site of the monastery. The monastery which dates back to at least the thirteenth century contained frescoes dating from the fourteenth century and many other priceless artefacts. Nobody knows whether anything was stolen before the church was set on fire. It is believed that the attack was purposely timed to coincide with the saint's feast day, and a local Christian spokesman said that even during the days of the Turkish Yoke, the area had not been so consistently subjected to anti-Christians attacks.

PRESIDENT PUTIN'S CONTACT WITH ROCA HIERARCH

SEVERAL REPORTS have circulated that while visiting America President Vladimir Putin invited the hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad to Russia, that conversations might be inaugurated aiming at the union of the Moscow Patriarchate with the Church Abroad. As might have been expected, these reports have spawned a great deal of speculation and controversy. In response to this, the Secretary of the ROCA Synod of Bishops, His Grace Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan, issued the following statement on 17th/30th November: "The newly-elected First Hierarchy of ROCOR, His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, received an invitation to the reception held at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Washington, by the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, on the occasion of his visit to the United States. Metropolitan Laurus, for reasons beyond his control, was not able to attend, but sent me to represent him. At the reception, in front of some 250 guests, the President of the Russian Federation spoke for about twenty minutes. After this, certain specially chosen guests, perhaps forty in all, were invited to a different reception room where they could be received by the President personally. I was among these guests. It should be noted that there were no clergy or other representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate present at this reception. When my turn came up, after mutual greetings, President Putin asked me to relay his congratulations and greetings to the newly-elected First Hierarchy, Metropolitan Laurus. I promised to relay these greetings to Vladyka Laurus, and, in turn, invited the President of Russia to visit our parishes in America, and, especially, Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville. The President thanked me for the invitation and invited me to make a visit to Moscow as well. At this, the meeting with the President, which lasted not forty minutes, as some reports have it, but some forty seconds, concluded."

TWIN TOWERS ATTACK AND THE ORTHODOX RESPONSE

FOR THE COMFORT of the grieving, on 12th October, one month after the terrorist attack, Metropolitan Pavlos of Astoria (Greek Old Calendarist Hierarchy) led a procession with the Sacred Relics of the holy New Martyr Argyrios of Thessalonica to the ruins of the World Trade Centre. Bishop Agathangel of Simferopol (ROCA) carried an icon of the Protection of the Mother of God, the eve of whose feast it was. Father

Wsewolod Dutikow, the priest of the Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church in Astoria, also participated and bore the Sacred Relics. Near the site of the tragedy, the Metropolitan performed the Lesser Blessing of Waters, and blessed with the holy water, before addressing the faithful who had assembled for the ceremony.

A Greek Orthodox layman, living in NYC, Michael Feranti, was a witness of the Twin Towers attack, and among the rumble of the destruction, he has placed a collection of paper icons with lamps near the place where the Orthodox Church of St Nicolas once stood. He also distributes paper icons to those who wish to take them as a consolation and takes the opportunity to tell passers-by about his Orthodox Faith.

Archbishop Demetrios, the Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (Ec. Pat) met with Governor George Pataki on

19th November to discuss the rebuilding of St Nicolas Church. It was the only religious building directly effected by the attack and the Archbishop emphasized that because of the number of contributions already received there would be no problem with the funding. He wanted the rebuilt church not only to serve as a parish church, but as a "worship space for prayer and as a memorial." Gov. Pataki said that "We can never forget that at this site almost 5,000 people lost their lives and we can never forget that important relics were lost at the site of St Nicolas. We have to incorporate all these concerns in the redevelopment." He assured Archbishop Demetrios that he "would be part of the rebuilding process."

TEMPLE MOUNT CEREMONY FORBIDDEN

THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE in Jerusalem, on 6th December, forbade the "Temple Mount Faithful" to perform a cornerstone laying ceremony for a Third Temple on the site of the ancient Temple of Solomon. The Court accepted the concern expressed by the police that such a ceremony, inaugurating a third Jewish Temple there, would ignite violent disturbances, which might well spread beyond the Temple Mount area.

PRAYER CARDS

THE SISTERS of the Convent of the Annunciation, Willesden, have recently published prayer cards with a Greek rendering of the Prayer of the Optina Elders, with artwork similar to that on the English version, done by Grace Meeking. The cards were printed by Greenprint & Design of Brookwood. An Arabic version of the Prayer has also been made by a Palestinian Christian, and is reported to be circulating widely among both Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land and in Jordan in photocopied form.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

BROTHERHOOD NEW HOUSE: Three weeks after a visit from the Senior Planning Officer at the Woking Borough Council Offices, who is handling our application, we received a letter more of less advising us to withdraw our application, and this after fifteen months of their gently encouraging us. To say the least, it came as rather a surprise. However, we have since met with our borough Councillor, Mark Pritchard, and our county councillor, Elizabeth Compton, both of whom can see the need for the development and are supportive of our efforts. On 14th January, with our architect, parishioner Irina Hoble, through the good offices of Mark Pritchard, we are due to meet the Chief Planning Officer for the borough. We ask the prayers of the faithful that this meeting might be beneficial, and more generally that whatever the outcome of the application, things may come about to the greatest spiritual benefit.

ORTHODOX AID FUND: In 2001, we made donations from this fund to various church and humanitarian charities totalling £3,314.69 and \$US1009.50. We thank all

our readers and supporters whose donations throughout the year have made this possible. May we take the opportunity of mentioning that donations for this fund should be made payable to Saint Edward Brotherhood, We do not have a separate bank account for it, but simply make ledger entries of all donations into the

Fund and of all payments to various charities that we make from it. Financially our own community does not benefit from this Fund at all. All monies are given to other charities and good causes.

SUE "THE VAGRANT:" About the time that we went to press with our last issue, Sue was hit by a car on Cemetery Pales. The accident happened at night near the turn-in to the Brotherhood. Those who worship at St Edward's or visit us will know Sue, as for periods, sometimes long and sometimes short, she lives in a disused shed on the far side of the cemetery, but would often come over to the Brotherhood to sit in the garden, play with the animals, attend church, water the flowers, or just for food. Her injuries were serious and she was kept in intensive care units at Guildford and Epsom hospitals for about three weeks. She is now beginning to make a recovery, and is currently in Bramshott Ward of the Royal Surrey County Hospital at Guildford. Please keep her in your prayers.

PRACTICAL TIP

WHEN YOU INVITE the priest to bless your home at Theophany, try to arrange a time when all the family can participate. Remember it is a prayer service and therefore an extension of the service in church, and that everyone should be dressed appropriately. This does not mean you have to be dressed up for the occasion – better a prayerful disposition of soul than a well turned out body! - but your attire should be modest and your behaviour reverent. Have a small table covered with a white cloth placed in front of the icon corner where you say family prayers, with a bowl for the holy water and a lighted candle or vigil lamp. Usually the priest will bring the things that he needs for the blessing, but you may light a hand censer there if you have one. Have the troparion of the feast ready so that you can chant it as he sprinkles the house, and as he does so have one member of the family lead him around the various rooms, outhouses and garden before returning to the icon corner to complete the short service.