

The Shepherd

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From the Fathers

“UNLESS a man sets himself utterly at naught, he cannot speak of the majesty of God ... Discourse deriving from the wisdom of this world always provokes self-esteem; because it is incapable of granting us the experience of spiritual perception, it inspires its adepts with a longing for praise, being naught but the fabrication of conceited men.”

SAINT DIADOCHUS OF PHOTIKI, + C. 486 A.D.

“THE ordinary initial faith of the Orthodox is born of natural knowledge, and from this faith are born devotion to God, fasting and vigil, reading and psalmody, prayers and the questioning of those with experience. It is such practices that give birth to the soul’s virtues, that is, to the constant observance of the commandments and moral conduct. Through this observance come great faith, hope, and the perfect love that ravishes the intellect in prayer, when one is united with God spiritually.”

SAINT PETER OF DAMASCUS, TWELFTH CENTURY

“THE Christian religion is not a certain philosophic system, about which learned men, trained in metaphysical studies, argue and then either espouse or reject, according to the opinion each one has formed. It is faith, established in the souls of men, which ought to be spread to the many and be maintained in their consciousnesses.”

SAINT NECTARIUS OF PENTAPOLIS, + 1920 A.D.

Two generations ago the following piece would have been avidly read by most converts and by those young cradle Orthodox who were just becoming aware of the fact that Orthodoxy was not just a part of some inherited cultural baggage, but is something of fundamental spiritual importance. Now it seems to take a back seat, and many among those that show any intelligent interest at all in the Faith sadly just see it as a source of materials from which they can pick ideas and develop them according to their own notions, often, even more sadly, to be able to judge and condemn others and to foster dissent. It therefore seemed vital to bring this work to the attention of our readers again.

THE CHURCH IS ONE*

Alexei Stepanovich Khomiakov

+ 1860 A.D.

§ 1. The Unity of the Church

The unity of the Church follows of necessity from the unity of God; for the Church is not a multitude of persons in their separate individuality, but a unity of the grace of God, living in a multitude of rational creatures, submitting themselves willingly to grace. Grace, indeed, is also given to those who resist it, and to those who do not make use of it (who hide their talent in the earth), but these are not in the Church. In fact, the unity of the Church is not imaginary or allegorical, but a true and substantial unity, such as is the unity of many members in a living body.

The Church is one, notwithstanding her division as it appears to a man who is still alive on earth. It is only in relation to man that it is possible to recognise a division of the Church into visible and invisible; her unity is, in reality, true and absolute.

* The original translation was obviously made by someone not Orthodox. We have inserted the translation of the Creed used in our churches, altered the sectional titles to those in the original Russian, and used the terms generally employed by the Orthodox rather than heterodox ones, for instance, Mysteries rather than Sacraments, Repentance rather than Penance.

Those who are alive on earth, those who have finished their earthly course, those who, like the angels, were not created for a life on earth, those in future generations who have not yet begun their earthly course, are all united together in one Church, in one and the same grace of God; for the creation of God which has not yet been manifested is manifest to Him; and God hears the prayers and knows the faith of those whom He has not yet called out of non-existence into existence. Indeed the Church, the Body of Christ, is manifesting forth and fulfilling herself in time, without changing her essential unity or inward life of grace. And therefore, when we speak of “the Church visible and invisible,” we so speak only in relation to man.

§ 2. The Church, visible and invisible

The Church visible, or upon earth, lives in complete communion and unity with the whole body of the Church, of which Christ is the Head. She has abiding within her Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit in all their living fullness, but not in the fullness of their manifestation, for she acts and knows not fully, but only so far as it pleases God.

Inasmuch as the earthly and visible Church is not the fullness and completeness of the whole Church which the Lord has appointed to appear at the final judgment of all creation, she acts and knows only within her own limits; and (according to the words of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 5:12) does not judge the rest of mankind, and only looks upon those as excluded, that is to say, not belonging to her, who exclude themselves. The rest of mankind, whether alien from the Church, or united to her by ties which God has not willed to reveal to her, she leaves to the judgment of the great day. The Church on earth judges for herself only, according to the grace of the Spirit, and the freedom granted her through Christ, inviting also the rest of mankind to the unity and adoption of God in Christ; but upon those who do not hear her appeal she pronounces no sentence, knowing the command of her Saviour and Head, “not to judge another man's servant” (Rom. 14:4).

§ 3. The Church of Christ on Earth

From the creation of the world the earthly Church has continued uninterruptedly upon the earth, and will continue until the accomplishment of all the works of God, according to the promise given her by God Himself. And her signs are: inward holiness, which does not allow for any admixture of error, for the spirit of truth and outward unchangeableness lives within her as Christ, her Preserver and Head, does not change.

All the notes of the Church, whether inward or outward, are recognised only by herself, and by those whom grace calls to be members of her. To those, indeed, who are alien to her, and are not called to her, they are unintelligible; for to such as these, outward change of rite appears to be a change of the Spirit itself, which is glorified in the rite (as, for instance, in the transition from the Church of the Old Testament to that of the New, or in the change of ecclesiastical rites and ordinances since Apostolic times). The Church and her members know, by the inward knowledge of faith, the unity and unchangeableness of her spirit, which is the spirit of God. But those who are outside and not called to belong to her, behold and know the changes in the external rite by an external knowledge, which does not comprehend the inward [knowledge], just as also the unchangeableness of God appears to them to be changeable in the changes of His creations. Wherefore the Church has not been, nor could she be, changed or obscured, nor could she have fallen away, for then she would have been deprived of the spirit of truth. It is impossible that there should have been a time when she could have received error into her bosom, or when the laity, presbyters, and bishops had submitted to instructions or teaching inconsistent with the teaching and spirit of Christ. The man who should say that such a weakening of the spirit of Christ could possibly come to pass within her knows nothing of the Church, and is altogether alien to her. Moreover, a partial revolt against false doctrines, together with the retention or acceptance of other false doctrines, neither is, nor could be, the work of the Church; for within her, according to her very essence, there must always have been preachers and teachers and martyrs confessing, not partial

truth with an admixture of error, but the full and unadulterated truth. The Church knows nothing of partial truth and partial error, but only the whole truth without admixture of error. And the man who is living within the Church does not submit to false teaching or receive the Mysteries from a false teacher; he will not, knowing him to be false, follow his false rites. And the Church herself does not err, for she is the truth, she is incapable of cunning or cowardice, for she is holy. And of course, the Church, by her very unchangeableness, does not acknowledge that to be error, which she has at any previous time acknowledged as truth; and having proclaimed by a General Council and common consent, that it is possible for any private individual, or any bishop or patriarch, to err in his teaching, she cannot acknowledge that such or such a private individual, or bishop, or patriarch, or successor of theirs, is incapable of falling into error in teaching; or that they are preserved from going astray by any special grace. By what would the earth be sanctified, if the Church were to lose her sanctity? And where would there be truth, if her judgments of today were contrary to those of yesterday? Within the Church, that is to say, within her members, false doctrines may be engendered, but then the infected members fall away, constituting a heresy or schism, and no longer defile the sanctity of the Church.

§ 4. She is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic

The Church is called One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic; because she is one, and holy; because she belongs to the whole world, and not to any particular locality; because by her all mankind and all the earth, and not any particular nation or country, are sanctified; because her very essence consists in the agreement and unity of the spirit and life of all the members who acknowledge her, throughout the world; lastly, because in the writings and doctrines of the Apostles is contained all the fullness of her faith, her hope, and her love.

From this it follows that when any society is called the Church of Christ, with the addition of a local name, such as the Greek, Russian, or Syrian Church, this appellation signifies nothing more than the congregation of members of the Church

living in that particular locality, that is, Greece, Russia, or Syria; and does not involve any such idea as that any single community of Christians is able to formulate the doctrine of the Church, or to give a dogmatic interpretation to the teaching of the Church without the concurrence therewith of the other communities; still less is it implied that any one particular community, or the pastor thereof, can prescribe its own interpretation to the others. The grace of faith is not to be separated from holiness of life, nor can any single community or any single pastor be acknowledged to be the custodian of the whole faith of the Church, any more than any single community or any single pastor can be looked upon as the representative of the whole of her sanctity. Nevertheless, every Christian community, without assuming to itself the right of dogmatic explanation or teaching, has a full right to change its forms and ceremonies, and to introduce new ones, so long as it does not cause offense to the other communities. Rather than do this, it ought to abandon its own opinion, and submit to that of the others, lest that which to one might seem harmless or even praiseworthy should seem blameworthy to another; or that brother should lead brother into the sin of doubt and discord. Every Christian ought to set a high value upon unity in the rites of the Church: for thereby is manifested, even for the unenlightened, unity of spirit and doctrine, while for the enlightened man it becomes a source of lively Christian joy. Love is the crown and glory of the Church.

§ 5. Scripture and Tradition

The Spirit of God, who lives in the Church, ruling her and making her wise, manifests Himself within her in divers manners; in Scripture, in Tradition, and in works; for the Church, which does the works of God, is the same Church, which preserves tradition and which has written the Scriptures. Neither individuals, nor a multitude of individuals within the Church, preserve Tradition or write the Scriptures; but the Spirit of God, which lives in the whole body of the Church. Therefore it is neither right nor possible to look for the grounds of Tradition in the Scripture, nor for the proof of Scripture in Tradition, nor for the warrant of Scripture or Tradition in works. To a man living

outside the Church neither her Scripture nor her Tradition nor her works are comprehensible. But to the man who lives within the Church and is united to the spirit of the Church, their unity is manifest by the grace which lives within her.

Do not works precede Scripture and Tradition? Does not Tradition precede Scripture? Were not the works of Noah, Abraham, the forefathers and representatives of the Church of the Old Testament, pleasing to God? And did not Tradition exist amongst the patriarchs, beginning with Adam, the forefathers of all? Did not Christ give liberty to men and teaching by word of mouth, before the Apostles by their writings bore witness to the work of redemption and the law of liberty? Wherefore, between Tradition, works, and Scripture there is no contradiction, but, on the contrary, complete agreement. A man understands the Scriptures, so far as he preserves Tradition, and does works agreeable to the wisdom that lives within him. But the wisdom that lives within him is not given to him individually, but as a member of the Church, and it is given to him in part, without altogether annulling his individual error; but to the Church it is given in the fullness of truth and without any admixture of error. Wherefore he must not judge the Church, but submit to her, that wisdom be not taken from him.

Every one that seeks for proof of the truth of the Church, by that very act either shows his doubt, and excludes himself from the Church, or assumes the appearance of one who doubts and at the same time preserves a hope of proving the truth, and arriving at it by his own power of reason: but the powers of reason do not attain to the truth of God, and the weakness of man is made manifest by the weakness of his proofs. The man who takes Scripture only, and founds the Church on it alone, is in reality rejecting the Church, and is hoping to found her afresh by his own powers: the man who takes Tradition and works only, and depreciates the importance of Scripture, is likewise in reality rejecting the Church, and constituting himself a judge of the Spirit of God, Who spoke by the Scripture. For Christian knowledge is a matter, not of intellectual investigation, but of a living faith, which is a gift of grace. Scripture is external, an

outward thing, and Tradition is external, and works are external: that which is inward in them is the one Spirit of God. From Tradition taken alone, or from Scripture or from works, a man can but derive an external and incomplete knowledge, which may indeed in itself contain truth, for it starts from truth, but at the same time must of necessity be erroneous, inasmuch as it is incomplete. A believer knows the Truth, but an unbeliever does not know it, or at least only knows it with an external and imperfect knowledge. The Church does not prove herself either as Scripture or as Tradition or as works, but bears witness to herself, just as the Spirit of God, dwelling in her, bears witness to Himself in the Scriptures. The Church does not ask: Which Scripture is true, which Tradition is true, which Council is true, or what works are pleasing to God: for Christ knows His own inheritance, and the Church in which He lives knows by inward knowledge, and cannot help knowing, her own manifestations. The collection of Old and New Testament books, which the Church acknowledges as hers, are called by the name of Holy Scripture. But there are no limits to Scripture; for every writing which the Church acknowledges as hers is Holy Scripture. Such pre-eminently are the Creeds of the General Councils, and especially the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. Wherefore, the writing of Holy Scripture has gone on up to our day, and, if God pleases, yet more will be written. But in the Church there has not been, nor ever will be, any contradictions, either in Scripture, or in Tradition, or in works; for in all three is Christ, one and unchangeable.

§ 6. Confession, Prayer and Works

Every action of the Church, directed by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life and truth, sets forth the full completeness of all His gifts of faith, hope, and love: or in Scripture not faith only, but also the hope of the Church, is made manifest, and the love of God; and in works well pleasing to God there is made manifest not only love, but likewise faith and hope and grace; and in the living Tradition of the Church which awaits from God her crown and consummation in Christ, not hope only, but also faith and love are manifested. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are inseparably

united in one holy and living unity; but as works well-pleasing to God belong more especially to love, and prayer well-pleasing to God belongs more especially to hope, so a Creed well-pleasing to God belongs more especially to faith, and the Church's creed is rightly called the Confession or Symbol of the Faith.

Wherefore it must be understood that Creeds and prayers and works are nothing of themselves, but are only an external manifestation of the inward spirit. Whereupon it also follows that neither he who prays nor he who does works nor he who confesses the Creed of the Church is pleasing to God, but only he who acts, confesses, and prays according to the spirit of Christ living within him. All men have not the same faith or the same hope or the same love; for a man may love the flesh, fix his hope on the world, and confess his belief in a lie; he may also love and hope and believe not fully, but only in part; and the Church calls his faith, faith, and his hope, hope, and his love, love; for he calls them so, and she will not dispute with him concerning words; but what she herself calls faith, hope, and love are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and she knows that they are true and perfect.

§ 7. The Symbol of Faith

The Holy Church confesses her faith by her whole life; by her doctrine, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit; by her Mysteries in which the Holy Spirit works; and by her rites, which He directs. And the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol is pre-eminently called her Confession of Faith.

In the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol is comprised the confession of the Church's doctrine; but, in order that it might be known that the hope of the Church is inseparable from her doctrine, it likewise confesses her hope; for it is said: "we look for," and not merely, "we believe in," that which is to come.

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol, the full and complete confession of the Church, from which she allows nothing to be omitted and to which she permits nothing to be added, is as follows:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one

Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; being of one essence with the Father; by Whom all things were made; Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from the Heavens, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man; and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried, and arose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the Heavens, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end; And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son is together worshipped and together glorified; Who spake by the Prophets; In One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

This confession, just as also the whole life of the Spirit, is comprehensible only to one who believes and is a member of the Church. It contains within itself mysteries inaccessible to the inquiring intellect, and manifest only to God Himself, and to those to whom He makes them manifest for an inward and living, not a dead and outward, knowledge. It contains within itself the mystery of the existence of God not only in relation to His outward action upon creation, but also to His inward eternal Being. Therefore the pride of reason and of illegal domination, which appropriated to itself, in opposition to the decree of the whole Church (pronounced at the Council of Ephesus), the right to add its private explanations and human hypotheses to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol, is in itself an infraction of the sanctity and inviolability of the Church. Just as the very pride of the separate churches, which dared to change the Symbol of the whole Church without the consent of their brethren, was inspired by a spirit not of love, and was a crime against God and the Church, so also their blind wisdom, which did not comprehend the mysteries of God, was a distortion of the faith; for faith is not preserved where love has grown weak. Wherefore the addition of the word *filioque* contains a sort of imaginary

dogma, unknown to any one of the writers well pleasing to God, or of the Bishops or successors of the Apostles in the first ages of the Church, and not spoken by Christ our Saviour. As Christ spoke clearly, so did and does the Church clearly confess that the Holy Spirit proceedeth from the Father; for not only the outward, but also the inward, mysteries of God were revealed by Christ, and by the Spirit of Faith, to the holy Apostles and to the holy Church. When Theodoret called all who confessed the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son blasphemers, the Church, while detecting his many errors, in this case approved his judgment by an eloquent silence. The Church does not deny that the Holy Spirit is sent not only by the Father, but also by the Son; the Church does not deny that the Holy Spirit is communicated to all rational creatures not only from the Father but also through the Son; but what she does reject is that the Holy Spirit had the principle of His procession in the Godhead itself, not merely from the Father, but also from the Son. He who has renounced the spirit of love and divested himself of the gifts of grace cannot any longer possess inward knowledge that is faith, but limits himself to mere outward knowledge; wherefore he can only know what is external, and not the inner mysteries of God. Communities of Christians which had broken away from the Holy Church could no longer confess (inasmuch as they now could not comprehend with the Spirit) the procession of the Holy Spirit, in the Godhead itself, from the Father only; but from that time they were obliged to confess only the external mission of the Spirit into all creation, a mission which comes to pass, not only from the Father, but also through the Son. They preserved the external form of the faith, but they lost the inner meaning and the grace of God; as in their confession, so also in their life.

§ 8. The Church and her Mysteries

Having confessed her faith in the Tri-hypostatic Deity, the Church confesses her faith in herself, because she acknowledges herself to be the instrument and vessel of divine grace, and acknowledges her works as the works of God, not as the works of the individuals of whom, in her visible manifestation [upon

earth], she is composed. In this confession she shows that knowledge concerning her essence and being is likewise a gift of grace, granted from above, and accessible to faith alone and not to reason.

For what would be the need for me to say, "I believe," if I already knew? Is not faith the evidence of things not seen? But the visible Church is not the visible society of Christians, but the Spirit of God and the grace of the Mysteries living in this society. Wherefore even the visible Church is visible only to the believer; for to the unbeliever a Mystery is only a rite, and the Church merely a society. The believer, while with the eyes of the body and of reason he sees the Church in her outward manifestations only, by the Spirit takes knowledge of her in her Mysteries and prayers and works well pleasing to God. Wherefore he does not confuse her with the society which bears the name of Christians, for not every one that saith, "Lord, Lord," really belongs to the Chosen Race and to the seed of Abraham. But the true Christian knows by faith that the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church will never disappear from the face of the earth until the last judgment of all creation, that she will remain on earth invisible to fleshly eyes, or to the understanding which is wise according to the flesh, among the visible society of Christians, exactly in the same way as she remains visible to the eye of faith in the Church beyond the grave, but invisible to the bodily eyes. But the Christian also knows, by means of the faith, that the Church upon earth, although it is invisible, is always clothed in a visible form; that there neither was, nor could have been, nor ever will be a time in which the Mysteries will be mutilated, holiness will be dried up, or doctrine will be corrupted; and that he is no Christian who cannot say where, from the time of the Apostles themselves, the holy Mysteries have been and are being administered, where doctrine was and is preserved, where prayers were and are being sent up to the Throne of Grace. The Holy Church confesses and believes that the sheep have never been deprived of their Divine Pastor, and that the Church never could either err for want of understanding - for the understanding of God dwells within her - or submit to false doctrines for want of courage - for within her dwells the might of the Spirit of God.

Believing in the word of God's promise, which has named all the followers of Christ's doctrine the friends of Christ and His brethren, and in Him the adopted sons of God, the Holy Church confesses the paths by which it pleases God to lead fallen and dead humanity to reunion in the spirit of grace and life. Wherefore, having made mention of the prophets, the representatives of the age of the Old Testament, she confesses the Mysteries, through which, in the Church of the New Testament, God sends down His grace upon men, and more especially she confesses the Mystery of Baptism for the remission of sins, as containing within itself the principle of all the others; for through Baptism alone does a man enter into the unity of the Church, which is the custodian of all the rest of the Mysteries.

Confessing one Baptism for the remission of sins, as a Mystery ordained by Christ Himself for entrance into the Church of the New Testament, the Church does not judge those who have not entered into communion with her through Baptism, for she knows and judges herself only. God alone knows the hardness of the heart, and He judges the weaknesses of reason according to truth and mercy. Many have been saved and have received inheritance without having received the Mystery of Baptism with water; for it was instituted only for the Church of the New Testament. He who rejects it rejects the whole Church and the Spirit of God which lives within her; but it was not ordained for man from the beginning, neither was it prescribed to the Church of the Old Testament. For if any one should say that circumcision was the Baptism of the Old Testament, he rejects Baptism for women, for whom there was no circumcision; and what will he say about the Patriarchs from Adam to Abraham, who did not receive the seal of circumcision? And so does he not acknowledge that outside the Church of the New Testament the Mystery of Baptism was not of obligation? If he will say that it was on behalf of the Church of the Old Testament that Christ received Baptism, who will place a limit to the loving-kindness of God, Who took upon Himself the sins of the world? Baptism is indeed of obligation; for it alone is the door into the Church of the New Testament, and in Baptism alone does man testify his assent to the redeeming action of grace. Wherefore also in Bap-

tism alone is he saved.

Moreover, we know that in confessing one Baptism, as the beginning of all the Mysteries, we do not reject the others; for, believing in the Church, we, together with her, confess seven Mysteries, namely, Baptism, the Eucharist, Laying on of Hands, Chrismation, Marriage, Repentance, and Unction. There are also many other Mysteries; for every work which is done in faith, love, and hope, is suggested to man by the Spirit of God, and invokes the unseen Grace of God. But the seven Mysteries are in reality not accomplished by any single individual who is worthy of the mercy of God, but by the whole Church in the person of an individual, even though he be unworthy.

Concerning the Mystery of the Eucharist the Holy Church teaches that in it the change of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is verily accomplished. She does not reject the word “transubstantiation”; but she does not assign to it that material meaning which is assigned to it by the teachers of the churches which have fallen away. The change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is accomplished in the Church and for the Church. If a man receive the consecrated Gifts, or worship Them, or think on Them with faith, he verily receives, adores, and thinks on the Body and Blood of Christ. If he receive unworthily he verily rejects the Body and Blood of Christ; in any case, in faith or in unbelief, he is sanctified or condemned by the Body and Blood of Christ. But this Mystery is in the Church and not for the outside world, not for fire, not for irrational creatures, not for corruption, and not for the man who has not heard the law of Christ in the Church itself (we are speaking of the visible Church), to the elect and to the reprobate the Holy Eucharist is not a mere commemoration concerning the mystery of redemption, it is not a presence of spiritual gifts within the bread and wine, it is not merely a spiritual reception of the Body and Blood of Christ, but is His true Body and Blood. Not in spirit alone was Christ pleased to unite Himself with the faithful, but also in Body and in Blood; in order that that union might be complete, and not only spiritual but also corporal. Both nonsensical explanations concerning the relations of the

holy Mystery to elements and irrational creatures (when the Mystery was instituted for the Church alone), and that spiritual pride which despises the Body and Blood and rejects the corporal union with Christ, are equally opposed to the Church. We shall not rise again without the body, and no spirit, except the Spirit of God, can be said to be entirely incorporeal. He that despises the body sins through pride of spirit.

To be continued...



THE COMING MONTH

IN October there are no Great Feasts or additional fast days, except the normal Wednesday and Friday fasting (and Mondays for all the monastics). Among the saints we celebrate:

Our **Venerable Father John Koukouzelis** (1st / 14th), a native of Dyrrhachion in Bulgaria (now Durres in Albania), was born in A.D. 1280 to an Albanian father and Bulgarian mother, and was orphaned in childhood. Endowed with a very fine voice, he entered the Constantinople court school. He found favour with the Emperor and became a chief court singer. The sumptuousness and luxury of the imperial court bothered the pious youth. Once, when asked what he had eaten for dinner, he replied, “beans and cabbage.” The name Koukouzelis (Greek *koukia* for beans and Slavic *zele* for cabbage) stuck with him ever after. John began to seek ways to escape the enticements of the court, as well as a marriage arranged for him by the Emperor. Through God’s mercy, John met the abbot of Great Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos who had come to Constantinople on monastery business. John revealed to the Elder his desire to become a monk without telling him of his office in the court. The Elder blessed John to come to the Holy Mountain. John then went to his hometown as if to get his mother’s blessing for a marriage. When he arrived however he had arranged with certain friends to tell her that he had died. When he overheard the news given to his mother that he had died and her lament, he was inspired to write a lamentation called *The*

Bulgarian Woman. Arriving at Great Lavra Monastery on the Holy Mountain, he informed them that he had been a shepherd in a village who now wanted to become a monastic. When it was observed that he seemed to be young, he replied, “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth” (Lamentations 3:27). He was given the obedience of tending the monastery’s flock of goats. He took the flock to remote areas of the Holy Mountain to graze. There in the wilderness the youth was able to pray, contemplate God, and sing the divine hymns in solitude. Out of modesty and humility the singer did not reveal his gift to the brethren. Whenever he returned to the monastery with his flock, it was noticed that his flock was thinner than the flocks of the others. A monk was charged therefore by the abbot to follow John to see why this happening. It was observed that while the flock grazed, John would start chanting, and his animals would stop grazing to listen to him. When he stopped they would graze again, but then he would chant again and they would stop to listen. The monk overheard his moving pastoral songs and informed the abbot. Saint John then confessed to the abbot that he had been a court singer. He tearfully implored him to allow him to remain in the wilderness with his flock. The abbot was fearful that the Emperor would find out that his favorite court singer was on the Holy Mountain and force him to return to court. Wishing to avoid the Emperor’s displeasure, the abbot wrote to him to explain what had become of John and begged him not to hinder the young man from his path towards salvation. Thereafter John Koukouzelis sang on the right kliros (choir) in the church on Sundays and feast days, while for six days of the week he lived in solitude in the cell of the Archangels. Once, after chanting the Akathist before an icon of the Mother of God, John was granted a great mercy. The Mother of God appeared to him in a dream and said, “Rejoice, John, and do not cease to sing. For that, I shall not forsake you.” With these words she placed into John’s hand a golden coin, then became invisible. This coin was placed beneath the icon. Many miracles have been credited to the coin and the icon. Today only half remains there, while the other half was given as a gift to Russia. The icon, named the “Koukouzelissa” in memory of Saint

John is located in the Great Lavra Monastery of Saint Athanasius. It is commemorated on 1st October, and on the 10th Friday after Pascha. The Mother of God appeared to Saint John again and healed him of a grievous affliction of his legs, caused by his long standing in church. Saint John's remaining days were spent in intense ascetic efforts. He also worked hard on the discipline of church chanting. His musical compositions, many of which survive in manuscript, mark a decisive stage in the development of Byzantine music. Foreseeing the hour of his death, Saint John took his leave of the brethren, and bade them to bury him in the cell of the Archangel that he built. Church chanters reverence Saint John Koukouzelis as their own special patron saint.

Our **Venerable Father Tryphon, Archimandrite of Vyatka** (8th / 21st) was born to pious parents who lived in the Archangelsk diocese, and baptised with the name Trophim. His parents intended to marry Trophim off, but from his youth he desired the monastic life, after his parish priest taught him, "Keep the purity of body and spirit, for whoever will preserve purity and take upon himself the angelic, monastic schema, the Lord God will join him to His elect." Hearing this he secretly left his home for the city of Ustiug, where he took up residence with a parish priest who dwelt in strict fasting and prayer. He then lived in the town of Orlov along the Kama River in the church porch, enduring hunger and cold. Once in winter, the blessed one walked along the high, steep bank of the Kama River, passing some of the young Stroganovs (a family of rich business people). Seeing the poor wanderer, they grabbed him and threw him down from the height to the river, and below there were deep snow drifts. When the blessed one fell into the snow, a snowdrift broke from the top, so that he was not visible for a long time. The pranksters repented and felt sorry for the blessed one. They went down, took the Saint out, and took off their boots to shake off the accumulated snow. At the same time, they themselves suffered greatly from the bitter cold and marvelled at the fact that the monk was cheerful and seemed to spread warmth around him. They asked for forgiveness and straightway received it. Arriving home, the Stroganovs told their master Yakov

Stroganov about the incident on the bank of the Kama. The next day, Yakov himself came to the parish church to meet Trophim. He spoke to him after the end of divine service. "Truly you are God's chosen one, in everything similar to the ancient saints. I ask you for the Lord's sake, help me. At first I had many children, but by God's will they all died. Only one son Maxim is left, but he is also sick. I beg you, pray to the Lord for him. By your holy prayers, the Lord will grant him health. I will help you with anything." Trophim replied: "What you ask for is not ours, but God's, to give. I am sinful and unworthy to take on such a great cause. But great is the grace of God." After this, Tryphon prayed for the healing of the son of Yakov, and the boy soon recovered. Leaving Orlov the Saint came to Nikolsky, where he met Juliana, the wife of Maxim Fedorov. Their two-year-old son Timothy was very sick, and the woman asked Trophim to pray for him. After a night of prayer, Timothy was healed. Fleeing the fame that came from these miracles, he moved on to the Pyshkorsk Monastery at the River Kama. Here Trophim was received into the monastic life and was tonsured by Abbot Barlaam with the name Tryphon. The 22-year-old monk did not miss a single church service, and he performed his obedience in the bakery. On summer nights, he would come out of his cell and, stripped to the waist, would give his body to be eaten by mosquitoes and gadflies, and as still as a pillar, he stood at prayer until the morning. He ate only bread and water, and then in moderation. He did not have a bed, and did not rest for a long time on the ground. When he fell grievously ill, probably due to his strict labours, his guardian angel appeared to him on the fortieth day of his illness to take his soul. However, as they ascended to heaven, a voice commanded the angel to take him back. Saint Nicolas then appeared to Tryphon and healed him, encouraging him even more in his ascetic effort. More and more he became known for his miracles, and many who were sick and possessed visited him and left healed. In search of solitude, the monk went to the Mulyanka River and settled at the place where the city of Perm is now. Here he converted to Christianity the pagan Ostyaks and Voguli. This was done after he cut down their sacred tree, which was a cause of curses to the pagans and they

offered sacrifice to the tree out of fear. When they saw nothing happened to the Saint after he cut down the tree, the proclaimed: "Great is the God of the Christians!" He was asked to return to his monastery, which he did, but he soon left in order to escape praise for being a wonderworker, after causing some dried-up springs to bring forth water. Then Saint Tryphon withdrew to the River Chusova and founded a monastery in honour of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. In A.D. 1580 he arrived in Vyatka, and he also founded a monastery there in honour of the Dormition and was made Archimandrite. Being a strict ascetic, he wore a hairshirt on his body and also heavy chains. The soul of the Elder longed to enlighten the lost with the light of faith in Christ. He devoted all his energy to this holy effort. At one time in Vyatka it did not rain from 15th August to 8th September, that is from the Dormition to the Nativity of the Mother of God. On the 8th September the Mother of God appeared to Tryphon and told him to command his workers to return to work in building the monastery, which they neglected, and after this it rained again. Towards the end of his life, the Saint journeyed to Moscow and Kazan, and forewarned Metropolitan Hermogenes that he would become Patriarch and die a martyr for the Faith. He also had to endure exile from his monastery by the brethren led by Jonas, his beloved disciple and intended successor, who rose up against him for applying their monastic rule too strictly. He therefore wandered about and established a monastery dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God in Slobodsk. Wanting to die in his monastery in Vyatka however, he returned there, and Jonas repented of his sin on his knees before the Saint. Before his repose, Saint Tryphon wrote a last testament to the brethren, in which he says, "Fathers and brethren, the flock gathered about Christ, heed me, a sinner. Though I am coarse and worse than any, God and His All-Pure Mother have permitted me, a sinner, to manage His household. I beseech you, for the sake of the Lord and His Mother, to have spiritual love among yourselves. Without this no virtue is complete before God. The lips of Christ spoke to the disciples, 'Love one another' (Jn. 13:34). And in the words of the Apostle Paul, 'Bear ye one another's burdens' (Gal. 6:2). Do not

condemn one another before God, whether in the church or in the cell, either alone or in common with the brethren. Pray with the fear of God. And by no means neglect church chanting; although there are other matters, hasten to church to God for spiritual song. First give to God what is God's, and then fulfil the other matters." Saint Tryphon fell asleep in the Lord in deep old age on 8th October, 1612. He was laid to rest in the Vyatka Monastery he had founded, and succeeded by his disciple Jonas, who promised to keep the monastic rule unchanged. In A.D. 1648 his honourable relics were found to be incorrupt.

The **Holy Martyr Shushanik** (Susanna) **of Georgia** (17th / 30th) was the wife of the Georgian prince Varsken, the ruler of Hereti (a province of southeastern Georgia). Hereti was under Persian control at that time; Varsken was essentially the viceroy for the Persians. Having been raised in a pious Christian family, Shushanik was deeply penetrated with love and the fear of God. At that time Kartli was under heavy political pressure from Persia, and Prince Varsken visited the Persian king Peroz in hopes of encouraging more friendly relations between the two countries. He willingly denied the true Faith, converted to the worship of fire, and promised the king to convert his wife and children upon his return to Hereti. Having approached the border of Hereti, Varsken sent messengers to Tsurtavi, the city in which he ruled, to ensure that his subjects met him with due respect. The blessed Shushanik, having learned of her husband's betrayal, fell to the ground and wept over him with bitter tears. Then she took her four children, deserted the palace, and sought refuge in a nearby church. That evening Shushanik was visited by her spiritual father, the elder Jacob, who predicted, "Varsken's cruelty and mercilessness are unmistakable. Know that terrible trials await you. Will you be firm and unyielding in your stance?" "I would rather die than join with him and destroy my soul!" she answered. Three days later the prince arrived in Tsurtavi. As promised, he tried to persuade his wife to convert, but Saint Shushanik firmly answered, "As you have renounced your Creator, so I am renouncing you. I will no longer take part in your affairs, no matter what suffering I must endure!" Varsken then sent his younger brother Jojik and Bishop Apots to

convince Shushanik to return to the palace. Shushanik refused for some time, but in the end she yielded to their persuasion. She set off for the palace with the Holy Gospel and the Lives of the holy martyrs, and when she arrived she locked herself in a squalid cell. Two days later Varsken returned to the palace and invited Shushanik, his brother Jojik, and his sister-in-law for supper. The queen, however, could not bring herself to share a meal with one who had betrayed Christ: she pushed away the cup that Jojik's wife had offered her, further angering her husband. The furious Varsken beat his wife mercilessly, fettered her in irons, locked her in prison, and forbade the guards to let anyone in to see her. Saint Shushanik spent six years in captivity. While she was serving her sentence, she helped the poor that came to her. Through her prayers the sick were healed and children were born to the childless. Before her death, the holy Martyr Shushanik blessed those around her and requested that she be buried at the place from which her unbelieving husband had dragged her out of the palace. This happened in the year 475. The clergy and people alike wept bitterly over Shushanik's tragic fate. Her holy relics were buried in accordance with her will. In A.D. 578, with the blessing of Catholicos Kirion I, Saint Shushanik's holy relics were translated to Tbilisi, where they remain today, in the Metekhi Church of the All-Holy Theotokos.



POINTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE

“SOME traditionalist Orthodox Churches refer to themselves as True Orthodox and others as Genuine Orthodox, is there a distinction between them? - E.S., Winslow.

THERE is no fundamental difference between them. It seems that Churches which generally use one of the Slavic languages use the term “True,” and those that use Greek say “Genuine.” Here we use Genuine for two relatively inconsequential reasons: first, because we are within the Church of Greece, and secondly because Genuine seems more subtle. Think of the opposites of the two words. The opposite of True would be False, which would imply all the other Churches are completely spurious, whereas the opposite of Genuine is more likely to be understood as veering off course but certainly not utterly bogus.

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

**SAINT EDWARD'S FEAST DAY,
HERE AND IN GREECE**

ON Friday, 2nd / 15th September, **His Grace Metropolitan Ambrose of Methoni** presided at the Vigil Service for Saint Edward, assisted by **Archimandrite Daniel, Priestmonk Sabbas, the Priest Borislav Popov** and **Deacon Ioan Turcu**. The next morning, the day of the feast, after the **Lesser Blessing of the Waters** and the reading of Hours, even though he was still very frail after his recent illness, Metropolitan Ambrose celebrated the Divine Liturgy, concelebrating with the same clergymen, and at the end preaching on the witness of Saint Edward. In both services the church was packed with faithful members of our congregation and friends of our community. Because of the numbers, the Parish Breakfast was served buffet-style, and during it the Bishop mingled with the parishioners. He left later in the day to travel to St Pancras station to return to Europe. His Grace, who blessed our celebration of the enshrinement of the sacred relics of Saint Edward, King and Martyr, with his presence and teaching, now tells us that he will be paying us another pastoral visit over the weekend of 11th and 12th November. The feast was also celebrated this year in the **Church of the Annunciation in Piræus, Greece**, by two of the senior hierarchs in our Synod, **Metropolitan Gerontios of Piræus and Salamis** and **Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica and Boeotia**, both of whom have visited the brotherhood in Brookwood.

CONVENT TRUSTEE MEETING

ON his arrival at the Brotherhood on Friday, 15th September, **Metropolitan Ambrose** opened a meeting of the trustees of the former **Annunciation Convent on Brondesbury Park**, which sadly closed down with the death of the last sister. They were joined by their accountant, **Darren Harding**, and **Tanya James** gave an extensive report on the progress so far of winding up affairs there. As there were now only three remaining trustees, a fourth was

appointed, **Diaconissa Georgette Turcu**, and she joined the meeting, which with Mr Harding's help outlined the course that the trust must now take.

CHRISMATION OF A FAMILY

ON the day following Saint Edward's feast, Sunday, 4th / 17th September, the **Bivol family from Old Woking** were received into our Church by the mysterion of Chrismation. The service was held back from the feast day itself so as not to burden Metropolitan Ambrose with more duties. The family, **Sergiu** and his wife **Valentina**, and their young sons **Cristian** and **Mihail**, are from Moldova and had been baptised there in a church under the Moscow Patriarchate, but having found our community they resolved to leave World Orthodoxy to join our traditionalist Church. The mysterion at Brookwood was served by **Priestmonk Sabbas**, between Matins and the Sunday Liturgy so that the faithful might witness their reception into our Church and greet them. Their sponsors are **Gabriel Maties**, and **Patrick and Rima Lewis**. Please remember them in your prayers that they remain faithful and contest well until the end.

NEW ICONS

WE have three new icons for the church. Two we commissioned from the **Convent of Saint Philothei in Sweden**; they are of our **Venerable Mother Aethelgifu**, the daughter of King Alfred the Great and the foundress of Shaftesbury, and **Saint Aelfgifu**, the grandmother of Saint Edward the Martyr, who was laid to rest in the Convent there. The third icon is of the **Venerable New Martyr Ephraim of Nea Makri**, East Attica. This icon was painted in Romania and kindly given to our church by **Alexandra Galbeaza**.

INTERMENT AT SAINT EDWARD'S

AFTER her funeral at the **Cathedral of the Nativity of the All-Holy Theotokos on Harvard Road, London W4** (ROCA-MP), **Katerina Penkova** was laid to rest in Saint Edward's Cemetery on Monday, 18th September. The funeral service and the commitment at

Brookwood were both served by **Archpriest Vitaly Serapinas**. After the burial the mourners returned to London for a Mercy Meal, and Fr Vitaly was offered refreshments here at the Brotherhood.

VISITORS

ON his return from Serbia, **Fr John Somers** visited us again and concelebrated at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, 21st August / 3rd September, before leaving for America on the Monday morning.

ON Saturday, 9th September, **John Leech** of the **Brookwood Cemetery Society** brought a group of about twenty people from **Holy Trinity Church, Guildford**, to see the church during their visit to the cemetery. Their group leader was **David Uzzell**.

ON Tuesday, 19th September, the **Rev'd Stewart Mackay**, a chaplain at the **Pirbright Army Camp** brought three other Army padres to Saint Edward's. They attended our Matins service and the memorial service afterwards.



Practical Tip

BE CAREFUL never to make an exhibition of your piety in church. Certainly behave with reverence, but do not make extravagant gestures of piety, make demonstrative signs of the Cross, take several minutes to light a candle and hold it poised to place in the holder, or flamboyant bows. Move about the church when you have to quietly and unobtrusively, never rush (unless there is a real emergency) remembering not to disturb others at prayer. And in regard to this last, when you come into church do not greet others, shaking hands and kissing them, or entering into conversation with them - if need be bow slightly to them, and let them continue their prayers in peace. You may express your piety, if such it really is, by your interior prayer in the place where you stand, and you can show your love for your fellow believers by greeting them when you leave the church. The holy Apostle Paul says, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints," - our worship should reflect that peace.