

The Shepherd

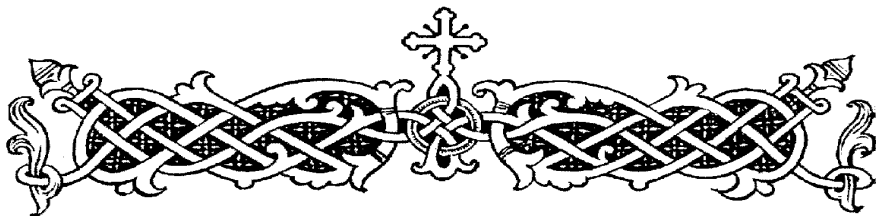
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FROM THE FATHERS

“TALKATIVENESS is the throne of vainglory, on which it loves to show itself and make a display. Talkativeness is a sign of ignorance, a door to slander, a guide to jesting, a servant of falsehood, the ruin of compunction, a creator and summoner of despondency, a precursor of sleep, the dissipation of recollection, the abolition of watchfulness, the cooling of ardour, the darkening of prayer.”

VEN. JOHN OF THE LADDER, + 649 A.D.

“THOSE taught by God will be regarded as fools by the disciples of such as are wise in the wisdom of this world. But in fact it is the worldly-wise that are fools, spouting an inane secular wisdom, the stupidity of which God has demonstrated (1 Cor. 1:20) and which Scripture condemns as material, un-spiritual, devilish, filled with strife and malice (Jas. 3:15). Since these people are blind to the divine light, they cannot see what marvels it contains; they regard as deluded those who dwell in that light and see and teach others about what is within it. On the contrary, it is they themselves that are deluded, not having tasted the ineffable blessings of God.”

VEN. SIMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, + 1022 A.D.

“IF YOU WISH to discover the truth, take as your model the lyre player. For he lowers his head and, his ear concentrated intently on the music, he strikes the strings with the plectrum. And when through his art the strings vibrate together, the lyre gives out the melody, and the player’s heart throbs with sweet-ness. Take this model, most diligent worker in the vineyard, as a sure guide, and put your trust in what I tell you. For if, like the lyre player, you concentrate your attention in this way – on, that is to say, the depths of your heart – you will easily find what you seek. For a soul that has been totally mastered by divine love cannot be turned back. As the psalmist says: My soul hath cleaved after Thee (Ps. 62:8). The lyre, my beloved, is the heart. The strings are the senses. The plectrum is the mind. When the mind constantly operates according to its spiritual power, it brings about the remembrance of God. Such remembrance fills the soul with ineffable delight and causes rays of divine light to shine forth in the pure intellect.”

SAINT CALLISTUS I, PATRIARCH OF
CONSTANTINOPLE, + 1363 A.D.

The Divine Light of the Transfiguration and the Illumination of our Hearts

A sacred ascent to the noetic Mount Tabor with the
eyewitness of the Divine Majesty, the Holy Apostle Peter,
as our guide.

“We were with Him on the Holy Mount” (2 Ptr 1:18).

*This “Ascent” was ventured with the aid of works of the sublime
Hesychast, St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite/*

A. All “equally precious” according to the Faith

The Holy Apostle Peter, as a genuine spiritual Shepherd, addresses himself to Christians in his God-inspired epistles, in order to draw up their minds to great heights, to another noetic Tabor, so that they, also, might become “eyewitnesses of the majesty” of Christ our Saviour.

The method employed by the Chief Apostle in drawing us up is genuinely pastoral. He knows that he is addressing himself to people who are still “novices and imperfect” and who “have not been vouchsafed noetic illumination of the heart;” consequently, the constant banishment of lethe (forgetfulness) and ignorance from their minds is needed, by means of remembrance and knowledge in Christ, so that, shaking off indolence, they might embark on the sacred ascent.

“I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things;” “I think it is meet to stir up your sincere minds by way of remembrance.”

The Chief Apostle gives us a powerful first impetus upwards when he reminds and assures us that we are “equally precious” with the Holy Apostles as regards the “Faith,” which affords us equal privileges and equal

honour: “to those who have obtained like precious faith with us [the Apostles].”

Living and active Faith purifies the hearts of the simple and “insignificant” believers no less than the hearts of the prominent and notable, and unites them with Christ our Saviour.

All of us Christians have been vouchsafed the lofty gift of receiving “one and the same rebirth” and have become “children of God.”

“Since Christians are born of one and the same Father, even God; and from one and the same Mother, the Church; and from one and the same womb, the holy Font, they are, for this reason, all one kind, and receive one and the same form,” and, in consequence, they are “equally precious” according to the Faith.

The Chief Apostle, then, greatly consoles the believers who are yet “novices and imperfect,” so as to awaken them from their indolence and draw them towards higher things, for “just as they are equally precious with him according to the Faith, so shall they become equal in glory as well, should they come to love Christ with the same measure of the Faith whereby he also loved Him.”

Even though it is bestowed “equally,” the sacred Faith nevertheless either increases or decreases: “It increases and grows in Christians who are virtuous, perfect, and of noble conduct; but it decreases inversely and diminishes in Christians of little faith, who have a worldly and base mentality.”

B. “As unto a light that shineth in a dark place”

But how, O Holy Apostle Peter, are we to rise above our worldly and base mentality, that the purifying, illuminating, and deifying Faith might increase in us?

The Chief Apostle now puts us in remembrance of the

revelatory experience he was vouchsafed on Mount Tabor and, at the same time, impels us yet higher.

“We were eyewitnesses of his majesty,” “being with Him on the holy mount.” We saw the raiment of our Master Christ shining like light in the Divine Transfiguration! We saw our Saviour in His Divine glory, “covered with light as with a garment”!

Of course, the Chief Apostle elucidates, our material and created eyes saw on Tabor the uncreated Light of Divinity, which flashed forth in a strange manner through the created human nature of our Lord; our eyes did not, however, see the immaterial Light simply by their natural power alone, but only after having been strengthened “by the supernatural Grace and powers of God.”

So, now “the word of prophecy is more sure.” And “insofar as you are novices and imperfect, and have not been vouchsafed noetic illumination in your hearts,” it is good and beneficial to take heed of words of prophecy.

Such words, though superior to the Law, are nevertheless inferior to the words of the Gospel; that is why they illumine your hearts and confirm them in the Mysteries of Christ, but only faintly. Therefore, the light of Faith is sufficient for the present, now when you are yet “novices.” Take heed of it, “as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.” However, it must be increased and augmented!

C. The deifying “Dayspring” in our hearts

Until when, O Chief Apostle, shall we take heed of the imperfect “word of prophecy”?

Not forever, the Divine Peter consoles and bolsters us, not even your entire life long. But “until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” Until the noetic Day and the Daystar, Christ our Saviour, “mystically arises in your hearts through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.”

Then, “He, the Giver of the Law and Lord of the Prophets, Who inspired the Prophets with the prophecies - He, I say, dwells in your hearts by Grace and His Divine Light; and He mystically teaches you not only the Mystery of the Incarnate Economy, but also other mystical and secret dogmas of higher theology, to the extent that they can be comprehended; and He gives you inner assurance and makes you established believers!

Our Shepherd, Who speaks of the mysteries and loves His children, has already drawn us up to the peak and summit of Tabor!

And how, O Chief Apostle, is this strange-sounding and super-natural illumination of the Divine Comforter brought about in our hearts? How are we to start, and what follows next? And how is this sacred activity brought to completion?

“Firstly,” says the Chief Apostle, “it is brought about through the practice of all of the life-giving and deifying commandments of the Lord.”

“Secondly,” he continues, “through the acquisition of all of the virtues, as much the practical ones as the theoretic, and, indeed, principally by means of noetic and unceasing prayer meditated in the heart with a mournful spirit.”

Through all of these things, “and especially through mourning and tears, the heart and all of the inner man are purified of predispositions and passions; the bodily, such as gluttony, hedonism, carnality and the rest, as much as the spiritual, namely arrogance, vainglory, unbelief, cowardice, and the rest.”

Further assiduous work is needed, however; for following the purification of the heart of such terrible passions, “the person then takes care also to acquire the golden sequence of godlike virtues: peace from thoughts, which is a gift containing spiritual gifts; humility, wrought by the Holy Spirit; meekness, fraternal affection, and the

pinnacle of all of the virtues, love.”

In the meantime, “the more illumined” the Christian “becomes by his works of light, and the more he approaches the true and first Light, God” – being continuously purified “of every sin” through partaking of the Immaculate Mysteries “with fear and a contrite heart” – he thereby all the more completes the arduous stage of purifying ascent, whereupon “his mind has returned, and not only his mind, to itself through noetic restoration in the heart, but it has also returned all of the other powers of the soul to itself, and has rendered them noetic, too, in a way.”

In this supernatural state, the person “has ascended above every sensible and noetic being and every thought of such beings, and presents himself, deaf and dumb, to God; and, like an unformed substance, he is formed and shaped by Divine Grace.”

Then, oh, then! the Chief Apostle continues, the cloud of Tabor descends upon the zealot of the Divine Glory. His heart is illumined; that is, it receives the illumination of the Holy Spirit and “is enlightened by a noetic, but at the same time real, enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, Who abides in the heart, that is not dispersed as are knowledge” and illumination brought about through thoughts, which illumination “exists momentarily, as a flash of lightning, simultaneously appearing and disappearing, wherefore it is called unhypostatic.”

Divine illumination, on the other hand, which “remains in those who are illumined” because “it is deeply engrained,” “that is, it does not appear and disappear, but remains in the soul,” is called by the Saints “enhypostatic” and “hypostatic light,” which is both “personal” and “enhypostatic.”

“Come, let us ascend the Lord’s mountain!” The purifying climb is arduous. The spiritual darkness of lethe, ignorance, and indolence, “of the thrice-gloomy darkness of ignorance,” deters the soul from Divine ascents.

The Chief of the Apostles exhorts us: let us make a start! Let us have “sincere minds,” such that they might be “stirred up” and begin the godly ascent.

And, on our toilsome journey, let us constantly chant: “Shine forth on us sinners Thine eternal light, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to Thee!”



The Mystery of the Divine Eucharist

IN the land of the Alamans (a Germanic tribe of the second century) there lived a very virtuous priest by the name of Pelagius, who had special devotion to the Most Holy Theotokos. The devil, however, envied him and sowed in him thoughts of disbelief regarding Holy Communion. “How is it possible,” he would think, “for the bread to become the Body and the wine to become the Blood of Christ?”

He was overcome by great distress at these thoughts, but did not dare to seek counsel from anyone. He thus turned to the *Panagia* (Mother of God) herself, beseeching her to instruct him in this regard.

One day, then, as he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy, when he came to the words “Especially our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed, and glorious Lady, Theotokos, and Ever-Virgin Mary...,” the holy Bread disappeared from the diskarion. Pelagius looked around, but could not find It.

“O my Panagia!” he called out in terror. “I understand that, by reason of my lack of faith and my doubts, Christ has come to hold me in abomination and disappeared from before my eyes, so that I, the unworthy one, might not

commune. Do Thou, how-ever, beseech Him to forgive me!”

He then saw the most glorious Queen before the Holy Table, bearing the Divine Infant in her arms, and she said to him: “This Infant is the Creator of the universe, the Son and Word of God, perfect God and perfect Man. It is He Who died on the Cross for the salvation of the world and was resurrected. Even now, He daily takes on, in a wondrous manner, the form of bread and wine, out of His great love for mankind, and is offered to men and women for the sanctification of their souls. Touch Him, then, and examine Him without fear, so as to see for yourself that this is a true vision, and that this is a true Body of flesh and blood, just as I gave birth to Him. This is precisely what the bread and wine become when you liturgise. Since humans are not able to eat raw flesh and drink blood however, the Omnipotent One, in His great wisdom, is offered in the form of bread and wine, so that everyone is able to partake of Him with longing and desire. Hence, you must also commune with piety and faith; for whoever receives Him worthily becomes a participant in His Divine Glory.”

With these words, the Mother of God placed the Infant on the Holy Table, and after humbly worshipping Him, she disappeared.

The Priest took the Divine Infant in his hands with fear and joy, reverently kissed Him, and discerned that this was indeed a living infant with true flesh. He then set Him on the Holy Table, fell to the ground, and prayed with tears: “I believe, O my Lord, and confess that Thou art the Son of God, Who wast born of the Ever-Virgin Mary. I thank Thee for the Grace that I, the unworthy one, was vouchsafed today, and I beseech Thee to forgive me my former disbelief. And now do Thou grant me to commune of Thee not as an Infant, but as Bread.”

Having prayed this way with faith, he stood up and saw before him the Holy Bread in its previous form. He

communed with great joy, and continued for the rest of his life to celebrate the Divine Mysteries with exceeding devoutness.

* Source: Miracles and Revelations from the Divine Liturgy [in Greek] and taken from the magazine Edification and Consolation. Obviously the story has been somewhat Greekified in being handed down, but its essential truth is clear.



THE IMAGE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST NOT MADE BY HANDS

**by Saint Philaret the New Confessor of New
York**

+1985 A.D.

AS WELL as continuing the festival of the Dormition of the Mother of God, the Church now [16th/ 29th August, second day of the Dormition feast] celebrates the Image of our Lord Jesus Christ, Not Made by Hands. By tradition the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God came down to us from the deepest antiquity, for it was painted by the holy Evangelist Luke, and received the blessing of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary herself. But the very first depiction of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ was not painted by any artist. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself made it in His good pleasure.

The Church preserves a tradition concerning this, how the King of Edessa, Abgar, who was afflicted with an ailment, had heard a great deal about the Saviour and His miraculous deeds, and sent an artist to Him, who was accomplished in portraiture, so that he might paint a portrait of the Saviour. However much the artist attempted to do this, nothing he did came out right. He saw that everything he depicted on his canvas simply did not

correspond to the reality at all, and nothing he did came out right. But the Lord Jesus Christ's good pleasure was to offer help to his efforts. He asked for a cloth as a canvas, and placed it to His Immaculate Face and that face was imprinted upon the cloth, upon that canvas. This was the very first image, not made by hands.

The Church now celebrates this very miracle, this Image. But it is for us, Christians, participating in this feast, not to forget that each one of us was created in the image and likeness of God. The Holy Bible, as you know, says that the Lord, having made heaven and earth, before creating man, took special counsel in the Holy Trinity, where the Lord, One in Trinity, spake His well-pleasing Word: "Let Us make man in Our image, and likeness, and let him have dominion over all creation." In the image and in the likeness. The holy Fathers teach us to distinguish the image from the likeness. The image of God – in the very nature of the human soul – is trinal, like unto the Holy Trinity, which is Divinity one in Essence, but at the same time, in Persons, a Trinity. So it is with the soul of man. The soul of man, being absolutely one, one personality, and one essence, is at the same time trinal in its fundamental powers: for the first – this is the mind in man; another is the heart, man's feelings, and a third is his will. With the mind man thinks, with the heart he experiences [things], and with the will he acts. But in all these three powers it is yet one and the same soul, and the person is yet one.

And as regards what concerns the likeness of God, it is not without reason that we call the Venerable Seraphim and those like him, righteous fathers [*In Russian "prepodobnye ottsy" – literally "fathers most like unto" (God)*]. They manifest the likeness of God in themselves. If the image of God, as I have told you, pertains to the very nature of man, then, as the holy Fathers say, even if the soul of man is condemned to fiery Gehenna for eternal torment, all the same it remains the image of God. It is

simply the case that the person himself degrades this image, defiles it, and makes himself deserving of torment in Hades. The likeness of God - this is the moral side; the more a man becomes like unto God, the closer he approaches Him, and the more manifest is the likeness of God in him.

The Apostle Paul once exhorted his spiritual children, "I beseech you, be ye followers [imitators] of me, even as I also am of Christ" (see 1 Cor. 4:16, & 11:1), that is be like unto me, imitate me, even as I imitate Christ. The sinful man, given over unto sin, loses the likeness of God. The image of God he does not lose, even in the fire of Gehenna, but the likeness of God he can lose completely. It was not in vain that it was said by the Psalmist, that "man being in honour, did not understand" (Ps. 48:12), that is, man did not understand, and did not value that honour of which his Creator had deemed him worthy, and "he is compared to the mindless cattle, and is become like unto them" (Ps. 48:12). What that man is reduced to, who loses the likeness of God and becomes like someone else, you and I know! To whom, for instance, is that man like, who, in his drunkenness, lies in the filth and mumbles. Who is he like? – in no way like the Lord God!

We must bear in mind that although the image of God is indestructible in each one of us, the likeness of God must needs be renewed in us, and every man must enhance it; – this is the purpose of the life of man. For this reason, remember, O man, and more frequently bear in mind, that the first man, Adam, was created in the image and likeness of God. But even if the image does not depend on us, yet the likeness depends entirely on us, and for that reason our task is to work upon our soul, so that it should be like its Creator, and not like someone else. Amen.

Translated from the Second Volume of the Sermons and Teachings of Metropolitan Philaret, published by the Russian Orthodox Youth Committee, in 1989.

THE COMING MONTH

AUGUST is the last month of the Church Year, and is divided neatly in two. The first fourteen days are kept as a fast, one as strict as the Great Lent, in preparation for the **Great Feast of the Dormition of the All-Holy Theotokos** (15th/28th).

Within the Dormition fast, we have the **Great Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Saviour** (6th/19th). The two Gospel readings read at this feast, Luke 9:28-36 at Mattins and Matthew 17:1-9 at the Liturgy, record the revelation of the glory of Christ's Divinity, which this feast celebrates. **St Ephraim the Syrian**, preaching on this festival, says:

He [Christ] showed them also that He was the Creator of heaven and earth, and the Lord of the living and the dead; for He spoke to the heavens, and they sent down Elias; He made a sign to the earth and raised Moses to life again... He brought them [the Apostles] up to the mountain that He might show them, before His Resurrection, the glory of His Divinity, so that when He had risen from the dead they might then know that He had not received this glory as the reward of His labour, and as one who had it not; but that He had it from all eternity, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Of the **Dormition**, **Saint John of Damascus** says:

This day the treasure of Life, the abyss of Grace (I know not in what manner I may make this clear with my presuming and faltering lips), is veiled in Life-bringing death. And she drew nigh to it without fear, who had given birth to death's Destroyer; if indeed we may speak of her all-holy and life-giving departure as

death. For how could she who truly brought Life to all, become subject to death? But she yields to the law laid down by Him Whom she had borne, and as a daughter of the old Adam submits to this inherited chastisement; since her Son, Who is Life Itself, had not refused it; but as the Mother of the Living God she is fittingly restored to Him. For if God said: Lest he (who first was made man [Adam]) put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and live for ever (Gen. 3:22); how could it be that she who had conceived Life Itself, Which is without beginning and unceasing, suffering neither beginning nor end, would not live for ever in perfect life?

Among the other saints we commemorate in August, we have:

Saint Nonna of Nazianzus (5th / 18th August), known for piety, purity and deep Christian faith, was the wife of Gregory of Nazianzus the Elder. A member of the Hypsistarians, a distinct Jewish-pagan sect worshipping Hypsistos, the Most High God, Gregory was convinced to convert to Christianity by his wife Nonna in 325, who prayed for him daily. Both Gregory and Nonna came from wealthy families, and Gregory was able to personally finance the construction of a church in Cappadocia. In 328, Gregory was selected as bishop of Nazianzus, a ministry he held until his death. Three children were born to Gregory and Nonna, all of whom are saints of the Church. One daughter, Saint Gorgonia, was outlived by her parents by only a year, and was lauded in the eulogy given by her brother Gregory as a model Christian wife. Their younger son, Caesarius of Nazianzus, studied in Caesarea Mazaca and at Alexandria and became a physician. He served in Constantinople as the court physician for both Constantius II and Julian the Apostate, and died in 368. Their elder son, also named Gregory (Jan. 25), served alongside his father first as a priest, and then as coadjutor. Gregory of Nazianzus the Younger (better

known as Gregory the Theologian) would later become the Patriarch of Constantinople and ranked among the great Three Hierarchs of the Church (30th January). Nonna outlived her husband and two of her children, dying in 374.

Speaking of her virtues and character, her son Gregory wrote of her:

What time or place for prayer escaped her? This was the first thought of her day. Rather, who had more confidence in gaining a petition as soon as it was made? Who had such reverence for the hands and countenance of priests? Who showed such honour for every form of philosophy? Who subdued her flesh more by fastings and watchings, or stood like a pillar during the night-long or daily singing of the psalms? Who had greater admiration for virginity, although she herself was under the bond of matrimony? Who was a better champion of widows and orphans? Who relieved to a like degree the misfortunes of the distressed? These things, small perhaps, and, it may be, even despised by some because they do not lie within the reach of the majority, for the unattainable, out of envy, is generally considered as not even credible, I esteem highly, for they were the inventions of her faith and undertakings of her spiritual fervour. So, too, her voice was never heard in the sacred assemblies or places, except when necessary and required by the liturgy.

It was once counted a glory for the altar that no axe had been lifted upon it, no stone-cutter's tool seen or heard, with the higher meaning that whatever was consecrated to God should be natural and free from artifice. Why should it not redound to her great praise that she honoured the sanctuary by her silence, that she never turned her back upon the holy table, nor spat upon the hallowed pavement, that she

never grasped the hand or kissed the lips of any pagan woman, however honourable in other respects and however closely related? She would not even share salt, either willingly or perforce, with those coming from a profane and unhallowed table, nor suffer herself, contrary to the law of conscience, to pass by or look upon a polluted house. She would not let her ears or her tongue, which had received and uttered holy things, be defiled by pagan tales or theatrical songs, because nothing unholy is becoming to the holy. What is deserving of greater admiration is the fact that she restrained external manifestation of grief to such a degree, although she was deeply affected by the sufferings even of strangers, as never to let a cry of affliction burst forth before the Eucharist, or to let a tear drop from eyes mystically sealed, or let any sign of mourning remain when a festival day came, although many sorrows befell her. For she felt that the soul that loves God should subject all human things to the divine.

Gregory also tells of an occasion in 351 when Nonna fell sick with a severe illness and appeared to be at the point of death. He writes:

Hardy and vigorous and free from disease all her life, she herself was seized with sickness. Of the many ills she suffered, not to prolong my story, nothing affected her so grievously as the inability to eat. Her life was in danger for many days, and no remedy for the disease could be found. How did God sustain her? Not by raining down manna, as of old for Israel, nor by striking the rock that gushed forth water for the thirsting people, nor by feeding her with the help of ravens, as the great Elias, nor by satisfying her need by a prophet carried through the air, as was done for Daniel of old when he suffered hunger in the lions' den. In what manner, then? She thought that she saw me, her darling, for not even in dreams did she prefer

any other of us, come up to her suddenly in the night with a basket of purest white bread, and after blessing and signing it with the cross according to my custom, feed and comfort her, and that she then recovered her strength. And this vision of the night was a thing of reality. For from that time she returned to herself and was of better hope. This is evidenced by a clear and manifest token. For on the day after, when I visited her early in the morning, I noticed at once that she was more cheerful. Then I asked her as usual how she had passed the night and whether she required anything. 'You fed me very readily and kindly, my son,' she said, 'and now you ask how I am! I feel splendid, and quite comfortable.' And at the same time her attendants made signs to me not to gainsay her and to accept her answer at once, lest she might be struck by despondency if the truth were revealed.

Gregory then speaks of a miracle his mother performed for him while he was traveling by sea and got caught in a fearsome storm:

I was voyaging from Alexandria to Greece over the Parthenian Sea. I sailed at a very unseasonable time, on an Aeginaten ship, impelled as I was by eager desire. What especially influenced me was that I had fallen in with a crew whom I knew well. We had proceeded but a little way when a violent storm arose, and one such as my shipmates said they had seldom experienced before. While all were afraid of a common death, I was in greater fear of spiritual death. Unfortunately, I was in danger of departing from life unbaptized, and I yearned for the spiritual water amid the waters of death. Therefore, I cried aloud and begged and implored a brief space of time. And my shipmates, in spite of their common danger, joined in my cries as not even many relatives would

have done, being kindly strangers who had learned sympathy from their perils. Thus did I suffer, and my parents suffered with me, sharing my danger which became known to them in a dream. And they brought help from the land, calming the waves by prayer, as afterwards we learned upon reckoning the time when I returned home. This was also revealed to me in a salutary sleep which I at length experienced when the storm abated a little. I seemed to be holding fast to a Fury of fearful aspect, threatening danger, for the night represented her clearly to me. Another of my fellow voyagers, a boy very well disposed and dear to me and deeply concerned for me under the circumstances, thought he saw my mother walk upon the sea and seize the ship and with no great effort draw it to land. And this vision was believed, for the sea began to grow calm, and we quickly arrived at Rhodes, without experiencing any great distress in the meantime. As a result of that peril, we ourselves became an offering. We promised ourselves to God if we were saved, and, on being saved, we gave ourselves to Him.

Gregory championed Nonna as a model of Christian motherhood. He wrote of her:

My mother was a worthy companion for such a man [as my father] and her qualities were as great as his. She came from a pious family, but was even more pious than they. Though in her body she was but a woman, in her spirit she was above all men... Her mouth knew nothing but the truth, but in her modesty she was silent about those deeds which brought her glory. She was guided by the fear of God.

And speaking further of his parents as models of Christian parentage, he wrote:

Our mother, from the beginning and by virtue of

descent, consecrated to God and receiving piety as a necessary heritage not for herself alone, but also for her children, was truly a holy lump from the holy first fruits of the dough. She so far increased and augmented it that some have expressed their belief the assertion is bold, but I will make it that not even her husband's perfection was any other's work than hers. And how wonderful it is that a greater and more perfect piety was bestowed as the reward of piety! Both were lovers of their children and of Christ. Yet it is a striking paradox that they were more devoted lovers of Christ than of their children. Their sole enjoyment in their children was that they be known as Christ's and called His. Their single definition of good children comprised virtue and kinship with the Chief Good. Compassionate and sympathetic, they rescued much treasure from moths and brigands and from the prince of this world, transferring it from their place of exile to their homeland, and storing up the glory of heaven for their children as their greatest inheritance.

The Venerable Pimen the Much-Ailing of Kiev (7th /20th): This righteous one was born sick and remained sickly throughout the greater part of his life. Because of the severity of his ailments he was eventually brought to the Monastery of the Kievan Caves by his parents, who asked the fathers to pray for his recovery. But, desiring to become a monk, Pimen secretly prayed that he would not be cured, and so stayed in the monastery infirmary. One night as he prayed, it appeared to him as if the Abbot and the brethren gathered around his sickbed and tonsured him into the monastic schema. In truth, he had been tonsured by the Angels. The fathers, however, heard the angelic chanting and hurried to his cell; there they found the newly tonsured monk, and the hair that had been shorn from his head, which they reverently placed on the tomb of Saint Theodosius, their founder.

St Pimen himself lived another twenty years and until the very end never recovered from his illnesses. Nonetheless he was always cheerful and, although sick himself, healed others through his prayers. Then his death approached. As he had been foretold by the Angels who tonsured him, a short while before his death, he was granted full health. He visited, and worshipped at, the holy places in the monastery, and thanked the fathers for bearing with his infirmities for so long. He prepared for himself a grave in the Caves of St Antony, and then, having partaken of the Holy Mysteries, he gave up his soul in the year 1110.

The Holy Hieromartyrs Pothinus and Irenaeus of Lyons (23rd August / 5th September): Both of these holy hierarchs were disciples of St Polycarp of Smyrna (fd: 23rd February / 8th March), who was himself a disciple of the Apostles. Under obedience to St Polycarp, St Pothinus was sent to preach the Gospel in Gaul, and established his mission centre in Lyons, becoming the first Bishop of that place. During the persecution, already a man of ninety, he was arrested and taken before the proconsul, who asked him Who the Christian God was. Knowing that he did not ask to learn, St Pothinus only told him that if he were worthy he would find out. The pagans then set upon the Bishop and beat him with sticks and stones, and so viciously that he died of his injuries. Thus in the year 177 he was crowned as a martyr. He was succeeded as Bishop of Lyons by the much more famous Saint Irenaeus. He is known for his numerous writings, especially those written to protect the flock entrusted to his care against the errors of the Gnostic heretics. He had been a disciple of St Polycarp in his earliest childhood and recorded that he treasured Polycarp's teaching "not on paper but in the heart, for the things learnt in childhood are part of our soul." He died in A.D. 202, during the persecution raised by the Emperor Severus, in which some nineteen thousand Christians suffered for their Faith.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

IN the Boston Prayer Book at the end of the Lord's Prayer they do not add, "For Thine is the kingdom..." but "Through the prayers...." Why is this? I am used to saying "For Thine is the kingdom...." - K.M., Wellingborough.

I THINK this is simply an instance where there are different local usages. I presume the Boston version derives from the fact that in the divine services when the Lord's Prayer is said, the priest makes the exclamation, "For thine is the kingdom..." but if there is no priest present, the senior person in church, says, "Through the prayers..." And this they have carried over into the prayers for private use. As they are private prayers, I would think you can follow the custom you are most at home with. I have to admit that I always say, "For Thine is the kingdom..."



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

BAPTISM AT SAINT EDWARD'S CHURCH

ON the Feast of the Holy Chiefs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, 29th June/12th July, **Moses Devenish** of Ripley was baptised and chrismated before the Hours and Liturgy. The celebrant was **Priestmonk Sabbas** and the sponsor was **Deacon Ioan Turcu**. Moses stayed at the Brotherhood for the week following until the baptismal robe was removed on the following Saturday at the end of the First Hour.

CHRISMATION AT SAINT EDWARD'S CHURCH

ON the Feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Twelve Apostles, Sunday 30th June/13th July, at the end of Matins, **Presbytera Loukia Liassi** as received by Chrismation into the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece; the celebrant was **Priestmonk Sabbas**.

FIRST AND EIGHTH DAY PRAYERS

On the eve of the feast of Saint Peter and Paul, **Priestmonk Sabbas** travelled to Royal Surrey County Hospital to read the First Day Prayer After Giving Birth for **Marina Ferguson** (the wife of **Reader Gregory Ferguson**). On the Eighth Day, **Fr Sabbas** travelled to Ash to read the naming prayers for baby **Theodore** (named after St. Theodore the Commander).

KEOT CO. LTD. AGM

ON the Feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Twelve Apostles, Sunday 30th June/13th July, immediately after the Divine Liturgy, the Annual General Meeting of **King Edward Orthodox Trust Company Limited** was held in the exhibition room in the Old Mortuary building. **Irina Aldersley** sent apologies for her absence. As **Fr. Alexis** was unwell, the meeting was chaired by **Priestmonk Sabbas**. The meeting was quite quick. Grave reservation prices were raised to £6000 for a single depth and £7500 for a double depth.

GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

Priest Gabriel Lawani donated a beautiful embroidered epitaphios from the Holy Land together with

two embroidered cloths. **Alexandra Galbeaza** gave two hand-painted icons of St Agatha of Catania and St Lucy of Syracuse which had been painted in Romania.

VISITORS

ON 25th June, **Kim Lowe** brought the members of the **Hartley Wintney U3A** to see the church. The group leader was **Malcolm Hitchcock**.

On Monday 21st July, **John Leech** brought three student planners from **Surrey County Council** to visit the cemetery and the church.

BROOKWOOD CEMETERY SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ON Saturday, 19th July, the Annual General Meeting of the **Brookwood Cemetery Society** was held in the Old Mortuary building. Refreshments were provided after the official meeting for all who attended.

ST. TRYPHON GARDENING GROUP

ON Saturday, 19th July, members of the group (Plamen Monovski, Mark Slater, Nicolas Socaciu, Alexandra and Anastasia Galbeaza, Teodora Sion and Lucie Brazil) spent most of Saturday gardening.



Practical Tip

MANY SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS advise that in church one does not use a Prayer Book. They do so in the belief that reading a book cuts one off from fully participating in the liturgy. One is, they argue, then simply alone with one's book and not watching the sacred rites, listening to the chants, participating as fully as one might with the rest of the congregation, in what is after all communal worship. There is a measure of truth in this, but there are also circumstances when a book might be a help, perhaps, for instance, when the service is being conducted in a language one does not readily understand. However, when one does choose to follow with a Prayer Book, make sure that you are only doing that. Do not have the Prayer Book so that you can read your private devotions or "catch up" on unsaid prayers (which should have been read at home) during the time of the Divine services, otherwise you will indeed be cutting yourself off from the rest of the congregation. And if you use service time to catch up on your private prayers, when are you going to catch up on your church-communal prayers? If you choose to use a Prayer Book when in church, use it only to help you follow the service which is being chanted.

