

The Shepherd

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FROM THE FATHERS

"ONE DAY of the week you should keep holy (Ex. 20:8), that which is called the Lord's Day, because it is consecrated to the Lord, Who on that day arose from the dead, disclosing and giving prior assurance of the general resurrection, when every earthly activity will come to an end. And you must not engage in any worldly activity that is not essential; you must allow those who are under your authority and those who live with you to rest, so that together you may all glorify Him, Who redeemed us through His death and Who arose from the dead and resurrected our human nature with Himself. You should bring to mind the age to come and meditate upon all the commandments and statutes of the Lord, and you should examine yourself to see whether you have transgressed or overlooked any of them, and you should correct yourself in all ways. On this day you should go to the house of God and attend the services held there and with sincere faith and a clean conscience you should receive the holy Body and Blood of Christ. You should make a beginning of a more perfect life and renew and prepare yourself for the reception of the eternal blessings to come. For the sake of those same blessings you must not misuse material things on the other days of the week either; but on the Lord's Day, so as to be constantly near to God, abstain from all activities except those which are absolutely necessary and which you have to perform in order to live. God thus being your refuge, you will not be distracted, the fire of the passions will not burn you, and you will be free from the burden of sin. In this way you will sanctify the Sabbath, observing it by doing no evil deeds. To the Lord's Day you should join the days dedicated to the Great Feasts, doing the same things and abstaining from the same things."

Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, + 1359 A.D.

"DO NOT SEPARATE yourself from Christ and from the Church. Do you hear the priest ringing the bells? Rise at once, wash yourselves, and go to church. Attend the Orthros [Mattins] attentively, and likewise the Divine Liturgy."

Holy New Hieromartyr & Peer of the Apostles Cosmas Aitolos, + 1779 A.D.

"AT THE APPROACH of the great festivals, you must be especially watchful over yourself. The enemy endeavours beforehand to chill the heart towards the subject of the event celebrated, so that the Christian should not honour it by the heartfelt consideration of its reality."

Saint John of Cronstadt, 1829-1908

"A MAN who is growing cold towards God begins first of all to flee attending church. At first he tries to come to services later, and then he ceases altogether to visit God's house."

Ven. Barsanuphius of Optina, + 1913 A.D.

LIFE'S WAYS

*"Enter ye in at the strait gate:
for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction,
and many there be which go in thereat;
because strait in the gate, and narrow is the way,
which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"
(Matthew 7:13-14).*

WITH THESE WORDS, O Christ-loving brothers and sisters, the Lord enjoins us to follow that narrow path in life, the way of afflictions, of privation and of bitter experiences, the way which leads to life eternal; there can be no other way there except this one of sorrows. Indeed there is a way, the broad, wide way, but this way leads to destruction, and even though it does lead to destruction there are many who, in the Lord's words, go in thereat. In the words of the holy Apostle Paul, the people who take the broad way in life live "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). Such people forget about God completely, and they always give themselves over to drunkenness, sexual licence, fornication, stealing, envy, hatred, pride, anger, laziness, irritability, self-love, love of money, extortion, slander, pleasing the stomach, foolishness and to the other lusts of their flesh. Let such people not think that they are alive. No, they have been a longtime dead, for of such the Holy Spirit says: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3:1). Then reflect, beloved brothers and sisters, how shall we, being dead, appear before the face of our Lord? Don't we know that He will then repudiate us? "I," He says, "am not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." And He goes on to emphasise this, saying: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). This is the portion, beloved brethren, that will fall to those people who go by the broad way in this life. Then let the reader pause on these last words of the Lord, let him reflect deeply and ask himself: how will it be if in actual fact I come to hear that dread and fearsome sentence from the Lord, and am plunged in the eternal, inextinguishable fire of hades? And in that fire we will burn not for a hundred, a thousand or even a million years, but eternally. When as many ages have passed as there are drops of water in the oceans, as there are grains of sands over the whole of the earthly globe, then the torments of hades will be as if they have only just begun, and even then there will be as many ages to follow as have already been. This is what our living on the broad way, our luxuriating way of life, should tell us.

Very few journey in this life by the narrow path of afflictions. The Lord Himself said, that "few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14). We might ask. Why is it thus? Because, according to the word of the Psalmist, "they are all gone astray, they are altogether rendered useless, there is none that doeth good, no not one" (Ps. 13:3).

Woe to that town or that country, says Saint Demetrius of Rostov, in which there is not even one righteous man; such places are close to destruction and devastation; as an example of this we have the Old Testament cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. During the time that the righteous Lot sojourned there they were safe, but when he left, at that very same time, the whole land was destroyed. Then let us marvel that the very same Saviour bears so long with the present times, in which we see the

destruction of cities, the devastation of lands, civil wars, the shedding of blood, and everywhere countless misfortunes. What is the reason for all this? Because, the same hierarch (St Demetrius of Rostov) himself replies, the number of the righteous has grown few.

So, beloved brethren, let us examine ourselves. Do we not resemble the Old Testament and the New Testament sinners, who go by the broad path, and of whom the Word of God says, "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door... and he shall answer and say: I know you not whence ye are" (Luke 13:24-25).

Those who wish to go by the narrow path, that is, to lead a pious life, will always be persecuted and hated by all, for it is said: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). All the holy Apostles pursued the earthly course of this life by this narrow way of much affliction, and they test this way well, desiring to show an example to those servants of God, who manifest a desire to journey by that narrow way. The holy Apostles said: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). And the Lord enjoins His disciples, and through them all His true followers, to journey by that same narrow way: "If any man will come after Me," He says, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24). From the Lord's words it is clear, that He does not in any way forcibly require anyone to follow Him, but He leaves this to the individual will of each man. He does not say that, whether you want it or not, you must suffer; rather He says: If any man *will* come after Me. I do not compel anyone, I do not require anyone, but I leave this to the individual will of each man. He who denies himself, renounces his own natural will and disposition, surrenders himself to the will of God, renounces everything for himself for the sake of Christ and for His sake is ready for every affliction, every deprivation, persecution and suffering, - in a word, such an one is prepared for every affliction even death itself. The Apostle Paul asks him that desires to set out on this narrow and much-afflicted path, and to continue thereon until the end of his earthly life, to first of all labour in prayer: "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all" that is before the start of every good endeavour, "supplications ... be made" (1 Tim.2:1). From this it is evident that without prayer it is not only impossible to make progress, but even to set out upon the accomplishment of any good deed. Saint Chrysostom says that without prayer it is in no way possible for one to have virtue as one's companion or travel the path of life with her. For who can begin to struggle in virtue, without having frequent recourse to, and falling down before, the One, Who is the Bestower and Granter of virtue? He who strengthens the desire for chastity and righteousness in himself by constant nourishing it, will he not pleasurably linger in converse with the One, Who requires this of us, and ever do this more and more? But I shall give my attention to showing briefly that, even if perforce we have been filled to repletion with every sin, the prayers, both those which are born within us and those which we initiate, quickly cleanse us from them. And, if such be the case, what can be greater and more divine than prayer, if it is demonstrated to be a healing medicine for those who are sick in soul? Consider the Ninevites, the first manifest as being cleansed through prayer of their many sins before God. As soon as prayer embraced them as her charges, immediately she made them righteous, - and the city, which formerly had been accustomed to live in dissipation, evil and every kind of lawlessness, was

corrected, overthrowing her earlier evil practices, installing instead the laws of heaven, it committed itself to chastity and philanthropy, to meekness and care for the poor. It had been without these virtues and they had no place in their souls, but suddenly there settled in every soul that thing which makes for every righteousness, which disposes one to every virtue, and which casts out every evil. If, at that time, someone who had known Nineveh well had visited her, he would not have recognised the city, so speedily had she converted from the life of dissipation to that of piety. "Behold, here you have a clear and true demonstration of the fact that if one does not travel the path with prayer, it is impossible to perfect good deeds." And St John of the Ladder calls prayer "the mother of all the virtues" (Step 28). So then, imitator of Christ, if you are considering or if you have already set out on the narrow path in this life, with God's help your first duty is to be instructed in prayer; and as prayer is the mother of all the virtues, you must also unite it with the father, which is attention, for from a mother children are not born without a father. So from this mother, which is prayer there will be born no children, that is virtues, unless she is united to the father, which is attention. Thus, if with the help of God you learn to pray with attention, then spiritual fruits will come to you, such as the holy Apostle Paul recounts: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, kind-heartedness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23). Now perhaps, a desire to understand how one can learn to pray as is outlined above has come to the reader. To this we can in reply use the words of the blessed Patriarch Callistus, who says: If you desire to maintain the genuine activity of prayer, then emulate the psaltery player, who inclines his head a little and turns his ear to the strings, who skilfully plucks the strings that they emit a harmonious sound, and who himself is delighted by their melody. Is this example clear to you? The psaltery is the heart, the strings are the feelings, the plucking of the strings is the remembrance of God (the repetition of the Jesus Prayer), and the player is the mind. The mind, mindful of God and of Divine things, elicits from the God-fearing heart holy feelings, from which a certain ineffable sweetness fills the soul and mind, which, when purified, is illumined with a Divine effulgence. The psaltery player sees nothing and hears nothing at all except his melody, by which he is delighted, and the mind at the time of prayer is actively sober, that is without any thoughts, and is immersed in the heart, and can pay no attention to anything save God alone. His whole inner being speaks to God with the voice of David: 'My soul hath cleaved after Thee' (Ps. 62:8)" (From the fifth volume of the Philokalia). Saint Hesychius the Presbyter of Jerusalem speaks of attentive prayer thus: "Here is an image and order for stillness of heart. If you wish to engage in spiritual warfare (successfully and as you should) then let that little animal, the spider, always be your example for stillness of heart; otherwise you will not be still in your intellect as you should be. The spider hunts and kills small flies; and you, if you will be like him, sitting in his spider's web, most assiduously remaining still in your soul, will continuously slay 'the children of Babylon,' that is evil thoughts, and for this slaying through David (Ps. 136:12) the Holy Spirit will bless you. If you do not achieve this, you will not be silent in mind as should be" (Philokalia, volume 2). Do not think, beloved reader, that one can pray without attention, standing in prayer only physically, and that in this way you can achieve any virtue or please God. No, do not accept any such thoughts. This idea comes from the enemy, for he well knows that prayer without attention is not prayer, but simply empty words. Someone asked Saint Abba Agathon about this - "Tell me,

Abba, what is greater bodily labour or the guarding of the heart?" The Abba replied to him: "Man is like a tree; bodily labours are the leaves, and the guarding of the heart is the fruit." Furthermore, according to the Scriptures, "every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. 3:10). Thus, beloved brothers and sisters, all that we have said might be summed up in the words of Saint Abba Esaias, who says: "Brethren, be attentive to yourselves. How long will you labour profitlessly, your work perishing through carelessness? How long will you submit to the enemy, who lives in us and entices us daily towards defilement, who deflects us from virtue, and does not permit us to lift up our eyes to contemplate the Divine light. Examine yourself, poor one, you who were baptised into Christ and into His death! Think what a death He surrendered Himself to for you, and do you follow in His footsteps? Show me your morals - are they akin to Him, Whose image you bear? He is sinless and in all things gave Himself as an example for you to emulate. He loved lowliness, and you avoid lowliness. He did not have where to lay His head (Matt. 8:20), and you seek spacious and comfortable accommodation. He bore with every kind of abuse, and you do not want to accept any kind of reproach. He did not return evil for evil, and you thirst for vengeance. He did not become wrathful even when He bore sufferings from others, and you, when you are put upon by others, are enraged. In the depth of dishonour He was not in the least disturbed, and you are disturbed by the slightest disgrace. He benevolently called sinners to Himself, and with your words you even alienate your friends. He good-heartedly bore offenses, and you are irritated by a slight insult. He was condescending to sinners, and you exalt yourself over them and even over those who are better than you. He gave Himself over to those who afflicted Him that He might redeem them, and you are afflicted even by those who are doing good for you. Think on this: that He gave Himself for you, and what for your part you give Him. Recognise Him from His deeds, and yourself from your own deeds. If you have died with Him [in Baptism], then who is it that is doing these things, these sins? And so, brethren, be attentive in your life lest your mind stagnate on account of your evil deeds, lest you lose time, lest you not achieve the peace of a son of God, which peace consists in these things: that in all things you guard your humility and innocence, that you not be at enmity with anyone, that you not find comfort in anything that God detests, and that you always have your sins before your eyes, and be dead to all evil deeds. For in such a way, the God "Who cannot lie" (Titus 1:2) will come to us and, in His kind-heartedness, will make strong our infirmities. Amen.

*Published as an anonymous paper by the
Russian Saint Elias Skete on Athos in 1896.*

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

By the Priest N. R. Antonov

Continuation

§ 50. Other Sacred Commemorations in the Church Services. Desiring to make her children somewhat purer, the Holy Church piously and attentively constantly dedicates not only every hour of the day but every day of the week as well. So it is that, from the very beginning of her existence, the Church of Christ has consecrated the first day of the week to the commemoration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and keeps it as a festive, joyous day, as a feast (1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7-8). Friday commemorates the day of the Passion of the Saviour and His death; and Wednesday the betrayal unto death of Jesus Christ, which happened on that day. Little by little the other days of the week were dedicated to the prayerful commemoration of the following persons, who with regard to time stood closer than others to Christ: Saint John the Baptist (who is always remembered in the services on Tuesdays), and the Holy Apostles (on Thursdays). Besides them on Thursdays we also remember Saint Nicolas the Wonderworker. On Saturdays we have the Mother of God, and Mondays are dedicated to the remembrance of the honourable bodiless Powers of Heaven, the Angels, who greeted the Nativity of the Saviour, His Resurrection and His Ascension.*

As the Christian faith spread, so the number of saints was increased; the martyrs and the God-pleasers came. The renown of their struggles proved such an inexhaustible source of inspiration for pious Christian hymnographers and iconographers that it brought about their being commemorated in various hymns and prayers as well as in iconographic depictions. The Holy Church embraced these spiritual outpourings within the system of her services, appointing readings and chants for them on the days that had been designated for these saints, usually the day of their repose or that of their glorification. The whole cycle of these prayers and hymns is broad and multi-faceted, because the host of Christian martyrs and righteous ones is immense. The cycle unfolds throughout the whole year and on each and every day not one but several glorified saints are designated. In the course of time, this cycle of services was enriched even more by other such commemorations and prayer services. Manifestations of God's mercy towards certain peoples, places or towns, for instance deliverance from flooding, earthquake, or the incursion of enemies and the like, provided other occasions to mark these impressive events in prayer. Besides this, already in olden times, they celebrated the day of the coronation of the Sovereign, the day of the consecration of the Bishop, and they observed fasts.

Thus every single day is kept as a day within the weekly cycle and at the same time as a day within the yearly cycle, and so on each day we have a trinity of commemorations:

- a) the commemorations of the various hours within the day;
- b) the commemorations corresponding to the various days of the week;

c) the commemorations which correspond to each day of the year.

* Footnote: Regarding the antiquity of the various dedications of the weekdays, we have evidence that the commemorations for Wednesdays and Fridays arose in the first century; regarding the other days, the special commemoration on Saturdays was established in the fourth century, but those for Monday, Tuesdays and Thursdays are of a rather later derivation. Furthermore the weekly honouring of Saint John the Forerunner, the Apostles and St Nicolas the Wonderworker were at first probably local to some particular monastery, a practice closely bound up with the ancient custom of dedicating one day of the week to the particular heavenly patron of the church or monastery. *[Even today, on Saturdays, when we do not have to combine two commemorations, the canon to the saint of the church is read at Mattins - ed.]* However, in time this purely local usage took on a broader and universal significance because of the particular importance of these Saints in the Church's history and their closeness to Jesus Christ.

§51. Understanding the Cycle of Services. As stated, thanks to the things outlined above, each day we have a trinity of commemorations, daily, weekly and yearly ones, but the question might strike the worshipper as to why in the church services we not only commemorate events connected with particular hours of the day but even other ones and going on from that a multitude of sacred personages. When he grasps the fact of the threefold daily commemorations, he will begin to be able to comprehend other things. If over the course of several weeks, not less than two, you attend every church service, attentively following the prayers that are read and chanted, then you will notice that, for instance, the prayer "Our Father," or the prayer to the All-holy Trinity, and the litanies are recited at every service; others, perhaps the majority of them, are heard only at one service and not used at others. Then you begin to understand that some prayers are constantly used at every service and do not change, and others change or alternate. So there are prayers and hymns which are appointed to particular services, and others which are proper to the special commemoration of the day.

Thus there are prayers which are repeated only once a week. "Let us who have beheld the Resurrection of Christ, "for instance, we hear only at the Vigil for Sunday; "Supreme commanders of the heavenly hosts" we hear only on Mondays. So we see that these prayers are on the weekly cycle.

Yet others are on the yearly cycle: Thy nativity, O Christ our God," we have on 25th December, and "Thy nativity, O Theotokos," on 8th September (and the days that immediately follow).

If you compare the changes and alterations in the church prayers that this threefold cycle induces, then you will see that each day we repeat the prayers that refer to the sacred significance of each hour; each week we complete those that refer to the daily commemorations, and in the year we complete the annual cycle. [It happens, of course, that because the years do not begin on the same day of the week every time, the weekly and annual cycles do not coincide in the same way every year.]

§ 52. The Way the Church Services are Composed. The three cycles that we have spoken of above comprise the parts of our services which change. There are also in the services parts which are unchanging and form the basic structure of the service. So

every service we hear consists of both an unchanging sequence of prayers, interwoven with sequence of prayers which change according to the three cycles.

§ 53. The Unchanging Prayer Sequence. To understand the order and meaning of our church services, it is good to concentrate first on understanding the unchanging parts of the service. The unchanging parts, which are read or sung at every service, are the following:- 1) The initial prayers, that is the prayers, with which we begin all our services and which, for that reason, are referred to in liturgical books as "the usual beginning;" 2) the litanies; 2) the exclamations; and 4) the dismissals.

To be continued with "The Usual Beginning"....

N.B. In the sections above and in the following ones, we have offered a rather free translation of Fr Antonov's work, to avoid much unnecessary and laboured repetition, to correspond to present-day practice and to explain his train of thought to people not brought up in an Orthodox society.

THE COMING MONTH

SEPTEMBER is blessed with two Great Feasts: the Nativity of the Virgin (8th/21st) and the Universal Exaltation of the Cross (14th/27th), and in addition to these here at Brookwood, we have the festival of our heavenly intercessor. Saint Edward the Martyr on 3rd/16th. All these are celebrated with Vigil services.

Saint Andrew of Crete refers to the feast of the Virgin's Nativity as "the beginning of feasts," saying that "it serves as the door to grace and truth." This, of course, refers to the fact that historically the birth of the all-holy Virgin was a preparation for that of her Divine Son, and that her birth was the doorway to the coming of Him by Whom "grace and truth came" (John 1:17). This truth is paralleled liturgically in that it is the first Great Feast in the Church Year, which begins on 1st September. The first six days of the year represent the six days of creation, followed by the Sabbath. The eighth day begins a new cycle. The first week ended with a note of sadness because of the fall of our first parents, and, as the first to sin. Eve was promised sorrow. That sorrow was taken from woman-kind when the Risen Saviour met them and greeted them with the salutation, "Rejoice," on the first Easter morning. But on today's feast, through a woman, the Most Pure Mother of God, that joy begins to blossom forth. And thus Saint John Damascene, one of the greatest Fathers of the Eastern Church, says of this festival that it is "feast of universal rejoicing, because in the Theotokos all the race of man is renewed and the sorrow of the foremother Eve is changed to joy." Already in the very first days of the year we called from afar towards Paschal joy, just as in the very beginning of the history of mankind, even in the act of convicting our parents of their sin, the Lord showed His exceeding love for us and granted us a promise of His victory over the enemy, when he addressed the serpent with the words: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The feast of the Cross is a composite celebration and the only one of the Twelve Great Feasts not to centre on the events in the life of the Saviour and His Mother. It comprises three main celebrations: 1) the finding of the Cross by St Helena (326 A.D.);2) the appearance of the Cross to St Constantine (312 A.D.);and 3) the

return of the Cross to Jerusalem in 614 after its capture by the Persians. First of all, the finding of the Cross was celebrated on the second day of Pascha (it happened at about that time of year), but in 335, the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem was consecrated on 13th September, and the feast of the Cross was shifted to be on the second day of that celebration, so that we have a festival of the Cross in the Spring and in the Autumn. After the Cross had been taken captive in the seventh century by the Persians, who were subsequently defeated by the Byzantines, it was returned to Jerusalem on 14th September, 614, and this event is now celebrated with the others.

Our celebration of Saint Edward in September is a recent addition to the calendar, and it commemorates the donation of the sacred relics of the martyr to our church on 3rd/16th September, 1984. In that year this day fell on a Sunday, and on the Saturday afternoon, the donor of the relics, the late John Wilson-Claridge, handed them over to Bishop Gregory of Washington, and they were brought into our church in preparation for the Vigil. The Sunday service was combined with the service of St Edward for what was undoubtedly the first time in centuries that a full service in his honour had been chanted by the Orthodox. As many readers will know, because of the court case against us, we were not permitted to keep the relics in the church until various matters had been resolved, but they were returned to the church at Brookwood on 9th/22nd December, 1988, and, through his intercessions, have rested there ever since.

Among other Saints in September, we have:

Saint Omer of Therouanne (9th/22nd) was born near Constance, the son of a nobleman and his wife. When he was still a child, his father was widowed and took his son to Luxeuil, where he placed himself and his young son in monastic obedience to St Eustathius, the successor of the great Saint Columbanus. The saint grew up and remained in the monastery until he was elected to be Bishop of Therouanne. He was consecrated by St Acharius, Bishop of Noyon. He found the people of his diocese still only half converted and, until deep old age, he exercised himself in endeavouring to bring them to the Faith. Once when travelling around his diocese he came to Boulogne, where he instructed the people and celebrated the Holy Mysteries for them. Afterwards he decided to take a rest, and the servant boy, seeing that his services would not be needed, asked his blessing to go down to the seashore and play. The Bishop forbade him, but when he had fallen asleep the boy went nonetheless. On the shore he found a skiff, and thinking it would be fun to take it out to sea, he did so. Soon the tide and the winds changed and he found that he was driven far out to sea. Only then did he remember that he had not obtained the Bishop's blessing and he repented of his folly. Immediately, through St Omer's prayers, the wind and tide changed and the boy was brought safely to the shore. In old age, St Omer lost his sight but he continued his ministry. It is said that he participated in the celebration of the translation of the sacred relics of St Vedast, and that during that festival his sight was restored to him. He died at Waorans in the year 670, and was buried in the Church there dedicated to the Theotokos. In later years this church became the Cathedral of St Omer, and part of his skull was preserved there for many years.

Our Venerable Father Evphrosynus (11th/24th), whose icon is often found in the kitchens of the homes of the faithful, because he was a cook, is approached in prayer to help with matters culinary. He lived in the ninth century and was a monastic

father, serving the brethren of his monastery as their cook. Because of his lowly task, little was thought of him, but, despite his heavy and tiring obedience, interiorly he achieved great purity and virtue through prayer. His virtue was revealed, when one night in a dream the Abbot was granted to visit Paradise; there he saw Fr Evphrosynus, who gave him three fragrant apples. When he awoke the abbot remembered the dream, and also found the apples on his pillow. He sought out Fr Evphrosynus and asked him what it might mean. "Where were you last night?" he asked him. "Where you were, father," the saint replied. The abbot then revealed the matter to all the monks, but St Evphrosynus, fleeing the glory of men, fled the monastery to live out the remainder of his days in the wilderness.

The Holy Martyr Callistratus (27th September/10th October) was from Carthage, and bore witness to Christ in the year 304. One of his ancestors, Neochorus, had been a soldier serving under Pontius Pilate at the time of the Lord's crucifixion. Seeing the many miracles worked at that time, which are recorded in the Gospels, Neochorus became a Christian and was baptised by the Apostles. When, after his military service, he returned to Carthage, his home city, he brought other members of his family to his new-found faith, and so generation after generation in that family were nurtured in piety. Like Neochorus, Callistratus embarked on a military career, and his comrades noticed that he was a Christian, because he used to rise at night, when all were asleep, to say his prayers. He was denounced to senior officers, and ordered to offer sacrifice to the idols. Upon his refusal he was harshly beaten, and then he was cast into the sea to drown. However, by God's providence and that others might be saved, he did not die at that time, but he was miraculously brought up from the sea unharmed. Seeing this miracle, knowing his integrity and having seen his steadfastness in the Faith, forty-nine of his fellow soldiers converted, and were thrown with him into prison. The commander ordered that they not be publicly executed, but rather he sent soldiers into the prison by night to put them to death, and so the fifty received crowns of martyrdom.

Saint Honorius of Canterbury (30th September/13th October) was the last of the original companions of Saint Augustine to succeed him as Archbishop of Canterbury. He was chosen to become Archbishop after the death of St Justus. The Pope, who at that time was also called Honorius, sent letters confirming the election and granting him the pallium. Anticipating the difficulty of his travelling to Rome for consecration as a Bishop (he was a priest at the time of his election to the Archiepiscopal throne). Pope Honorius granted the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to consecrate each other's successors. The saint therefore travelled north to receive consecration at the hands of Saint Paulinus of York, and he met him at Lincoln where the Mystery was celebrated. Notices of the good activity of St Honorius occur in the lives of many other saints: he encouraged the mission of Saint Felix in East Anglia; he received St Paulinus and the Queen St Ethelburga when they were exiled from the North, and installed St Paulinus in the vacant see of Rochester; later he appointed St Ithamar, a native of Kent, to the same diocese; he also helped the young St Wilfrid when he was making his first pilgrimage to Rome. He was Archbishop for twenty-five years and known as a great scholar; the references to him in the lives of other saints indicate to us the breadth of his concern for the Church and the compassionate love that he showed others. He ended his earthly course in the year 653, and was laid to

rest beside his predecessors. So, after almost sixty years, ended the course of those saintly Archbishops who had come from Rome to Kent with Saint Augustine, who would have known the great Saint Gregory himself and were the first fruits of his concern for the conversion of our forebears. The story of Saint Gregory's seeing the Anglian slave boys in the market place in Rome, and remarking that they were not Angles but Angels is legendary. From such a small incident there was kindled in his heart a zeal to bring our people to the Faith. Such was that love and zeal that, among his immediate sons, it inspired that chapter of missionary witness which draws to a close with the death of St Honorius, but which continued thereafter for many more generations and which, in our own days, has in some small part been rekindled again.

FATHER GEORGE CHEREMETIEFF

SOMETIME 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.

FROM THE NUN ELENA'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ELDER, SAINT BARSANUPIUS OF OPTINA

...I happened to hear from the Elder how there rolled up to the Skete some merchant-pilgrims, who had come from Kaluga on horseback solely with the aim of speaking with Fr Macarius. At the threshold of the Holy Gates, some monk met them with the following speech: "You're coming to see Fr Macarius? What for? Do you really think he's an elder? He's just a monk - there are lots like him!" The merchants heeded him, turned the horses around and left, without having been to see the Elder.

Obviously, such a zealous advisor can always be found, and one was found for me, too: "Fr Barsanuphius? What kind of elder is he?" A monk threw out two or three phrases, some unfamiliar women added to them, and the work of the enemy of our salvation began. I did not recognise that I was confusing myself and giving free rein to my thoughts. Things got to the point that after a few days Fr Barsanuphius seemed in my eyes to be a very, very bad person, guilty of my sins. To this day I don't understand how I could have allowed myself to get to that point. It is interesting that not only did this new view of the elder not bring me peace but I was utterly tormented in soul. It must also be said that it was terrible to again be deceived in my search. It seemed that I had found someone and had again lost him. I wept, just as if I had buried something precious; I was tormented but did not know how to help myself. Totally exhausted, I decided to head to the Shamordino Convent and announced this to Fr Barsanuphius: "I came to say goodbye; I'm going to Shamordino tomorrow."

"Ach, is that how it is? You've made up your mind?"

"Yes, I've made up my mind!"

"Well, alright, if you've decided, go..."

Then I did not understand the absurdity of my behaviour; I did not understand that in Optina people come to an elder, not with a prepared and self-willed decision, but with a request for a blessing one way or the other, and with a readiness to submit to his decision. I did not ask for a blessing for my trip and did not receive one. I left for Shamordino and spent several days there in terrible anguish, finding no joy in either the singing or in the Divine services and finally, utterly exhausted, I returned to Optina for my things, since the time had come for me to go home. Before my departure I went to the Skete to "say good-bye" to Fr Barsanuphius, considering that simple courtesy demanded this, as though he had not "fallen" low in my eyes.

But when, arriving at the Skete, I found out from the cell-attendant that Fr Barsanuphius was not home and would return in two days, my heart began to ache. The thought that I might leave without seeing the elder seemed quite terrible to me, and I vaguely understood that this was not a matter of courtesy alone. I had stopped by three times to find out whether the elder had returned when, at last, the cell-attendant told me to come that day in the evening, and perhaps, to my good fortune, he would have returned. This was the deadline for me; it was impossible for me to delay my departure any longer.

Coming in the evening with another woman, I learned that Fr Barsanuphius had arrived, and they let us in to wait for him.

The Elder soon entered and called us both into his "prayer room" together. Seating us side by side on the couch, he began the following conversation: "Were you at Shamordino?"

"I was there, Batiushka."

"Alright, did you like the new catholicon?"

"I liked it, Batiushka."

"And did they sing nicely?"

"Very nicely."

"And were the meals tasty? Did they feed you well there?"

"It was good, Batiushka."

"And were the nuns kind and friendly?"

"Yes, very friendly."

"Glory to Thee, O Lord! Did you find rest for your soul?" This phrase, which sounded ironical in my ears, I could not endure; and glancing at the elder, who was thoughtfully fingering his prayer-rope and looking at us concentratedly, I blurted out: "No, Batiushka, I found no rest at all!"

"What do you mean - did you really not rest? After all, the church was nice, they sang well, the nuns were kind - and you didn't find rest in soul? ... What a marvel: the church was nice, they sang well, the food was tasty ... and you didn't rest in soul ... What might this mean? The church was nice...."

I felt as though I were on burning coals, and the calmer the Elder was outwardly, the harder it became for me, and finally I couldn't stand it and declared that I thought I knew how to explain this "wonder," but only wanted to speak privately. Fr Barsanuphius asked the other pilgrim to go out. I was left alone, and the Elder began to look inquiringly at me. "Well, what would you like to say to me?" His eyes looked deeply into my soul, their expression sympathetic and worried.

"Batiushka, it seems to me that the reason I was so tormented in Shamordino is that the whole time I was there I was angry at you."

"What do you mean? What for? Perhaps I am guilty of something before you? Then forgive me!"

I did not expect this humble request at all, and became totally ashamed. It became clear to me that all those accusations against the Elder that had been piling up in my mind at that time were growing dim.

"No, you're not guilty before me in anything. I just thought nasty thoughts about you!"

"Nasty thoughts? What precisely?"

"Do I have to tell you that? After all, I thought insulting things about you!"

"How can you not tell me? I'm your spiritual father, and you have to say everything to your father."

"No, I wouldn't say insulting words to my father, and I won't tell you!"

"Lock the door!" Again I latched the door, again I was on my knees, again there was a struggle, but this time the matter was complicated by the fact that now all my monstrous thoughts against Fr Barsanuphius were scattered and had lost any semblance of truth. I felt that they were just nonsense, just lies, and that I myself was a disgracefully thankless creature, endlessly guilty before the Elder. The more glaringly I recognised all the absurdity of my accusations, the more clearly I sensed all the moral beauty of the Elder, and the more hurt I would have to break off my relationship with him, which, according to my reasoning, would have inevitably followed if he had found out how I had lumped him together with dirt in my thoughts. To tell him all my thoughts seemed all the more impossible, but the Elder was insistently demanding this admission and was waiting for it. I finally gave in. Kneeling, with my face averted from the Elder, upon whom I could not even look for shame, I said, "Here's what I thought about you choosing the most offensive thing from my arsenal of accusations. I waited for an outburst, but Fr Barsanuphius remained as he was, and placing his hand on my shoulder, he just calmly and thoughtfully said, "That's just how I am!... That's one! What else?"

"Here's what." (There followed another slander).

That's two! What else?"

I was going downhill, and clearly realised with despair, that everything I was saying - everything - was a lie and a slander. I brought forth accusation after

accusation, while the Elder held up his fingers: "three ... four..." At last I fell silent. "And what else?"

"It seems there's nothing more left!" I replied, and I expected that we would then dryly say good-bye, and that I would leave, never to return here again. I waited for Fr Barsanuphius to say something like this: "It's very sad that that's the way I am and that you had to be so disappointed in me. What is to be done? Look for someone else somewhere..." and so on. But I listened and the elder was silent, and was looking for something in his pocket. I lifted my head, but did not dare to look at him.

"Christ is risen!" I heard. I looked (this took place after the feast of Sts Peter and Paul), and in the Elder's hand was a golden egg on a ribbon, and he was all radiant, joyful and affectionate. "Christ is risen! My child, my child, how could you have accepted those thoughts as your own? They were, without a doubt, not yours, but from the enemy!"

And Fr Barsanuphius began to talk about how the enemy hates the guidance of eldership, how he tries to deflect a person from this salvific path, and how these very temptations, experienced by me and other beginners when they embark upon this path, serve as evidence of its truth. It was as if a mountain had fallen from my shoulders, and that dark wave by which I had almost been choked receded, and Fr Barsanuphius became close, dear, and bright. Receiving a blessing for the beginning of a new life - a life in God - and having received a small icon of the Mother of God "Assuage My Sorrows," with the instruction to guard it for the rest of my life, so that I would even have it placed in my coffin after my death, I left Optina.

*From the book, 'Elder Barsanuphius of Optina' by Victor Afanasiev,
published by St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2000*

NEWS SECTION

ATHONITE ABBOT EXPRESSES GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT RAVENNA LITURGY: ARCHIMANDRITE GEORGE, the Abbot of the Sacred Monastery of Grigoriou on the Holy Mountain Athos, has issued a statement of his concern on hearing, while he was visiting Athens, that His All-Holiness the Œcumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos I imparted the Holy Mysteries to Roman Catholics, during the Liturgy that he celebrated earlier in the year in Ravenna. Fr George states: "I know from eyewitnesses that His All-Holiness never imparts Holy Communion to the heterodox, and further that it is a principle of the Great Church for there not to be sacramental intercommunion with the heterodox before dogmatic agreement and unity in the Orthodox Faith." Nonetheless, distress had been felt by the Greek faithful at numerous reports that the Patriarch, either wittingly or unwittingly, had departed from this Orthodox principle when serving at Ravenna, and Fr George has been led to believe that this concern of the faithful members of the Church is totally justified. He asks that "because the shock and scandal are great, with unfortunate consequences for the unity of our Holy Orthodox Church, we think it an urgent need for there to be responsible and official statements that the above happened inadvertently and by mistake and that there will be no such further incidents."

VISIT OF ARCHBISHOP MARK: FOR THE GREAT FEAST OF THE DORMITION, the dedication festival of the London Russian Orthodox Church, His Grace Archbishop Mark visited his flock in the London area. On the Sunday before the Dormition, 12th/25th August, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Brookwood, assisted by Fr Alexis, Fr Thomas Hardy, Fr Peter Baulk, Fr Paul Elliott, Fr Elias Jones, Hierodeacon Sabbas and Fr Deacon Geoffrey Ready. During the service, Fr Geoffrey was ordained to the sacred priesthood to serve at the Holy Trinity Mission in Belfast. Fr Geoffrey, who was named after Saint Ceolfrid, was also given the name Cassian after Saint John Cassian the Roman by the Archbishop, who felt this name would be more readily recognised by the increasing number of Orthodox Christians from Eastern Europe settling in this country. At the end of the Liturgy, the Archbishop began his sermon by remarking how apposite the Scriptural readings appointed for that, the ninth Sunday after Pentecost, had been for the ordination of a priest. At the Liturgy, the infant son of Fr Geoffrey-Cassian and Presbytera Jolan, Nathanael, received the Holy Mysteries for the first time.

On Bank Holiday Monday, the Archbishop served with Fr Alexis, Fr Vadim Zakrevsky, and Frs Peter and Cassian, assisted by Hierodeacon Sabbas and Deacon Sergei Zashchitin at the Convent of the Annunciation in Willesden.

On the feast itself, the Archbishop celebrated at the Church of the Dormition on Harvard Road, with Fathers Alexis, Vadim, Thomas, Paul and Cassian, and with Fr Peter Holodny who was visiting Britain from the States, and with the two deacons. After the Liturgy, a procession was made around the church with the icon of the feast. At the festal meal after the church celebration, while greeting the parishioners on their dedication festival. His Grace addressed the people with a rather forceful admonition about church commitment. That same day, the Archbishop returned to Germany.

DESECRATION IN KOSOVO: ACTS of deliberate desecration of Christian holy places continue in Kosovo. On 22nd June, Fr Zoran Filipovic went to the cemetery at Milosevo for the annual commemoration service. They found that hardly one grave monument was left unbroken and that the eyes in the photographs of the departed, which, according to the custom, are affixed to their stones, had been deliberately put out. On 31st July, five Serbian homes in the village of Klokot were blown up with powerful explosives. And churchmen say that "attacks on Serb civilians and their holy places are becoming more frequent." Serbs have also been arrested on specious charges, probably a form of harassment. In the Monastery of Gracanica, the superior Mother Efrosinia was arrested for growing and consuming cannabis within the monastery. It was later found that the growth in question was just hemp. Dr Milan Ivanovic, the president of Serb National Council in Northern Kosovo was charged with throwing a grenade at a police vehicle; at the time when the alleged crime took place witnesses agree he was working in hospital. Lands, belonging to the Monastery of Visoki Decani for centuries, have been appropriated with the endorsement of the local court. Such is the situation that, on 19th August this year, even the Secretaries General of the World Council of Churches and of the Conference of European Churches have addressed UNMIK's chief, Michael Steiner, and His Holiness Patriarch Pavle of Serbia, expressing "their profound concern at the continued violence facing members of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its cultural and spiritual property in Kosovo."

An internet posting, "from the diary of a Serb Monk," however, tells of God's mercy and providence sheltering His people. It reads:-

"July 26, 2002 - The miracle of Holy Archangels

We finally greeted the 650th anniversary of the founding of the Holy Archangels Monastery near Prizren. I remained in Decani this time, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the brethren and the bishop, who were scheduled to come to the monastery with their escorts after the festivities. The bishop arrived late because the UNMIK police driving him in an armoured vehicle took a wrong turn at Djakovica and apparently went as far as the Albanian border. I would not be surprised to learn that they entered Albania proper undetected since there is no longer any border between the province of Kosovo and Albania. Abbot Theodosije arrived with the Decani brethren only four hours later because Italian military transporters took them on an alternative route by way of Brezovica and Pristina due to the anti-Serb demonstrations in Prizren. We gathered together that evening and exchanged impressions from the celebration which, despite the rain, took place with great dignity and spiritual joy.

Especially noteworthy were comments regarding the explosion heard in the Holy Archangels Monastery immediately after the Liturgy as many people still hovered in the church entrance. Later we learned that the Albanians had planted strong explosives some one hundred metres above the monastery in order to invoke the collapse of a part of the hill with a huge cliff directly on the monastery yard, thus burying the attendants. It is not difficult to imagine the extent of the damage had more than a mere one hundred grams of the total of 9 kilos of highly volatile explosives planted in the hillside actually detonated. We praised God Who, in answer to the prayers of the Holy Archangels, prevented yet another tragedy and spared many human lives."

"AS YOU WERE": IN A BRIEF NOTICE in our July issue we mentioned the troubles within the Sourozh Diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate in this country; these troubles had arisen over the appointment and ministry of Bishop Hilarion, who had recently been consecrated to serve within the diocese. For the time being, the matter has now been resolved by a decision of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate. Archbishop Anatoly, who had been retired, has been brought out of retirement and the title "of Kerch" has been restored to him. Bishop Hilarion has been given the title "of Podolsk" and appointed to be the representative of the Patriarchate to European International organisations in Brussels, where he will serve as a Vicar Bishop of the diocese of Moscow.

BROOKWOOD NEWS

HOLY BAPTISM: On Saturday 11th/24th August, assisted by Fr Paul Elliott, Fr Peter Baulk baptised Nathanael, the infant son of Fr Deacon Geoffrey and Diaconissa Jan Ready. Fr Paul and his presbytera, Elizabeth, stood as sponsors for the child. Nathanael received the Holy Mysteries for the first time at the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy on the next day (see above); and, having then received ordination to the sacred priesthood, Fr Geoffrey Cassian, who is serving daily at Brookwood in training, had the

blessing of having Nathanael and Presbyteria Jolan as the first two laypeople to whom he imparted the Holy Mysteries on the following Tuesday. May their family all be kept in unity of faith and in piety for the remaining days of their lives.

BROOKWOOD CEMETERY SOCIETY: The BCS Open Day was held in the grounds of Saint Edward's Church on Sunday 18th August. A number of stalls and exhibits were set up around the church, and guided walks around the cemetery were organised at regular intervals. The occasion was graced by the visit of the Mayor of Woking, Cllr Mehala Gosling and her mayoral consort and husband, Mr Alan Gosling. We had thought this visit might simply be a brief courtesy visit to support the efforts of BCS. In fact the mayoral couple showed a lively interest in the history of the cemetery, in the work of the Cemetery Society, and in our own brotherhood. They were given a short tour of the church, and presented with an icon of our heavenly patron, St Edward; afterwards they asked to see our brotherhood house and expressed their gratitude that in adapting the former chapel as our living accommodation, we had managed to maintain so many of its original features.

NEW ICONS: New hand-painted icons have arrived from America for Saint Edward Church. One is of Saint Hilda, Abbess of Whitby and has been donated to our church by Mother Pelagia of the Lesna Icon Convent, whose name in the world was Hilda; and the other is of Saint Erkenwald, the Bishop of London - a saint local to us, as he was the founder of the monastic house at Chertsey - donated by subscriptions from those who regularly attend our church from London. Both icons were painted by Fr Theodore Jurewicz of Erie, Pennsylvania, whose work is known to our parishioners because he painted our iconostas icons, the shrine icon of St Edward and the large Platytera above the Holy Table.

GUESTS: On Sunday 11th August, we were joined at the Divine Liturgy by Fr Deacon Stephen Fretwell and his diaconissa from the Sts Peter and Paul Parish in Portsmouth and their guest, Fr Henri de France, priest of the Sts Cosmas and Damian Church in Avignon, France.

TV INTERVIEW: On Tuesday 20th August, Fr Alexis was interviewed by Christine Morgan at the All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney, for a programme, dealing with the celibacy debate within the Roman Catholic Church, to be broadcast later in the year.

PRACTICAL TIP

WHEN during the church services, the order requires the celebrant to stand in the middle of the church, or even in the narthex, the faithful should not cross the church in front of him, between him and the sanctuary, but should always go round behind him.