

The Shepherd

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From the Fathers

“O Lord, we intreat of Thy goodness that Thou wilt forgive our sins, and pass by our follies. Open to us, Lord, the door of Thy tender mercies, that there may come unto us seasons of refreshing. And if indeed, O Lord, Thou dost open the door to the penitent, in Thy mercy receive our petition.”

VEN. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN, + 373 A.D.

“AND in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people’s heart has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with the eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should turn back, and I should heal them (Mt. 13:14-15; Es. 6: 9-10).’ Do you see what this prophesy is saying? You do not understand, not because I created your heart fat and dull, but because it has grown fat, although it is obvious that before it was fine and subtle. For something which grows fat was first thin. And when their heart had grown fat, then they closed their eyes. He did not say that God had closed their eyes, but they did, of their own choice. They did this, He says, so that they would not turn back and be healed by Me.”

“DO you wish to understand that God has made all to see what they ought to do? Listen, that they see comes from God; but that they see without perceiving comes from their own

wickedness. For God created them able to see, that is, to understand the good, but they do not see, intentionally shutting their eyes so that they will not turn back and be corrected. It is as if they despised their own salvation and betterment.”

“THE Lord says: ‘Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,’ that is, unto you who desire to learn, ‘for everyone that seeketh findeth.’ To the others who are not worthy of the mysteries, He speaks obscurely. They think that they see, but they do not; they hear, but they do not understand. And this is to their benefit. The Lord hides these things from them so that they will not fall under greater condemnation for understanding the mysteries and then disregarding them. He who understands, and then disregards, deserves a more severe punishment.”

THREE QUOTATIONS FROM
ST THEOPHYLACT OF OCHRID, + 1107 A.D.



*The Prerogatives of Sunday,
the Lord’s Day*

VEN. NICODEMUS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, + 1809 A.D.

BRETHREN, we shudder when we think about the lofty and great and wondrous prerogatives of the resurrectional day of Sunday, which are these:

1) Sunday is the beginning of the creation of the cosmos, on which day the Father especially acted, while co-operating with the Son and the Spirit.

2) Sunday became the beginning of the renewal of creation, on which day the Son especially acted through His Resurrection.

3) Sunday is the perfection of creation, on which day the Holy Spirit especially acted, descending on Sunday in the likeness of fiery tongues, and enlightened and perfected the Apostles. Behold how much the whole Holy Trinity honoured the holy day of Sunday!

4) Sunday is the eighth day: a) Because it is numbered after the seventh day, and it superseded the seventh day of the Jewish Sabbath, according to Athanasius, Basil, and Gregory the Theologian in their reference to the inscription of the sixth Psalm. b) Because the resurrection of the Lord occurred on Sunday, being the eighth resurrection numbered after the previous seven resurrections, according to Gregory Palamas of Thessalonica. Three resurrections occurred in the Old Testament: one by Elias, and two by Eliseus. Four occurred by the Lord: the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow, Lazarus, and those who were resurrected on Great and Holy Friday. Therefore, the Lord's resurrection is the eighth. c) It is called the eighth day because the Lord rose on the eighth day and appeared to the Apostles, and again, after eight days, He appeared to them, Thomas being present. d) Because all of the other Feasts of the Lord are celebrated only one time per year, but Sunday is celebrated every eight days, therefore it is celebrated fifty-two times a year. Behold how much more exalted and supreme Sunday is over the other Feasts!

5) Sunday is one, as Moses calls it: "And there was evening and there was morning, one day" (Gen. 1:5).

6) Sunday is an icon and a prelude of the future age. Wherefore Basil the Great, wondering why Moses called it "one" and not "first," says: "Thus it is in order that you may carry your thoughts forward towards the future life, that he marks by the word 'one' the day which is the icon of eternity, the first-fruit of days, the contemporary of light, Holy Sunday, honoured by the resurrection of our Lord." And Gregory of Thessalonica says: "We call Sunday the new and first of all days. But Moses did not name it 'first,' but 'one,' as superseding all the other days, and being a prelude of the future age: one never-setting day." Gregory the Theologian, in his Homily on Pentecost, said: "Seven being multiplied by seven generates fifty, minus one day, which we borrow from the age to come, at once the eighth and the first, or rather one and indestructible. For the present sabbatism of our souls can find its cessation there, that a portion may be given to seven and also to eight."

7) Sunday greatly surpasses Saturday, as much as the truth and the end surpasses the beginning, the type, and the shadow, according to Gregory of Thessalonica: "As Friday is to Saturday,

so Saturday is to Sunday, Sunday clearly surpassing Saturday, just as the beginning and the type and the shadow is surpassed by the end and the truth.”

8) The Lord will come on Sunday at the Second Coming. Wherefore the God-bearing Maximus said: “The appearance of the Lord will be on the eighth day (which is Sunday, for there is no other eighth day), that is, His Second Coming.”

9) The general resurrection of the dead will occur on Sunday, and not on another day. Wherefore Gregory of Thessalonica said: “Sunday is so sublime and sacred, on account of the supremely blessed end and the hoped-for common resurrection of all that will take place on Sunday.”

10) The righteous will enter into the perfect rest of that eternal and absolute life on Sunday, according to the same Saint: “On Sunday will be the perfect entrance of the worthy into divine rest, and the dissolution and restoration of the entire cosmos.”

11) Now Sunday is an icon of the future age; then it will be in truth the eighth age, for on Sunday the Second Coming will happen, as the divine Maximus said above, and the resurrection of the dead, and the delightful rest of the righteous, as Gregory of Thessalonica said. Many saints say that the Lord, the never-setting Sun of Righteousness, will come at midnight on Sunday, as this is inferred from the Gospel passage which says: “And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him” (Mt. 25:6). The reason being that once that Sunday is illumined by the rays of Christ the spiritual Sun, it will never again see the evening, but it will be one never-setting day, without any successor, and eternal unto the ages of ages. Wherefore Basil the Great said: “The great day of the Lord (that is, the Sunday on which the Second Coming will occur, as we said above), not the day that the physical sun will bring, but the day that the rising Sun of Righteousness will exceedingly illumine, will be one and unending, having no successive night, but extending forever unto the ages.” And again: “And only the Lord will be exalted on that final day of all days, which day neither night will interrupt, nor time confine, nor will physical light give a beginning and end to it, but it is one, unmovable, never-setting, and perpetual.” And again, in his commentary on the six days of Creation he says: “This day without evening, without succession and without end is not unknown to Scripture, and it is the day that

the Psalmist calls the eighth day, because it is outside this time of weeks. Thus whether you call it day, or whether you call it eternity, you express the same idea. Give this state the name of day; there are not several, but only one. If you call it eternity still it is unique and not manifold.”

In agreement, the brother of Basil the Great, the divine Gregory of Nyssa, also says: “When the time of weeks comes to an end, the eighth day (which is Sunday) will come after the seventh. And we call it ‘eighth’ because it follows the seventh, without however permitting itself to be superseded by any other number. For one day remains forever and the darkness of night will never interrupt it. For another Sun brings that day, which flashes the true light. When that Sun has illumined us but one time, as the Apostle says, it will never hide in the west again, but after it has embraced everything, it ceaselessly sends its light upon the worthy, upon which no darkness will follow, and those who participate in that light are made into other suns, as the Word says in the Gospel: “Then the righteous will shine like the sun’ (Mt. 13:43).”

And John of Damascus says: “Eternal life and eternal hell prove that the age to come is unending. For time will not be counted by days and nights after the resurrection, but there will rather be one day with no evening (Sunday, that is), wherein the Sun of Righteousness will shine brightly on the righteous, but for the sinful there will be night profound and limitless.”

All of these Fathers which have been quoted concerning the eighth and one day of the future age spoke of Sunday as the eighth and one day, according to Moses and the divine teachers, as was shown above. For this reason the Church of Christ also considers the whole of Bright Week as one brilliant Sunday in order to show by this that this entire seventh age of this present life will become one day, the eighth, that is, Sunday, which will be that eighth age of the future life.

12) We add a twelfth prerogative to the already mentioned eleven prerogatives of Sunday: the name of Sunday itself. Even if all of the other days of the week belong to the Lord, being His creations, none of them, however, bear His Name, for only that one and eighth day was worthy to be named Kyriaki [the Lord’s Day] after the Lord Himself. First, on Sunday, and no other day, the Lord’s resurrection occurred. Second, because that day, apart from all of the other days, is especially consecrated to the Lord.

Do you see, brethren, the lofty prerogatives? Do you see the great prerogatives? Do you see the wondrous prerogatives of the resurrectional day of Sunday? These lofty and great prerogatives of Sunday, then, we fear to violate and to contravene. We fear to ascribe any dishonour to Sunday, the day so honoured by the Holy Trinity. We fear to introduce the things of the seventh into the eighth. We fear to inject the shadow and the type of the Sabbath into the truth and perfection of Sunday, as Gregory Palamas designated it. We fear not offering the proper honour to the icon of the future age, for “the honour given to the icon passes to the prototype,” just as, contrarily, the dishonour given to the icon is brought upon the prototype. Sunday is “the chosen and holy day,” as Saint John of Damascus writes, for according to Moses, “the eighth day shall be chosen and holy unto you” (Lev. 23:36).



Modesty and Will

SAINT PHILARET OF NEW YORK,
THE NEW CONFESSOR, + 1985 A.D.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, instructing His disciples and apostles, imbued in them the necessity of observing purity of heart and thought. From the thought and from the heart proceed our sinful impulses: “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart,” says the Saviour; “and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies” (Matt. 15:18-19).

The Saviour pointed to this with the following words: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28). This law of the psychological nature of man is well-known to contemporary perverters, who are consciously striving to corrupt our youth. We remember how in Russia those who prepared the Revolution, and then the communists, began the spiritual weakening of our nation by imbuing the youth with shamelessness and depravity.

Special circles were organised for this, which spread contempt for the ordinary laws of morality. Such propagation of “free morals” which surrounds us is even greater, frequently being spread even among school age children.

In our days, as in pre-revolutionary times in Russia, this propagation has the definite goal of corrupting contemporary society. This is an old method. History is filled with examples of nations which perished from the spread of depravity. The Lord turned Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes. Babylon fell. The Roman Empire perished. The free West could be subjected to this same corruption... What do we see in the life which surrounds us? Indecency and shamelessness in clothing; shameless kissing and embracing on the streets and in public places; shameless advertisements, filthy pornographic literature... All of this dissoluteness and perversion pours into life in an immense wave. Truly, there is no less shamelessness now, if not more, than in pagan times when the holy apostles and their successors had to exhort Christians with especial zeal in the observance of modesty.

Man’s nature is such that in the sins of the flesh, the active rôle belongs on the one hand to the male sex, while on the other the temptation comes from women. Because of this, Christian cultures everywhere established customs which helped the preservation of good morals, as well as modest dress for women, so that the exposure of the latter should not evoke sinful thoughts and tempting inclinations in anyone. The more elevated the spiritual culture, the more modest was the dress of the women.

Modesty in dress is our first line of defence. It must guard the purity of women and keep men from the temptation of sinful desires. Meanwhile, the evocation of precisely these feelings... characterises contemporary fashion. [N.B. This was written at least 40 years ago now. What would he say today?]

What was peculiar before to fallen women who, in plying their base trade, dressed provocatively with the goal of evoking sensuality in men, is now becoming the mode and norm for young women who are often unconscious of the meaning and consequences of this fashion which enslaves them. We know that the fight against sin which surrounds us on all sides is not an easy matter. The path of salvation is made narrower in proportion to the intensification in the world of evil and apostasy. But

the ancient pagan world which surrounded the handful of the first Christians was no less corrupt. These latter, however, did not accede to the temptations of the pagan modes, even as some now do not accede to contemporary temptations.

The Holy Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Philippians wrote that they shone as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (Phil. 2:15). A lofty spiritual disposition and irreproachably clean, strictly chaste life; these were the characteristic traits of the Philippian Christians, for which the Apostle Paul praised them. We live in later times; nineteen centuries separate us from those days in which the Apostle Paul wrote his epistles. But now, just as the Christians of the first centuries, we are encircled by an environment full of shamelessness and perversion. May the high and holy example of the ancient Christians teach us to be as steadfast and firm in the observance of the laws of Christian morals, and not accede to the temptations which surround us.

The moral character and moral value of man's personality depends most of all on the direction and strength of the will. Of course, everyone understands that for a Christian it is necessary to have: first, a strong and decisive will, and second, a will which is firmly directed toward the good of his neighbour; toward the side of good and not evil. How is one to develop a strong will? The answer is simple: above all through the exercise of the will. To do this, as with bodily exercise, it is necessary to begin slowly, little by little. However, having begun to exercise one's will in anything (e.g. in a constant struggle with one's sinful habits or whims) this work on oneself must never cease. Moreover, a Christian who wishes to strengthen his will, his character, must from the very beginning avoid all dissipation, disorder and inconsistency of behaviour. Otherwise, he will be a person without character, unreliable, a reed shaking in the wind, as we read in Holy Scripture. Discipline is necessary for every one of us. It has such vital significance that without it, a correct, normal order and success in our endeavours is impossible. In the life of each individual it is of primary importance, for inner self-discipline takes the place here of external school or military discipline. Man must place himself in definite frameworks, having created definite conditions and an order of life, and not depart from this. Let us note this too: man's habits are of great significance in the matter of strengthening the will. Bad, sinful habits are a great obstacle for a Christian moral life. On the other hand, good habits

are a valuable acquisition for the soul and, therefore, man must teach himself much good so that what is good becomes his own, habitual. This is especially important in the early years, when a man's character takes shape. It is not vainly that we say that the second half of man's earthly life is formed from habits acquired in the first half. Probably no one would argue against the need for a strong will. In life we meet people with varying degrees of strength of will. It often happens that a person who is very gifted, talented, with a strong mind and a profoundly good heart, turns out to be weak willed and cannot carry out his plans in life, no matter how good and valuable they might be. On the other hand, a less talented person who is stronger in character and has great strength of will often succeeds in life. What is more important than strength of will is its direction: does it act for good or evil? A well-intentioned but weak-willed person is seldom of great use to society; a person with a strong will bent on evil is very dangerous. From this it is clear how very important are those principles, those basic foundations and rules by which man's will is guided. From what source can man's will draw suitable principles of guidance? For an unbelieving person, an answer to this is extremely difficult and essentially impossible. Are they to be drawn from science? In the first place, science is interested primarily in questions of knowledge and not morals, and secondly, it does not contain anything solid and constant in principles because it is constantly changing. From philosophy? Philosophy teaches about the relativity of its truths and does not claim to their unconditional authority. From practical life? Even less. This life itself is in need of positive principles which can remove from it unruly and unprincipled conditions. But while the answer to the present question is so difficult for unbelievers, for a believing Christian the answer is simple and clear. The source of good principles is God's will, and this is revealed to us in the Saviour's teaching, in His Holy Gospel. It alone has an unconditional, steadfast authority in this regard; and it alone teaches us self-sacrifice and Christian freedom, Christian equality and brotherhood (a concept stolen by those outside the Faith). The Lord Himself said of true Christians, "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father (Mt. 7:21)."



On The Building Of Churches

SAINT JOHN OF SHANGHAI, + 1966 A.D.

SOME people are saying: “The time is not come to build the Lord’s house.” Among them are many who are buying houses for themselves, who live in their own houses in full satisfaction of their material needs, or who are selling their homes to move into better and better dwellings, increasing their assets. It is understandable when such words are heard from unbelievers... But how can they be repeated by believers who themselves go to church?

A church is a place that is consecrated, holy, in which there always dwells the grace of God. At the consecration of Solomon’s temple, the glory of the Lord in the appearance of a cloud filled the house of God. So it was in the Old Testament temple. How much more powerfully does the grace of God act in the temples of the New Testament where there is offered the true cleansing from sin, where we partake of the true Body and Blood of Christ, where during the Divine Liturgy the Holy Spirit continually descends upon the gifts being consecrated and upon the people present?

One can pray anywhere, and God hears prayers from everywhere. But it’s much easier to pray in a church where everything is conducive to prayer. From there our prayers ascend to God, and the mercies of God are sent down upon us.

The construction of a church is a sacrifice to God; to allocate a parcel of land for church services is to sacrifice unto God a part of your own property, but most of all it is a gift of your love, your zeal. Churches are not needed by God, Whose throne is heaven and Whose footstool is the earth; it is we who need them.

It is we who benefit from donating toward the building of churches, although the Lord accepts not so much the substances of our alms as much as He does our zeal - the quality of our effort.

Christ approved the widow’s mite, saying that she had given more than anyone else, for the rich cast in a great deal from their abundance, but she gave all she had, all her livelihood. Those alms we give in the name of God are received by God



Himself. Spiritually, our alms are laid up in the treasuries of heaven, God's treasuries, from which no one can steal them away. If someone steals any church possession, he steals from God Himself.

At each Liturgy, those who contributed to the building of the church are commemorated. In building churches here on earth, we create for ourselves eternal habitations in heaven. Decades will pass, our bodies will decay, perhaps our very bones will turn to dust, but our souls will live eternally. Happy will he be who prepared for his soul a dwelling in the heavenly mansions. Even if the churches which are built should fall to ruin, the names of those who contributed to their construction will be written in God's eternal books, and the prayers which arose from within these Churches will be sealed.



THE COMING MONTH

IN July there are no Great Feasts or special fasting periods, except of course the usual Wednesdays and Fridays and Mondays for the monastics, but there are a host of saints we celebrate.

The **Holy Martyr Potitus of Sardinia** (1st / 14th) was born in Sardinia and lived during the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161). Having become familiar with the Christian teaching, the young Potitus believed in the true God and accepted holy Baptism at around thirteen years of age. When he learned of this, his pagan father Hylas was extremely upset and tried, first by entreaties and then by threats, to dissuade his son from his faith in Christ the Saviour, but his efforts were in vain. As a punishment, he locked Potitus up in a room of the house without food or drink. The next day a conversation took place between Hylas and Potitus about the truth of the Christian faith and the error of idolatry. Impressed by the boy's firmness of faith, the father also came to believe in the Son of God and became a Christian himself. Potitus then travelled to the

mountains of Epirus, where he had many visions and faced many temptations of the devil. There an angel of the Lord appeared to him, and informed him that he would suffer martyrdom for the faith. He also instructed Potitus to avoid vice, and warned him that he would suffer from many temptations and the delusions of demons. One day a demon appeared in the form of our Lord Jesus Christ, beautiful and venerable, and at first Potitus thought it may indeed be the Lord. But then out of humility he remembered his own wretchedness, and thought why would the Lord appear to him. The demon in the form of the Lord told Potitus to relax his austerities and go back to his father's house, where there was plenty of food and water. Potitus responded by asking the spirit to pray with him, and he noticed that one of the feet of the spirit was of a peculiar shape and did not touch the ground. Then he remembered the warning of the angel, and horrified he prayed to God for strength. Immediately the devil changed his appearance, and took on a gigantic stature, with a horrible head. Potitus took courage and breathed on the creature, saying: "Be gone, Satan, for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." The devil then took the form of an enormous bull bellowing like thunder, and tried to frighten the youth from his cave. But when he made the sign of the Cross, the bull writhed in pain and cried out: "O Potitus, send me away! Why torture me with that sign? Oh, how I burn!" Potitus then made the devil swear to never harm another Christian, and with the devil's consent Potitus set him free, but the devil then went and took possession of the pagan daughter of the Emperor. From Epirus Potitus then left for Valeria in Sardinia. Hungry and weary, he sat in the Forum and saw the beautiful and magnificent city enveloped in a cloud of darkness due to its idolatry. He became determined to remove this cloud that hung over the city, by using the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to work miracles of healing so that many would come to believe in the Lord. In Valeria there lived the illustrious woman Kyriaki, the wife of a senator; she was afflicted with leprosy. When Potitus heard from her husband of her affliction, he asked if he could heal her. The saint presented himself to her and declared that if she believed in Christ, she would be

healed. The woman accepted holy Baptism and was immediately made well. Seeing such a miracle, her husband and all their household believed in Christ and were baptised as well. In fact, his biography tells us that this miracle alone was the cause for the conversion of half of the city. After this, the Saint left Valeria due to his growing fame, and settled on Mount Gargano in the province of Foggia and lived in solitude among the animals. He was found there by servants of the Emperor Antoninus, whose daughter Agnes was possessed by a demon. The evil spirit so tortured her that she became an object of terror to all her household. She would let out the most terrible screams, at table she would be raised up by the hair as if by an invisible hand and let go so that she would violently fall, and she would dash to pieces every ornament of the palace. In vain the Emperor offered sacrifices to Jupiter on her behalf, for this made the devil in Agnes laugh and he gloried in the sacrifices the Emperor offered him. Through the lips of the maiden, the devil said that he would come out of her only if Potitus should come, and she revealed where he could be found. Antoninus ascribed this as a revelation from the gods, so he sent for the young Potitus, thinking he was a magician. They brought the holy youth to the Emperor, and when he saw it was merely a young boy of thirteen or fourteen, and when he found out he was a Christian, he was disturbed but also desperate to have his daughter healed. Agnes was presented to Potitus, and she came out looking like a skeleton, with bloodshot and wild eyes, yet so weak that she could hardly stand. Seeing Potitus, she trembled and screamed: "It is Potitus!" The youth approached her, prayed, commanded the spirit to depart from the girl, then breathed on her. Immediately Agnes was thrown to the floor as if dead, and the entire palace trembled. Then everyone noticed a horrible creature, like a dragon, fly out the window. The room was filled with a stench of fire and brimstone. The young beauty of Agnes then returned to her and she fully revived. But instead of being grateful, the Emperor treated the saint with inhuman cruelty. The Emperor wanted to ascribe the miracle to the false gods he worshiped, but Potitus insisted it was through the power of Jesus Christ alone. For his firm confession of faith in Christ the Saviour, and



for his refusal to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, to whom the Emperor imputed the healing of his daughter, he ordered that the saint be tortured. First Potitus was stripped and beaten with heavy sticks. Then, after Potitus broke to pieces a statue of Apollo with only the words of prayer from his lips, he was taken to the Roman Coliseum and presented before the Emperor half stripped and chained. Then he was tortured on the wheel, the Emperor hoping to sever every bone on the young boy's body. But Potitus endured all his tortures with joy, and this astounded the people. Then wild beasts were set loose upon him, but they only gathered around him and licked his feet. Four gladiators were then released to slay him, but an angel of the Lord prevented them from striking him. Wearied of trying, they gave up. Then was prepared a fearsome torture never before seen: a pair of pincers with two large spikes, which were intended to pass through the head and meet in the brain, so that there was no possibility of living after this torture. The people fell silent when they beheld this instrument of torture, but Potitus freely offered his head to the executioners. As the instrument was applied to his head, the boy prayed and it was invisibly removed and placed on the head of the Emperor. The Emperor screamed with pain and asked Potitus to free him. Agnes then went and fell at the feet of Potitus and asked that she be baptised. Potitus then asked for some water and had Agnes baptised before all the people of the Coliseum. As soon as she was baptised, the terrible spikes fell from the head of the Emperor. Then at the wishes of blessed Potitus, the Emperor had him beheaded. Two thousand people were converted to Christianity that day, after beholding the most extraordinary things they had ever seen. It is unknown where Potitus was buried. In the eleventh century, however, his holy relics were discovered underneath an old church in Sardinia. Although the sarcophagus had no name to identify the relics, beside his body was laid the instrument by which he was tortured in the Coliseum of Rome, that miraculously transferred to the head of the Emperor. Since there was no other martyr from Sardinia tortured this way, it was assumed to be the relics of Saint Potitus. Besides, there was an old tradition that he had been buried beneath this church. This discovery confirmed for

many the martyric struggles of the Saint. As for Agnes, she remained a faithful Christian, but did not die the death of a martyr. For Antoninus saw something supernatural about his daughter, and he was in awe of her and revered her. She remained unsullied by all the luxury and vanity of the pagan court, and was allowed to freely practice her Christian faith. A few years after her healing she reposed in peace, in the imperial palace.

On 11th / 24th July we commemorate the **Miracle of Saint Evphemia at the Fourth Œcumenical Council**, when she held the Tome of the Definition of the Faith of the Six Hundred and Thirty God-bearing Fathers gathered in Chalcedon for the Fourth Council. The holy and gloriously triumphant Martyr Evphemia flourished during the reign of Diocletian (284-305) when Priscus was proconsul of Rome. She was from Chalcedon; her father was named Philophronus, and her mother Theodosiani. Having been accused of confessing Christ, she was punished with torture on wheels and with fire, as well as with other instruments and ways of torture. After this she was to be devoured by wild beasts, but she remained unharmed by them. When she had been slightly bitten by a bear, and prayed, she delivered her soul into the hands of God within the arena. Her honourable relics were placed in a casket. More can be read in her Synaxarion on the sixteenth of September. Over the course of many years, when piety had spread throughout the world, then the following tremendous incident took place during the reign of Theodosius the Younger (402-450). A monk and priest whose name was Evtyches became the leader of a heresy. The deranged one said that our Lord Jesus Christ had only one nature, namely the divine, and only the one energy of His divinity. For this he was deposed by Patriarch Flavian of Constantinople. The unfortunate Evtyches used as his accomplices the unbelieving royal eunuchs, and he did not cease disturbing the Church. He continued thus until the Emperor Theodosius died. When Marcian reigned together with Pulcheria, he convened an Œcumenical Synod to take place in Chalcedon in A.D. 451. Thus six hundred and thirty Bishops gathered. They wrote down both positions, the Orthodox and the cacodox Monophysite, in two tomes. And

opening the casket in which were the honourable relics of Saint Evphemia, they placed both books on her chest and shut it. Then after an agreed amount of days they opened it, and what they saw astonished them. They saw the heretical tome cast towards the ground below the feet of the Saint, and the Orthodox tome, which contained the definition and decision of the Holy Synod, they saw the Martyr holding it in her embrace. When this took place, everyone marvelled at this tremendous incident. And the Orthodox were made firm in their faith and glorified God, who daily does great and paradoxical things in order to bring about the return and correction of many. The heretical Monophysites were put to shame. The synaxis and feast of Saint Evphemia is celebrated in her church, which is in the so-called Antiochus [the Hippodrome], near Lauson.

On 12th / 25th July we celebrate an **icon of the All-holy Mother of God** which is known by the name, **the Three-Handed, Tricherousa**. To someone unaware of why this name was given the icon, this may seem as if we are straying into the realm of fantasy. However it derives from a well-documented miracle. In the ninth century during the time of the Iconoclasts, Saint John Damascene was zealous in his veneration of the holy icons. Because of this, he was slandered by the iconoclast Emperor Leo III the Isaurian (717-740), who informed the Damascus caliph that Saint John was committing treasonous acts against him. The caliph gave orders to cut off the hand of the saint and take it to the marketplace. In the evening Saint John, having asked the caliph for the cut-off hand, put it to its joint and fell to the ground before the icon of the Mother of God. The monk begged her to heal the hand, which had written in defence of Orthodoxy. After long prayer he fell asleep and saw in a dream that the All-Pure Mother of God had turned to him promising him quick healing. Before this the Mother of God bade him toil without fail with that hand. Having awakened from sleep, Saint John saw that his hand was unharmed. In thankfulness for this healing he placed a hand fashioned of silver on the icon, from which the icon received its name "Of Three Hands." Some iconographers, in their ignorance, have mistakenly depicted the Most Holy Theotokos herself with three arms and hands. According to

tradition, Saint John wrote a hymn of thanksgiving to the Mother of God: "All creation rejoiceth in thee, O Full of Grace," which appears in place of the hymn "It is Truly Meet" in the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. Saint John Damascene then became a monk at the Monastery of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified and there his wonderworking icon was treasured. The Lavra later presented the icon as a blessing to Saint Sava, Archbishop of Serbia (+ 1237). During an invasion of Serbia by the Turks in the reign of King Urosh V, some Christians who wanted to protect the icon entrusted it to the safe-keeping of the Mother of God herself. They placed it on a donkey to lead the army into battle, but instead without a driver it went on its own by another route to Mount Athos and stopped in front of the Hilandar Monastery which is Serbian. The monks put the icon in the monastery's principal church. During a time of discord over the choice of abbot, the Mother of God deigned to head the monastery herself and the icon moved miraculously from the sanctuary, and from that time has occupied the abbot's throne in the church. Now at the Hilandar Monastery only a vicar abbot is chosen, and the monks take a blessing from the holy icon for every obedience. Thus even though the Hilandar brotherhood is a cœnobium, it has no abbot and is led in accordance with the system of idiorrhythmic monasteries.

The **Venerable Martyr Helier the Hermit** (16th / 29th) was born to pagan parents in Tongeren (now in Belgium). His father was Sigebert, a nobleman from Tongeren, and his mother was Lusigard. Having had difficulties conceiving a child, they had turned to Saint Cunibert who had advised them to pray to God and that when they had a child they must hand him over to God, and that he, Cunibert, would bring him up in the Christian faith. Their prayers having been answered, Helier was born, but his father, the Saxon Governor of that place, eventually grew angry at the influence Cunibert exerted over his gifted son, who was already causing consternation with his youthful miracles. Helier's father had Cunibert killed, whereupon Helier fled. His wanderings led him through what is now the village of St. Hellier in the département of Seine-Maritime in Normandy and eventually to the Cotentin where he sought retreat from the distract-

tions of the world in the monastic community of Saint Marculf at Nantus (Nanteuil, now St. Marcouf-de-l'Isle in Manche). He found the monastic community did not provide the quiet he required to devote himself fully to a life of contemplation. Marculf had received pleas from the few people of the island called Gersut, or Agna, now called Jersey, which was all but depopulated due to repeated attacks by Vikings. The inhabitants requested someone to help them, and bring the Gospel to them as they had no shepherd to guide them. Marculf sent Helier, and a companion, Saint Romard, to Jersey, where he found a small community of fishermen on the sand dunes where the modern town of St. Helier was to develop. He settled on a tidal islet, nowadays known as the Hermitage Rock, next to L'Islet, the tidal island now occupied by the 16th century Elizabeth Castle. Romard would travel back and forth between the hermit on his rock and the fishing village. From his vantage point on his rock, Helier could see the sails of approaching attackers and would signal to the shore, whereupon the inhabitants would scatter in the surrounding marshes, thereby frustrating the attackers' bloodlust. Small dark clouds on the horizon are still known as "les vailes dé St. Hélyi" (the sails of Saint Helier). The story is that he was eventually martyred by marauding pirates who beheaded him with an axe - hence the crossed axes on the parish crest. Helier is recorded as performing one healing miracle in Jersey, curing a lame man named Anquetil. His prayers and the sign of the cross raised a storm that drove off a raiding party. Though Helier starved himself to ascetic weakness for thirteen years, tradition holds that he had the strength, when he was beheaded by attackers, to pick up his head and walk to shore. Romard discovered Helier's body on the beach still clutching his head in his hands, placed it in a boat and set off for the mainland. The boat, guided by the hand of God, arrived at Bréville-sur-mer (Manche) where a miraculous healing spring arose on the spot where Helier's body rested overnight. A church was founded next to the spring, and still attracts those seeking a cure. Helier's relics were sent to the abbey of Beaubec (in Beaubec-la-Rosière Seine-Maritime) where they remained until the destruction of the abbey during the French Revolution.

Our holy **Father Parthenius, Bishop of Radovisdion** (21st July / 3rd August) was born in the early 18th century in the village of Vatsounia in Thessaly, in the region of Agrafa, which during the Turkish occupation of Greece remained unconquered by the Turks and where there was a strong spiritual presence. His parents were pious Orthodox Christians who lived the simple life of being farmers and raising animals. At a young age the saint went to a monastery of the region to become a monk, where he lived an ecclesiastical life focused on prayer, fasting, asceticism, vigils and church services to acquire the virtues and communion with the Holy Trinity. There he was given the duty of looking after the animals of the monastery. Being a shining example within the monastery, he was elevated to the priesthood. Eventually he was chosen to become the bishop of Radovisdion, which is today part of Radovizi and consists of a number of villages in Arta (this diocese no longer exists; as of 1830 it has become a part of the Metropolis of Arta). It is estimated that before 1854, the Diocese of Radovisdion had around 830 families and nine churches. As bishop he served the needs of the people with love and humility, both spiritual and physical, and he did not cease living a life of strict fasting and prayer. Near the diocese there lived a poor man who had five children. He had a piece of land which contained many rocks, and because he was sick he was unable to remove the rocks and till the land to provide food for his household. This prompted Saint Parthenius to go out every night at midnight and remove the rocks for the poor man, with only the light provided to him by the moon. The poor father would notice that someone was coming every night and removing the rocks. One night he kept watch and saw Bishop Parthenius out there clearing his field. When the bishop was discovered, he ordered the man to not tell anyone what he had done for him. Eventually the entire field was clear of both the large and the small rocks by his labours. Saint Parthenius not only loved God very much as well as his fellow people, but from his youth also loved animals. He would spend several hours of the day near the herds of cows in the village. According to tradition, during the summer months he would leave the village and go out to Beselo where the flocks went to be watered. There,

sitting on a wooden bed beneath the shade of the trees, he watched them, blessing and praying for them. Sometimes he cared for the animals as he did while he was a monk. He considered shepherds to be especially blessed as “the least of the brethren” who were first blessed with the announcement of the incarnation of Christ by angels and heard the angelic hymn “Glory to God in the highest.” It should be added that Saint Parthenius many times healed the animals and cows from sicknesses through his prayers, which is why today he is considered a patron saint of animals. According to local tradition, when Saint Cosmas of Aitolia visited this region, he met Bishop Parthenius (even today villagers point to the spot where they met). After they discussed various matters they went together to the Monastery of Rovelistia, in which there was a school run by the monks and which contained a large library. This library is lost today, having been destroyed by the Turks. As for the death of Saint Parthenius, there are two traditions. One says he died as a martyr, and another says he died in peace on 21st July, 1777, in the village of Velentziko. He was buried behind the Holy Altar of the Diocesan Church of the Holy Unmercenaries. Thirty-five years passed and they uncovered his grave in order to intern one of Saint Parthenius’ successors, Bishop Callinicus. On 21st July, 1810, his grave was opened and a heavenly fragrance came forth, and immediately the clouds began to sprinkle rain. This was believed to be a heavenly sign of his sainthood. His relics were then placed on the Holy Altar of the Church of the Holy Unmercenaries. After this the family of Saint Parthenius sought to take possession of his relics, but the residents of Velentzikou wanted to keep them instead for them to be venerated by the diocese. The matter was brought before the Œcumenical Patriarch, and he decided to give the skull of Saint Parthenius to the residents of Velentzikou, and the rest of the bones were to go to the family. Eventually the relics of the Saint were distributed to many places, including the Monastery of Gregoriou on Mount Athos which possesses his jaw, given to them by Bishop Ambrose of Stagon. Yet it is the skull of the Saint which is the primary object of veneration for the faithful, and is processed annually on his feast. In 1854 there was a revolt by the

people of Radovisdion against the Turks, and during this time the service which had been written to honour the Saint was destroyed. One priest however was able to protect the holy skull from being lost or destroyed, and he brought it to the village of Valto. In 1939 the abbot of the Dousikou Monastery, where there is special veneration of Saint Parthenius and which holds many of his relics, arranged for a new service to be written and it was published in 1971. Today many miracles are attributed to Saint Parthenius, and he is especially invoked to come to the aid of sick animals.



NBS from the Richmond
*Diocese of the Church of the Genuine
Orthodox Christians of Greece*

BAPTISM AT SAINT EDWARD'S CHURCH

ON the Great Feast of Pentecost, Sunday, 26th May / 8th June, **Joshua and Philippa Bailey of Ditchingham, Norfolk**, and their children **Elijah, Mary, Phoebe and Jonah**, were baptised and chrismated before the Hours and Liturgy. The **Priest Alexander Hahr** was the sponsor of Joshua, although **Anthony Bell** stood in as his proxy. Philippa's god-mother is **Osyth Thompson**, Elijah's sponsor is **Alexander Spiroglou**, Mary's **Andreea Turcu**, Phoebe's **Stephanie Toseva**, and Jonah's **Nicholas Golitsyn**. The celebrant at the Baptism and Chrismation was **Priestmonk Sabbas**, and the newly-illuminated partook of the Holy Mysteries for the first time at the festal Liturgy that day. They later stayed in this area until the Friday to be able to attend as many services as possible while in their baptismal robes. They then returned to Norfolk and attended the Sunday of All Saints Liturgy, celebrated by

Archimandrite Daniel (Toyne), at the **Saint Olaf's chapel** which is used for the services at the **Liggy Camps**. In the afternoon Joshua and Philippa were married there according to the Orthodox practice and then their baptismal robes were removed. Please remember our new brothers and sisters in Christ and their sponsors in your regular prayers, that they may run their course well.

VISIT OF METROPOLITAN DEMETRIUS OF AMERICA

ON Saturday, 8th / 21st June, **Metropolitan Demetrius of America**, who had travelled from the continent by boat arrived at the Brotherhood in the middle of the night, having been brought from Poole by **Deacon Ioan**. Having rested a little, later in the morning he was taken by the deacon and **Deacon-issa Georgette** to St Alban's. **Nectarius Photopoulos**, **Haralambos Hamos** and **Nicolas Socaciu** joined their pilgrimage and they arrived back here in the mid-afternoon. Then, His Eminence took time to speak with **Fr Evangelos Liassi** (see piece immediately below). On the next day, the Sunday of the Athonite Fathers, the Metropolitan celebrated the Divine Liturgy here assisted by **Archimandrite Daniel**, **Priest Gabriel Lawani**, **Priest Borislav Popov**, **Priest-monk Sabbas** and **Priest Evangelos**. Haralambos, who is a teacher of Byzantine chant, and **Pavlos Deskos** chanted parts of Matins and the Divine Liturgy in traditional Byzantine chant. After the Parish Breakfast, Metropolitan Demetrius spent an hour in church leading a question and answers session, which our people found most helpful. As the contingent from America were planning to embark for America on Monday morning, Deacon Ioan took them to Southampton, only to find that the boat was sailing the next day (!), so they were returned to Brookwood, and Fr Sabbas took the opportunity to take His Eminence to Chertsey where they met **Mary Haig**. In the end the American contingent left for Southampton after the Divine Liturgy here on the Tuesday, at about mid-morning.

PRIEST FROM WORLD ORTHODOXY JOINS US

RECENTLY, a priest of the Thyateira Archdiocese (Ec. Patr), **Father Evangelos Liassi**, contacted us because he was no longer able to bear the deepening of the heresy of Ecumenism within his Church. We put him in touch with **Metropolitan Ambrose of Methoni**, and the matter was put before the Synod of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece. As he will not be in England for some time, Metropolitan Ambrose asked Metropolitan Demetrius to receive him during his recent visit. Consequently on Sunday, Priestmonk Sabbas heard Fr Evangelos's confession and chrismated him and before the Divine Liturgy Metropolitan Demetrius read the prayers of Χειροθεσίας over him and he concelebrated with the other clergy at the Divine Liturgy. Please pray for him and his presbytera Loukia.

GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

A RELIC of the holy **Great Martyr Paraskeve of Rome** was given us by **Archpriest Andrew Kencis of Edmonton, Alberta**, and **Abbess Amvrossia of the Holy Protection Convent in Bluffton** kindly added a beautiful reliquary for it. These were brought back by Fr Daniel after his recent trip to Canada and the United States.

Fr Gabriel Lawani has also given fragments of the sacred relics of **Saint Nectarius of Pentapolis** and of the **New Martyr George of Ioannina**.

BURIAL AT SAINT EDWARD'S

ON 3rd June, **Miriam Labouras of Broadstairs, Kent**, was laid to rest in Saint Edward's Cemetery, after a funeral service in the Greek Orthodox Church there. At her interment, **Archimandrite Diodoros (Ec. Patr)** served, assisted by **Archpriests Joseph Skinner, Maxim Nikolsky** and **Stephen Platt** (Russian Orthodox Church). After the service

Miriam's husband, **Constantine**, and the clergy and mourners were given hospitality in the Old Mortuary. For many years the Lambourases have been friends of our community, and Miriam wrote a series of articles on the falsity of the R.C. Marian apparitions which we published in this magazine.

THE GARDENING GROUP

ON Saturday, 1st / 14th June, at the request of **Plamen Monovsky**, who had initiated this extremely helpful project and got it up and running, we dedicated the group to a saint. Plamen sent us a list of suitable saints and we chose Saint Tryphon, both because we had been given a very beautiful icon of the saint for the church and because every year since we established ourselves here we have blessed waters and read his prayer against garden pests on his feast day, 1st / 14th February. So this year, on 1st / 14th June, as the group were working (Plamen, Aquilina Steel, Nicolas Socaciu, Noah Seebach, Lucie Brazil, Alexandra and Anastasia Galbeaza, Dymphna and Osyth Thompson, Andriy Sinclair, Mark Slater, and Edward Whicker), the icon was set up and **Priestmonk Sabbas** led a *moleben* dedicating the gardening group to the Holy Martyr Tryphon.



Practical Tip

IN what we must call the Orthodox diaspora here in the West, many are not able to attend the Saturday evening services and those on the evenings before Great Feasts and other more important days of celebration. However, even if this is the case, and especially if you are hoping to receive the Holy Mysteries on the feast day, be sure to spend the evening before at home quietly and reverently, if possible reading the service that you are unable to get to, so that you make the best preparation possible. Do not spend those evenings watching films and entertainments, or socialising with friends, rather as the Psalms teach, *Seek peace and pursue it* (Ps. 33:14).