

The Shepherd

An Orthodox Christian Pastoral Magazine

VOLUME XXXIII NUMBER 3 NOVEMBER 2002

FROM THE FATHERS

"IF WE REMEMBER the wickedness of men we destroy the power of the memory, but if we remember how the demons act wickedly we shall remain uninjured."

Ven. Macarius, from "The Paradise of the Fathers"- fourth century

"SINCE EVERY VICE is defeated by continence, and whatever avarice thirsts for, and whatsoever pride seeks in earthly honours, and whatever sensuality desires, is overcome by the power of this virtue, who is it that does not see what safeguards are granted us by fasting, in which it is implicitly laid upon us that we abstain not only from food, but from all fleshly desires? Furthermore, it is profitless to suffer the hunger, and not to put away evil dispositions; to afflict ourselves by going without food, but at the same time not to turn away from evil desire. It is an unspiritual fast, not a spiritual one, where a man mortifies the body only, and remains fast in the delights that are more harmful to him than all delicacies."

Saint Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, + 461 A.D.

"LET US reject the pleasure and pain of this present life with what strength we have, and so free ourselves entirely from all thoughts of the passions and all machinations of the demons. For we love the passions because of pleasure, and avoid virtue because of pain."

Ven. Maximus the Confessor, + 662 A.D.

THE TEACHING OF THE ELDERS OF VALAAM ON THE PRAYER OF JESUS

1. Schemamonk Agapius

Concerning Oral Prayer: Most briefly it is said thus: "Lord, have mercy," "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, the sinner;" or more fully: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner."

At first, for the most part it is said with a certain compulsion and a certain reluctance, but, insofar as you decidedly resolve that by means of the prayer, with the aid of God's grace, you will diminish the passions which are on every side, to the extent that you force yourself to practice it, then from frequent practice, as the passions diminish, from time to time, it will become easier, more pleasant and desirable.

With oral prayer it is imperative that one strive to hold the mind on the words of the prayer; speak without hurrying, concentrating all the attention on the thoughts which the words express; and when the mind is carried off by distracting thoughts,

without being disturbed bring it back again to the words of the prayer (see "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," Step 28:17).

The mind's not being dispersed is not something which is granted quickly, and it is only granted when one humbles oneself and when God blesses.

This gift of God is not determined by the times, nor by the quantity of prayers one says, but by lowliness of heart and Christ's grace and through one's becoming accustomed to forcing oneself towards it.

From attentive oral prayer there is a transferal to mental prayer, which is called such when with the mind alone we direct ourselves towards God or behold God.

Concerning Mental Prayer: With mental prayer it is indispensable that one holds the attention in the heart before the Lord. According to the measure of our assiduity and of our humble diligence in prayer, God will grant our mind a first gift - that it be collected and concentrated in prayer. When attention to the Lord is secured, then it is a grace-granted attention; but our own attention is always forced. From such mental prayer, if only one has an experienced teacher, with whom one can be open and free, there comes a transfer to the inner prayer of the heart. When in the feelings of the heart we abide with God, and love towards God fills the heart, then such prayer is called Prayer of the Heart.

Concerning the Inner Prayer of the Heart: In the Gospel it is said; "He that would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross." If we apply these words to the subject of the prayer, then they will signify the following: He that desires licitly to engage in the struggle of prayer, let him first of all renounce his own will and his own perceptions, and then take up the cross, which is the spiritual and physical labour which are unavoidable in this struggle. Having wholly given himself up unto God's unfailing care, humbly and with a good heart he must continue in this task for the sake of that true good, which, in His own good time, is granted by God to him that prays diligently, when through His grace God will set bounds to our mind and establish it immovable with the remembrance of God in the heart. When such a state of mind is established as though it were something natural and constant, then it is called by the Fathers the *union of the mind in the heart*; in such a state the mind has no desire to be outside the heart. On the contrary if through some circumstance or through much conversation it should be detained outside the attention of the heart, then it has an unrestrainable desire with such a spiritual thirst to enter again within itself, and with renewed diligence to be occupied again with building its inner home. With such a disposition of heart, everything that a man has in his head relocates within the heart, and then such a noetic light illumines all that is within him that there is nothing which he does, which he says, which he thinks, but all is done with complete understanding and attention. Then he can clearly see what thoughts, intentions and desires come to him, and he readily compels his mind, heart and will in obedience to Christ in the fulfilment of all the commandments of God and the Fathers; and for every deviation from them he makes amends with a feeling of heartfelt repentance and contrition, with unfeigned sorrow and with his falling down before God in anguish and humility, beseeching and awaiting help from on high in his helplessness. And God, seeing this his humility, does not deprive him of His grace.

You must know that the mental prayer of the heart enters the heart of one person quickly and of another less quickly. I know three people: to one it came as soon as they were told of it, in the very same hour; to another it came in six months; to the third in ten months; but to a certain great Elder it came only after two years. And quite why this should be is known only to God.

Furthermore you should know that before the extirpation of the passions the prayer is one thing, and it is another after the cleansing of the heart from the passions. In the first instance, it is an aid in cleansing the heart of the passions, and in the second it is a certain earnest of the future blessedness. Act in this way: when you feel the descent of the mind into the heart and the ascendancy of the prayer, then give full freedom to such prayer putting aside all that is inimical to it, and when it (the prayer) is active, then do nothing else. And when you do not feel any such inclination, then pray the prayer orally making prostrations, attempting in every way to hold the attention in the heart before the face of the Lord. The heart will be warmed by this kind of practice in prayer.

Be sober and be vigilant especially at the time of mental prayer of the heart. No one is so well pleasing to God as he who rightly applies himself to the mental prayer of the heart. When it is not convenient or when you have no time train yourself in the prayer, then as much as possible maintain within yourself a prayerful disposition while you are concerned with all your other occupations, that is have God in mind and strive to the utmost with fear and with love to behold Him with the mind's eye before you, and thus, feeling His being before you, with reverent submission give yourself over in your every activity to His supreme sovereignty, to His omnipotence. His seeing all things and His omniscience, so that in every one of your activities, words or thoughts you are aware of God and of His holy will. In short, it is in this that the prayerful spirit consists. It is indispensable for the lover of prayer to have such a disposition, and as far as is possible, with constant attention of the heart to submit his understanding to that of God, and obediently and reverently to submit to Him; in like manner both his desires and wishes must be brought under the will of God and he must completely surrender himself to the Divine understanding and to the Divine will. In every way possible one must stand against the spirit of wilfulness, and against the desires and urges to behave as if ashamed of nothing. This spirit whispers that all this is beyond my strength, that I do not have time enough, or that there is time enough to start on it and that I should put it off for the moment, or that the duties of my obedience will be hindered, and much more of the same. He who listens to him will never become accustomed to prayer. In affiliation with this spirit there stands the spirit of self-justification, which approaches and begins to work after someone, drawn by the spirit of a wilful independence, does something which disturbs his conscience. Then the spirit of self-justification employs various ruses to cloud the conscience, and to present his wrong as right. May God protect us from these evil spirits!

2. Hegoumen Varlaam

The Apostle writes: "Our boast is a clean conscience." [St] Simeon the New Theologian says: "For it is the mental prayer of the heart which imparts this, and without it a man will not succeed in any spiritual struggle."

3. Hegoumen Nazarius

With reverence, secretly make the prayer in Jesus' name, following this form: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner."

Try to make this prayer more profound in your soul and heart; make it with the mind and the thought, do not permit it be far from your lips even for the shortest time; unite it, as far as you can, with your breathing and as far as your strength allows try at the same time to bring yourself to brokenness of heart, and do not repent of your sins without tears. If you have no tears, then at the very least there should be brokenness and groaning of the heart.

Translated from an anthology of the teachings of the Holy Fathers concerning the Jesus Prayer, compiled by Hegoumen Chariton of Valaam Monastery and first published in July 1936.

Homily on the ENTRY INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN MARY

By the Blessed & Ever-Memorable Metropolitan Philaret of New York, + 1985

"TODAY THE THEOTOKOS, the Temple that is to hold God, is led into the temple of the Lord, and Zacharias receiveth her. Today the Holy of Holies rejoiceth greatly" (Hymn on the Liti of the Vigil Service). You and I have just heard how they chanted these words, in which the Church depicts the festive occasion which we are commemorating in today's Great Feast. "Today the Holy of Holies rejoiceth greatly," says the Church. And you and I know that in the Akathist to the Mother of God, in one of Her blessings, we also say: "Rejoice, Holy one, holier than the [Holy of] Holies," that is "Do thou rejoice, thou who art greater than the Holy of Holies! The history of the festival tells us how, according to their promise, their vow, her pious parents Joachim and Anna brought the three-year-old Maiden Mary to the Temple of God, so that they might consecrate her to God. How virgins with candles accompanied her, and how, when, at last, they entered into the Temple of God, the High Priest himself, Zacharias, came forth to meet her. And how, as Tradition tells us, she, still exceedingly small, a three-year-old only, nonetheless freely ascended the many steps to approach him, and how, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he did something which none other had done at any time: he led her into the Holy of Holies, into that very place, in which mystically in the darkness the Lord Himself abode; where never before the feet of man had trodden, not just the feet of the simple people, but where even the feet of the priests had never entered, except only the High Priest alone, who, on one day a year only, when he had the right to do so, went in there with incense and with prayer. One day in the year! But this was not that day. However, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the righteous Zacharias took the three-year-old Little One into the Holy of Holies, that she might be reared there. In another of the church prayers, it speaks of her "as sanctified." And church Tradition speaks of her being often in the Holy of Holies, of the angel who appeared to her there. The Archangel Gabriel appeared to her; he brought her food. And so, when we read how that other festive event, the Annunciation of the Mother of God, came to pass, just as the Gospel describes it, we see that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was disturbed when she saw the Archangel

Gabriel, not because she did so, because he had long been known to her and had appeared to her many times in the Holy of Holies, but because of his words. For then she heard of him an unusual greeting, "Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." It was this strange greeting which disturbed her, and she reflected upon what it could mean.

By tradition, after her entry into the Temple, she stayed continually in the Temple and lived there. It was there that she prayed, there that she laboured, and, as we have already said, it was there in the Holy of Holies that the angels brought her food.

What then should be our attitude to the God's temple? For the Christian, the church should be as it was of old for the Psalmist: "I was glad because of them that said unto me: Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 121:1). That is, I rejoiced, hearing that they said. Let us go into the house of the Lord. *[The Metropolitan obviously repeats this because in the first instance he was quoting the psalmic verse in Church Slavonic, a language which would not have been immediately understood by his congregation - ed.]* But is it so with us? Do we really value God's house? Do we love God's house? Do we try to go there on every possible occasion that we can? Maybe instead we make various excuses? You yourselves know that we are often very near to doing that. Let us be specific: they bring the All-pure Virgin Mary, as a three-year-old maiden they bring her into the Temple, and the Temple becomes her own for her. She lived there; she spent her time near it. But sadly, it often happens that our children very rarely even see the house of God.... Indeed, blessed are those children whose pious parents constantly bring them to church! That which a child receives in church, in the grace-filled, radiant, illuminating, spiritual atmosphere of the church is such a treasure that nothing at all can equal. That which the young soul stocks up in those first years of infancy will be a treasury, his spiritual capital, and his best defence against all the banality and filthiness of life that he will soon come up against. Oh, if only our holy churches would, as in former times, be full of children! But on the contrary we constantly see that the opposite is always the case, and even on the Great Feasts. For instance, sometimes there are numbers of people in church, but very few children.

This is something that we should all think about, not only parents, educators and teachers, but all Christians must think about how they can give the young the possibility of nourishing their souls, when those souls are just blossoming, just flowering, with the spiritual wealth that is in God's church. This, so that in his life each might use that wealth, and so that it might be his spiritual riches not only in this life but also in the future one. Consider how, and try to ensure that our children are actually brought to church more often, that they might come to love the church and always want to be there. In earlier times there used to be, and there still are, some families in which the little children so love God's house, that they are not dragged to the services, but rather than their parents bringing them they bring the parents to church - "Come on! Come on!" Blessed are those families in which such things happen. Think on this, beloved brethren, take a concern that our children are raised as Christians, as faithful children of the Orthodox Church, and that they love the house of God with its reverent and prayerful atmosphere. Amen.

*From "Metropolitan Philaret: Sermons"
published in Russian by the Committee
of Russian Orthodox Youth, 1989*

These sermons are not dated, but in the 27 years since the righteous repose of Metropolitan Philaret, the situation regarding our children has quite manifestly deteriorated. The Metropolitan enjoins us to take a concern to correct this, but what can be done? There are a number of things: parents can train their children to behave in church, instruct them as to what is happening and why, teach them to be still, and even before they come to church they can train them with prayers at home and with instruction there. Mother Elisabeth of the Convent in London, who had an unusual insight and wisdom, once remarked on something which is probably at the root of many troubles with our children. She mentioned that she pitied them because from their earliest years they are not allowed to be quiet or to be still; even those who love them insist that they are always active, busy, involved in something and surrounded by noise and banter, and so they have no time to learn the blessedness of quiet or of reflection. So, it is to be expected that when they step into the different atmosphere of the church they find it boring, or behave as if it were just another play area.

From

"THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THE CHURCH SERVICES"

By the Priest N. R. Antonov

Continuation

§ 56. The Great Litany. This consists of a number of petitions which we run through below. The deacon comes out onto the ambon and calls upon the people praying in church as follows:

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. - This means we invoke the peace of God upon our prayerful assembly, that under the presence of God's face, which inclines to us with peace and love, we set about making our petitions regarding our needs. Equally we must remember that our prayer will only be in peace, when we have forgiven each other our various offenses (see Matthew 5:23-24).

For the peace from above, and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord. - The peace from above is that peace on earth which is from heaven, the reconciliation of man with God, or the reception from God of the forgiveness of sins through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:1). The fruit of the forgiveness of sins, or of our reconciliation with God, is the salvation of our souls, for which we also pray in this second petition.

* For the peace of the whole world, the good estate of the holy churches of God and the union of all, let us pray to the Lord. - In this third petition we pray not only for concord and living in friendship among all the peoples of the world, not only for peace throughout the whole world, but for something much broader and deeper than that: for the peace and concord (harmony) of the *whole world*, that is throughout the fullness of God's creation (heaven and earth, the sea and "all that is therein," the

angels and men, the living and the dead). The second subject of our prayer in this petition is the good estate (i.e. the peace and well-being) of the holy churches of God, the individual communities of the Orthodox. And a broader ethical unity will be the fruit and consequence of this flowering and flourishing of the Orthodox communities on earth: concord, the raising up of glory to God as fellows even though we are from among all the tribes of the earth, and for every living creature there will such a penetration of the "whole" by such a higher religious underpinning that God will indeed "be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

* For this holy house, and for them that with faith, reverence and the fear of God enter herein, let us pray to the Lord. - To pray for the holy house, the church (building), means to ask God that He never take His grace away from the church, that He will protect it from being defiled by the enemies of our Faith, destroyed by fire, earthquake, and plunder-that the material means necessary for its maintenance and flourishing will not dry up. The church building is called holy because of the sanctity of the sacred rites which are celebrated within it, and because through grace God is present therein from the time of its consecration. The grace which abides in the church is not apprehensible to everybody, but only to only to those who come with faith, reverence and the fear of God. Reverence and the fear of God are expressed in a prayerful disposition, the putting away of worldly concerns, and the cleansing of the heart from enmity and envy. Outwardly reverence refers to bodily cleanliness, to wearing appropriate clothing, to abstaining from talking and from looking around at everything.

For the Orthodox episcopate of the suffering Church of Russia, for our master the Most Reverend Metropolitan Lavr and our master the Most Reverend Archbishop Mark for the honourable presbytery, the diaconate in Christ all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord. - In this petition we pray for the Bishops, presbyters (priests) and deacons and for all the clergy, the readers and the chanters, that is for all those who help us in the salvation of our souls. We refer to the Church of Russia, because we are canonically members of that particular Local Church. We call her suffering, because of the wounds that have been inflicted upon her through the period of severe persecutions through which she has just passed, and because of the troubles which now assail her because of dissensions and the difficulties of coming to terms with the situation which she faces in the post-Soviet world.

For our sovereign lady. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and all her Roval House, this country and the faithful people who dwell herein, let us pray to the Lord. - Here we pray for our Sovereign because of the great responsibility she bears, and for our country that therein such order may be established that we may continue to live in peace and in the practice of our Faith. And we pray for the faithful people, the Orthodox Christians, who live here, that they might be a leaven to the whole country.

For the salvation and preservation of the holy places, homeland lives of our brethren in the Holy Land & the Balkans, for the deliverance of His Orthodox peoples everywhere from enemies visible and invisible, and for our confirmation in concord, brotherly love, and piety, let us pray to the Lord. - We use this petition, praying for our brethren who are suffering in these lands, because of the recent hostilities there, recognising also that our enemies are not just those whom we see, but that we also have invisible foes who stir up aggression, disputes and temptations. In many

Orthodox churches, where the congregation is largely composed of people from one ethnic background, they often use a petition here which refers to the homeland of their forebears, remembering them with thanksgiving for the blessings that they have inherited from them, particularly the gift of their Orthodox Faith.

* For this brotherhood, mission and village, and every city and land and the faithful who dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord. - In this petition, we pray for the city or monastic community in which we live, and for all cities and lands and the faithful living there. Christian brotherly love constrains us also to remember all who live there, for we do not pray only for our own, but for all peoples.

* For seasonable weathers, the abundance of the fruits of the earth, and peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord. - Essentially in this petition we ask God to grant us our daily bread, that is the things which are indispensable for our continued existence, our life on earth. We ask for seasonable weathers and for peaceful times that the crops might thrive.

* For those that journey by sea, land and air, the sick, the suffering, captives, and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord. - In this petition, the Holy Church invites us to pray not only for those who are present with us, but for those who for various reasons are absent: 1) those journeying; 2) those detained by sickness or infirmity, all those who are in any way sick or weak physically, and the "suffering" which refers to those who are confined to their beds by some severe illness; and 3) those who are held in captivity: prisoners, hostages, detainees, and also those who are held captive by some spiritual or mental affliction.

* For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger and necessity, let us pray to the Lord. - Here we ask for deliverance from every misfortune, calamity, and unbearable constraint.

* Help us, save us, have mercy on us and keep us, O God, by Thy Grace. - Here we ask the Lord to safeguard and have mercy upon us through His mercy and grace. As this petition is a direct prayer to the Lord, whereas in the previous petitions the deacon was calling upon the people to pray and was not himself directly addressing God, to the previous petitions the response of the choir is "Lord, have mercy," but to this one, in some churches, they reply instead, "Amen."

* Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, exceedingly blessed and glorious Ladv, Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and all our life unto Christ our God. - We constantly call upon the Mother of God in the litanies because she ministers as our helper and our intercessor before the Lord. After turning for help to the Mother of God and the Saints, the Holy Church counsels us to commend ourselves and one another to the Lord.

The Great Litany is also called the Litany of Peace (because thereby people often obtain peace) or the General Litany (because therein we pray for everything: the Hierarchy, the sovereign, the government, the army, the clergy and the people in general).

To be continued with "The Litany of Fervent Supplication"....

Translator's Note: In the above section, as in subsequent ones, we have adapted Fr Antonov's work to accord with contemporary practice, sometimes abridging what he

says (we have not, for instance included the three petitions for the Russian Imperial Family or his explanations for them!), and sometimes adding to his text for greater clarity. In some instances, Fr Antonov also added the Greek form of the petition and he usually followed this with a transliteration into Russian characters - we have of course omitted this.

THE COMING MONTH

IN NOVEMBER, quite naturally our thoughts turn towards the celebration of the Saviour's Nativity, and the Holy Church begins to focus our spiritual attention on that great celebration through two events: the beginning of the Nativity Fast on 15th/28th of the month, and the Great Feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple on 21st November/4th December.

The Nativity Fast lasts for forty days, and throughout this period we abstain from meat and dairy products. Fish is permitted in this fast on every Saturday and Sunday until the start of the fore-festival period (20th December/2nd January) or according to some usages only up to and including St Spiridon's day (12th/25th December). Fish is also permitted on the Great Feast of the Entry, on Tuesdays and Thursdays when the Great Doxology is chanted, but on the other days of the week only if it is the patronal feast of one's church or a Vigil is chanted. Usually on Tuesdays and Thursdays, only wine (alcohol) and oil are permitted, but no animal products at all except seafoods such as shrimps, squid and other invertebrates. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are kept as "f3" days, according to the usage that we employ in our monthly calendar insert, unless they should coincide with some important festival, when they are upgraded to "f2" status.

Usually the day before the fast is kept as a meatless day on whatever day of the week it might fall, as a preparation for the fast itself. This year, the day before the fast begins is a Wednesday and therefore itself a fast-day, and so the Tuesday (13th/26th) is kept as the meatless day.

This fast has been observed by the Christians from the earliest days, and in the fifth century St Leo the Great wrote concerning it. We have included a part of his homily in our quotes "From the Fathers" at the beginning of this issue. The exact disciplines that we now observe were formalised at the Council of Constantinople, held in 1166 A.D., although the prescriptions were based on already long-established disciplines.

The fast is intended not only as a time of change of diet, but as a time of spiritual preparation for the Nativity, of which the dietary regulations are only the groundwork. Throughout the fast we should fast, as the Fathers teach, not only from foods but from the passions; we should practice the virtues, particularly almsgiving; and we should attempt to deepen our prayer-life and increase our spiritual reading, so that the period becomes one of spiritual growth.

The Great Feast of the Virgin's Entry into the Temple reminds us of one whose life was always adorned with the splendour of the fast, one who ever fasted from the passions, who achieved such purity and spiritual maturity, that even as a young girl she was granted to become the Mother of her Creator. With her entry into the Temple, we

see her taking up this course with a resolve which should be an example to us, weaker creatures. Her ascetic course led, her not only physically into the Temple's Holy of Holies, but to conceive the Word incarnate in her womb and finally, through grace, to be raised to the highest heaven. In our fast, we should strive to follow her course, that within our hearts the love of the Lord Jesus Christ might be born, and that we too, at the last, might be granted a portion in the heavenly kingdom.

The Virgin's course began simply with her determinedly ascending the steps to the Holy Place, our course begins with something equally simple and seemingly mundane: our attempting to observe the fast, which is set before us by the Church for our own spiritual profit. That, like the three-year-old's climbing of the Temple steps, requires determination and resolve, but it is not something onerous and it is rewarded with great blessings.

Among the Saints in November, we have:

The Holy Martyrs Galacteon and Episteme (5th/18th) were from the city of Emesa in Syria. Galacteon's parents were noble and wealthy, but they were pagans and suffered much grief because they were childless. In an attempt to beget a child they prayed particularly to the goddess Artemis. One day a ragged Christian monk came to their house begging bread, but seeing the state of the man, Leucippe (Galacteon's mother) ordered that the gates be closed against him. Yet he stood there and waited. In the end, seeing his patience, Leucippe relented and ordered that he be allowed into their courtyard and given food. While there the elder perceived that Leucippe was grieved and asked the cause of her grief. She told him of her childlessness, and the elder asked which god she worshipped. When she told him Artemis; the elder explained that this was the cause of her childlessness and he exhorted her to become a Christian. Through his admonitions she was converted and secretly baptised, and shortly thereafter she conceived a child. *[Recently, we were told of a similar case, an English woman married to a Greek and living in Greece, had no children. A Bishop told her that the cause was that she was not Orthodox. She was instructed in the Faith and baptised, and soon thereafter conceived. She now has several children.]* Leucippe's husband, Cletophon, was overjoyed and wished to offer thanks to the pagan gods, but Leucippe took the opportunity to tell him of her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, in time he was baptised as was the infant, Galacteon, when he was born. In this way, Galacteon was brought up as a Christian, but when the time came for him to marry, he was espoused, perhaps through a prior arrangement, to a maiden, Episteme, who was not a believer, and whom in turn he brought to the Christian Faith. After her baptism, Episteme was granted a vision of beautiful palaces in which she saw a choir of men dressed in black, and a second choir of virgins, and a third of fiery beings. She told Galacteon of this revelation, and he rightly understood that these were the choirs of monks and nuns, aided by the angels. They therefore resolved not to consummate their marriage, but instead to take up the monastic life and live their days in virginity. Then they distributed their possessions to the poor and went off into the desert places. At Mount Pupilion, they found a small monastery of ten monks and nearby a convent of four aged nuns. They bade farewell to each other and joined these communities. During the persecutions, Galacteon's monastery was raided, and the monks, except the venerable Galacteon, fled. He was arrested and taken off to be put to torture.

The Lord revealed these things to Episteme, and she begged her Abbess to allow her to rejoin her husband at his time of trial. The eldress tried to dissuade her, but in the end gave her blessing. And so Episteme voluntarily presented herself to the persecutors. The two saints were interrogated, abused and put to various tortures. They were eventually put to death with extreme cruelty, their hands were cut off, then their feet; their tongues were torn out, and lastly they were beheaded. The record of their heroic martyrdom was written by Eutolmius, a former slave of Epistemi's father, who had followed the pair into the desert, taken up the monastic life, and then laying aside his habit (so as not to be recognised and apprehended) had followed them to witness the end.

The Venerable Æmilian or Milan (12th/25th) lived in the sixth century, and his life was recorded by Braulius the Bishop of Saragossa within a few decades of his death. Æmilian was in early life a shepherd, but he took up the monastic life, placing himself in obedience to a hermit named Felix. When he had progressed in the eremitic life, the Elder Felix blessed him to live in solitude, and he settled in the mountains of Disterce and lived in solitude for forty years. His virtue came to the notice of the Bishop of Tarazona, Didymus, who ordained him a priest and appointed him pastor of the church of Vergege. This was a foolish move, as Æmilian's charity was such that he dissipated all the wealth of the church by his almsgiving, and the other clergy complained against him. Realising his mistake, the Bishop blessed the saint to return to his hermit's solitude, in which at the age of one hundred, he gave up his soul in the year 574. His sacred relics were treasured in the monastery of St Milan de la Cogolla, near Najara. Milan is a shortening of his name, Æmilian.

FATHER GEORGE CHEREMETIEFF

SOME TIME AGO, in serial form we published "The Spiritual Heritage of Father George Cheremetieff" in "The Shepherd." An opportunity has now arisen, through a kind offer from a benefactor, to publish this in booklet form in memory of Father George, who served for many years as a clergyman of the Russian Church Abroad diocese in this country and latterly as chaplain of the Convent of the Annunciation in Willesden. We ask readers who have any reminiscences, stories of his life and ministry, or photographs to send them to us at the Brotherhood, so that these may be included in the publication. Photographs and other materials offered can be returned.

N.B. We posted this notice in the September issue, but sadly to date have received only one response and that verbal. We hope that not all those who loved and respected Fr George have passed on, and so remind our readers again of this opportunity. It may be, of course, that those who remember Fr George do not read this magazine, so we also ask those who do to make this appeal known to other churchgoers in the hope of our gathering some materials.

NEWS SECTION

FIRST CENTURY OSSUARY FOUND

AN OSSUARY (bone-box), dated to 63 A.D. and bearing the inscription in Aramaic, "Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua" (James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus) has come to light. Dr Andre Lemaire, a researcher at the Sorbonne in Paris, believes that the inscription refers to the Holy Apostle James, the Brother of God, and first Bishop of Jerusalem. If so, this is the first material object which archaeology has turned up which refers directly to our Saviour, although in 1990 the ossuary of Caiaphas was found, and some forty years ago an inscription mentioning Pontius Pilate was uncovered. The present artefact is made of a limestone from the Jerusalem area; the patina on it indicates that it comes from a cave environment with no trace of modern elements. The Aramaic inscription is in a cursive script and the form of some of the letters indicates that the container was made in the decades immediately before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. First century Jews had the custom of laying their dead to rest in cave-tombs, and then when the flesh had dissolved placing the bones in ossuaries - a similar custom prevails to this day in parts of Greece and other eastern countries, where the dead are exhumed after a certain time and their bones placed in charnel houses. One cannot be sure that the ossuary is authentic; one problem is that it was apparently looted and therefore its recent history cannot be accurately traced. The archaeological evidence dating it to the first century is, however, compelling, and Dr Lemaire points out that in the period when the box was made "no more than twenty people could have been called 'James the son of Joseph, the Brother of Jesus.'" Of these twenty most would not have been prominent enough to have such an inscription made. Furthermore the reference to the brother Jesus, indicates that the bones contained in this ossuary were those of a man whose brother Jesus was renowned, otherwise no reference would have been made to a brother. All this gives the strongest indication that the ossuary did indeed contain the bones of the Apostle. The feastday of the Apostle is 23rd October/5th November, and most lives are silent about what happened to his sacred relics.

ROMANIAN PATRIARCH'S INCREDIBLE MOVE

POPE JOHN PAUL II welcomed the Romanian Orthodox Patriarch Teoctist in St Peter's Square, Rome on 7th October. The Patriarch stayed in Rome for almost a week, and the visit was to end with his participating in a Eucharist celebrated by the Pope on Sunday, 13th October. Apparently the Patriarch was to "share in the Liturgy of the Word, pray together with the Pope, profess the faith in the Romanian language, and separate at the moment of the Eucharistic Prayer." This extraordinary and confusing ecumenical gesture is, of course, clean contrary to Orthodox faith and practice, but the event was made the more extraordinary by the fact that the Patriarch chose to arrive and greet the Pope in the presence of 200,000 pilgrims who had gathered for the canonisation of Josemaria Escriva. His canonisation was understandably controversial for many Roman Catholics, and one would have thought that at the very least an Orthodox hierarch would have distanced himself from such an event, rather than even seeming to participate in it.

CHURCH STATE CONCORDAT IN GEORGIA

PRESIDENT EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE and Patriarch-Catholicos Ilya II of Georgia signed an agreement on church-state relations in Mtskheta on 14th October. The document recognises the state's responsibility for the damages suffered by churches and church properties during the period that "Georgia lost its independence" (i.e., the Soviet period) and the state therein recognises that it is liable to pay compensation. However, more sinisterly, the agreement gives the Georgian Patriarchate a veto on which other religious communities can call themselves Churches, and which can produce items used in worship, build churches or publish religious literature. The director of the Liberty Institute, a Tbilisi-based human rights group, Levan Ramishvili, has pointed out that there are five other Orthodox jurisdictions in Georgia, and he suggests that "they will be the prime victims of this." Ramishvili believes that the monopoly thus granted the Patriarchate, "endangers religious freedom, as well as freedom of speech and academic freedom."

MODERNISING TENDENCY STOPPED IN GREECE

A REQUEST by some Orthodox clergy in Greece (State Church) to shed their beards, black robes and stove-pipe hats has been disallowed by the Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and his Synod. A spokesman for the Synod, Bishop Anthimos explained that certain exceptions to the dress code could be made when priests were involved in manual work. "There must be understanding for priests who live in rural parishes. Many of them have to tend their fields. It is acceptable for them to wear shorter robes," he said.

MOSCOW PATRIARCH UNWELL

PATRIARCH ALEKSII II OF MOSCOW fell ill while visiting Astrakhan at the end of October. The 73 year-old prelate was suffering from hypertension; however, he made something of a recovery in hospital and was able to be flown back to Moscow. It is reported that concern over the theatre-hostage crisis in Moscow disturbed the Patriarch and aggravated his condition.

BELLS RESTORED TO ST SERGIUS MONASTERY

TWO HUGE BELLS, one weighing 27 tons and another 35.5 tonnes (*sic ENI Bulletin 02-0288*), the biggest made in Russia for two hundred years, have been installed in the Holy Trinity Lavra of St Sergius. In 1930, as part of the Bolshevik anti-religious campaign, three bells were torn down and smashed. The new bells, hung on 4th September replace, what Patriarch Aleksii described as "what was barbarically destroyed." Oddly the bells, which together cost about US\$1 million, were paid for by a state run nuclear power company, Rosenergoatom.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

VISIT FROM SINAI: On Sunday 14th/27th October, despite the terrific storms, we were joined at the Divine Liturgy by the Priestmonk Justin of the brotherhood of the Sacred Monastery of St Catherine at Mount Sinai. Fr Justin, who was en route to America, kindly brought us icon reproductions of the Saviour and of St Catherine, a ruby glass

for a vigil lamp, and a rug made by the local Bedouin, and he promised us that he would visit again.

HOLY BAPTISM: On Sunday 30th September/13th October, Angela the infant daughter of Dominic and Elena Crask of Peterborough was baptised, chrismated and given the Holy Mysteries at Saint Edward's Church. The celebrant was Fr Peter Baulk, and Valentina Merritt was godmother. May the holy angels, after whom Angela is named, ever keep her under their protection.

HOLY MATRIMONY: The following Sunday, Fr Peter solemnised the marriage of Vasileos Kalkanteras and Evphemia McOnegal, immediately after the Vespers for St Pelagia's day. May the blessing which they have now received sustain them throughout their marriage until their lives' end.

FELIXSTOWE VISIT: On the weekend of 12th-13th October, in his obedience as dean, Fr Alexis, visited the Mission of Sts Felix and Edmund in Felixstowe, and there enjoyed the hospitality of Fr Andrew Phillips and his presbytera, Sabine. On the "way" there, he took the opportunity to visit St Cedd's Church of St Peter-on-the-Wall at Bradwell-on-Sea, which was built in 654 A.D. A little further on the "way," he also stopped off at St Osyth's, where one of the very few saints to come from Surrey ended her earthly course in martyrdom in the year 673.

NEW ICON CARDS: Through the good offices of Gabriel & Helena Lawani of Greenprint & Design, we have just had printed new icon cards of Saint Erkenwald, the Bishop of London and founder of Chertsey Abbey, and of Saint Hilda the Abbess of Whitby (approx. 5 1/4" x 4"). These are available on the bookstall in the narthex at Brookwood at 20p, or by post. Please send 40p to cover postage costs as well.

SPECIAL THANKS: Our special thanks are due to Father Joseph Paliouras, pastor of the Twelve Apostles Church in Brookmans Park, Hatfield, who has very kindly volunteered to give us a formal course in Byzantine chant. Our thanks are also due to Mr Gervase Bradley of the Parish of Sts Peter and Paul in Portsmouth, who, although unable to attend the Liturgy here on that day, made a special journey and brought his icon of his name saint, for us to have in church on the saint's day.

CHRISTMAS CARDS: This year we have not published our own Brotherhood Christmas cards, but we have a quantity left over from previous years and we have also obtained a supply of the cards published by Saint George Orthodox Information Service to offer our readers.

DONORS SOUGHT: Recently Mrs Ekaterina Harwood visited the Ukraine and brought us various gifts. At our request she also bought for us there an artoclasia set (for the blessing of the five loaves at the Vigil services), some anointing brushes and two klobuks. If any of our readers would like to make an offering to the church, by contributing to these purchases (total cost: £80), their generosity would be greatly appreciated.

PRACTICAL TIP

TAKE CARE with yourself. When you see someone do something wrong, guard yourself against judging them. And also, be sure that you do not use what they are doing as an

example for yourself. Perhaps there are extenuating circumstances in their case which do not apply to you. Perhaps they have a blessing to be doing what seems to your judgmental eye to be so wrong. Often, for instance, we might see someone who came to church late still approach the Chalice, or someone sit down when it is not usual to do so, - you do not usually know the circumstances or whether for some special reason they have obtained a blessing for their behaviour. So follow as best you can what you know to be right, and do not think that simply because you see someone else do something that you can thereafter use that as a model for your own behaviour. Most of all, do not judge them.