

# *The Shepherd*

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## FROM THE FATHERS

“YOU must consider your senses as the door to a house. Through the senses all images of things enter into the heart, and, through the senses, the innumerable multitude of lusts pour into it. The Prophet Joel calls the senses windows, saying: “They shall enter in at our windows like a thief” (Joel 2:9), because these windows have not been marked with the precious blood of Christ. Moreover, the Law commanded that, after the slaughter (of the lamb), the Israelites were to smear the doorposts and the lintels of their houses with its blood, showing by this that the precious blood of Christ protects our own earthly dwelling-place, which is to say, our body, and that the death brought about by the transgression is repelled by our enjoyment of the partaking of life (that is, of life-giving Communion). Further, through our sealing (with the blood of Christ) we distance from ourselves the destroyer.”

SAINT CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, +444 A.D.

“IF WE FALL into some small, pardonable sins on account of our being human, either with our tongue, our ears, our eyes, and we fall as victims of deceit into vainglory, or sorrow, or anger, or some other like sin, let us condemn ourselves and confess to God. Thus let us partake of the Holy Mysteries, believing that the reception of the divine Mysteries is unto the purification of these small sins (though not the grave and evil and impure sins which we may have committed, regarding which we should seek the Mystery of Confession).

SAINT ANASTASIUS OF ANTIOCH, +599 A.D.

“DO YOU SEE the ineffable gift? He not only died for us, but He also gives Himself to us as food. What could show more love than this? What is more salvific to the soul? Moreover, no one fails to partake every day of the food and drink of the common table. And, if it happens that someone does not eat, he becomes greatly dismayed. And we are not speaking here about ordinary bread, but about the Bread of life; not about an ordinary cup, but about the Cup of immortality. And do we consider Communion an indifferent matter, entirely unnecessary? How is this thought not irrational and foolish? If this is how it has been up until now, my children, I ask that we henceforth take heed to ourselves, and, knowing the power of the Gift, let us purify ourselves as much as possible and partake of the sanctified Things. And if it happens that we are occupied with a handicraft, as soon as we hear the sounding-board calling us to church, let us put our work aside and go partake of the Gift with great desire. And this (that is, frequent Communion) will certainly benefit us, for we keep ourselves pure through our preparation for Communion. If we do not commune frequently, it is impossible for us not to become subject to the passions. Frequent Communion will become for us a companion unto eternal life.”

VEN. THEODORE THE STUDITE, + 826 A.D.

“BUT IF we should cut ourselves off, if we should separate ourselves from the unity of this most holy body, we partake of the Holy Mysteries in vain, for life cannot flow into dead and amputated limbs. And what can cut off the members from this holy body? ‘It is your sins which have separated Me from you’ (Es. 59:2), says God. Does all sin then bring death to man? No indeed, but mortal sin only; that is why it is called mortal. For according to Saint John there are sins which are not mortal (*cf.* 1Jn 5:16-17). That is why Christians, if they have not committed such sins as would cut them off from Christ and bring death, are in no way prevented, when partaking of the Holy Mysteries, from receiving sanctification, not in name alone, but in fact, since they continue to be living members united to the Head.”

SAINT NICOLAS CABASILAS, + 1371 A.D.

“ALL Orthodox Christians are commanded to receive Communion frequently. First, by the orders of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Secondly, by the Acts and Canons of the Holy Apostles and the sacred Councils and by the testimonies of the divine Fathers. Thirdly, by the very words, the order, and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Fourthly, by Holy Communion in and of itself.”

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



# On the Lord's Prayer

HOLY HIEROMARTYR CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE,  
+ 258 A.D.

Continuation & Conclusion

AS the prayer goes forward, we ask and say, “***Give us this day our daily bread.***” And this may be understood both spiritually and literally, because either way of understanding it is rich in divine usefulness to our salvation. For Christ is the bread of life; and this Bread does not belong to all men, but it is ours. And according as we say, “Our Father,” because He is the Father of those who understand and believe; so also we call it “our bread,” because Christ is the bread of those who are in union with His body. And we ask that this bread should be given to us daily, that we who are in Christ, and daily receive the Eucharist for the food of salvation, may not, by the interposition of some heinous sin, by being prevented, as withheld and not communicating, from partaking of the heavenly bread, be separated from Christ's body, as He Himself predicts, and warns, “I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. If any man eat of my bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world” (Jn 6:58). When, therefore, He says, that whoever shall eat of His bread shall live for ever; as it is manifest that those who partake of His body and receive the Eucharist by the right of communion are living, so, on the other

hand, we must fear and pray lest anyone who, being withheld from communion, is separate from Christ's body should remain at a distance from salvation; as He Himself threatens, and says, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall have no life in you" (Jn 6:53). And therefore we ask that our bread - that is, Christ - may be given to us daily, that we who abide and live in Christ may not depart from His sanctification and body.

But it may also be thus understood, that we who have renounced the world, and have cast away its riches and pomps in the faith of spiritual grace, should only ask for ourselves food and support, since the Lord instructs us, and says, "Whosoever forsakes not all that he has, cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:33). But he who has begun to be Christ's disciple, renouncing all things according to the word of his Master, ought to ask for his daily food, and not to extend the desires of his petition to a long period, as the Lord again prescribes, and says, "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow itself shall take thought for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:34). With reason, then, does Christ's disciple ask food for himself for the day, since he is prohibited from thinking of the morrow; because it becomes a contradiction and a repugnant thing for us to seek to live long in this world, since we ask that the kingdom of God should come quickly. Thus also the blessed apostle admonishes us, giving substance and strength to the steadfastness of our hope and faith: "We brought nothing," says he, "into this world, nor indeed can we carry anything out. Having therefore food and raiment, let us be herewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted, they have made shipwreck from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:7).

He teaches us that riches are not only to be contemned, but that they are also full of peril; that in them is the root of seducing evils, that deceive the blindness of the human mind by a hidden deception. Whence also God rebukes the rich fool, who thinks of his earthly wealth, and boasts himself in the abundance of his overflowing harvests, saying, "You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you; then whose shall those things be which

you have provided?” (Lk. 12:20). The fool who was to die that very night was rejoicing in his stores, and he to whom life already was failing was thinking of the abundance of his food. But, on the other hand, the Lord tells us that he becomes perfect and complete who sells all his goods, and distributes them for the use of the poor, and so lays up for himself treasure in heaven. He says that that man is able to follow Him, and to imitate the glory of the Lord’s passion, who, free from hindrance, and with his loins girded, is involved in no entanglements of worldly estate, but, at large and free himself, accompanies his possessions, which before have been sent to God. For which result, that every one of us may be able to prepare himself, let him thus learn to pray, and know, from the character of the prayer, what he ought to be.

For daily bread cannot be wanting to the righteous man, since it is written, “The Lord will not slay the soul of the righteous by hunger” (Prov. 10:3); and again “I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.” And the Lord moreover promises and says, “Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the nations seek. And your Father knows that you have need of all these things. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:31). To those who seek God’s kingdom and righteousness, He promises that all things shall be added. For since all things are God’s, nothing will be wanting to him who possesses God, if God Himself be not wanting to him. Thus a meal was divinely provided for Daniel: when he was shut up by the king’s command in the den of lions, and in the midst of wild beasts who were hungry, and yet spared him, the man of God was fed. Thus Elias in his flight was nourished both by ravens ministering to him in his solitude, and by birds bringing him food in his persecution. And - oh, detestable cruelty of the malice of man! - the wild beasts spare, the birds feed, while men lay snares and rage!

After this we also entreat for our sins, saying, “***And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.***” After the supply of food, pardon of sin is also asked for, that he who is fed by God may live in God, and that not only the present and temporal life may be provided for, but the eternal also, to which we

may come if our sins are forgiven; and these the Lord calls debts, as He says in His Gospel, "I forgave you all that debt, because you desired me" (Matt. 18:32). And how necessarily, how providently and salutarily, are we admonished that we are sinners, since we are compelled to entreat for our sins, and while pardon is asked for from God, the soul recalls its own consciousness of sin! Lest anyone should flatter himself that he is innocent, and by exalting himself should more deeply perish, he is instructed and taught that he sins daily, in that he is bidden to entreat daily for his sins. Thus, moreover, John also in his epistle warns us, and says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." In his epistle he has combined both, that we should entreat for our sins, and that we should obtain pardon when we ask. Therefore he said that the Lord was faithful to forgive sins, keeping the faith of His promise; because He Who taught us to pray for our debts and sins, has promised that His fatherly mercy and pardon shall follow.

He has clearly joined herewith and added the law, and has bound us by a certain condition and engagement, that we should ask that our debts be forgiven us in such a manner as we ourselves forgive our debtors, knowing that that which we seek for our sins cannot be obtained unless we ourselves have acted in a similar way in respect of our debtors. Therefore also He says in another place, "With what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you again." And the servant who, after having had all his debt forgiven him by his master, would not forgive his fellow-servant, is cast back into prison; because he would not forgive his fellow-servant, he lost the indulgence that had been shown to himself by his lord. And these things Christ still more urgently sets forth in His precepts with yet greater power of His rebuke. "When you stand praying," says He, "forgive if you have anything against any, that your Father which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses." There remains no ground of excuse in the day of judgment, when you will be judged according to your own sentence; and whatever you have done, that you also will suffer. For God commands us to be peacemakers, and in agreement, and of one mind in His house; and such as He makes us by a second birth, such He



wishes us when newborn to continue, that we who have begun to be sons of God may abide in God's peace, and that, having one spirit, we should also have one heart and one mind. Thus God does not receive the sacrifice of a person who is in disagreement, but commands him to go back from the altar and first be reconciled to his brother, that so God also may be appeased by the prayers of a peacemaker. Our peace and brotherly agreement is the greater sacrifice to God - and a people united in one in the unity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

For even in the sacrifices which Abel and Cain first offered, God looked not at their gifts, but at their hearts, so that he was acceptable in his gift who was acceptable in his heart. Abel, peaceable and righteous in sacrificing in innocence to God, taught others also, when they bring their gift to the altar, thus to come with the fear of God, with a simple heart, with the law of righteousness, with the peace of concord. With reason did he, who was such in respect of God's sacrifice, become subsequently himself a sacrifice to God; so that he who first set forth martyrdom, and initiated the Lord's passion by the glory of his blood, had both the Lord's righteousness and His peace. Finally, such are crowned by the Lord, such will be avenged with the Lord in the day of judgment; but the quarrelsome and disunited, and he who has not peace with his brethren, in accordance with what the blessed apostle and the Holy Scripture testifies, even if he have been slain for the name of Christ, shall not be able to escape the crime of fraternal dissension, because, as it is written, He who hates his brother is a murderer (1 Jn 3:15) and no murderer attains to the kingdom of heaven, nor does he live with God. He cannot be with Christ, who had rather be an imitator of Judas than of Christ. How great is the sin which cannot even be washed away by a baptism of blood - how heinous the crime which cannot be expiated by martyrdom!

Moreover, the Lord of necessity admonishes us to say in prayer, "***And lead us not into temptation.***" In which words it is shown that the adversary can do nothing against us except God shall have previously permitted it; so that all our fear, and devotion, and obedience may be turned towards God, since in our temptations nothing is permitted to evil unless power is given from Him. This is proved by divine Scripture, which says, "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and be-



sieged it; and the Lord delivered it into his hand” (2 Kgs 24:11). But power is given to evil against us according to our sins, as it is written, “Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to those who make a prey of Him? Did not the Lord, against whom they sinned, and would not walk in His ways, nor hear His law? And He has brought upon them the anger of His wrath” (Es. 13:24). And again, when Solomon sinned, and departed from the Lord’s commandments and ways, it is recorded, “And the Lord stirred up Satan against Solomon himself” (1 Kgs 11:14).

Now power is given against us in two modes: either for punishment when we sin, or for glory when we are proved, as we see was done with respect to Job; as God Himself sets forth, saying, “Behold, all that he has I give unto your hands; but be careful not to touch himself” (Job 1:12). And the Lord in His Gospel says, in the time of His passion, “You could have no power against me unless it were given you from above” (Jn 19:11). But when we ask that we may not come into temptation, we are reminded of our infirmity and weakness in that we thus ask, lest any should insolently vaunt himself, lest any should proudly and arrogantly assume anything to himself, lest any should take to himself the glory either of confession or of suffering as his own, when the Lord Himself, teaching humility, said, “Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mk 14:38) so that while a humble and submissive confession comes first, and all is attributed to God, whatever is sought for suppliantly with fear and honour of God, may be granted by His own loving-kindness.

After all these things, in the conclusion of the prayer comes a brief clause, which shortly and comprehensively sums up all our petitions and our prayers. For we conclude by saying, “**But deliver us from the evil one,**” comprehending all adverse things which the enemy attempts against us in this world, from which there may be a faithful and sure protection if God deliver us, if He afford His help to us who pray for and implore it. And when we say, Deliver us from the evil one, there remains nothing further which ought to be asked. When we have once asked for God’s protection against evil, and have obtained it, then against everything which the devil and the world work against us we stand secure and safe. For what fear is there in this life, to the man whose guardian in this life is God?

What wonder is it, beloved brethren, if such is the prayer which God taught, seeing that He condensed in His teaching all our prayer in one saving sentence? This had already been before foretold by Esaias the prophet, when, being filled with the Holy Spirit, he spoke of the majesty and loving-kindness of God, “consummating and shortening His word,” He says, “in righteousness, because a shortened word will the Lord make in the whole earth” (Es. 10:22). For when the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, came unto all, and gathering alike the learned and unlearned, published to each sex and every age the precepts of salvation He made a large compendium of His precepts, that the memory of the scholars might not be burdened in the celestial learning, but might quickly learn what was necessary to a simple faith. Thus, when He taught what is life eternal, He embraced the mystery of life in a large and divine brevity, saying, “And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only and true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You have sent” (Jn 17:3). Also, when He would gather from the law and the prophets the first and greatest commandments, He said, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God: and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Mt. 12:29-31). “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mt. 22:40). And again: “Whatsoever good things you would have men do to you, do even so to them. For this is the law and the prophets” (Mt. 7:12).

Nor was it only in words, but in deeds also, that the Lord taught us to pray, Himself praying frequently and beseeching, and thus showing us, by the testimony of His example, what it behooved us to do, as it is written, “But Himself departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Lk. 5:16). And again: “He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” But if He prayed Who was without sin, how much more ought sinners to pray; and if He prayed continually, watching through the whole night in uninterrupted petitions, how much more ought we to watch nightly in constantly repeated prayer!

But the Lord prayed and besought not for Himself - for why should He who was guiltless pray on His own behalf? - but for our sins, as He Himself declared, when He said to Peter, “Behold, Satan has desired that he might sift you as wheat. But I have

prayed for you, that your faith fail not” (Lk. 13:31). And subsequently He beseeches the Father for all, saying, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word; that they all may be one; as You, Father, art in me, and I in You, that they also may be one in us.” The Lord’s loving-kindness, no less than His mercy, is great in respect of our salvation, in that, not content to redeem us with His blood, He in addition also prayed for us. Behold now what was the desire of His petition, that like as the Father and Son are one, so also we should abide in absolute unity; so that from this it may be understood how greatly he sins who divides unity and peace, since for this same thing even the Lord besought, desirous doubtless that His people should thus be saved and live in peace, since He knew that discord cannot come into the kingdom of God.

Moreover, when we stand praying, beloved brethren, we ought to be watchful and earnest with our whole heart, intent on our prayers. Let all carnal and worldly thoughts pass away, nor let the soul at that time think on anything but the object only of its prayer. For this reason also the priest, by way of preface before his prayer, prepares the minds of the brethren by saying, “Lift up your hearts,” that so upon the people’s response, “We lift them up unto the Lord,” he may be reminded that he himself ought to think of nothing but the Lord. Let the breast be closed against the adversary, and be open to God alone; nor let it suffer God’s enemy to approach to it at the time of prayer. For frequently he steals upon us, and penetrates within, and by crafty deceit calls away our prayers from God, that we may have one thing in our heart and another in our voice, when not the sound of the voice, but the soul and mind, ought to be praying to the Lord with a simple intention. But what carelessness it is, to be distracted and carried away by foolish and profane thoughts when you are praying to the Lord, as if there were anything which you should rather be thinking of than that you are speaking with God! How can you ask to be heard of God, when you yourself do not hear yourself? Do you wish that God should remember you when you ask, if you yourself do not remember yourself? This is absolutely to take no precaution against the enemy; this is, when you pray to God, to offend the majesty of God by the carelessness of your prayer; this is to be watchful with your eyes, and to be asleep with your heart, while the Christian, even though he is asleep with his eyes, ought to be awake with his heart, as it is

written in the person of the Church speaking in the Song of Songs, "I sleep, yet my heart wakes" (Song 5:2). Wherefore the apostle anxiously and carefully warns us, saying, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same" (Col. 4:2); teaching, that is, and showing that those are able to obtain from God what they ask, whom God sees to be watchful in their prayer.

Moreover, those who pray should not come to God with fruitless or naked prayers. Petition is ineffectual when it is a barren entreaty that beseeches God. For as every tree that brings not forth fruit is cut down and cast into the fire; assuredly also, words that do not bear fruit cannot deserve anything of God, because they are fruitful in no result. And thus Holy Scripture instructs us, saying, "Prayer is good with fasting and almsgiving" (Tobit 12:8). For He who will give us in the day of judgment a reward for our labours and alms, is even in this life a merciful hearer of one who comes to Him in prayer associated with good works. Thus, for instance, Cornelius the centurion, when he prayed, had a claim to be heard. For he was in the habit of doing many alms deeds for the people, and of ever praying to God. To this man, when he prayed about the ninth hour, an angel appeared bearing testimony to his labours, and saying, "Cornelius, your prayers and your alms are gone up in remembrance before God."

Those prayers quickly ascend to God which the excellencies of our labours urge upon God. Thus also Raphael the angel was a witness to the constant prayer and the constant good works of Tobias, saying, "It is honourable to reveal and confess the works of God. For when you prayed, and Sarah, I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the holiness of God. And when you buried the dead in simplicity, and because you did not delay to rise up and to leave your dinner, but went out and covered the dead, I was sent to prove you; and again God has sent me to heal you, and Sarah your daughter-in-law. For I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels which stand and go in and out before the glory of God" (Tob. 12:12-15). By Esaias also the Lord reminds us, and teaches similar things, saying, "Loosen every knot of iniquity, release the oppressions of contracts which have no power, let the troubled go into peace, and break every unjust engagement. Break your bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are without shelter into your house. When you see the naked, clothe him; and despise not those of the same family and race as your-

self. Then shall your light break forth in season, and your raiment shall spring forth speedily; and righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of God shall surround you. Then shall you call, and God shall hear you; and while you shall yet speak, He shall say, Here I am” (Es. 58:6-9). He promises that He will be at hand, and says that He will hear and protect those who, loosening the knots of unrighteousness from their heart, and giving alms among the members of God’s household according to His commands, even in hearing what God commands to be done, do themselves also deserve to be heard by God. The blessed Apostle Paul, when aided in the necessity of affliction by his brethren, said that good works which are performed are sacrifices to God. “I am full,” says he, “having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God” (Phil. 4:18). For when one has pity on the poor, he lends to God; and he who gives to the least gives to God - sacrifices spiritually to God an odour of a sweet smell.

And in discharging the duties of prayer, we find that the three children with Daniel, being strong in faith and victorious in captivity, observed the third, sixth, and ninth hour, as it were, for a sacrament of the Trinity, which in the last times had to be manifested. For both the first hour in its progress to the third shows forth the consummated number of the Trinity, and also the fourth proceeding to the sixth declares another Trinity; and when from the seventh the ninth is completed, the perfect Trinity is numbered every three hours, which spaces of hours the worshippers of God in time past having spiritually decided on, made use of for determined and lawful times for prayer. And subsequently the thing was manifested, that these things were of old sacraments, in that anciently righteous men prayed in this manner. For upon the disciples at the third hour the Holy Spirit descended, who fulfilled the grace of the Lord’s promise. Moreover, at the sixth hour, Peter, going up unto the house-top, was instructed as well by the sign as by the word of God admonishing him to receive all to the grace of salvation, whereas he was previously doubtful of the receiving of the gentiles to baptism. And from the sixth hour to the ninth, the Lord, being crucified, washed away our sins by His blood; and that He might redeem and quicken us, He then accomplished His victory by His passion.

But for us, beloved brethren, besides the hours of prayer observed of old, both the times and the mysteries have now increased in number. For we must also pray in the morning, that the Lord's resurrection may be celebrated by morning prayer. And this formerly the Holy Spirit pointed out in the Psalms, saying, "My King, and my God, because unto You will I cry; O Lord, in the morning shall You hear my voice; in the morning will I stand before You, and will look up to You." And again, the Lord speaks by the mouth of the prophet: "Early in the morning shall they watch for me, saying, Let us go, and return unto the Lord our God" (Hos. 6:1). Also at the sunsetting and at the decline of day, of necessity we must pray again. For since Christ is the true sun and the true day, as the worldly sun and worldly day depart, when we pray and ask that light may return to us again, we pray for the advent of Christ, which shall give us the grace of everlasting light. Moreover, the Holy Spirit in the Psalms manifests that Christ is called the day. "The stone," says He, "which the builders rejected, has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; let us walk and rejoice in it." Also the prophet Malachias testifies that He is called the Sun, when he says, "But to you that fear the name of the Lord shall the Sun of righteousness arise, and there is healing in His wings" (Mal. 4:2). But if in the Holy Scriptures the true sun and the true day is Christ, there is no hour excepted for Christians wherein God ought not frequently and always to be worshipped; so that we who are in Christ - that is, in the true Sun and the true Day - should be instant throughout the entire day in petitions, and should pray; and when, by the law of the world, the revolving night, recurring in its alternate changes, succeeds, there can be no harm arising from the darkness of night to those who pray, because the children of light have the day even in the night. For when is he without light who has light in his heart? Or when has not he the sun and the day, whose Sun and Day is Christ?

Let us not, then, who are in Christ - that is, always in the lights, cease from praying even during night. Thus the widow Anna, without intermission praying and watching, persevered in deserving well of God, as it is written in the Gospel: "She departed not," it says, "from the temple, serving with fastings and prayers night and day." Let the Nations look to this, who are not yet enlightened, or the Jews who have remained in darkness by having

forsaken the light. Let us, beloved brethren, who are always in the light of the Lord, who remember and hold fast what by grace received we have begun to be, reckon night for day; let us believe that we always walk in the light, and let us not be hindered by the darkness which we have escaped. Let there be no failure of prayers in the hours of night - no idle and reckless waste of the occasions of prayer. New-created and newborn of the Spirit by the mercy of God, let us imitate what we shall one day be. Since in the kingdom we shall possess day alone, without intervention of night, let us so watch in the night as if in the daylight. Since we are to pray and give thanks to God for ever, let us not cease in this life also to pray and give thanks.



## THE COMING MONTH

OUR news section this month is so full, we shall only be able to carry one life this time, but it is one with several points which are particularly instructive.

Our **Venerable Father John of Chozeba**, Palestine (3<sup>rd</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> October) was from Thebes in Egypt, the son of great and notable parents. He received the monastic angelic schema from his grandfather, who was also a monk, and bidding farewell to him, he went to Jerusalem. Because he did not accept the Holy and Œcumenical Fourth Synod of Chalcedon, and thus separated himself from the Catholic Church, and wanting to venerate the honourable Cross, he was prevented from approaching it. For he had heard a voice in his dreams say to him: "Those who are not in communion with the Catholic Church, are not worthy of venerating the Cross of the Lord." Waking up, therefore, he went to the Church and was corrected. He then returned to his elder and grandfather, and bidding farewell once again, he left the monastery. And finding a very small cave in an untrodden and precipitous place called Chozeba, he resided therein, and fed himself from the shoots of the trees in that place. God, wanting to glorify him, revealed him in the following manner.



There was a great ascetic at that place named Ananias. A wealthy man once brought to him his son, who was being disturbed by an unclean spirit, and he was not received by the Saint out of his great humility. But he urged those who brought the youth to go to the deeper parts of that place to John the Egyptian in order to be healed by him. Upon finding John, they revealed the cause for which they came to him. At first the Saint was not persuaded to pray for the youth. After being constrained to do so, he prayed. He then turned and said to the demon: "In the name of Christ, O unclean spirit, I do not order thee, but the servant of God Ananias orders thee, come out of this youth." When the unclean spirit heard this, he immediately came out, and the youth was restored to health. Because this astonishing miracle made the Saint famous throughout the area, he was consecrated, even against his will, as Bishop of Caesarea. Due to the cares of the office, however, and being unable to pursue an eremitic and quiet life, he left Caesarea and went back to the desert. But then he was unable to hide himself from the crowds. For a farmer had a young child that was disturbed by an unclean spirit, and putting him in a straw basket which he covered with grass, he placed him near the window of the Saint and left. When the child cried, the Saint heard him. When he got up and saw him, he immediately recognised the demon dwelling in him. Thus by his prayers he banished the demon, and restored the child to health. But the banished demon did not rest, but it changed its form into that of a man. And finding the Saint in an untrodden and precipitous place, he fell down at his feet as if he were asking for a blessing. The Saint was astonished by this unexpected sight, and his feet became entangled and he overstepped, falling to the bottom of the precipice. But the murderer-of-man laboured in vain, for the Saint remained unharmed by the grace of God. But the envious one stirred up another temptation for the Saint. He brought against him a murderer and a thief. This man sometimes beat the Saint, other times he would take his garment, and another time the inhuman one burned down his hut. Suffering these things, the Saint said only these words to himself, as he himself later narrated: "O Lord, if these things are pleasing to Thee, I thank Thee." When the Highest heard this in the heavens, He freed him from this temptation, for the robber was taken by the authorities and put to death. From then on the Saint received much relief. But the treacherous devil did not cease from

digging pits for the Saint. Once, as he was going to visit certain brothers, he met a woman along the way, who entertained shameful thoughts instilled in her heart by the devil. Falling at the feet of the Saint, she begged him to make her worthy to enter his cave, as if to receive a blessing and sanctification. The Saint consented to receive her, and immediately the defiled and unbridled one shut the door, undressed herself revealing her entire body, and went to do such shameless things, which should not even be spoken with words, attempting to defile the undefiled one. But the invincible and unshakeable servant of Christ at once eluded this instrument of the devil, and he emerged out of his hut untouched. One day the blessed John heard of the fame of a certain ascetic named Marcianus, and he desired to see him. Because however he self-imposed a rule to not leave his cave, even if a great need arose, he was not eager to break that bond and leave. What did the all-bestowing providence of God arrange? An Angel of God took Marcianus from his cell, and brought him high in the air, quietly and without noise, and placed him in the cave of the blessed John. After the Saints saw each other and embraced, and were satisfied with spiritual conversation between them, lastly the divine John said: "Glory to Holy God, that He made me worthy to see my most-desired Marcianus." Immediately after these words, divine Marcianus was again taken by an Angel from before the eyes of John and brought back to his cell. However the extravagance of this miracle brought various thoughts to Saint John, that perhaps it was a demonic phantasm. As he pondered and wrestled with his thoughts, he dissolved the rule that he adhered to and came out of his cave. Going to the cell of Marcianus, he found him along the way. When he greeted him and heard him call him by name, he was now assured concerning his earlier paradoxical arrival by the Angel. After bidding each other farewell once again, he returned with joy to his cave. The divine John banished demons from people, he healed incurable sicknesses, he made water gush forth from various places, he managed to bring down rain from heaven by his prayers, and many other signs and wonders were wrought through him by God. Therefore as a beacon of asceticism and miracles he shined upon the earth, and his life came to an end at a good old age, and in peace he delivered his soul to the Lord. (From the synaxarion on his day).



## POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

*“A RELATIVE of mine asked me about the Western Rite... Please tell me about who are the Western Rite and what are their significance to our Holy Church. Is there a particular canon of the Ecumenical Councils that mandates exclusive use of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom? Are the Orthodox faithful of the Western Rite parish allowed to receive communion with us and vice-versa? - A.Q., By email*

REGARDING the Western Rite, I must start by saying that what I am going to say is only my opinion, and I may well be wrong. I only offer it, because you asked for my opinion. It is true that the ROCOR which has united with Moscow, ROCA-MP, has in the last few years [the period when Metropolitan Hilarion headed their Church] taken in a number of Western Rite clergymen and parishes, and appears to be promoting them. Although, rather strangely, on their official website, little or no mention has been made of this fact. There the emphasis seems to be on Russianness. Perhaps they fear that the two things do not quite marry and are keeping them in separate compartments. His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion appears to have taken all the Western Rite groups under his own *omophorion*, whatever geographical diocese they happen to fall in. The ROCA, under His Eminence Metropolitan Agafangel, which is our sister Traditionalist Synod, does not have any Western Rite clergy or parishes to the best of my knowledge. Regarding the Rite itself, I believe that there should be great concerns about its implementation, and I believe the fact that it is being sponsored is something that should be of great concern to Orthodox Traditionalists. I will try and explain why I feel this. First of all, there seem to be two types of Western Rites. There are those who use a modified form of relatively modern Roman Catholic or Anglican rites, from which things, which are ostensibly not Orthodox, have been excised, and into which some Orthodox features have been added. Let us call these TYPE A. And there are those who have tried to return to rites which were current in the West, before the Schism of Rome from Orthodoxy. Let us call them TYPE B. I believe that there are dangers in adopting either of these approaches. TYPE A: In this

instance, they are using rites, which although they might be able to trace a history back to something authentic, have essentially been shaped and formed by people outside the Church. The modifications, excisions and additions, do not seem to have been thought over long and hard. It seems to me as if they have taken a Ford Escort, added in a couple of features, improved the upholstery and taken off the Escort insignia, and now pretend it is a Lexus. Just recently, I saw a clip of one of these Western Rite services, and they had statues in their church. If such a 'conversion' of these rites was to be undertaken, then I would think that it should be done not by one or two hierarchs and not in a short space of time, but by the whole Church acting together - a thing which, given the situation that Orthodoxy finds itself in today, is completely impossible. TYPE B: Here we have the problem of trying to revive something which has been unused in the Church for a thousand years. If I am not mistaken, none of the rites used in the pre-schism West still exist in their entirety, and so those who have adopted this approach, of necessity, have to feed in certain elements from Byzantine usage. I once, many years ago, attended such a Mass, celebrated by Bishop Germain de Saint-Denis, who struck me as a very affable man (I gave him a lift in my car), but, although I am no expert in liturgics, it was obvious that the rite he performed could not have been that of the pre-schism West. If my memory serves me right, he even used the *dikiri* and *trikiri* candles, which I am sure were not used in pre-schism France! Furthermore, with TYPE B, we have the problem of providing for those feasts which are celebrated by the Orthodox today, but were not observed in the pre-schism West. Do services, fitting the Western usage, have to be composed for them or are these feasts simply to be ignored? I think, too, that there is a 'chicken and egg,' problem. The West fell away from Orthodoxy, and since that time has added heresy to heresy. One has to ask: were the rites that they were using in some sense deficient, and unable to contain the fullness of Orthodox teaching? If such is the case, there is extreme folly in returning to those rites, especially as we do not possess them in their fulness. But maybe the West fell away from Orthodoxy despite the adequacy of their rites at that time; then there is folly in the TYPE A

approach. We are in a twilight zone here, and we need fathers of clear spiritual insight, or, better still, the consensus of the whole Church to guide us before we venture on a path which may be perilous. I am bold enough, and stupid enough, to believe that the adoption of the Western Rite is a path which is extremely perilous, and I will try to explain, in addition to the above, why. First of all, in the Byzantine Rite, we have an immense wealth of liturgical materials, which have been used by the whole Church for centuries. We have a banquet spread before us. Why turn away from it and pick at crumbs which are stale and may be contaminated? Secondly, the vast majority of people involved in the Western Rite movement, if one can call it that, are quite understandably converts to Orthodoxy. They are, perhaps, the people who most need to drink from the living sources, to be nurtured on Orthodox teaching and understanding through the services of the Church. Thirdly, those in the TYPE A situation, who are excising and amending to bring their rites into an Orthodox frame, are often the very people who should not be doing this! They are not, by and large, people who have been formed by Orthodoxy, who have reached spiritual heights, but are the converts themselves, very often converts who, because of their adherence to these rites, have lived as it were on the very outskirts of the Orthodox world, have not integrated with it. How different their approach to that of that beautiful example of a convert, our foremother Ruth - see her confession (chapter 1:15-18) and see her extraordinary obedience (chapter 3:2-5). Can you think for a moment how difficult that obedience must have been for a modest, Eastern woman of that period? And yet her answer was: 'All that thou sayest unto me, I will do.' Maybe I judge them, and if I do may I be forgiven, but it seems to me that these people are instead making that most horrible of professions, 'I will do it my way.' Lastly, at least for now, from the clip that I saw the other day, my attending Bishop Germain's Mass, and other things I have seen, it seems to me that the Rite itself fosters an un-Orthodox spirit. There appears to be a strong element of posing (for want of a better word), of striking 'pious' poses, which is alien to Orthodoxy. It appears also that the order somehow takes precedence over the spirit. The thing appears to be an

elaborate ritual. In a sense, we do not have ritual in Orthodoxy. I remember years ago seeing Father Vladimir serve at Jordanville. One could not say he was performing a ritual (although of course there is an outward ritual form to our services), rather it was clear that he was entering into a dialogue with our Saviour. Perhaps I exaggerate - I was young and impressionable at the time, but it does seem to me that the Western Rite (what I have seen of it) promotes a contrary spirit, - to put it very crudely, a 'look at me, see how well I am doing this' ethos. Again, forgive me if I am wrong. This may in any case be a defect of the celebrants I have seen, and not of the rite itself, but it is these same celebrants who are furthering its use. I believe that before ROCA-MP went under Moscow, there was only one Western Rite community, and that was countenanced more as a pastoral condescension to its priest, with whom I had a brief correspondence, than anything else. There was an earlier venture into Western Rite with the consecration of Bishop Jean-Nectaire of Saint-Denis, but that did not last long. As far as I know there is no canon of the Œcumenical Councils regarding the Western Rite - what rites were being used in the West at that time would have been Orthodox, and the question of assessing them would not have arisen. Regarding whether Western Rite people may receive the Holy Mysteries in Eastern Rite churches: I presume, and only that - I have not looked into it, that in the present ROCA-MP they can, because surely as they are under the same Bishops they are of one mind and one heart with each other, and with their Bishops.



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

**ARCHPASTORAL VISIT**

OUR BISHOP, **Metropolitan Ambrose of Methoni**, came to England again especially for the feast of Saint Edward the Martyr. He arrived at London Heathrow on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> September and was

brought to the brotherhood by Priestmonk Sabbas. On Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> / 14<sup>th</sup> September, he attended our celebration of the Divine Liturgy for the Church New Year, and after the parish breakfast was interviewed by **Timothy Schenone** of the **Saint Photios Orthodox Theological Seminary** (SPOTS), Etna, California, for one of his “Tea Time at the Seminary” talks. A little later in the day, he chaired a meeting of the trustees of the former **Convent, Brondesbury Park, Willesden**, attended by their accountant, **Darren Harding** of **Richard Place Dobson**. On the Sunday, His Grace concelebrated the Divine Liturgy assisted by **Archimandrite Daniel**, **Priestmonk Sabbas**, **Father Borislav Popov**, and the visiting clergy **Frs John Somers** from America, and **Alexander Hahr** from Sweden. Our **Deacon Ioan Turcu** assisted at the service. At the end of the service the Bishop preached on the Gospel of the day, the story of the rich young man who went away sorrowful; and he made a presentation to **Rima Lewis** for all her extraordinary work in arranging the Young Adults Conference. In the evening, the same clergy served at the Vigil service for the feast of **Saint Edward the Martyr**. On the day itself, Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> / 16<sup>th</sup> September, a further celebrant joined us, **Priestmonk Loukas**, a Brazilian now serving in Greece, who was specially blessed by **Metropolitan Gerontios of Piraeus & Salamis**, to represent him at the ceremonies. Then the Bishop preached on the veneration of relics, after which a procession with the sacred relics was made around the church. Unknown to us a pilgrim from Greece, **Penelope**, filmed this and other parts of the day’s celebration and this has been posted online by our fellow believers in Greece. Her presentation lasts about half-an-hour (link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Om4mLvG4lCQ>), and we have sent it round to our people. After the Parish Breakfast and meeting with the parishioners and pilgrims, His Grace left for London, bringing the celebrations in honour of our dedication saint to a close.

## ***A WEDDING AT SAINT EDWARD’S***

AFTER the Divine Liturgy and the Parish Breakfast at our church on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> / 22<sup>nd</sup> September, the Synaxis of Sts Joachim and Ann, **Pavlos Deskas** and **Ann Harvey** were married at Saint Edward’s Church. The celebrant was **Father Sabbas**, assisted by **Deacon Ioan**, and the witnesses were **Pavel** and **Stephanie Tosev**, the bouquet holders were **Flavia Turcu** and **Anastasia Galbeaza**. The bride and groom had partaken of the Holy Mysteries at the Divine



Liturgy that day. After the sacred mysterion, there was a festal celebration in the Mortuary for all the participants. Pray that Pavlos and Ann struggle well in the contest before them and are crowned in the life of the age to come.

## ***THE RIMA YOUNG ADULTS CONFERENCE***

BETWEEN 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> September a **Young Adults Conference** for people in their late teens and twenties was organised at the **Canadian Pavilion in Bisley** about two miles from Saint Edward's Church. For the majority of the participants excellent accommodation was provided at the Pavilion, and they were joined by a few who lived locally in any case. The project, the first of its kind in our history here, was blessed by **Metropolitan Ambrose** and all the talks were given by **Fr Daniel**. The first of these was held on the Friday morning, and they were apparently based on the Brotherhood's publication, "**The Grace of the Spirit.**" For the first two days, there were talks with questions afterwards every morning and afternoon, and the participants were given time to come to Vespers at the church. After an evening meal together, everyone was allowed time to socialise. On the Sunday, they all came to the services at Saint Edward's; the conscientious ones to Matins and the Liturgy, and others just for the Liturgy, and then in the afternoon they broke up, having, we hope, received some help in their Christian lives.

## ***MORE SCHENANIGANS***

ON 12<sup>th</sup> September, **Timothy Schenone** of **SPOTS**, who had come to England for the feast of Saint Edward, also interviewed our **Fr Nippon** for his "Tea Time at the Seminary" series. He had been ill-advised to ask Fr Alexis to do it, but arriving here and seeing the state he was in, he sensibly chose to ask Fr Nippon instead.

## ***CEMETERY OPEN DAY***

THE main **Brookwood Cemetery**, which this year celebrates the **170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding** (1854-2024) held their annual **Heritage Open Day** on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> September, and despite the rather uncertain weather conditions, it was apparently the best attended ever. **Avril Kirby**, the manager of the cemetery, told us that

they estimated that about 800 people visited, and this we can well believe, because in previous years at the brotherhood we have had hardly any more visitors than the usual three or four who call in on any day, but this year we were kept busy showing people the church and the exhibition room. Participants had been invited to visit the Military Cemeteries, Saint Edward Brotherhood and The Trench Experience as well as to take a short ride on the Mizens Railway, a passenger carrying miniature railway in nearby Knaphill.

## ***BURIALS IN OUR CEMETERY***

ON 20<sup>th</sup> August / 2<sup>nd</sup> September, **Maria Kirollova** who had recently died in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was laid to rest in our cemetery, because her son and daughter-in-law live in nearby West Byfleet and her grandson, Thomas, is also laid to rest here. **Archpriest Joseph Skinner** (Sourozh diocese) served the funeral service and the interment.

AFTER a funeral service in London on 30<sup>th</sup> August / 12<sup>th</sup> September, **Laura Grierson** was laid to rest with her husband, Gordon, who died in 2020, in our cemetery. The services were conducted by **Metropolitan Silouan** and **Deacon Dmitry** of the Antiochian Church. Please remember Maria and Laura in your prayers, asking the Lord to grant them His great mercy.

## ***VISITORS***

ON 3<sup>rd</sup> September, **Archpriest Gotlinsky** (OCA) and **thirty American pilgrims** visited Saint Edward Brotherhood. They were spending two weeks in England and Scotland, visiting holy places. Here they went to the church and the exhibition room and were then given hospitality in the Mortuary before leaving to travel on to Oxford.

On 5<sup>th</sup> September, four Roman Catholic monastics from **Saint Michael's Abbey, Farnborough**, visited us unexpectedly.

On 7<sup>th</sup> September, **Frs M. Villani** and **Kevin O'Donnell** accompanied by **Emily Croke** and **Amy-Louise Meredith** visited us, and spent well over an hour in church, before being given refreshments in the exhibition room. The visitors were from the **Salesian School in Chertsey**.

On 18<sup>th</sup> September, **Christopher Reid** was brought to the Brotherhood to see our church, by Avril Kirby.

## ***GIFTS TO THE CHURCH***

PRIESTMONK LOUKAS, when he came to the Saint Edward's day feast, brought with him as a gift from **Metropolitan Gerontios** a large icon of the Saints glorified by the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, Romania and Russia.

**Elena Holden**, our lead Dinner Lady, has given our church a hand-painted icon of **Saint Phoebe the Deaconess**, after whom her granddaughter is named. The icon was painted by the sisters of the **Saint Philothei Convent in Sweden**, and brought us by **Fr Alexander**, when he came for our feast. When he did, he was kindly brought to us from Stanstead airport by **the Thompson family**, and expressed a desire to see London. And so on a Saturday night (of all times!) they kindly drove him past the most important sites in the City and Westminster. For their kindness in doing this, we presented them with an icon at the end of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> September.



## **Practical Tip**

ALWAYS remember there are points in the Divine Services when one should **stand still**, and not move around, unless of course there is an emergency. The principal ones are when the Gospel is being read, during the consecration of the Gifts at the Liturgy, during the various entrances of the clergy, during the Cherubic Hymn, and during the Six Psalms near the beginning of Matins. Often one sees people lighting or tending to candles at such times or going to venerate an icon. Better, if that needs to do so when the service is in progress, to do so when the hymns of the feast are being chanted or the litanies intoned. Also one should never walk between the clergy when they are in the centre of the church and the Royal Gates. The video Penelope made of our feast catches one woman doing that!