

The Shepherd

An Orthodox Christian Pastoral Magazine

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FROM THE FATHERS

"EVERY MAN who belongs to God and Jesus Christ stands by his bishop. As for the rest, if they repent and come back to the unity of the Church, they too shall belong to God, and so bring their lives into conformity with Jesus Christ. But make no mistake, my brothers; the adherents of a schismatic can never inherit the kingdom of God. Those who wander in outlandish by-ways of doctrine must forfeit all part in the Lord's Passion. Make certain, therefore, that you all observe one common Eucharist, for there is but one Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and but one cup of His Blood, and one single sacrificial altar, even as also there is but one bishop with his clergy and my own fellow-servitors, the deacons. This will ensure that all your doings are in full accord with the will of God."

Holy Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer of Antioch, + c. 110 A.D.

"IT IS NECESSARY to obey those who are the presbyters in the Church, those who, as we have shown, have succession from the Apostles, those who have received, with the succession of the episcopate, the sure charism of truth according to the good pleasure of the Father. But the rest, who have no part in the primitive succession and assemble wheresoever they will, must be held in suspicion."

Holy Hieromartyr Irenaeus of Lyons, + c. 202 A.D.

THE MYSTERY OF THE LITURGY

1. THE PROSKOMIDI AND THE LITURGY OF THE CATECHUMENS

GRIEF

TO UNDERSTAND the Liturgy is to understand the grief of God for the world. God rejoiced in creating the world, but the Lord was grieved by the fall of His friend, man, to whom He had given the world. And although the Lord condemned man and the whole world to suffering, at the same time He granted him salvation, for the Lord at the same time suffered with the world and with man. From this moment on, the joy of God for the whole world is realised through the saving suffering of God for the world and for man. This grief caused God to descend to earth, and then to be raised upon the Cross. The Cross is the expression of the suffering of grief, and also of the joy of salvation. Man is also called to walk on the Divine way, through sorrow towards joy.

Without sorrows there is no salvation. Why should one be saved if there is nothing which causes one suffering? Only one who suffers seeks salvation through the suffering. The grief of God is not for Himself, but for His friend, man. So the grief of man must in like manner be for his neighbour, that is to say, it must not depend on sorrow for himself, which is personal and not pleasing to God, unless it be a regret for his sins, a sorrowful repentance.

How can you not, O man, feel grief when God is grieved? Unite yourself in your heart with God's grief, and then you will also rejoice with God. You should not have within you personal grief, but instead the grief of God for the fallen world, and this grief will unite the world with God. But if one day not a single man can be found who grieves with the grief of God, then the world will be again estranged from God, for the thread of grief uniting man to God will be broken, as will happen at the end of the world, for grief rests on faith, and faith in the sacrifice will then fail.

And so the Son of man offers Himself in sacrifice for the world, and you, you will participate by your compassionate suffering. God will have mercy upon you, and you will share in His grief. It is on this that there hangs the chain of the centuries. And you are an indispensable link in this chain, for on you hang all the others. At the time when God was born on earth. He included His name in the census of the names of men. That was the proud chain of the master of the world, Caesar. Rome wished to affirm her power on earth by means of this census. But it made a mistake. There was only one name written in this chain which was not of this world - Jesus - and the chain broke, and the Roman Empire collapsed.

At the death of the God-man on earth, another chain of names began, the chain of the names of those who suffered with Christ. The first who had the right to be included was the repentant thief, who was honoured by undergoing the same death as Christ on the Cross. We are not all worthy to go by the true Golgotha, but we are all called to suffer with the same suffering as Christ on Golgotha for the entire world. And this suffering will then enable us to be included in the chain of salvation, the names of which are inscribed in heaven.

In this way the path to the joy of salvation through grief is open. This joy is not of this world, because this grief is also not of this world. This joy is perfect, for it is purified of the impurities of this world through grief. So joy and Christian grief are two sides of the same coin, the coin which gives the right of entry into the heavenly Kingdom. That is why grief without joy is not good, nor is joy without grief Christian. That is why it is said, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in Him with trembling," and again, "Grant me, O Lord, the joy to fear Thy name."

The Liturgy is the union of extreme grief and extreme joy, for it is the complete repetition, or more exactly, the expression of the life of Christ, of His sacrifice, not only on Golgotha, but at every moment of His life. For from the moment that He took on flesh, the Son of man gave Himself as a sacrifice by humbling Himself, by taking on the weaknesses of the flesh. The All-Powerful submitted Himself to the conditions of human existence. In the desert, the devil presented Him with the first temptation: "Make these stones bread. Why suffer hunger if you can do otherwise? Why suffer? Why exhaust yourself? Why die?" This temptation would have undermined the very aim of His incarnation. He had come to bear our weaknesses on His powerful shoulders, and to die to take away the "dues" of death. "Get thee hence, Satan" (Matt. 4:10), "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," Who makes the weak strong and the dead to live.

From then on there began this Divine life in a human body, and the holy service of the Liturgy commenced. It is accomplished by Christ Himself since it is His life which cannot be concealed, but is fulfilled by the hand of the priest, feeble in its humanity

but clothed with strength from the Power on high. Which can change the bread into Flesh and wine into Blood, not only water into wine.

The priest of God holds the bread and takes from it the heart, that is the Lamb of God, born in a human body [*this refers to the taking of a central square of bread from the prosphora in the proskomidi; it is laid on the paten and called the Lamb - it is the portion which later in the Liturgy is consecrated - ed.*]. It is placed on the paten, which symbolises at the same time the cave of the Nativity and the cave of the Tomb. Why at the same time? Because the whole Liturgy is one unique act, outside time. It is the reconstitution in one moment of the whole life of sacrifice of God on earth. The life of God cannot be represented in chronological order. God being eternal, the Liturgy is so also. When His life had finished on earth, it continued and continues in Heaven, not just in the form of a sacred Act, but in the form of the life of Christ realised in each of the inhabitants of the new earth and the new heaven.

Thus the Lamb of God, Who has taken on Himself the sins of the whole world, is laid on the paten, and near Him are placed the particles taken from the prosphoras for the health and repose of souls. All the Church is there. Near their Head, Christ, the angels triumph with men, just as before round the cradle of the Infant God. And the star, in the form of the "star-cover" [asterisk], brings together above the Saviour of the world the shining rays of all the luminaries of the heavens.

Now the centre is there, the point of convergence of the whole world, beside the altar-cradle on which the God-man rests. All those for whom prosphoras were sent up and for whom particles were taken out receive that salvific strength which renews the soul, heals maladies, lessens sorrows and satisfies every necessity. The Lamb is sacrificed, the feast is open to all, for those who are called and those who are not called, the good and the bad. Only one condition must be fulfilled - one must be clad in a wedding garment.

But the feast is only just beginning, it is still only the Proskomidi. This moment corresponds to the period of Christ's life on earth when He remained hidden from the world until the age of thirty years. Only a few people understood this mystery and awaited its revelation with trembling. And so for us in the church the curtain is drawn during the Prothesis. The Hours are read, that is some Old Testament psalms and a few prayers from the New Testament.

JOY

But now the mystery is revealed. The Liturgy begins, all become attentive. Soon Christ Himself will appear. Hardly have the prayers of the Old Testament psalms ended than the joyful song of the triumphant Church resounds, "O only-begotten Son and Word of God, Thou Who art immortal, and didst deign for our salvation to become incarnate of the holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, without change becoming man, and Who was crucified, O Christ God, trampling down death by death: Thou Who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, save us." This chant, composed by the Emperor Justinian, is sung by the Church in triumph, victoriously, welcoming her King Christ, Who is coming to preach to us. The Royal doors are opened for the entrance of the King, and Christ Himself appears in the person of the priest, preceded by a candle representing St John the Forerunner. "Behold the Lamb of God," Who brings you the joyous news, the Gospel, and gently, as

if from afar, there comes to the ears of the faithful this truly radiant news: "Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed are they that mourn..., [Blessed are they that weep...,] they that hunger..., they that are persecuted...,for your reward in great in the Heavens."

Having heard this sweet and radiant sermon of Christ's, the people exclaim without restraint, "Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, O Son of God, save us who chant to Thee: Alleluia." Then follow a series of hymns containing New Testament materials, which are sung to the memory and glory of the saints already saved by Christ. They have already proved to be living examples of His sermon. His work has already borne fruit. Mankind has truly achieved salvation. All those present in church await their salvation likewise. With this hope, there quite naturally comes the desire to sing the praises and glory of the Holy Trinity, the author of our salvation. The people then begin to chant the Trisagion:"Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us." Meanwhile, the clergy having returned to the sanctuary, [ascend to the High Place] saying, "Blessed art Thou on the throne of the glory of Thy kingdom. Thou that sittest upon the cherubim." And so the Holy Trinity is glorified and then begin the readings of the Epistles and the Gospel.

THE WORD

The Son of God Who is eternally in the bosom of the Father became the incarnate Word on earth. The Liturgy expresses every phase of the divine Incarnation. Men can only perceive it by comprehending the Truth revealed by the Word of God, pronounced by human mouths. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God. "How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). The Word of God must be announced during every Liturgy. The preaching presents the prophets, the Apostles and Christ Himself. This is why the epistles are read first, because the Gospel is the sun, and the epistles of the Apostles the rays of this sun. At first we see the rays of the sun, and then if our spiritual eye is strengthened, it is possible to see the sun itself. But the Epistles themselves are quite naturally preceded by the preaching of the Old Testament in the form of the prokeimenon. Primarily excerpts are taken which foretell the Incarnation or glorify Divine Providence for the world. Only on Wednesdays is the prokeimenon taken from the New Testament, namely the Hymn of the Mother of God,"My soul doth magnify the Lord." This is perhaps because the Old Testament is linked with the New through the Mother of God. By this, the Mother of God is distinguished from the whole human race, for every Wednesday is consecrated to the sufferings of Christ, which began with the betrayal by Judas on a Wednesday. Unlike all the others who had been close to Him but abandoned the Lord then, the Mother of God did not leave Him, no matter how hard this was for her.

At last comes the third phase of the preaching, as the words of God Incarnate Himself resound. The faithful lower their heads as a sign of continuous attention. How can one not be attentive when God Himself speaks to us in human language? Those present are thus called by the cry of the deacon: "Wisdom. Upright. Let us hear the holy Gospel." Wisdom Incarnate in person is about to speak to you, opening His mysteries to the intelligence and the heart of man. "As heaven is far from the earth, so are My thoughts from your thoughts." So attend, because even with the total

concentration of your intelligence you will not reach Me, but I, Wisdom, will Myself place My revelation in your souls.

As a sign that the expected relationship between the hearer and Christ has been established, the priest exclaims, "Peace be unto all." "Not as the world giveth, give I this peace." How then? This peace is the reconciliation between God and man; this peace descends from above. The entire Liturgy is based on this peace, and this is expressed in words many times over as it unfolds.

The epistles and the Gospel are pronounced triumphantly, usually with a progressive raising of the vocal pitch, since one must attain the greatest expression so as to awaken the greatest attention and engrave every word in the heart. The deepening of the words activates the spirit more and more, for every word of the Gospel is spirit and life. The multiplicity of the words produces a concentration of the strength and an elevation of the spirit.

...to be completed in the next issue, beginning with "Love."

This article, by Archimandrite Athanasy, was translated from "The Mystery of the Liturgy" (in Russian), translated into French by N. Tikhomirova, & into English, with slight omissions & revisions, by Mother Pelagia of the Lesna Icon Convent, Provemont, Normandy, France.

Adapted from

"THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THE CHURCH SERVICES"

By the Priest N. R. Antonov

Continuation

§ 44. The Sacred Vestments. During the celebration of the church services, the ministers are clothed in sacred vestments, which correspond to the three degrees of the church hierarchy, and thus are distinguished as diaconal, priestly and hierarchal. The use of vestments for the services is founded upon the Old Testament example of the High Priest and the priests, who vested in special clothes for the celebration of their rites.

The deacon's vestments are the following: 1) the sticharion, which is usually made from a bright material to indicate the purity of life which is required of those in sacred orders; 2) the orarion or stole, a narrow, long strip, which during the services the deacon wears over his left shoulder. Its name, orarion, derives from the Latin word *oro*, I pray, or perhaps from the Greek word *ora*, the time, the hour, because with his orarion he indicates when we must pray or chant and when the catechumens must leave the church. Without his orarion, the deacon cannot serve at any of the services, and he must needs obtain the priest's blessing to vest himself with it; 3) the cuffs are worn around the wrists to hold the clothes beneath in place. In the case of the deacons, the cuffs hold the sleeves of his cassock, and in the case of priests and bishops the cuffs restrain the sleeves of their sticharions.

According to the teaching of the Church, each degree of the church hierarchy possesses its grace, and besides this rights and pre-eminence over the lower grades. This idea is clearly signalled even by the church vestments because the vestments

which belong to the lower degrees are also worn by the higher ones. Thus the priests wear a sticharion like a deacons (although its cut is rather different to allow it to be worn with the other specifically priestly vestments) and they wear the cuffs. In addition they also wear: 1) a stole, which in their case is often called an epitrachilion (a word which derives from the Greek words meaning, around the neck). This corresponds to the deacons orarion, but is not worn over one shoulder, falling down at the front and the back, but is taken around the neck and falls over the chest to the hem of his garments in front. The two sides of the priest's stole are buttoned or sometimes sewn together. The two sides represent the double grace that the priest has been granted, and without his stole he does not perform any of the church services; 2) the cincture, or zone, a belt tied around the waist to hold the stole and sticharion in; 3) the nabadrennik - a rectangular cloth worn suspended over the right knee; in the Russian Church it is awarded to certain priests as a sign of seniority. 4) *the epigonation or palitza - a similar decoration, but lozenge shaped and stiff, worn over the right knee - a further award given as a sign of seniority. If this is awarded, the nabadrennik is transferred to the left knee. In some local Churches, the palitza is awarded to those priests who are blessed to hear confessions, but this is not the case in the Russian church, where it is simply a decoration. Only the Russian Church uses the nabadrennik;* 5) the phelonion, the outer vestment, a long sleeveless and almost circular cape worn over the other vestments. *Among the Russians the front is often very severely cut away to allow free movement of the arms, and the back of the neck is stiffened and worn high. The Mediterranean Churches usually have phelonians of lighter materials, longer in front, and the vestment is fitted around the shoulders.*

For Bishops in addition to the vestments that the priests also wear (sticharion, stole, cincture, cuffs); they have the sakkos, omophorion, palitza, and mitre.

1) The sakkos is the Bishop's outer vestment. In appearance it is something like a deacon's sticharion, a wide tunic with wide sleeves, but it is shorter, and has small bells attached to it. It corresponds to the priest's phelonion (in fact Bishops oftentimes serve in a phelonion), and its symbolic significance is the same; 2) the omophorion is a wide rectangular "stole" which is worn around the Bishop's shoulders in such a way that one end falls down his back and one at the front. *[There is in fact a small omophorion, worn in parts of the service, which is much shorter and is simply worn around the shoulders with both ends falling over the chest - ed.]* The omophorion is the distinctive episcopal vestment and without it, the Bishop does not celebrate any of the divine services. When vested in it, the Bishop represents Christ taking upon His shoulders the sins of the people; 3) the palitza - *see above in the section on priests' vestments;* 4) the mitre is a crown-like headpiece, which signifies the wearer's spiritual authority, and also represents both the crown of thorns and the linen cloth, which was wrapped about the Saviour's head at His burial.

Priests are granted the right to wear various liturgical head-coverings: the skufya - *a soft cone shaped hat of purple stuff;* the kamilavka - *a tall cylindrical and stiff hat;* and sometimes *[in the Russian practice]* the mitre itself.

§ 45. The Symbolical Meaning of the Sacred Vestments. Every vestment has its particular symbolical significance, which reminds us of the importance of the ministry of the Church hierarchy. The sticharion signifies the purity of life of the deacons. The orarion - the grace of the diaconal ministry and the wings of the Angels, whose

ministry the deacons represent during Divine service. The cuffs signify that the ministers have to entrust themselves to the Power of God, and they also recall the bonds of the Saviour. The priestly stole denotes the sanctifying grace of the priesthood. The cincture or belt reminds us that Jesus Christ bound Himself with a towel at the Mystical Supper, and also of the readiness with which the clergy must be about their service in good spirits. The navedrennik and palitza represent the spiritual sword, which for the minister is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). The phelonion represents the purple robe in which Jesus Christ was garbed by the soldiers, and so reminds the priest of the fact that he must be ready to suffer for righteousness' sake and rejoice in the truth. The sakkos has the same significance as the phelonion. The omophorion represents human nature which has gone astray, and which the Lord took on His shoulders and brought to God the Father. All these thoughts, which are bound up with the symbolic meaning of the vestments, are expressed in the special prayers which the sacred ministers recite as they vest themselves in readiness for the celebration of the Liturgy.

To be continued with "The Order and Explanation of the Church Services"...

THE COMING MONTH

JULY AND OCTOBER are the only months in the Church Year when there are no Great Feasts and no special fasts. Furthermore, we have now finished the sequence of fasts and feasts that depend on Easter, and so the month runs quietly from Sunday to Sunday with the daily commemoration of the saints. In fact this year, the month begins on a Sunday.

This particular Sunday is somewhat unusual because it is the third after Pentecost and yet on it we celebrate All the Saints that Shone Forth in the Land of Russia and All the Saints of Athos, although usually these are commemorated on the second Sunday after Pentecost. The reason for the change this year is that the second Sunday coincides with the festival of the Birth of St John the Baptist (24th June/7th July) and this festival is so important that it is celebrated with a Vigil and the other commemorations are postponed for a week.

It is perhaps appropriate that we begin the month with the feast of All the Saints of Russia because, just as May is a month full of English saints, July is a month crowded with Russian saints: St Philip of Moscow on the 3rd/16th, the New Imperial Martyrs on 4th/17th, St Sergius of Radonezh on 5th/18th, St Antony of Kiev on 10th/23rd, Blessed Olga on 11th/24th, St Vladimir on 15th/28th, St Seraphim of Sarov on 19th July/1st August, and Sts Boris and Gleb on 24th July/6th August. And in addition to these we have three important festivals of beloved icons of the Mother of God from Russia: the Appearance of the Kazan Icon on 8th/21st, the deliverance of the Pochaev Lavra by the Theotokos on 23rd July/5th August, and the Smolensk Icon on 28th July/10th August.

But, of course, the Church, even though she is administered by the hierarchies of a series of Local (or rather National) Churches, does not order her inner life on nationalistic lines, and there are hosts of other saints as well, from many nations, which we celebrate in July.

On 7th/20th July, we have a martyr whose name comes down to us in three different versions: Dominica, Kyriaki, and Nedelja. The first two of these names derive from the Latin and Greek words for the Lord (Dominus and Kyrios) and indicate that the martyr was His. The third is a little more oblique, because Nedelja (spelt in various ways) is a Slavonic word for Sunday, the Lord's Day, the day on which one does nothing because it is the day of rest. And so in the Slavic versions the Martyr's name has been shifted from reference to the Lord Himself to His day. As the Saint lived in Anatolia, one suspects in any case that in her lifetime she was known by the Greek version of her name. The Great Martyr Kyriaki's parents were named Dorotheus and Eusebia and they were devout Christians. Although they were rich, they were childless and prayed for the gift of a child. For this reason when their daughter was born they dedicated her to the Lord in thanksgiving.

Accepting this consecration of her life to the Lord, Kyriaki resolved to spend her life in virginity, and although as a rich, patrician young woman she was sought by many in marriage, she declined all offers. One of her rejected suitors denounced her and her parents to the Imperial authorities and they were all arrested. Her parents were put to torture and eventually died as martyrs. Kyriaki was brought before the Emperor Maximian, and on his order she was cruelly tortured and thrown into prison. The Saviour visited her while in prison and miraculously healed her of the wounds she had received. Later she was subjected to fresh tortures, but she was preserved through all these. Such was her steadfastness and the manifest miraculous nature of her being able to bear such tortures that many pagans were converted and believed in Christ. Many of these subsequently died as martyrs. Finally, as they could not shake her resolve, the authorities ordered that she be beheaded. At the place of execution she knelt and asked the Lord to have mercy and save those who would celebrate her memory and then, before the axeman could strike off her head, she gave up her soul.

The New Hieromartyr Anastasius of Ioannina (8th/21st) was from the village of St Blaise near Ioannina, where he was the parish priest. He witnessed the martyrdom of St Constantius the Russian and this inflamed his heart with a desire to die as a martyr. At that time there was a seventy year-old priestmonk from Cyprus, who had led a disgraceful and dissolute life, and who, falling even lower, apostatised and became a Muslim. This poor man, who was by now physically blind and had blinded himself spiritually then became a teacher to the Muslims so that he could support himself. One day Father Anastasius came upon him as he was teaching and stood to listen. The Turks there noticed him and, mocking him, suggested that he should embrace Islam too, pointing out that their teacher had been a priest too. Sorrowing for the fallen priestmonk and filled with a love of the truth, the saint began to censure the Turks for their misbelief. The Turks, in turn, were infuriated and set upon him and dragged him off to the judge. They ordered that he be banished to the island of Chios as a punishment, but fearing that he would thus lose the crown of martyrdom, the saint raised objections and contrived to have his case brought before the Vizier. There again, he confessed his Christian Faith and censured the false doctrines of the Muslims. For this he was taken out and beheaded in front of the Gieni Mosque on 8th July, 1743. Soldiers were put on guard to make sure that no one obtained portions of his sacred relics, instead they became witnesses of one of the miracles of the Saint, for

they saw a heavenly light which appeared over his body and bathed it in radiance, bearing witness to the fact that his soul was bathed in the joyous light of Paradise.

Saint Veronica (12th/25th) is one of the saints who was a contemporary of the Saviour Himself. Because her name can be interpreted as "True Icon," in the West the legend of Veronica's veil has grown up, but this is unknown in Orthodox sources. These tell us that St Veronica was the woman with the issue of blood whom our Saviour healed (Matthew, chapter nine). Because of the miracle, she became a follower of the Lord Jesus and remained faithful to Him until her death. Tradition tells us that she died in peace. It is also recorded that in the way of the classical world, after her healing she had a statue of the Saviour erected as a thank offering. This statue survived until the mid-fourth century, when during the reign of Julian the Apostate, it was altered so as to seem to be a portrayal of the pagan god, Zeus.

Saint Mary Magdalene (22nd July/4th August) is another saint, about whom there are widely differing stories in East and West. From the Gospels, we learn that she had been healed by the Saviour of possession by seven demons. Perhaps because this was misunderstood or misrepresented as indicating that she was a "bad woman," in the West the idea has gained currency that she had been a prostitute, although there is nothing in the Gospels to suggest this and it finds no place in the Orthodox tradition. From this a host of romances about her seem to have arisen, many of them clean contrary to piety. We do know that she was one of the first people to meet the Risen Christ. After the day of Pentecost, she travelled to Rome and gained an audience with the Emperor Tiberius. She took the opportunity to denounce Pilate, and this resulted in his being deprived of his governorship in Palestine and exiled to Gaul. Later St Mary Magdalene settled in Ephesus, where the holy Apostle John the Theologian was also living. It was there that she died, and she was laid to rest in a cave near the city. (Years later, in the mid-third century the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus were to take refuge in that cave, doubtless under the saint's protection, during the period of Decius' persecution). The sacred relics of St Mary Magdalene were eventually translated to Constantinople. Because of her missionary zeal in preaching the Risen Saviour, she is hymned in the Orthodox Church as a Peer of the Apostles.

Saint Germanus of Auxerre (31st July/13th August) is a saint to whom the Church in this country owes an immense debt of gratitude. He was Bishop of Auxerre in Gaul in the early fifth century and was renowned for his life of prayer and asceticism. At that time the Church in Britain was in a rather deplorable state. The heresy of Pelagius was being vigorously propagated by his disciple, Agricola, and among the Orthodox clergy here there were none of the spiritual or intellectual stature to withstand this false teaching. The clergy therefore petitioned the Bishops on the continent to send help, and Saint Germanus was chosen for the task. He came to Britain with St Lupus, the Bishop of Troyes, and both by his preaching and his miracles he withstood the proponents of Pelagianism. While in Britain, he also helped the Britons win a bloodless victory over the Picts and Saxons. This victory is known to history as the "Alleluia Victory," because the Saint counselled the Britons to meet their enemies in a narrow defile, and when the barbarian forces approached, he had the British troops cry out the Alleluia, which in such a confined space echoed with such resonance that the enemy forces feared that they were meeting far superior forces and hastily retreated. St Germanus also visited the shrine of St Alban and deposited

relics there, reverently taking a handful of earth from that holy place. Some years later, the heretics having gained boldness again, Saint Germanus paid a second visit to Britain, this time accompanied by St Severus of Treves. On this occasion his success in eradicating the pernicious beliefs of Pelagius was said to be complete. He died making a third journey, again motivated by love for others. The people of Brittany had incurred the displeasure of the Emperor of the West, Valentinian, and so Saint Germanus journeyed to Ravenna to petition the Emperor on their behalf. It was while there that he gave up his soul. The Bishop of that city, St Peter Chrysologus, the Emperor and his mother, Placidia, all counted Germanus a saint, and so they divided his garments among themselves as precious relics, but they arranged for the bodily remains of the holy hierarch to be taken back to Gaul to be laid to rest among his people. The saint died in 448 A.D.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

IN YOUR MAY ISSUE, Fr Antonov states that the Orthodox Church allows scope to man's religious expressions by dedicating all the different arts to the Lord. He lists poetry, singing, architecture and the visual arts, but there is no mention of dance. Is there any form of liturgical dancing in Orthodox worship? - R.T.B, Dartford, Kent.

Yes, indeed there is. In her use of the arts, the Church is careful to avoid that which is sensual or worldly. We see this in the holy icons themselves. The depictions are not like even the best classical religious paintings of the West, where the emphasis is on being realistic and life-like. There is a certain restraint about the way in which the holy persons or sacred events are portrayed, which tells us immediately that the icons are not intended to be like religious snapshots, but that they do reveal an inner meaning. So it is with our liturgical "dance." We do not have artistes in leotards prancing around the sanctuary or even sedate blue-rincers waltzing in the nave. Such things would be utterly at odds with our traditional worship. But we do have various forms of liturgical dance, that is ritualised movement. The movements, particularly of the clergy, in the Divine services are a kind of dance. As with the icons, so with this "dance," - the movements are restrained. Their purpose is not to excite or draw attention to the participants or even to interest those observing it, but to proclaim the Gospel. Thus in the Little Entrance of the Liturgy the Gospel Book is brought out of the sanctuary by the clergy to declare to us that our Saviour brought the Gospel message to peoples everywhere, as He Himself said: "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth." Every movement and every appointed gesture in the services has the purpose of proclaiming Christ. Even very slight gestures, such as the clergy bowing to each other when they begin or end certain parts of the service, are instructive for us. They show us how Christ should be manifest in our life by deferring to others, by showing them respect, by courteous conduct towards each other.

It is not only the clergy and servers who are involved in this "dance," and this fact is made clear by the various processions and movements in which the laity are required to participate: the procession around the font at a Baptism, that around the church at Pascha, etc. One is even called the "Dance of Esaias" - it is the procession of the bride and groom around the the Gospel Book and Cross during the Wedding

service. Nor is it only on rare and special occasions that the laity are called upon to participate in the Church's liturgical dance. When, in church, we are blessed by the priest, or when we are censed, we bow our heads to indicate our grateful reception of the blessing offered. We bow our heads when the Gospel is being read, thus proclaiming by a ritualised movement (by dance) our attentive respect for the word of God. The deeper bowing that we do at the petitions of the litanies, and the prostrations we make, are also a way of offering prayer through bodily movement and therefore might well be considered a form of liturgical dance. Just as when we day dream in church and do not listen to the sacred hymns and prayers we are thereby separating ourselves from the common work of prayer - (liturgy means "work of the people") - so equally when we do not cross ourselves, bow or join in the other liturgical movements, we are also separating ourselves from that work of prayer and from the blessings it brings.

You will find those who claim that there is no such thing as liturgical dance in the Orthodox Church, but this is probably because they are sensibly leery of the more boisterous forms that those who do not share our Faith have promoted in recent years in their "experimental" Liturgies.

NEWS SECTION

DIVINE LITURGY IN RAVENNA

HIS ALL-HOLINESS ŒCUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEOS I celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the ancient Basilica of Sant'Apollinaire in Classe, in the northern Italian city of Ravenna on 9th June. The Patriarch had arrived on a cruiser which from the previous Wednesday had been sailing the Adriatic as part of an environmental protection initiative. The Pope, John Paul II, applauded the celebration of the Liturgy in a church which is renowned for its Byzantine iconography, as something which encourages us "to continue on the road toward full unity between the Christian East and West." The Patriarch was somewhat more reticent in his appraisal, and it is reported that he did not hide the difficulties in theological dialogue, but he nonetheless stated that "we hope for the magnificent day, blessed by God, in which spiritual communion between the Churches will be restored." On the Monday, having journeyed on to Venice, the Patriarch signed a declaration on the protection of the environment, which was simultaneously signed by the Pope in the Vatican. Again, the Pope saw this event, which does not seem to be directly concerned with ecclesiology, as "another example of that sharing of intentions, which is the prelude to a renewed and full communion."

SERBIAN CHURCH ASSEMBLY

THE HOLY ASSEMBLY of the hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church was held in Belgrade from 23rd to 31st May this year, presided over by His Beatitude Patriarch Pavle. During the session, on Sunday 26th May, the hierarchs celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Moraca Monastery, thus marking the 750th anniversary of its foundation. The Bishops' Council paid special attention to the improvement of the church educational system, and approved a draft agreement which commissions from Belgrade and Skopje had drawn up to bring about an end to the schism between the

Serbian and Macedonian Churches. The Council urged refugees from the various parts of the former Yugoslavia to return to their homelands, and it called upon the state authorities and international agencies to aid their return and to create the conditions necessary for normal life. The Council paid attention to the situation of its dioceses in America, Australia and Western Europe and made various ecclesiastical appointments.

ANTIOCH ANTICIPATES CONSTANTINOPLE

THE HOLY SYNOD of the Patriarchate of Antioch, meeting in Damascus, Syria, granted autonomy to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America on 14th June this year. The move comes eleven months after the Archdiocese petitioned for this status. As we have reported in earlier issues, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in the States has petitioned the (Ecumenical Patriarchate for autonomy, but when visiting America Patriarch Bartholomeos opined that the Church in America was not yet mature enough to permit such a move. His thoughts have provoked widespread criticism, not least because he appears to have made his appeal for a delay in this regard not on the basis of church order or considerations of Orthodox faith and practice, but on the presumed identity of ethnic background of the faithful in America and those in Constantinople (!). It is likely that the delegates at the 36th Clergy-Laity Congress in Los Angeles, which is due to convene on 30th June, will be encouraged by the Antiochian precedent and will petition more vigorously for their own autonomy.

JERUSALEM PATRIARCHATE

THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT has now recognised the election of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Patriarch Eirenaios I. It is thought that they were pressured to do so by the international community as part of the process of trying to resolve the conflicts presently raging in the Holy Land. The Church has not responded by weakly bowing to pressures from the State though, and through her spokesman Dr Fr Attallah Hanna, she has called upon Christians throughout the world to break their silence over what he calls the Israeli genocide. Dr Hanna rejected a proposal that the Palestinian Christians should form a political party, saying that it would further divide Christians and Muslims, and would only help the extremist Zionists achieve their aims. He also called upon Christians in the West to reflect upon the fact that Christianity is not a Western phenomenon, but a Faith which has its roots in Palestine and the East.

WEST BANK CHURCH DAMAGED BY ISRAELIS

ISRAELI FORCES have admitted that they damaged an Orthodox church in the village of Abud, nine miles from Ramallah, on Saturday 1st June. They claimed that nothing made them think it was a church, because it simply looked like a grotto. In searching for Palestinian suspects, they dynamited the doors, but claimed that once inside, when they saw the cross and church furnishings, they left, and they have issued an apology. The residents of Abud and the Palestinian authorities, however, said that the church had been destroyed. The church was a medieval one, dedicated to the holy Great Martyr Barbara.

CONFERENCE 'RESPECTFULLY DISAGREES' WITH PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

THE STANDING CONFERENCE of Middle Eastern Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders, which represents America's 5,000,000 citizens of Arab heritage, has issued a statement protesting against Israeli aggression in the Palestinian territories. They tell President Bush that they "respectfully disagree" with him, when he refers to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as "a man of peace." The conference statement comments: "What a mockery! Sharon's hands are still stained with the blood of more than 1,000 men, women and children who were slaughtered in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon, and now in Jenin, the West Bank and Gaza." They endorse the proposal put forward by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, and call for the withdrawal of Israel from all the territories occupied in the 1967 war in accordance with U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338.

TROUBLES WITHIN SOUROZH

FAITHFUL MEMBERS of the congregation at the Russian Patriarchal Cathedral at Ennismore Gardens, Knightsbridge, have asked prayers regarding the troubles that they have experienced there in the past few weeks. Contentions have arisen over the appointment and ministry of the newly consecrated Bishop Hilarion of Kerch, a vicar Bishop within the diocese. It is not for us to pry needlessly into the rights and wrongs of these contentions and the way in which they have been bruited abroad, but without a doubt, although we have been loyal to the Church Abroad for decades for reasons of conscience, we cannot ignore the distress that the faithful there are experiencing nor the fact that the continuation of the contention might well bring hurt to the Orthodox Church's mission in the British Isles - a mission which hitherto has been more vigorously promoted by the Moscow Patriarchal diocese in this country than by any other of the Orthodox Churches established here.

MONASTERY THREATENED BY FIRE

THE OCA MONASTERY of the Protection of the Holy Virgin, Lake George, was threatened by the Hayman fire in Colorado, and its superior Mother Cassiana and her sisters prepared to leave their house and issued a request to the faithful to offer prayers for them. Prayers have been answered and through the efforts of the firefighters, it now seems that the monastery will be spared destruction, but the life and work of the sisters has been disrupted.

NEW MISSIONARY JOURNAL IN AFRICA

"THE ORTHODOX KENYAN QUARTERLY" started publication this year under the auspices of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, Archbishopric of Kenya and Irinoupolis. The first issue reports on the visit of the Pope-Patriarch of Alexandria Petros VII to the mission in eastern Africa. More details from the Archbishopric's centre: P.O. Box 46119, Nairobi, Kenya; Fax:(254) 2 560750; E-mail: themistoclesrev@yahoo.co.uk.

'SPEAKING IN TONGUES'?

THE DEPARTMENT of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate has released the news that on 17th June, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, its chairman, met with leaders of the European Commission, the supreme executive body of the European Union. In his talks, the Metropolitan "confirmed the readiness of the Russian Orthodox Church to take part in the wide dialogue the on world-outlook matters with EC structures conducted for the sake of establishing a multipolar and multilayered world order." Well, there we have it, something to look forward to!

BROOKWOOD NEWS

GIFT OF RELICS: On Thursday 27th June, our community was visited by Father Stephen Platt of the Parish of the Annunciation in Oxford, who very kindly donated a small portion of the sacred relics of Saint Nectarius of Pentapolis the Wonderworker with a portion of his rason to our church. We have also been given in recent weeks portions of the relics of St Anna the Mother of the Theotokos and of St Antony the Great.

PLANNING APPLICATION: Mrs Irina Aldersley, our architect, has now submitted a revised plan for the new monastic house that we hope to build at Brookwood to the planning authorities, for their perusal. We ask the prayers of the faithful with regard to our efforts in this respect.

BELFAST VISIT: As dean of the ROCA English-language parishes, Fr Alexis visited the Holy Trinity Mission in Belfast on 8th and 9th June, serving at the mission's new location. While in the city, he was offered hospitality by Dr Theodore MacCaw, and before the Saturday evening service read the fortieth day prayers for Diaconissa Jolan Ready and for her infant son, Nathanael At that service and at the Divine Liturgy next morning Fr Alexis was assisted by Fr Deacon Geoffrey, whom it is hoped will shortly be ordained to the priesthood so that the mission can benefit from regular priestly services.

NEW CATECHUMENS: At the St Boniface Mission in Ryde, Isle of Wight, which is served from our community, Benjamin and Elaine Waterhouse of Newport had the prayers read for the catechumenate on 2nd/15th June. While keeping their Christian names, we drew lots for their name saints. Benjamin was named after the holy New Hieromartyr Benjamin of Petersburg (13th/26th August), and Elaine was named for Helen, one of the New Martyrs of China (10th/23rd June). May the prayers of these Saints, who gave their lives for Holy Orthodoxy, protect, guide and sustain them and bring them in due season to Holy Baptism.

PRACTICAL TIP

IT IS A WELL-KNOWN FACT that people often only turn to God when they encounter obstacles and troubles in life. Indeed it is for this very reason that the Lord often allows such troubles to befall us. But there is an opposite temptation: that of turning away from God at the very time when we most need Him. One notices this in the excuses one hears when people fall behind in their church commitment. Often they will say, for instance, that they did not attend church because they felt low. This is fine if, while not

attending church (perhaps because they cannot face the prospect), they stay quietly at home and do some spiritual reading or try to say prayers; but if "feeling low" is used simply as an excuse to escape from one's commitment, to forget God and to "enjoy life," then we should realise that we have got something seriously wrong. It is when you are sick that you go to a hospital, not when you feel healthy. Sometimes circumstances prevent us from fulfilling our commitment, and at other times it is probably wise to allow ourselves to approach Him another way (by being quiet and reading, for instance, instead of attending a service), but we must be careful to test ourselves in such cases to make sure that we are not making "excuse with excuses in sin" (Ps. 140:4). A good test is to check whether in what we are doing we are striving to turn towards God or away from Him.