

# *The Shepherd*

*An Orthodox Christian  
Pastoral Magazine*

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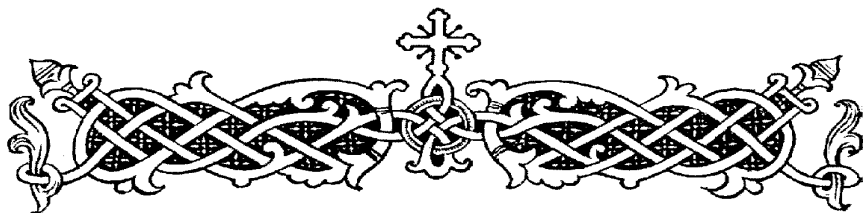
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## FROM THE FATHERS

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

HOLY HIEROMARTYR IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER  
OF ANTIOCH, + c.110 A.D.

“The effect of Baptism is, let us say for the sake of instruction to be derived from the parallel, like the change of colour which occurs in wool when it is dipped into dye - or rather, that we may enkindle the light of knowledge unto the comprehension of the great Light, let us take John the Baptist for guide, who prophesied concerning the Lord, ‘He shall baptise you in the Holy Spirit and fire’, and use the comparison of iron dipped in fire whose flames are fanned

by the wind. Under such conditions, the iron most readily betrays any dross it may contain and is very easily purified. After the iron is transformed not only in colour but also in texture, its hardness and rigidity are rendered pliant, so that it becomes very malleable in the hands of the artisan and wonderfully adapts itself to the will of its master. Its dull black hue becomes extraordinarily bright, and it not only burns and shines itself, but it illuminates and warms its surroundings.”

SAINT BASIL THE GREAT, + 379 A.D.

“Moses stretched forth his rod and God guided the people of the Hebrews; by night in a pillar of fire, by day in a pillar of cloud (cf. Exod. 13-14). And what is this light but the Truth, Which pours forth a full clear light? And the pillar of light, what is it if not Christ the Lord, Who has scattered the darkness of unbelief, and poured forth the light of His truth and spiritual grace on human hearts? The Holy Spirit is the pillar of cloud. The people were in the sea, and before them went the pillar of light. Then followed the pillar of cloud, as the shadow of the Holy Spirit. You see then how through water and the Holy Spirit a figure of Baptism was revealed to us.”

SAINT AMBROSE OF MILAN, +397 A.D

“Those who remained with Him for three days (*see Mark 8:1-9*) signify the baptised. For Baptism is called illumination, and is administered by a threefold immersion.”

SAINT THEOPHYLACT OF OCHRID + c.1107 A.D.

# ON THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS

**A Homily by Saint Gregory Palamas**

*Translated from the Greek by Patrick Barker (now  
Archimandrite Patapios)*

The Cross of Christ was preannounced and prefigured mystically by the generations of old, and nobody has ever been reconciled to God without the power of the Cross; for after that ancestral transgression through the tree in the Paradise of God sin revived, but we died after undergoing the death of the soul, which is the separation of the soul from God, before that of the body.

Insofar as we lived after the transgression, we lived to sin and to the life according to the flesh; but sin is not subject to the Law of God, for it cannot be, nor can those who live in the flesh be pleasing to God (Rom. 8:7). Therefore since, as the Apostle says, “the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh” (Gal. 5:17); since God is Spirit, Goodness itself and Virtue, and since our spirit is in His image and likeness, by which standard it was corrupted through sin, how could anything at all have been renewed and reconciled to God in spirit, unless sin and the life according to the flesh had been destroyed?

This is precisely what the Cross of Christ is: the destruction of sin. For this reason any of our God-bearing Fathers who is asked by an unbeliever whether he believes in the Crucified One, says “Yes, in Him Who crucified sin.” Many friends of God, before and after the Law, when the Cross had not yet appeared, received testimony from God Himself, and the King and Prophet David, as being in every way a friend of God at that time, says: “But Thy friends, O God, have been greatly honoured by me” (Ps. 138:17). How, then, could those who came before the Cross be called

friends of God? I will show you, if you lend me a God-loving and obedient ear.

Just as when the man of sin, the son of iniquity, I mean the Antichrist, had not yet come, the Beloved Disciple of Christ, John the Theologian said, "And now, my beloved, the Antichrist hath come," (1 John 2:18) so also the Cross existed among our ancestors even before it was accomplished. For the great Paul, quite clearly teaching how the Antichrist has not yet come among us, says: "his mystery is working among us" (2 Thess. 2:7).

In this way the Cross of Christ existed among the forefathers when it had not yet come about. To pass over Abel, Seth, Enos, Enoch, Noah and those who were pleasing to God up to the time of Noah, and anyone else close to them, I shall start from Abraham, who was called the father of many nations, of the Jews from the flesh, but of us by faith. To start from this father of ours according to the spirit and his first call from God, what was God's first utterance to him? "Go forth out of thy land and out of thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee" (Gen. 12:11). This utterance bears in itself the mystery of the Cross. For this is what Paul, who boasts in the Cross, says openly: "The world is crucified to me" (Gal. 6:14). For to him, who has fled his fatherland or the world without turning round, have his fatherland according to the flesh and the world been mortified and annulled; and this is the Cross.

But to Abraham, who had not yet fled his association with the godless, God said: "Go forth from thy land, and come into the land, not that which I shall give thee, but which I shall show thee," indicating thereby another land that was spiritual. What does God first say to Moses after he had escaped from Egypt and ascended the mountain? "Loose thy sandals from off thy feet" (Exod. 3:5). This is another mystery of the Cross, following naturally on the previous one.

The statement showed to Moses the sanctification that was going to come about on earth through the Cross after the Epiphany of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. For at that time Moses foresaw the then future coming of Christ, when he beheld that great sight, the bush bedewed in fire; this vision to Moses was the mystery of the Cross, greater and more perfect than that mystery experienced by Abraham.

Surely Moses was initiated into the mystery of the Cross more perfectly, not Abraham. How would this be so? Now at that time Abraham had not been initiated into this calling, but later on after the calling he was initiated once and twice and many times, although time does not permit us to speak about them all just now. I shall remind you of his more amazing vision of God, when he beheld the one God clearly in three Persons, though He had not yet been proclaimed as such: "God appeared to him by the oak of Mamre. And he lifted up his eyes and beheld, and lo! three men and he ran to meet them" (Gen. 18:1-2).

Lo, he saw the one God Who appeared to him as three. For God appeared to him, it says, and lo! three men, and again, he ran to the three and spoke to them as if to one: "Lord, if indeed I have found grace in Thy sight, pass not by Thy servant" (Gen. 18:3). And those three men conversed with him as though they were one. For He said to Abraham, "Where is Sarah thy wife? ... And He said, 'I will return and come to thee according to this period seasonably, and Sarah thy wife shall have a son'" (Gen. 18:9-10).

When the aged Sarah heard this and laughed, "The Lord said, 'Why is it that Sarah thy wife has laughed?'" Lo, the one God is three Persons, and these three are one Lord; for it says, "the Lord said." In this way, then, the mystery of the Cross operated in Abraham. Isaac himself was a type of Him Who was nailed to the Cross, for like Christ he became obedient to his father unto death; and the ram given in exchange for him prefigured the Lamb of God given for sacrifice on our behalf; and the plant in which the ram was

bound was a type of the mystery of the Cross, and hence the plant was called Sabek, that is a plant of forgiveness, as the Cross is called a tree of salvation.

The mystery and the type of the Cross was at work in Jacob, the son of Isaac; for it multiplied his sheep for him by wood and water (Gen. 30:25-43). The wood prefigured the wood of the Cross; the water prefigured the divine Baptism, which the mystery of the Cross contains in itself. "For we were baptised into the death of Christ," says the Apostle (Rom. 6:3). Christ multiplied His rational sheep for Himself on earth by wood and water – the Cross and Baptism. Jacob, both when he did reverence to the top of Joseph's staff (Gen. 47:31 LXX), and when he blessed his grandsons, placing his hands crosswise, showed the Cross still more clearly (Gen. 48:14-19).

But surely Jacob, the son of obedience, gained the greater mystery of the Cross, I mean the vision of God, in accordance with which man is crucified and dies to sin more perfectly, and lives to virtue. Indeed Jacob bears witness to himself about his vision and salvation, for he says:

"I have seen God face to face, and my life was preserved" (Gen. 32:30). Where are those who still agree with the disgusting pratings of the heterodox who have appeared in our times? Let them hear that Jacob saw the face of God. Not only was he not deprived of life, but as he himself says, it was preserved, although God says: "No man shall see My face, and live" (Exod. 33:20). So are there two Gods, one who has a face that submits to being seen by the saints, and the other with a face beyond all seeing? Away with such impiety!

But the face of God that is seen is the energy and grace of God manifested to the saints. The face of God that is never seen is sometimes called the nature of God beyond every appearance and vision; for nobody has stood in the person and essence of the Lord, as it is written (Jer. 23:18),



and nobody has ever seen or recounted the nature of God.

Just as the mystery of the Cross, then, was at work in Abraham, and his son was a type of Him Who was later crucified, so again in the whole life of Jacob the mystery of the Cross was at work, and Jacob's son Joseph was himself a type of the theanthropic Word Who was subsequently to be crucified; for by envy he was led off to slaughter, and that by his brothers according to the flesh, on whose behalf he had been sent by his father, as Christ was later on.

Although he was not slaughtered, Joseph was sold, and there is nothing amazing in this, for Isaac was not slaughtered either; for they were not the truth, but types of the truth that was to come. If we are to detect in them the twofold mystery of Jesus Who is twofold in nature, their being led off to slaughter prefigures the suffering of the God-man in the flesh, while their not suffering prefigures the impassibility of His Divinity.

You will find this also in the cases of Jacob and Abraham; for although they were tested, they conquered, which is written clearly in the case of Christ. Of the four, then, who were renowned for their virtue and piety before the Law, two of them, Abraham and Jacob, had the mystery of the Cross at work in their lives, while the other two, Isaac and Joseph, marvellously preannounced the mystery of the Cross.

But what about Moses, who was the first to receive the Law from God and hand it on to the rest: was he not saved by wood and water before the Law when he was exposed in the streams of the Nile in a basket (Exod. 2:2-10), and did he not save the people of Israel by wood and water (Exod. 14:15-31), by wood when he revealed the Cross, and by water when he revealed the divine Baptism? As Paul, the beholder of mysteries, plainly says: "they were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud" (1 Cor. 10:2). He testifies that even before the sea and this rod of his, Moses willingly endured the Cross of Christ, for he says: "He esteemed the



reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:26).

For the foolish the Cross of Christ is a reproach; again, as Paul himself says about Christ, "He endured the Cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). For Moses went forward and prefigured most clearly the type and shape of the Cross and the salvation that was to come through this type; for he set the rod up straight and stretched out his hands over it, and he shaped himself in the manner of the Cross over the rod, and utterly routed Amalek by appearing thus (Exod. 17:8-16). He also placed a bronze serpent crosswise on a signal-staff, and having openly set up the type of the Cross, he bade those of the Jews who had been bitten by serpents to look on it for their salvation, and in this way he cured the bites of the serpents (Num. 21:6-9).

I lack the time to tell of Joshua and those after him who, working by the mystery of the Cross, checked rivers in their courses, caused the sun to stand still, demolished the cities of the impious, became strong in war, subdued the camps of adversaries, escaped the points of swords, quenched the power of fire, stopped the mouths of lions, confuted kings, reduced naval commanders to ashes, raised the dead, halted and again released the sky by a word, making the clouds in it unproductive and again productive; for although Paul says that faith has wrought these things (Heb. 11:32-40) yet faith is power unto salvation; this is why all things are possible for him who believes. Such a thing in every way is the Cross of Christ for those who believe; for again, as Paul says, "the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

# AN EXPLANATION OF THE RITE OF THE EXALTATION OF THE LIFE-CREATING CROSS

**By Saint Philaret of New York**

The Church continues to celebrate the Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Life-Creating Cross. For this reason you and I together hear the chanting of resurrectional hymns with those to the Cross. On the eve of the Great Feast itself in some churches they solemnised the Rite of the Exaltation itself, during which the cross is raised aloft in the hands of the hierarchy, and then gradually lowered almost to the very ground itself, and then again, just as gradually, raised on high. In this rite, the Church shows the great deed that Our Lord Jesus Christ did for us, coming down from heaven to earth, and from the earth even to the regions under the earth, so that (as the Holy Fathers so loved to say) He might seek, find and save man.

But notice the difference: from the Throne of God there came down the Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, God Almighty and Illimitable, the only Divinity. And when He had completed His great work, the salvation of man, He was again taken up into the Heavens, but it was not simply the Son of God and God who ascended, but rather the God-Man, One Person, One Identity or, as the Greeks say, Hypostasis, but in two essences, two natures: God and Man. For in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, Divinity and humanity are wholly united forever, for all eternity, and never shall there be any change in this regard. And the Divine nature and the human nature maintain all their own properties; it is only that miraculously they are joined in one.

The Holy Fathers loved to say that the Lord, in ascending from earth to heaven, as it were blazed the trail for us. The soul that is faithful to Him sees within the

fulfilment of His radiant promise, when He says, "Where I am, there shall my servant be also." For the Lord has, as it were, opened up this path from earth to heaven for us, the children of His Church.

But only be careful, Christian soul, that you do not take earthly vanities with you into heaven; it is needful to live on earth in such a way that when we reach the end of this earthly life we are manifest as worthy of the blessed life of Paradise, so that we are occupied by, that we live by and experience, while still here on earth, that which pertains to the mansions of Paradise and to the eternal blessed life. It is necessary to bear in mind that a third way is not an option; if the soul is not saved, if it does not inherit the mansions of Paradise; if it does not settle in them, then it will certainly fall into the dread abyss of hades: there is no third way!

Therefore, take care, O Christian soul, to prepare yourself that you might be received into the abodes of Paradise and not into that dread abyss of hades, in which there is only oppression and torment and absolutely no delight or hope.

And blessed is that soul which shall inherit eternal life, such as the Lord Jesus Christ promised to His disciples, and through them to us, the believing Orthodox Christians. Amen.

***From the second volume of Metropolitan  
Philaret's "Sermons and Teachings" published in  
Russian in 1989 by the Russian Orthodox Youth  
Committee.***

# ON SHUNNING THE READING OF BOOKS WHICH CONTAIN FALSE TEACHING

**Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov**

Again I offer to you, faithful son of the Orthodox Church, a word of sincere, good advice. This word does not belong to me: it is from the holy fathers. Thence are all my counsels.

Guard your mind and heart from learning falsehood. Do not converse about Christianity with people who are infected with false thoughts; do not read books about Christianity which are written by false teachers.

The Holy Spirit accompanies truth: He is the Spirit of Truth. The spirit of the devil, who is a liar and the father of lies, accompanies and assists falsehood.

One who reads books by false teachers partakes without fail of the evil, dark spirit of falsehood. Let this not seem to you strange or unbelievable: the luminaries of the Church, the holy fathers, declare it thus.

"Let no one read what does not serve to please God," said Saint Peter of Damascus:

*But if, in ignorance, one should sometime read such a writing, then let him at once labour to erase it from his memory by reading Divine Scriptures, and from exactly those which more serve for the salvation of his soul, in accordance with the state to which he has attained... But let him not at all read books which are opposed to this. What need is there to accept an unclean spirit, instead of the Holy Spirit? One receives the character of that word which he studies, although the inexperienced do not see this as do those who have spiritual experiences.*

If your mind and heart are not inscribed with anything, then let the Truth and the Spirit write on them the commandments of God and His spiritual teaching. But if you have allowed the tablets of your soul to be written and marked on by various understandings and impressions, without prudently and carefully discriminating who wrote them and what he wrote, then clean away what has been written by alien writers, purge it away by means of repentance and by rejecting everything that is opposed to God.

Let the writer on your tablets be only the finger of God.

Prepare for this writer purity of mind and heart by means of a pious, chaste life. Then, when you pray and when you read holy books, the law of the Spirit will be imperceptibly, mystically inscribed on the tablets of your soul.

It is permitted you to read only those books about religion which are written by the holy fathers of the universal Orthodox Church. This the Orthodox Church requires of her children.

If you judge otherwise and find this commandment of the Church less well-founded than your judgment and that of others who agree with you, then you are no longer a son of the Church, but Her judge.

Will you call me one-sided, insufficiently enlightened, a rigorist? Leave me my one-sidedness and all other shortcomings: I would rather with these shortcomings be obedient to the Orthodox Church than with all imagined perfections be wiser than Her, and therefore allow myself disobedience to Her, and separation from Her. To true children of the Orthodox Church, my voice will be pleasing.

They know that he who wishes to acquire heavenly wisdom must abandon his own earthly wisdom, however great it be, must renounce it, must recognise it to be what it is: foolishness (1 Cor 3:19).

Earthly wisdom is enmity with God: it does not submit to the law of God, and it cannot submit (Rom. 8:7). From the beginning, such is its character and such it will remain to its end, when "the earth and the works that are therein," and with them also earthly wisdom, "shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

The Holy Church allows the books of false teachers to be read only by those of Her members whose thought and the feelings of whose hearts have been healed and illumined by the Holy Spirit, who are always able to distinguish true good from evil which pretends to be good and which covers itself with a mask of good.

The great pleasers of God, who knew the weakness common to all men, feared the poison of heresy and falsehood, and therefore with all possible care fled from conversation with people who were infected with false teaching and from the reading of heretical books.

Having before their eyes the fall of the most learned Origen, of Arius who was so proficient in debate, of the eloquent Nestorius and of others who were rich in the wisdom of the world and who perished from their self-confidence and conceit, they sought salvation and found it in fleeing from false teachings, they found it in the most exact obedience to the Church.

The Spirit-bearing holy shepherds and teachers of the Church read the writings of the blasphemous heretics, being forced to this reading by the essential need of the whole Christian society. With a powerful, with a spiritual word, they unmasked delusions and proclaimed to all the children of the Church the hidden danger in the heretical writings, which was concealed by magnificent appellations of holiness and piety.

But for you and me, it is essential to guard ourselves from reading books which have been composed by false teachers. The name of false teacher belongs to every person who writes about Christ and about the Christian Faith and

morality, but does not belong to the Orthodox Church, the one holy Church.

Tell me – how is it possible to allow yourself to read every book, when every book that is read by you leads you wherever it wishes – persuades you to agree to everything on which it needs your agreement, and to reject everything that it needs you to reject?

Experience proves how disastrous are the consequences of indiscriminate reading. Among sons of the Orthodox Church, how many understandings one may encounter about Christianity which are most confused, incorrect; understandings which are contradictory to the Church's teaching, which deprecate this holy teaching – understandings which have been acquired by reading heretical books!

Do not grieve, my friend, over my warnings, which are inspired by the desire for your true good.

Will not a father, a mother, a good teacher fear for an innocent, inexperienced infant, when he wishes to have free access to a room in which amidst edible provisions there is a great quantity of poison?

Death of the soul is more disastrous than death of the body: the dead body will rise, and often death of the body becomes the cause of life for the soul. But the soul which has been put to death by evil is a victim of eternal death. The soul can be killed by one thought which contains any kind of blasphemy whatsoever, one that is subtle, completely unnoticed by the ignorant.

The time will come, said the holy Apostle prophetically, "when they will not listen to sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned aside unto fables" (2 Tim 4:3-4).

Do not be seduced by a book's high-sounding title which promises to teach Christian perfection to someone for



whom an infant's food is still necessary. Do not be seduced by a magnificent edition or a picture, by power, beauty of style, nor by the writer's seeming to be holy, seeming to prove his holiness by many miracles.

False teaching does not stop at any contrivance whatsoever, at any fraud whatsoever, to give its fables the appearance of truth, and in this way to more easily poison a soul with them.

A false teaching is in itself already a deception. The writer has been deceived by it even before the reader (2 Tim 3:13).

The mark of a book which is truly, essentially beneficial to the soul is a holy writer, a member of the Orthodox Church, who is approved and recognised by the Holy Church. Amen.

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## THE COMING MONTH

September is the first month in the **Church Year**, and in it we begin the cycle of Great Feasts, which celebrate events in the life of our Saviour and His Mother, with the Virgin's Nativity. The celebration is appointed to fall on the eighth of the month (21<sup>st</sup> new style), because we begin the New Year as God began creation. In six days He created everything that there is and rested the seventh. And so we leave seven days in commemoration of that first creation, and then celebrate the **Birth of the Most Holy Mother of God**, the beginning of the New Creation, on the eighth

day. The eighth day also has significance for Christians in that it represents the life of the Age to Come; the seven days representing the life of this earthly order.

Some may wonder why the Orthodox Church starts her year on 1<sup>st</sup> September in any case. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly the early autumn marks the end of the agricultural year, and thus the beginning of the new one, and is in a sense the natural place to divide the year. By tradition also it was at this time of year that Our Saviour came to His home town of Nazareth and read the prophesy of Esaias: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, for He hath anointed Me to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (see Luke 4:18-19).

This Gospel is read to this day on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Furthermore it was on 1st September that the Emperor St Constantine the Great conquered Maxentius, after his miraculous vision, and so at the First, Holy and Ecumenical Council, in recognition of these things, the beginning of September was appointed the beginning also of the Church Year.

Another Great Feast falls in September, that of the **Universal Exaltation of the Honourable and Life-creating Cross** on the 14<sup>th</sup> /27<sup>th</sup>. Towards the end of the Vigil service served on the eve of this feast, in cathedrals and larger monasteries we have one of the most beautiful ceremonies of the Church Year, the elevation and veneration of the Cross. This ceremony derives from the first elevation of the Cross at its finding

The precious Cross was discovered in the year 326 by the Empress St Helena, and was raised up before the people by the Patriarch Macarius. During the feast we commemorate not only this event but also the dedication of the original Church of the Resurrection (the Holy Sepulchre) in 335 A.D.; the vision of St Constantine mentioned above, and the restoration of the Cross to the Christians in 628 A.D. In 614, the Cross had been captured

by the Persian king, Chosroes, when he was at war with the Byzantine Emperor Phocas. The Persians took Jerusalem, and laid it and many of its shrines waste. The Cross was among the many other trophies which they took back to Persia. However even in this seemingly disastrous loss for the Christian world, God's mercy was at work. Because of the miracles worked by the Cross, numbers of the Persians, including St Anastasius the Persian (22<sup>nd</sup> January), were brought to Christ. In 628, Chosroes' successor, Syroes concluded a peace with the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, and as one of the conditions of this peace the Cross was returned to Jerusalem. The Emperor Heraclius himself travelled to Jerusalem to receive the Holy Cross. Tradition tells us that he was vested in his Imperial regalia to receive this supremely important relic. However, when he approached the doors of the Church with the Cross, he found that an invisible force restrained him from entering there. It was revealed to the Patriarch Zosimas by an Angel that the Emperor should bear the Cross humbly clad only in a simple loincloth, and when he divested himself of the purple and the regalia, he found that he was able to carry the trophy of salvation into the Church. Although this feast is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the year, because it hymns the saving Passion of our Saviour, it is always kept as a fast day. The feast itself is kept for eight days until the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Our own community also celebrates its dedication festival on 3<sup>rd</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> September, this being the day that the sacred relics of **Saint Edward** were presented to our church in 1984 and a day appointed by the Synod of our Bishops for the celebration of the Saint.

Among the other saints that we celebrate in September are: **The Holy Martyr Severian of Sebaste** (9<sup>th</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> ) was a man of noble birth in the city and a Christian. He was emboldened by witnessing the martyrdom of the Forty Martyrs, whom we celebrate on 9<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> March, and therefore went to the governor and confessed himself to be

a Christian. Because of Severian's position in society, the governor at first tried to persuade him with bribes and soft talk to renounce his faith or not to make an issue of it. However Severian remained steadfast; he was then put to torture, but still would not deny Our Saviour. Seeing that they could not prevail, the governor ordered that he be put to death. They killed him in a particularly cruel way, by suspending him by a rope from the city wall, and tying a heavy stone around his neck and another to his feet. Thus he gained the crown of martyrdom, and his sacred relics proved a source of healing for all those who had recourse to them in faith.

On 28<sup>th</sup> September/11<sup>th</sup> October, we commemorate **Saint Exuperius of Toulouse**. He is believed to have been born at Bordeaux, and was consecrated as Bishop of Toulouse in the year 405, on the death of Saint Sylvius. The Blessed Jerome wrote of him, that: "to relieve their (his flock's) hunger, he suffers it himself, and condemns himself to the severest self-denial, that he may be enabled to minister to their wants. The paleness of his face declares the rigour of his fasts. But his poverty makes him truly rich; so poor is he, as to be forced to carry the Body of the Lord in an osier basket and His Blood in a glass vessel. His charity knows no bounds. It sought for objects in the most distant parts and the solitaries of Egypt felt its beneficial effects." St Exuperius completed the church of Saint Saturninus in Toulouse and translated the relics of that saint, who had been the Apostle of Toulouse, there. He sent a letter to Innocent I, the Pope of Rome, requesting answers to certain questions, and the Pope's reply is still extant. Saint Paulinus of Nola regarded Exuperius as one of the greatest saints of Gaul, and Blessed Jerome dedicated his commentary on Zecharias to him. The Saint died in 415, a short time before his country was invaded by the Goths and Vandals, and Toulouse made the capital of the Gothic King Walla. The relics of the saint reposed at Arreau in the Pyrenees, and his glass chalice was kept at Toulouse.

# POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

I would like to purchase a copy of the Bible. Could you please recommend a suitable edition and a publisher?  
**C.M. Kent**

This is not a question with a straightforward answer. First, we need to consider how an Orthodox Bible is different in structure from most easily available English translations. Then we need to consider the merits of the translations themselves.

The Old Testament used in the Orthodox Church is called the *Septuagint*. This word means ‘of the Seventy’ and refers to the seventy translators assembled during the reign of Pharaoh Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 285-246 B.C.) who translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek. The Septuagint is the oldest witness to the books of the Old Testament in their entirety.

The Hebrew Bible from which these translators worked has long been lost. There are many hundreds of Hebrew Old Testament fragments surviving but the oldest complete Hebrew manuscript, the Leningrad Codex, dates to A.D. 1008. This Hebrew text is called the Masoretic Text after the Masoretes (Jewish scribes) who edited the text between the 7th and 10th centuries A.D.

English editions of the Bible use this Masoretic text for the Old Testament. The Septuagint, however, is the Old Testament of the Early Church, and the New Testament authors most often choose the Septuagint version when quoting the Old Testament. Also, the ancient copies of the Septuagint such as the fourth century codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus contain a number of books missing from the Masoretic Text; these books are usually referred to in western usage as the *Apocrypha*.

The most popular Bible translation among traditional Orthodox is the King James Version (KJV). The Old Testament in the KJV is translated from the Hebrew, but if

we can find an edition that includes the Apocrypha we will have a complete Bible at a reasonable price. *The New Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, for example, is a very slightly updated version of the 1611 KJV and contains the Apocrypha.

The New King James Version (NKJV) is, as the name suggests, a modern English version of the KJV. In some places, this new translation is an improvement. For example, at the wedding of Cana, the KJV translates Christ's words to the Mother of God as 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come' (John 2:4). The NKJV renders this verse more accurately as 'Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."'

The NKJV references the Septuagint in footnotes throughout the Old Testament where it differs significantly from the Masoretic Text. The NKJV is a good choice for a modern English translation although it is difficult to find one with the apocrypha included.

The *Orthodox Study Bible* is a version of the NKJV and contains the complete Orthodox Old Testament; on closer examination we find that is not a new translation of the Septuagint, but merely a NKJV which has been conformed to the Septuagint in some places, but not in others. Unfortunately, the study guides and footnotes are not always traditionally Orthodox. If one ignores these, then the OSB does have some advantages in having all the books needed under one cover.

For a complete version of the Old Testament, then the choice is mainly between the 19<sup>th</sup> century Lancelot Brenton translation and the modern *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (NETS).

Unfortunately, there are a number of errors in the Brenton translation, and the apocryphal books are merely a reprint of the KJV apocrypha. In addition, the English text in Brenton editions is set in a very small font making it hard to read.

The NETS, on the other hand, is easier to read, but the translation is often quite ugly and tends to transliterate the Greek unnecessarily resulting in ‘Ioudith’ instead of ‘Judith’ and ‘Salomon’ rather than ‘Solomon’.

The *Psalter According the Seventy* translated by Holy Transfiguration Monastery is widely used in Orthodoxy, and provides an accurate, traditional English alternative to the Psalms in Brenton and NETS.

Lastly, we need to mention the *Eastern/Greek Orthodox New Testament* (EOB) translated by Laurent Cleenewerck. This is a modern English translation of the Greek New Testament text that was approved by the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1904.

The EOB, being a translation of an approved Orthodox text, should be superior to the other translations we have mentioned. In some respects it is, but the translation has some strange quirks. For example, the translator has chosen to avoid the use of the word ‘worship’ in many instances and substitutes ‘express adoration’ instead. For example, in John 4:21-22, Christ says to the Samaritan Woman: ‘Woman, believe me, a time is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you express adoration to the Father. You express adoration to what you do not know. We express adoration to what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.’

These translation choices make the EOB a difficult read in certain parts, but it is certainly an excellent reference. Perhaps, with time, one could learn to ignore these quirks. The EOB contains numerous useful appendices, but these make it quite thick and, being a glued paperback, it is hard to see the binding lasting for any length of time.

All in all, there is no real correct answer to your question, only a number of options. Probably the most important thing to consider is your preferred style of English. However, any single book or combination of books that we have mentioned above would certainly be a good start.



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

## **BAPTISM AT SAINT EDWARD'S CHURCH**

ON Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> August, baby **Theodore Ferguson**, son of **Reader Gregory** and **Marina Ferguson** of Ash was baptised. The celebrant was Theodore's grandfather **Fr. Borislav Popov** and the sponsor, **Deacon Ioan Turcu**. On the Feast of the Transfiguration **Priestmonk Sabbas** read the 40<sup>th</sup> Day Prayer for Marina Ferguson.

## **NEW CATECHUMENS**

On Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> July/10<sup>th</sup> August, **Daniel, Emily and Lilian Burford** were received as catechumens, the prayers being read by **Priestmonk Sabbas**. Daniel is named after Prophet Daniel (17<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> December) Emily after the Righteous Emilia, mother of Saint Basil the Great (8<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> May) and Lilian after the Martyr Lilian of Cordova (21<sup>st</sup> July/9<sup>th</sup> August).

On Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> August, **James Bell** and **Mark Slater** were received as catechumens, the prayers being read by **Priestmonk Sabbas**. James is named after James, the Brother of God (Oct 23<sup>rd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> November) and Mark after St Mark of Trache (5<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> April).

## **BURIAL AT SAINT EDWARD BROTHERHOOD**

On Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> August, **Khaled George Abdel Nour** was laid to rest in the Saint Edward Brotherhood Cemetery. The funeral had been served earlier at St.

Nectarius Church, Battersea by Protopresbyter **Christodolous Christodolou**, the pastor of George.

## **RIMA CONFERENCE**

This year's Young Adults Conference was held, with the blessing of Metropolitan Ambrose at The Mill, Forest Green, Surrey between Monday 28<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> July. The conference was planned and supervised by **Patrick** and **Rima Lewis**. The speakers were **Fr. Daniel**, **Fr Alexander Hahr** and **Fr. Thomas**, and the theme was the Liturgical Services of the Church. The first two talks were held at the Brotherhood on Monday morning, and then the Conference moved to the Mill. On Wednesday the participants attended the Divine Liturgy.

On Thursday there was an optional coach outing to Shaftesbury Abbey and Corfe Castle. Frs. Niphon and Thomas went on the tour which was led by Patrick Lewis. At Shaftesbury Abbey the visitors were given an introductory talk by the Head of Collections, **Claire Ryley**, after which Fr. Thomas answered various questions about the discovery of the relics at Shaftesbury and their subsequent history. On arriving at Corfe Castle, the Supplicatory Canon to Saint Edward the Martyr was chanted in the Church of Saint Edward King and Martyr.

## **LIGGY CAMP**

This year's camp was led by **Fr. Alexander Hahr** from Sweden. Metropolitan Ambrose was able to visit the camp for a brief overnight visit and the camp seems to have been enjoyed by all.

## **VISITORS**

On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August, **Archimandrite Nicanor** and **Priestmonk Zacharias** of **Saints Cosmas and Damian Monastery**, Tsarnogorski, Bulgaria visited the

Brotherhood. They were accompanied by **Priest Constantine**. The guests looked around the Church and were given hospitality in the Exhibition Room.

## NEW ICONS

The Brotherhood has received delivery of two new icons for the Church. A large icon depicting the **Sayings of our Saviour** (Matt. 25: 35-40) was painted by the **Sisters of the Holy Angels Convent**, Afidnai. An icon of **Blessed Theophylact** of Bulgaria was painted by the **Sisters of the Convent of Saint Philothei** in Sweden.

## Practical Tip

Nowadays, it seems that many of us fall into one of two great temptations with regard to spiritual reading. Many neglect the reading of the Scriptures and other spiritual works altogether, and so their church practice simply becomes a following of certain rites, regulations and observances, but they are hardly nourished by it at all, and become, as it were, starved by their “Orthodoxy.” Others do read Church things, but confine themselves to news and views, contentions and disputes. Thus they come to know the arguments about everything; become adept at judging everything and everyone, and can have an opinion on everything that happens in the Church and indeed throughout the world, but similarly they are not interiorly nourished. Our minds need to be fed and they need to be fed with the good wholesome food of the teachings of the Scriptures and the Fathers. This spiritual nourishment does not just appear in our minds and hearts; just as we need to eat to fill our bellies, so everyday we need to read spiritually profitable works to nourish our hearts and minds.