

The Shepherd

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FROM THE FATHERS

“O LORD, my heart is not exalted, nor are mine eyes become lofty’ (Ps. 130:1). This Psalm, a short one... teaches us the lesson of humility and meekness... Of course we are bound to bear in mind in how great need our faith stands of humility when we hear the Prophet thus speaking of it as the equivalent to the performance of the highest works: ‘O Lord, my heart is not exalted.’ For a troubled heart is the noblest sacrifice in the eyes of God. The heart, therefore, must not be lifted up by prosperity, but humbly kept within the bounds of meekness through the fear of God.”

SAINT HILARY OF POITIERS, + 369 A.D.

“NEITHER asceticism, nor vigils nor any kind of suffering are able to save, only true humility can do that. There was an anchorite who was able to banish the demons; and he asked them, ‘What makes you go away? Is it fasting?’ They replied, ‘We do not eat or drink.’ ‘Is it vigils?’ They replied, ‘We do not sleep.’ ‘Is it separation from the world?’ ‘We live in the deserts.’ ‘What power sends you away then?’ They said, ‘Nothing can overcome us, but only humility.’ Do you see how humility is victorious over the demons?”

AMMA THEODORA, + 490 A.D.

“THE FEAR of God is the beginning of wisdom’ (Prov. 1:7). And what is the beginning of wisdom, if it is not to remove oneself from everything hateful to God? And how does one remove oneself from this? Do nothing without questioning and counsel; likewise, say nothing unfitting, and at the same time acknowledge oneself to be senseless, unsalted, and degraded, and generally insignificant.”

VEN. BARSANUPIUS AND JOHN, 6TH CENTURY

“THE FIRST KIND of humility is to hold my brother to be wiser than myself, and in all things to rate him higher than myself, and simply ... to put oneself below everyone. The second kind is to attribute to God all virtuous actions. This is the perfect humility of the saints. It is generated naturally in the soul by the performance of the commandments. Just like a tree bearing much fruit: it is the fruit that bends the branches and lowers them down, but when there is no fruit, the branches point upwards and grow straight.”

VEN. DOROTHEUS OF GAZA, + 620 A.D.

“WHAT SALT is for any food, humility is for every virtue. To acquire it, a man must always think of himself with contrition, self-belittlement and painful self-judgment. But if we acquire it, it will make us sons of God.”

VEN. ISAAC THE SYRIAN, 7TH CENTURY

“NO MAN, wise in his own opinion because he has studied all the sciences and is learned in external wisdom, will ever penetrate God’s mysteries or see them unless he first humbles himself and becomes foolish in his heart, repudiating his self-opinion together with the acquisitions of learning.”

VEN. SIMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN, + 1021 A.D.

“THE CHRISTIAN needs two wings in order to soar upward and attain Paradise: humility and love. When the first order of angels fell from angelic glory and became demons, the other nine orders humbled themselves and worshipped the All-Holy Trinity, and remained in their place and rejoice forever. We, too, my brethren, must reflect what an evil thing pride is: that it cast down the devil from angelic glory and he will always burn in Hades, and that humility kept the angels in Heaven, and they rejoice perpetually in the glory of the Holy Trinity. Let us then, my brethren, avoid pride, because it is the first daughter of the devil, and is a path that leads to Hades; and let us have humility, because it is angelic, and is a path that leads to Paradise.”

HOLY NEW HIEROMARTYR & PEER OF THE APOSTLES
COSMAS OF AETOLIA, +1779 A.D.



A PROCLAMATION ON ECCLESIOLOGY

The Proclamation which we reproduce below was issued by our Church in America in October, 2006, as is evident from the text itself. Soberly it limits itself to addressing only the situation in their own country, but the essential and fundamental teaching which it endorses applies to every one of us.

1) We believe and confess that the Orthodox Church is neither of man nor a product of the human mind, but is by the revelation of Jesus Christ. This revelation was preached by the divine Apostles, confirmed by the Holy Œcumenical Councils, passed down by the wisest and greatest teachers in the world, and sealed by the blood of the martyrs.

2) The purpose of the Church of the G.O.C. of America is the purification, enlightenment, and divination in Christ of the entire population of the American continent. To this end she preserves unsullied the Apostolic faith and Tradition as the sole means of and sole route to perfection. This faith was revealed and entrusted to the Church by God the Word Himself; therefore, the Church neither adds nor subtracts anything from what she has received from Christ through the Prophets, Apostles, and Holy Fathers. For this reason she remains steadfast in the decisions of the Œcumenical and Pan-Orthodox councils. We accept and revere all the Holy and Œcumenical Councils, as well as the decisions of the Quintisext Council of 692, the First-Second Council of 879 held in Constantinople under Saint Photius the Great, and the Tome of the Synod of Blachernae held in 1351 under Saint Gregory Palamas and the holy Patriarch Kallistos I, as having œcumenical and catholic force. We also love and obey the decisions of the Holy Pan-Orthodox Councils of 1583, 1587, and 1593, which condemned the so-called “Frankish” or “New” Calendar (instituted by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582) as a departure from the catholicity of the Church. In respect to this we accept and recognise as an œcumenical and catholic monument of the Orthodox Faith the

Patriarchal Tome of 1756 regarding the Baptism of the heterodox, as well as the Synodal Singilion of 1848 pronounced by the Patriarchs of the East. The mission the Church of the G.O.C. of America is identical to the mission of Christ's whole Church: i.e., by means of divine grace (in which man can participate, or acquire through the Mysteries of the Church); a correct confession of the Orthodox faith, and the struggle to keep God's commandments, she seeks to save all her members and bring them to a state of spiritual perfection, which is sanctification and deifying union with God Himself.

3) The Orthodox Church is the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. As such, she cannot recognise any heterodox church or religious community outside her as a parallel expression of the Catholic faith or continuation of the Church of Christ and the Apostles. The Orthodox Church confesses one Baptism and one Eucharist, just as Christ is one hypostasis, one person. The Orthodox Church pursues her sanctifying mission of salvation through Orthodox faith, acts, and divine vision, but particularly through the highest communion between God and man in the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist. There can be no division or sundering of the catholicity of the Church such as the heresy of Ecumenism preaches, falsifying and adulterating the true faith and tradition. There can only be a falling away from the catholicity, for that which is whole is not subject to division. For this reason, Ecumenism is the greatest temptation today for the Orthodox, who are called to emulate Christ in the desert and reproach Satan, resisting the temptations of the "favours," the "glory" and the "kingdoms of the world" which it promises in exchange for the soul.

4) Thus, the Church of the G.O.C. of America continues the Holy Tradition of the truth of the Orthodox Catholic Church, introducing no innovation, and revering the holy struggle of our predecessors from 1924 to the present. She prays that the portion of Christian brothers who follow the New Calendar innovation will return to the Sacred Tradition of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, so that full communion will be restored among all Orthodox Christians within the bounds of the sacred

canons and the common Orthodox confession. The Calendar change was instituted unilaterally in 1924, at first in the Greek Church and the Œcumenical Patriarchate, and then slowly spread like a disease to other local Churches (but never catholically), thus opposing the catholicity of the Church both in its method of implementation and in its goal. The unilateral introduction of the New Calendar was an uncanonical and uncatholic act of local hierarchs which violated the external manifestation of the catholicity and ecumenicity of the worldwide Orthodox Church. The Church's unity has always been expressed through the use of a single calendar, which was established at the First Œcumenical Council for that very purpose. Its pervasiveness in the liturgical life and the Eucharistic experience of the Church has steadily increased from that time forward, both through Synodal acts and through unwritten tradition. The changing of the calendar was an attempt to harmonise the external signs of Church's unity with the heterodox churches of Western Europe, at the expense of unity within the Orthodox Church herself. The calendar change was the result of a secularised mindset which suffered from an inferiority complex toward the West; and it was only forced through during a time of national disaster. The Church calendar is the external manifestation of the unity of the Orthodox Churches, and to dispose of it in favour of unity with heretical churches is to violate the catholicity of the Church.

5) The Church of the G.O.C. of America has no relations or communion with the local Churches which have accepted the calendar innovation (i.e., adopted the Gregorian calendar of the Vatican), nor with the Churches which have any communion with the pan-heresy of Ecumenism and which belong to the World Council of Churches. She will never have communion with these Churches as long as they remain in their cacodox state. The contemporary movement of Ecumenism is the result of thinking that the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ has lost her catholicity due to theological and political quarrels. It seeks to reconstitute the Church's lost catholicity by uniting the split parts and restoring Eucharistic communion with heterodox groups without first reaching a common theo-

logical stance. Participation in the World Council of Churches (an organisation which embodies the feeling of lost catholicity and seeks to restore it) on the part of local Orthodox Churches is a radical denial that the Orthodox Church is the totality of the Church of Christ. It presupposes the denial of the existence of authentic ecclesiastical catholicity today and it recognises the need to reconstitute a “truly authentic” catholicity.

6) When our Lord Jesus Christ asked his apostles and disciples, “Whom do men say that I am?” the Apostle Peter confessed, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And straightway Christ answered, saying, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16, 15-19). The rock upon which Christ built His Church is precisely that confession of the truth which the heavenly Father revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ, His Son and Word. This confession binds the Church together and makes her one body, receptive of divine illumination, able and sufficient to assemble at the Eucharistic table.

7) The Greek Orthodox Church of the Patristic Calendar, whose jurisdiction extends throughout the United States of America and beyond, recognises that the greatest danger to the Church and her members is secularisation; which, in the mind of the Church, is a heresy threatening her very foundations. Especially today it is capable of destroying our unity and particularly our Orthodox lifestyle. Secularisation is any action which pushes aside the workings of the Holy Spirit, seeking to promote lust for worldly power in the Church; whether in pastoral work, missionary work, or governmental duties of all her faithful members, both clergy and laity. Secularisation is the greatest danger for the human dimension of the Church, since it slowly eats away at the Orthodox lifestyle and mindset.

8) The Orthodox Church of the G.O.C. of America imparts the Mysteries to her faithful members in accordance with age-old Orthodox tradition, inasmuch as she bears responsibility for

their souls. The Orthodox Church always recognises as valid, canonical, and efficacious only those Mysteries performed within herself. Those outside the Orthodox Church (heterodox and non-Christians), who wish to become members of the Church, are accepted after rejecting every heresy (especially the one to which they belonged) and receiving baptism and chrismation, unless the Holy Canons permit some oecumeny.

9) In addition to her pastoral work, the Church of the G.O.C. of America preaches the Holy Gospel of Christ and seeks to evangelise or re-evangelise into the traditional Orthodox faith every human being, regardless of race, colour, or religion. The Church has therefore a missionary nature, and wishes to pass on the light of Orthodoxy to those who are outside her and bring everyone into her bosom, without engaging in proselytism. She preaches to all the Word of the Gospel and calls upon all who desire salvation to join her, for the Church ever since Apostolic times has been multicultural and multiracial. Our Church continues in this tradition, the tradition of Romanity, for which there is “neither Jew, nor Greek, slave, nor free” (Gal. 3:28).

Some very slight changes made to spelling and grammar in accord with British usage.



“IT WAS SAID concerning Abba Agathon that some monks came to find him, having heard tell of his great discernment. Wanting to see if he would lose his temper, they said to him, ‘Aren't you that Agathon who is said to be a fornicator and a proud man?’ ‘Yes, it is very true,’ he answered. They resumed, ‘Aren't you that Agathon who is always talking nonsense?’ ‘I am.’ Again they said, ‘Aren't you Agathon the heretic?’ But at that he replied, ‘I am not a heretic.’ So they asked him, ‘Tell us why you accepted everything we cast at you, but repudiated this last insult.’ He replied ‘The first accusations I take to myself for that is good for my soul. But heresy is separation from God. Now I have no wish to be separated from God.’ At this saying they were astonished at his discernment and returned, edified.”

FROM THE LIVES OF THE DESERT FATHERS

This is how the Word of God renews a man!

EVER-MEMORABLE ARCHBISHOP ANDREW
OF ROCKLAND, + 1978 A.D.

BROTHERS and sisters, have you noticed how the Holy Church for a long time now has been telling us about the Word of God? With His Word Christ calmed the storm, healed the servant of the centurion and the daughter of the Canaanite woman, raised the son of the widow of Nain, and filled five thousand people with five loaves of bread. By His Word, the miraculous catch of fish was accomplished. And even today's Gospel reading speaks about the Word of God. "There was a certain rich man," relates the Gospel, "which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores" (Lk. 16:19-21) [This year, this Gospel reading is appointed for Sunday, 31st October / 13th November].

And further it reveals to us what is beyond the grave. Eternity. The rich man - in hell, in torments; and Lazarus - in the bosom of Abraham. This Gospel ends with the words: and Abraham said to the rich man, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets (that is, the Word of God) neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Lk. 16:31). See how important the Word of God is: our eternal fate depends on our attitude towards it. Although the rich man did nothing evil, he did not live according to the Word of God, and he perished. But Lazarus did live according to the Word of God, and was saved. The Word of God has the wonderful power to renew the soul of a sinner. I will not explain to you how this happens, but will simply tell you something that happened in St Petersburg. Here it is:

There lived a family - a grandmother and grandson. The grandson was an Imperial Guardsman. His parents had died when he was still young, and his grandmother took their place. They were magnates, incalculably rich, millionaires. Vladimir, as this officer was called, while still a young man become satiated with everything that only the life of wealthy Russians could provide at that time. Like the life of the rich man in today's parable, his life was spent in gaiety and carousing. He had a good heart and his friends loved him as a person from whom they could always get anything they wanted. The word "no" did not exist for him.

But once his grandmother called Vladimir and said: "Vladimir, after my death, you will have no one. Your friends will strip you of everything, and you will perish a lonely, unfortunate man. Get married." Vladimir answered, "All right, Grandmother, I will get married."

The grandmother found a fiancée for him - a princess from an impoverished family. Vladimir danced with her two or three times at parties and proposed to her. And then, because the wedding was set for only after the Christmas season, and Vladimir's life went on in its routine way — in a fog of merry-making and revelry - he wouldn't even have been able to remember her name right away. And if he had met her on the street, he probably wouldn't have recognised her.

Yet the closer the wedding day approached, the more troubled his soul became. And finally came the second day after the Baptism of Christ. He had to go to his army office in order to get his salary and his vacation for the honeymoon. This was the first time he had gone out in St Petersburg at such an early hour and, moreover, in a sober state. Usually, when he was traveling in Petersburg at this hour or still earlier, it was after a night spent in extreme debauchery, and then he was usually dozing off, oblivious to his surroundings. But today, as if for the first time, he saw Petersburg during working hours. On everything lay the impression of the business-like seriousness of a morning in a metropolitan city. And upon his soul there lay, like a heavy stone, something unusually business-like and serious: marriage,

family life, obligations which he never had, never knew.

Upon arrival at his office, he received his papers and money - his large purse was filled with gold coins. When he went out, he wanted to be alone and walk. He ordered the driver to follow him on the roadway, and he himself walked on foot.

Without noticing it, he reached the cathedral of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God. Just at that moment the bell rang. And for the first time, he felt drawn to enter church. Of course, he had been to church services, moliebens and pannihidas, but only because this was required by his social standing. But now, an inner need manifested itself. The cathedral was plunged in a cozy half-darkness. The Miraculous Icon was simply shining in brilliance. In spite of the winter season there were white lilies. The reading of the Akathist was still going on. There was a deep prayerful singing, a multitude of candles and devotion lamps, and more and more people - praying, weeping. Vladimir froze. He had not prayed for a long, long time. All he could say was: "O Mother of God! I am coming to a turning point in my life. If it has to be so, help me. But if all this is not necessary, stop it." And here, he himself thought that this was no way to pray, that he didn't even know how to pray.

Suddenly someone tenderly touched his sleeve. It was a beggar woman with a child in her arms. "Sir, help me," she whispered. He thrust his hand into his pocket, pulled out his large purse, and put it in her hand. Because of the weight of the purse, she almost dropped it.

"Sir," she exclaimed, "I cannot take it. People will say I have stolen it."

"Don't be afraid, my card is in the purse. Say that I gave it to you."

"Sir, and what about you? You are giving away everything... and yourself?"

"Don't you understand, I have everything, I don't need anything."

"All right, I will take it. But know this: you are saving two lives - mine and my child's. How can I repay your kindness?"

“You know what? Yes, you can help me. I don’t know how to pray; but I am in need of prayer, right now, for my soul. Otherwise I will perish.” She looked at him with a long, compassionate look. She bowed and disappeared into the crowd.

But then he saw her again. She approached the Miraculous Icon, put her baby on one of the steps before the Icon, and started praying and making prostrations. Tears were streaming down her pale face. A shiver ran down his spine. He understood. This was a prayer for him. He quickly walked out of the church, went one block until he reached Great Konushenna Street. After the semi-darkness of the cathedral, the bright sun on the white snow blinded him. He felt a sharp, sudden pain in his eyes, then in his head, and he lost consciousness.

When he recovered, he sensed that he was lying on a table in his full Guard’s uniform. He had fallen into a lethargic sleep (a comatose condition in which all bodily functions become undetectable and the person appears to be dead), and now he was starting to wake up. He still couldn’t move, couldn’t open his eyes, but he heard everything. Only he thought that he had died, and everything he heard he accepted as if he were dead. And everyone around him was sure that he was dead, and they prepared him for burial.

And now he understood the reverse side of life. He heard two voices - male and female. The man’s voice said: “At least for the sake of decency, put your handkerchief to your eyes. After all, he was your fiancé.”

And the female voice said: “Papa, you know how I hated and despised him. Only your debts made me agree to this marriage. I cannot continue this comedy.”

And then his friends approached. All of them were in debt to him. “How wonderful that Vladimir died, and I don’t have to pay back what he, good man that he was, loaned to me.”

And so more and more all the hypocrisy of the life he had been living was revealed to him. The tears of only one person were sincere. His nurse, who had taken the place of his father and mother, was sobbing.

Then they started to read the Psalter. Before, he had not understood them; but now, each word of the Psalms excited his awakening soul. All the depth of God's mercy was revealed to him. God's truth was revealed against the background of human lies. And then he heard a movement. He understood, the clergy had come and they were starting to serve the pannihida. And when they began to sing: "With the Saints give rest...", and when they lifted his body to put it in the coffin, he caught his breath, recovered consciousness and began to move. Out of fear, the bearers dropped the coffin and ran out of the room. Vladimir remained alone. But by now he was not the same. In the middle of the empty room stood the renewed Vladimir.

When everything had calmed down, he divided all his property. Half he gave to his fiancée and all the rest to the poor. And he forgave all the debts. Soon afterwards, he became a monk and finished his ascetic life as archimandrite of the Kostroma Monastery.

This is how the Word of God renews a man!



How to live in accord with the Gospel

A TRANSLATION OF A BOOKLET PUBLISHED BY THE SYNODAL PRESS IN RUSSIA IN 1905, SOMEWHAT ADAPTED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR TIMES.

How to live in accordance to the Gospel in the World

FOLLOWING ON from this, the Christian does not need to always wear a frown on his face, be constantly sombre, and cold to all those around him. On the contrary smiles should play on his face. He must needs rejoice because he knows himself to be a member of the great kingdom of God, the foundation of which was already laid almost two thousand years ago through the saving blood of the Son of God. He must never despond, because he possesses the Merciful and All-Providential Heavenly Father, Who did not even spare His Only-Begotten Son in the

cause of our salvation. Before Him we are guilty, and yet He set forgiveness before us (Matt. 3:12; Mark 1:15); we were worn down in the battle with evil and He invited us to rest with Him (Matt. 11:28); we were helpless and, through His Church, He set before us a means of strengthening our infirmity in the form of the Holy Mysteries. And in this way, through love, hope and kind-heartedness He granted us renewed courage and strengthening on the thorny path of life.

The Christian must be like a warrior, who enters into the battle emboldened by joy. His earthly occupation also involves a struggle with sin, a struggle which is important and serious, however difficult it may be. The struggle is particularly difficult because in this battle a man enters into a contest with himself, that is with the pernicious faculties of his nature. And to battle with oneself is the most difficult. The Emperor Peter I of Russia once said: "I humbled the *strel'tsi* [members of a military corps who rebelled at the beginning of his reign], I overpowered Sophia [his half-sister and former regent], I was victorious over Charles [King Charles XII of Sweden], but I cannot conquer myself." So, such a famous person as the Emperor Peter I recognised that the struggle with oneself is the most difficult, and sometimes even beyond one's strength.

But in the face of all this, the Christian must not lose hope and become dejected in spirit, but must rather hope on God's help. Saint John Chrysostom says: "Do not tell me, I am perishing, what remains for me to do? Do not say to me, I have sinned, what can I do? You have a Physician, Who is higher than any sickness; you have a Doctor, Who overrules the power of sickness; you have a Doctor, Who heals with a single nod; you have a Doctor, Who can and Who desires to heal. If He has called you forth from non-being, then all the more He can put you right, though you are now injured. Will He not hearken unto you, He Who took dust from the earth and formed man? How was earth made into flesh? How were nerves formed, how were eyelashes, how eyebrows, how bones, how skin, how sinews, how noses, how eyes, how the chest, how were the legs, and all the rest? Earth was taken up, just one thing; a creative act followed and various different constructions were fashioned. You cannot tell in what way you were created. Similarly you cannot tell in what

way sin is extirpated. If fire falling into thorns destroys them, then all the more the will of God can destroy and cut out our transgressions at the root, making the sinner like one who is sinless. Do not ask how this can be; do not explore how this is achieved, only believe the miracle. You ask, I have sinned a lot and my sins are great, but who is without sin? You say, I have sinned heavily, more and worse than everyone else. But it is enough for you to offer this sacrifice: ‘Declare thou thy transgressions, that thou mayest be justified’ (Es. 43:26). Recognise that you have sinned, and this serves as the beginning of your correction. Lament, be contrite, shed tears. Other than this, what else did the harlot do? Nothing at all, except tears of repentance. She took upon herself the rôle of a guide to repentance, and she went straight to the Source.”



THE COMING MONTH

ON 10th / 23rd October we celebrate the **Twenty-six Venerable Martyrs of Zographou, who were slain by the Latin-minded.** In A.D. 1274, the Emperor Michael VIII Paleologos entered into union with the Pope of Rome with the infamous Union of Lyons, in the hope that an alliance would strengthen his empire from the encroaching presence of the Bulgars and the Serbs. The union was not popularly received and the Emperor threatened to enforce the treaty by force if necessary, issuing an edict to that effect. The monks of Mount Athos were solidly opposed to the union and sent a letter to the Emperor enumerating the heresies of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. They urged the Emperor to put aside the union, reject heresy and return to Orthodoxy. They specifically pointed out that the primacy of the Pope, his commemoration in the churches, celebrating the Eucharist with unleavened bread, and the insertion of the *filioque* into the Creed, could not be accepted by the Orthodox, and they asked the emperor to reverse his policy. “We clearly see,” the letter said, “that you are

becoming a heretic, but we implore you to forsake all this and abide in the teachings that were handed down to you... Reject the unholy and novel teachings of a false knowledge, speculations, and additions to the Faith.” The emperor came to despise the Athonite monks for their opposition. Since he did not want to provoke the Greeks, he decided to vent his spite upon the Athonite Slavs. Crusaders, who had been expelled from Palestine and had found refuge in Romania, had declared their readiness to establish the authority of the Pope by fire and the sword. Michael employed Turks and Tatars as well. And because some monks did yield under the pressure of promises and tortures, two monasteries were lost to the Latins: Lavra and Xeropotamou. The monks in these two monasteries accepted the Latin intrusion with a subservient fear. The army attacked and killed monks in many of the Slavic monasteries. They hanged the Protos, and having killed many monks in Vatopaidi, Iveron and other monasteries (some were hanged, others drowned, others beheaded at Karyes on Mt. Athos), the Latins attacked Zographou. When Abbot Thomas of Zographou learned of the impending attack by inspiration (see below), he told the community that those who wished to save themselves should flee, and that those who wished for martyrdom should stay in the monastery. The majority of the Zographou monks left the monastery, but the most steadfast, twenty-six in number, remained within the monastery tower. The twenty-six men who remained and locked themselves in the monastery tower were: Abbot Thomas, monks Barsanuphius, Cyril, Michaeas, Cosmas, Hilarion, James, Job, Cyprian, Sabbas, James, Martinian, Cosmas, Sergius, Minas, Joasaph, Ioannikius, Paul, Antony, Euthymius, Dometian, Parthenius and four laymen. The Latins were soon outside the Monastery. Initially they motioned to the monks to have the gates opened to let them in: if they acknowledged the Primacy of the Pope they would have nothing to fear but his mercy plus a lot of gold. The monks answered them from the top of the tower: “And who told you that your Pope is Head of the Church? From where does this teaching of yours come? For us, the Head of the Church is only Christ! It is easier for us to choose death rather than give in and

defile this holy place by your violence and tyranny; we shall not open the gates of the Monastery! Leave now!” The Latins replied with rage: “Die then!” Gathering wood around the tower they lit a large fire to burn them alive. The holy martyrs sang hymns to the Mother of God while the tower burned, and gave their souls to God on 10th October, 1282. In December of the same year, the dishonourable Emperor Michael died in poverty, when the Serbian King Milutin rose up against him in defence of Orthodoxy.

The Miraculous Icon of the Theotokos and the Abbot’s Revelation: By God’s providence, the greatest number of miracles and heavenly manifestations occur during the martyrdom of His servants. On the day that the Latins set out for the Monastery of Zographou, an old monk had an obedience in a vineyard half an hour’s distance from the monastery. At the prescribed time, he read the Akathist before the icon of the Mother of God. However, when he began to pronounce the word “Rejoice!” a voice came to him from the icon: “Do thou also rejoice, O elder! Flee from here now, or misfortune will befall thee; go and tell the brethren of the monastery to lock themselves in, for the God-opposing Latins have attacked this, my chosen Mountain, and are already near.” The frightened elder fell to his knees and cried out in fear: “How can I leave thee here, my Queen and Intercessor?” At this he again heard the voice: “Do not worry about me, but go quickly!” The elder went to the monastery immediately to warn the brethren. But when he reached the monastery gates he beheld that same icon of the Mother of God. In a miraculous manner, the icon had preceded him to the monastery. The amazed elder related all that had been revealed to him to the abbot and the brethren. At that, all of them glorified God and the Mother of God. The miraculous icon of the Virgin which they had with them was found unharmed in the ruins of the tower and was placed on the iconostas of the Chapel of the Dormition of the Theotokos, where it still is today. The Bulgarian monks of Zographou called it “Chairovo”, that is, “Our Lady of the Rejoice,” and in the Liturgies in the chapel, the Salutations are read instead of a

communion hymn. The place where the miraculous revelation to the elder took place is known till today by the name Chairovo.

The Miracle of 10th October, 1873: Once, during the celebration of the Feast of the Martyrs of Zographou, in 1873, there was an all-night vigil. It was a moonless night. In the middle of the night, while the monks were chanting and reading the lives of the holy martyrs in the church, a noise was suddenly heard, and over the church a fiery pillar appeared, extending from earth to heaven. It was so bright that things at a distance could be seen as though it were midday. This wondrous manifestation lasted for about fifteen minutes and then disappeared.

The **Holy Martyrs Nazarius, Gervasius, Protasius and Celsus of Milan** (14th/ 27th) are among the Saints whose lives have come down to us from the dawn of Christianity. Saint Nazarius was born in Rome. His father was a Jew and his mother, Perpetua, was a Christian who had been baptised by the Apostle Peter. No doubt it was thanks to her prayers that Nazarius, upon coming of age, chose to embrace the Christian faith. He was baptised by Saint Linus, the first Bishop of Rome. Nazarius showed himself to be desirous not only of his own salvation but also that of others. He was very generous in almsgiving and in leaving Rome for Milan he gave away his possessions to the poor and used his inheritance to ease the lot of those Christians suffering in prison as a result of Nero's persecutions. Among those who benefited from Nazarius' devout conversations and material aid were the twin brothers Gervasius and Protasius who longed for a martyr's crown. Nazarius felt such love for these zealots that he regretted having to part from them and would have preferred to die in their place. The regional governor, Anulinus, soon heard of Nazarius' activities among the prisoners and commanded that he be brought to trial. Learning that Nazarius was a Roman by birth, Anulinus tried to persuade him to respect his ancestors' idols which Romans from antiquity had honoured with sacrifices and obeisances. Nazarius made bold to reproach the governor and ridicule the pagan religion, whereupon the governor ordered that he be beaten on the mouth. When Nazarius persisted in confessing the One True God, he was beaten still more and

banished from the city in dishonour. The saint was grieved over his separation from his friends Gervasius and Protasius, but he rejoiced that he had been found worthy to suffer for Christ and found comfort in His words: “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake” (Matt. 5:11). The following night his mother appeared to him in a dream and told him to go to Gaul, and there to labour in spreading the Gospel. Nazarius willingly journeyed westward, preaching Christ and enlightening many with knowledge of the True God. In the city of Melia he received from the hands of a certain noble and believing woman a three year-old boy by the name of Celsus. Nazarius had him baptised and educated him in piety. His efforts were crowned with success, for when the boy grew older he worked alongside his preceptor in preaching the Gospel. Their mutual zeal made them a vulnerable target. In Trier they were seized by idol-worshippers and taken to Nero himself who tried all manner of torture before finally having them thrown into the sea to drown. But the Almighty God was pleased to show favour towards His beloved confessors, and He caused them to walk upon the water as on a flat field. Seeing this miracle, the Emperor’s servants believed Christ to be the true God and accepted baptism from St. Nazarius. They did not return to Nero’s court but began to serve their new Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Saint Nazarius returned with his disciple to Milan where he resumed his preaching of the Gospel. On this account he was brought once again before the governor Anulinus who, on learning that Nazarius had been in the hands of Nero himself, marvelled that he was still among the living, for he knew Nero’s tyrannical cruelty. In vain did the governor try to force Nazarius and Celsus to worship the pagan gods. Thrown into prison, they were overjoyed to find themselves in the company of Gervasius and Protasius. In time, however, Nero learned of Nazarius’ and Celsus’ miraculous escape from the jaws of death; greatly angered, he sent a decree to Anulinus ordering their immediate execution, and the heads of these two martyrs were severed with a sword. A Christian living in the city environs secretly obtained their holy remains and brought them

to his home. Upon his arrival, his ailing daughter rose up from her bed as though she had never been ill. The family rejoiced at this miracle and reverently buried the bodies of the martyrs in a fresh grave in their garden. Shortly after the beheading of Nazarius and Celsus, there arrived in the city of Milan the military leader Astasius who was anxious for a victory in the war against Moravia to the north. The pagan priests suggested that to win the favour of the gods Astasius force Gervasius and Protasius to sacrifice to the idols. Gervasius died under the beatings, and Protasius was finally beheaded. And so they joined their beloved friends Nazarius and Celsus in the choir of martyrs. A Christian by the name of Philip took the martyrs' bodies and buried them at his home. The relics of all four martyrs lay hidden in the earth until they were discovered late in the fourth century by Saint Ambrose of Milan. The finding of the relics of Saint Nazarius is described by the presbyter Paulinus in his *Life of Saint Ambrose*: "We saw in the grave...blood as though it had just flowed out of the body. The head with hair and beard was so preserved that it was as if it had just now been placed into the grave. The face was radiant..." The relics of the martyr Celsus were found nearby and the remains of both martyrs were solemnly transferred to the Cathedral of the Holy Apostles in Milan. Saint Ambrose himself describes the vision which led to the discovery of the relics of the holy martyrs Gervasius and Protasius. One night, during a time of prayer and fasting, Saint Ambrose fell into such a state that, he says, "although wanting to, I did not sleep, nor did I feel anything. I then saw two youths in white garments, raising their hands upwards and praying. Possessed with drowsiness, I was unable to speak with them, and when I came to myself they were no longer visible." Not knowing if this were a revelation from God or a delusion sent by the devil, Saint Ambrose intensified his fast and begged God to make it clear to him. A second night the youths appeared to him as before. The third night they appeared again together with a man resembling the Apostle Paul as he is portrayed in his icons. Pointing to the youths, he said to Ambrose: "These are those who, hearing my words, despised the world and its riches, and followed our Lord

Jesus Christ... Their bodies you will discover lying in a tomb beneath the very place you are standing and praying. Remove them from the earth and build a church in their honour.” Summoning his brother bishops, Ambrose related to them his vision, and they began to dig. They found the bodies of the martyrs, which emitted a most wonderful fragrance. In the grave near their heads was a small book written by the slave of God Philip who had preserved for posterity the names of these martyrs and certain details from their life. Their parents, Vitaly and Valeria, both died as confessors of the Faith. The orphaned twins sold their belongings, freed their slaves, and for ten years gave themselves wholeheartedly to prayer, fasting and spiritual reading. In the eleventh year they were imprisoned by Anulinus and suffered the death of their bodies for the sake of eternal life with Jesus Christ. When their holy relics were taken from the earth, the sick began to receive healing, demons were driven out of people, the blind received sight. Then the holy Ambrose remembered that in the city was a well-known blind man by the name of Severgnus; as soon as he touched the edge of the garments on the martyrs’ relics, the darkness of blindness was scattered and he saw the light of day. Through the prayers of Thy Saints, O Lord, enlighten our spiritual eyes that we may walk in the light of Thy Countenance and in Thy Name rejoice forever. Amen.



“THE WEALTHY PERSON must not boast of his riches, nor the wise person of his wisdom, nor the mighty person of his strength, but let him boast when he comes to know God and is known by Him. The knowledge of God signifies that we learn all that He tells us in the Gospel; He invites us to go with Him, ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,’ and, ‘Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.’”

THE ELDER PHILOTHEUS ZERVAKOS, + 1980 A.D.

POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

“I AM SORRY to trouble you with something like this but how does the Church advise us to treat these types of messages? For example, this message (which has been sent to me by a friend) says that this picture [included with original message] is a saint and miraculous and it should be forwarded to ten people; however if you do not, there are some examples of what has happened to people who ignored it - really awful ones. If this is a saint, why the awful punishment? I am telling myself that the only book that we should guide ourselves by is the Bible and not these kind of internet messages but then there is this fear in me that it might be true? Or is this the real fear that I disobey God’s Gospel and that I will one day have to suffer the consequences? Maybe I am trying to alleviate the underlying anxiety and fool myself into thinking that by sending this message through my sins will be overlooked? Is this not a very un-Christian attitude? Or am I just being ridiculous? - C.M., Woking.

THIS is a form of emotional blackmail. You have quite rightly understood that no saint of God would impose dreadful punishments on people who exercise their free will. Serve the True God and His Saints, by absolutely refusing to send this on and causing hurt to other people. Of course, the Bible is not our only guide, we also have the writings of the Holy Fathers, the services of the Church (particularly Vespers and Matins), and the witnesses and examples of the true Saints. God bless you for having the good sense to question this.



“PRIDE is utter penury of soul under the illusion of wealth, imagining light in its darkness. The foul passion not only blocks our advance, but even hurls us down from the heights... I do not know how it is, but the majority of the proud remain ignorant of their real selves. They imagine that they are free from passion, and only realise their need, lack and poverty at their departure from this life.”

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

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

**PASTORAL VISIT OF METROPOLITAN
AMBROSE OF METHONI**

OUR BISHOP, **Metropolitan Ambrose**, arrived in England on Saturday, 28th October / 10th September, and was met at Heathrow by **Priestmonk Sabbas**. That evening he led the prayers at the Vigil for the feast of the **Beheading of St John the Baptist**. And on the next day, the Sunday, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy assisted by **Fr Borislav Popov** and **Fr Sabbas**. In his sermon on the Beheading he spoke of the importance of speaking the truth in love without regard to partiality, but warned us that we should always speak in love and not judgmentally. On the Monday, through the kind offices of **Mrs Tanya James**, the **Convent trustee meeting** was transferred to Brookwood to help accommodate one particularly decrepit member. The trustees met with their accountant, **Mr Darren Harding**, and after the lull caused by the Covid period and by the Bishop being taken seriously ill in the Spring, they were able to set things on course again. After the meeting Tanya kindly took the Bishop to London. From there he visited some of the scattered faithful in Scotland and then in Suffolk, before returning to Brookwood on 2nd / 15th September for the celebration of the **Deposition of the Sacred Relics of Saint Edward the Martyr** on the following day. He was brought to us by **Fr Nicolae Capitanu** from London, who attended the festal services. For both the Vigil and the Divine Liturgy, His Grace led the services, assisted by **Archimandrite Daniel**, **Fr Borislav** and **Fr Sabbas**. In his sermon, he spoke of the place of Saint Edward the Martyr in church history. At our usual buffet-style parish breakfast afterwards, Metropolitan Ambrose met and talked to numbers of our parishioners before returning to London to take flight next day to Belgium.

PARISHIONERS MARRY

TWO of our parishioners, **Pavel Tosev** and **Stephanie Molas**, who was recently baptised in the River Jordan on a Holy Land pilgrimage, were married on the Great Feast of the Dormition of the All-holy Mother God, 15th / 28th August. The Mysterion of Matrimony was celebrated by **Metropolitan Ambrose** in the Cathedral of our Sister Church, the **Orthodox Old Calendarist Church of Bulgaria**, in Sofia. The cathedral is dedicated to the Great Feast of the Dormition, and Pavel's family are numbered among the faithful of that Church. Stephanie's parents attended, visiting from Mexico, and later joined the couple in England for a while, and attended services at Brookwood. May our Saviour grant Pavel and Stephanie a peaceful life, length of days, chastity, and mutual love in the bond of peace.

NEW ICON GIVEN TO OUR CHURCH

PARISHIONER **Simon Teague** commissioned a hand-painted icon of the **Great Martyr Phanourius**, which was painted by the sisters of the **Convent of the Holy Angels, Afidnai, Greece**. He has kindly donated it to Saint Edward's Church.

BURIAL AT BROOKWOOD

ON Tuesday, 30th August, **Andy Lever**, who for many years worked as a grave digger and monumental mason, was laid to rest in the small section of our cemetery which we reserve for non-Orthodox benefactors of our community. Not only had he served us well from the mid-eighties, but also provided the inscribed foundation stone which **Mrs Sarah Goad** (later Dame Sarah), then **Lord Lieutenant of Surrey**, laid at the start of the building of the new monastic house, and Andy also carved the plaque commemorating the donor of the sacred relics of Saint Edward, **John Wilson-Claridge**, which can be seen at the west end of our church. These things and many others he did *gratis*. The committal was without religious cere-

mony, as it appears Andy had no particular religious convictions, but was attended by two members of our brotherhood and by four senior members of the **Ismaeli community**, whose cemetery is near the entrance to Saint Cyprian's Avenue, and whom he had also helped over the years. For his kindness, may he find mercy in the life of the age to come.

NEW ICON CARDS

WE have had icon cards made of the hand-painted icon of **Saints Zinaïs and Philonilla**, which was recently given to our church. The photography and printing were undertaken for us by **Matt Moore of Aldershot**. The cards are available from our church bookstall at 30p each. The hand-painted icon, now framed by **Shanni at Easels in Chobham**, has been hung in the shrine area of the church.

VISITORS

ON Tuesday 20th September, **Diana Ball** brought a group of about twenty people to visit Saint Edward's Church.



Practical Tip

MAKE SURE that you write a will, and in doing so make sure that you record the names of the beneficiaries correctly, and that you give generously to charities. If you only provide for your children and closest relatives, you are being essentially selfish. In the last few years, one of our parishioners left a great example, by leaving the majority of his estate to charities and only the residue to close relatives and friends. Also, and this is especially important if your immediate family members are not Orthodox or only nominally so, leave clear and definite instructions about your funeral arrangements: Orthodox service, no embalmment, burial not cremation, etc. Even as you approach death, make sure those caring for you know how to contact the priest who confesses you so that they know to keep in touch regarding you, and request him to come at the very least when you are approaching death, so that you do not die without the ministrations of the Church.